

The Burgundy Report

The 2005's of Jean-Claude Boisset



For close to the full two and a half hours' journey-time to Nuits St.Georges it rained, then it rained some more. What with that rain and a 9:30am first appointment I was sorely in need of some kind of 'pick-me-up' - my rendezvous with Grégory Patriat turned out to be enough - and considering the very recent birth of child number 2, Grégory also seemed remarkably awake!

I tasted Grégory's wines for the first time in Spring last year; these were the incredibly muscular and successful 2004's, the Chambolle 1er 'Charmes' remains one of the best 1er Crus I tasted in 2006. I was amazed how much wine had been packed into the bottles - without losing sense of place - so much so, that I made the following comment: "If this is what he can do with a vintage like 2004, be scared, be very scared, of what he might achieve with 2005". It was time to find out!



Since we last met, Grégory has really put the cat amongst the pigeons with his 2005's; he's not the first to bottle wines in screw-caps - he even did some himself in 2003 and 2004 - but with some media fanfare he has so publicly put half his 2005 Le Chambertin Grand Cru production into 'Stelvin' that some in the Gevrey hinterland consider it either as

'provocative', or something that simply should not be allowed.

His experience is limited, so he continues to trial different versions of the 'Stelvin Lux+' with both Saranex seals for limited air transport, and 'Saranex Film Etain' seals which have some metallisation and virtually no air transport - his Beaune 1er Cru Bressandes is the workhorse for this experimentation. The Le Chambertin is 50% bottled with the limited air transport Saranex seal, the rest in cork; I'd have liked a few bottles for future comparison but the wine is already oversold - particularly the demand was very high for the screw-capped version, despite the local outrage! Apparently Alcan (the producers of Stelvin) have been working very hard to improve the aesthetics of the closures - they now look quite smart, and not obviously like 'screwcaps', plus they have managed to make them sound more like a cross between glass and plastic when opening - rather than the 'tinny' sound you might be used to. The same caps have also now been chosen by Château Pichon-Baron for their second wine - the Tourelles de Longueville. It's actually not easy for a domaine to simply decide 'today I will start bottling screwcaps' as there's quite an investment required for the special bottling machine - ~60,000 Euros - but it is possible to hire one.



For me, there were two quite interesting aspects to this approach by Grégory; first he clearly states that his primary aim is not simply the elimination of corked bottles, but rather his wish to have bottle to bottle consistency - a problem with even the best corks - and secondly that all the wines we tasted together came from cork-stoppered bottles as the Stelvin sealed bottles were virtually over-sold. It seems that regardless of any criticism for this approach, that the market is more than happy to trial the bottles. Nathalie Berges-Boisset has no plans to roll this out to the group's other wines, but is watching closely.

WINEMAKING & THE WINES

Grégory says (his) "*main challenge is to make the 'entry-level' wines as good as possible - it's quite easy with Clos de Vougeot*". In 2005 there was no chaptalisation, all the cuvées came in between 12.8 and 13.8% natural - the 13.8 of his Pommard is actually a little problematic as Grégory only uses the natural yeast populations which stop working

below this - so the Pommard was actually pressed before completing the alcoholic fermentation - but finished without a hitch in barrel. Talking of barrels; Grégory dislikes too much new oak so will typically only use 20-30%, the rest made up of one and two year old barrels with a light 'white-wine' toast - even for the reds. Because many of the cuvées are quite small, when he has only enough wine for two barrels there will be no new ones used. Recently he has been working with an 'artisan' barrel-maker who produces only ~1,000 barrels per year - he's very happy with the results. Stems are included in some cuvées, but if so, he reduces the pigeage to once per day instead of two per day for the stem-free cuvées.

Summarising the wines below, I'm happy to see that Grégory has tailored his approach to the vintage; his 2004's were so muscular that I feared his 2005's might be 'wall of sound' wines - concentrated to the extent that subtlety is lost - this was absolutely not the case. The wines are balanced, round, certainly well concentrated, but full of nuance - there are no wines below that I would feel bad about paying for.

Grégory uses no battonage in any of his whites:

2005 Jean-Claude Boisset, Bourgogne Hautes Côtes de Nuits 🍷

A lovely wide and slightly spicy nose - 20% new wood was used. The palate reflects the nose with a wide and fresh, very lithe stance with a good finish. Great value.

2005 Jean-Claude Boisset, Bourgogne Chardonnay 🍷

This is a blend of grapes from Ladoix and Puligny-Montrachet. The nose is deeper with a citrus-edged melon impression. The palate is wider and softer than the Hautes Côtes, good acidity too. Nice wine.

2005 Jean-Claude Boisset, Monthelie 🍷

Grégory likes to slip this into blind tastings - it's almost half the price of a Meursault but stands up rather well. Dense stone fruit on the nose. The palate is richer and wider but with the same good acidity as the previous wines. This is really lovely.

2005 Jean-Claude Boisset, Meursault Les Limozin 🍷

These vines are sited just below the Meursault 1er of Charmes. The nose is wide and pleasantly Meursault in character. This wine has a real extra dimension on the palate and despite an extra level of richness retains a very good level of freshness. This is an excellent village.

2005 Jean-Claude Boisset, Puligny-Montrachet 1er Champs Gains 🍷

This was a very dry vineyard in 2005 which resulted in only 2.5 barrels of wine instead of closer to 7 - so no new oak. Because there was little juice in those harvested grapes Grégory had to use a very light pressure on his press. The nose is compact but quite deep. In the mouth it's much more linear than the last wines but there's richness to the texture and a tight core of fruit at its centre. This is very, very long. Bottled unfiltered with a slight fining. Another excellent wine.

2005 Jean-Claude Boisset, Savigny-lès-Beaune 1er Dominode 🍷

From old south-east facing vines planted in 1901 - only about 3% have been replaced. The nose is wide but with good focus to the ripe red fruits - very impressive. This wine had 15 months in barrel, but none were new as there were only 3 barrels. The first impression is the good texture of the tannins, then the linear long, rather than wide presentation of the fruit. Frankly a bit of a stunner.

2005 Jean-Claude Boisset, Savigny-lès-Beaune 1er Serpentières 🍷

From younger - only 70 years - south facing vines. Grégory walked by these vines and saw really fine millerandaged berries, looked for the owner and asked to buy - et voila - four and a half barrels, one of new oak. Linear ripe fruit on the nose, even a little blue skinned fruit - it's a beauty. Like the Dominode this has super texture, this time a little wider and richer although perhaps not quite as long. Hard to criticise, it's lovely.

2005 Jean-Claude Boisset, Chambolle-Musigny 🍷

This is a blend of 3 different vineyards all located at the top of the village, Grégory says that you really need to wait much longer to harvest here and that the results are much more interesting than from the vineyards below the village. After the Serpentières this is a narrow, focused nose over a brooding and denser creamy base. It's a wide vista on the palate with velvet tannins and a very good length. This is a very understated and uncomplicated wine and highly recommended.

2005 Jean-Claude Boisset, Vosne-Romanée 🍷

Harvested from vines 150 metres from Quartier de Nuits wall of the Clos de Vougeot. The nose wide with hints of iron and cinnamon. The first impression is the faint grain of the tannin and the concentrated, linear fruit. Slowly it opens on the palate and into the mid-palate giving a finish of real persistence. Again another understated and accomplished wine.

2005 Jean-Claude Boisset, Pommard Les Vaumuriens 🍷

After the understated spice of the Vosne this is fresher with redder fruit. The palate is linear with grainy tannin, density in the mid-palate and a slowly lingering finish. Nice wine.

2005 Jean-Claude Boisset, Nuits St.Georges Les Charbonnières 🍷

This is always close to the first vineyard to be picked as it's so fast to ripen. The nose is very wide and slightly floral - nicely elegant. Equally elegant is the palate; wide with fine acidity, merely background tannin and a lingering creamy personality. Very cultured Nuits.

2005 Jean-Claude Boisset, Gevrey-Chambertin Le Creot 🍷

From the Brochon hill, lying just below Les Jeunes Rois. This is another vineyard where Grégory took note of the quality of the fruit and approached the owner in order to buy. The vines are ~70 years old. The aromatics concentrate on red fruit over an earthy base and eventually just a few smoky notes hinting at stems - Grégory confirms that a few were used. Bright and interesting fruit of some depth, the tannins cling just a little more than the previous wines but they are very ripe. Very good and some personality.

2005 Jean-Claude Boisset, Chambolle-Musigny 1er Les Charmes 🍷

The vines are ~50 years old, everything has been changed in the last 5 years - even the training from Guyot to Cordon Royat - zero herbicides and grass allowed to grow in the rows. Freshly opened the nose is a little unfocused; slowly it relaxes, opening to become creamier without ever getting into top gear. The palate is about understated elegance coupled to excellent length. Despite that, it's a very well muscled wine below the perfectly tailored presentation. Super, but not over-achieving within the vintage to the same extent as the 2004 did.

2005 Jean-Claude Boisset, Le Chambertin 🍷

This wine has only been in bottle for about one week so should get better and better in

the bottle. These grapes from these 70 year-old vines (that border the vines of Domaine Leroy) were harvested a full three weeks after the bans de vendanges, yet only come into the cuverie at 13.5°. The screw-cap version is oversold, so this is tasted from the cork sealed bottle. The nose develops a really creamy base though I didn't stay with it long enough to see much more than a little extra width. Understated excellence on the palate, the multiple flavours just cling and cling to the inside of your mouth leaving a soft coating over your teeth. Will be fantastic.

Burgundy-Report + Add blog to favs

2005 Jean-Claude Boisset, Savigny-lès-Beaune 1er La Serpentièrè 🍷

Deeply coloured with a purple rim. Wide and high-toned aromatics on opening, very slowly deepens with black cherry and a snip of cream. Lithe entry, expanding in the mid palate with perfect acidity. The well-covered tannin is quite silky. Finally the nose is of redcurrant with a twist of tobacco - very nice. - from 2012+

Rebuy - Yes