

Bruce Sanderson Decanted



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Chanson on the Rise and the New Team at La Vougeraie

Posted: 11:35 AM ET, June 30, 2008

June 19 was another beautiful morning in Burgundy as I strolled over to [Chanson Père & Fils](#). I was impressed with the 2005s I tasted on my first visit there two years ago. President Gilles de Courcel and winemaker Jean-Pierre Confuron have a tasty collection of 2007s in barrel and seem to be going from strength to strength in the revitalization of this house.

In 2007, Chanson purchased parcels in Puligny-Montrachet Les Folatières, Chassagne-Montrachet and Chassagne-Montrachet Les Chenevottes, bringing the total holdings to 111 acres.

All the malolactics for the whites and reds were finished in March and April. "We have a high level of natural acidity in '07," said Confuron (who you can see in the video below, demonstrating how he draws barrel samples). Other producers had reported above-average pH levels in 2007, and he confirmed they were "perhaps slightly above average" at Chanson.

The clue [for the whites in '07] was to wait for the maturity," said de Courcel. "It was one of the few years that the Chardonnay was mature after the Pinot Noir. We waited quite late."

We started with the whites, which included a rich **Beaune White Clos des Mouches** evoking citrus blossom, honey and mineral, followed by one of my favorite whites from Chanson, the mineral-laden **Pernand-Vergelesses Les Caradeux**. The **Puligny-Montrachet Les Folatières** showed lemon and floral notes and fine harmony, while the **Chassagne-Montrachet Les Chenevottes** was all smoke and flint, balancing power and finesse.

A trio of *grands crus* wrapped up the whites. The **Corton-Charlemagne** and **Corton White Vergennes**

were a study in contrasts. The Charlemagne was vertical, pure and sinewy, with loads of mineral that built on the palate. The Vergennes displayed a round profile, with a creamy texture and honey flavor. The **Criots-Bâtard-Montrachet** was generous, but not fat, with citrus and honey notes.

Chanson makes 10 different Beaune *premiers crus*; we tasted three. There was a fruity, open **Champimonts**, with black cherry and blackberry flavors; a spicy, supple cherry and licorice-tinged **Bressandes**; and a structured, minerally **Clos des Fèves**, a monopole of Chanson's.

The **Pommard Épenots** offered more floral and red fruits and a lot of finesse. Equally impressive was the **Gevrey-Chambertin**, showing great depth to its black fruit, licorice, and spice notes.

The **Charmes-Chambertin** was better from a one-year-old barrel, with more flesh, roundness and sweet fruit. A new barrel gave the **Chambertin-Clos de Bèze** smoke and toast notes, but there's excellent material underneath.

We also tasted a selection of 2006s, several of which showed outstanding potential. In red, the **Nuits-St.-Georges Les Porêts St.-Georges, Gevrey-Chambertin Lavaux St.-Jacques, Charmes-Chambertin, Echézeaux, Bonnes Mares** and **Clos de Vougeot** were particularly impressive.

"It's a classic vintage," said Confuron, describing 2006. "After a series of hot vintages, we were back to a normal maturation process. We harvested on the 20th of September."

Among the whites, I liked the **Pernand-Vergelesses Les Caradeux** for its mineral and saline, iodine quality. The **Beaune Clos des Mouches** featured lemon, hazelnut and honey flavors, while the **Meursault Perrières** offered richness and a stony note. The **Corton-Charlemagne**, from parcels in Les Languettes and Pougets, was full of floral and apricot flavors, very complex and powerful. The **Corton White Vergennes** had more weight and body by comparison, with citrus and mineral elements.

My afternoon appointment was at [Domaine de la Vougeraie](#). My last visit here was in 2006, to taste the 2004 vintage, though, I also tasted some samples of 2005s a year later with former winemaker [Pascal Marchand](#). The 2006s and 2007s were made by the soft-spoken, 34-year-old estate manager Pierre Vincent. The current style has a lighter touch, with more elegance and softer textures, but not at the expense of *terroir*.

Vincent achieves this with the aid of a vertical press for the reds. The newly fermented wine is gently clarified by the *marc* of skins, and the pips remain in the cake left behind. The barrels are filled by gravity and racking takes place with compressed air. The total aging in barrel is roughly 10 months.

Sorting of Pinot Noir was crucial in 2007. "Overall, 15 to 30 percent of bad grapes were eliminated for the domaine," said Vincent.

The **Beaune Clos du Roi** was rich round and supple and the **Savigny-lès-Beaune Les Marconnets** was fruity, elegant and racy.

In the Côte de Nuits, there was a black cherry- and spice-filled **Gevrey-Chambertin Les Evocelles** and a **Chambolle-Musigny** that was all flowers and red cherry on a delicate frame. Both the **Les Corvées**

Pagets and **Les Damodes** from Nuits-St.-Georges showed fine textures, with the former offering more red fruits, the latter black cherry and richness.

The **Vougeot Les Cras** exhibited pure blackberry and mineral flavors, revealing more elegance than the powerful, structured **Charmes-Chambertin Les Mazoyères**, made from vines planted between 1910 and 1920.

I found the **Bonnes Mares** difficult to get a sense of due to the unfinished malolactic conversion. The **Musigny**, however, featured a gorgeous nose of red and black fruits, floral and licorice notes that were complex and long. Unfortunately, there were only three barrels, or about 75 cases, made.

http://www.winespectator.com/Wine/Blogs/Blog_Detail/0,4211,1962,00.html