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Decanter | **buying guide**

STEVEN
SPURRIER

WINES TO LAY DOWN

JEAN-CLAUDE BOISSET BURGUNDIES

Since 2002, the Jean-Claude Boisset label has been transformed by Jean-Charles Boisset from a traditional négociant into a 'viticulteur', a cross between a viticulturalist and a vinifier. Following the creation of Domaine de la Vougeraie in the late 1990s, where Pascal Marchand vinifies the 40ha of the JC Boisset Burgundian domaines, the company has built another cellar in Nuits-St-Georges and hired the brilliant young Gregory Patriat, formerly with Domaines Leroy. There is no stronger supporter in the Côte d'Or than Lalou Bize-Leroy for quality, and in Patriat

she found a willing pupil. Spending much of his time in the vineyards, paying by acreage to ensure lower yields from vines never less than 30 years old, working with organic growers, using natural yeasts, using a maximum of 20% new oak and bottling without fining nor filtering, Patriat has created wines that are as pure, genuine and long in flavour as they come.

His range of 2002s, a fortunate vintage to begin with, was the equal of the major tastings of 2002s this January. Even the lower appellations such as Bourgogne Hautes-Côtes de Nuits Blanc

(2004-7) and Bourgogne Haut-Côtes de Beaune (2005-8) were impressive, while the middle range St-Aubin 1er Cru sur Gamay Blanc (2004-8) and Santenay 1er Cru Grand Clos Rousseau (2006-10) were benchmark examples. Higher up the range, his Beaune 1er Cru Les Bressandes (2007-15), Gevrey-Chambertin (2007-14) and the superb Chambolle-Musigny (2006-14) with 25% declassified 1er Cru Les Noirots, were a mini-masterclass in fine Burgundy. **£10.95-25.95; Lib**

For UK stockist details, see p138.

INSIDE:

Must-buy Burgundy

GREGORY PATRIAT, HEAD winemaker at Jean-Claude Boisset in Burgundy, is a happy man. He joined the company in 2002 and has worked hard to restore its somewhat faded reputation. When he unveiled the impressive results of his hard work in London last month, Patriat was visibly delighted that his efforts had coincided with a great Burgundy vintage. Approachable young, the wines will nonetheless rival 1990 in ageing potential, he says.

Whether or not Burgundy 2002 rivals 1999, 1996 and 1990 is debatable. Wine critics all seem to vary in where they place the new vintage on the scale of greatness. What isn't disputed is that this is an all-round vintage of extremely high quality, for reds and for whites. The wines have both ripeness and acidity, and are a must-buy for Burgundy lovers. On pages 48-56 we bring you an in-depth guide to 2002, with an expert view from Clive Coates MW, and recommendations from across the region.

Italy remains high on the list of our readers' favourite wine regions, and this month we have made it our quest to bring you 45 of the country's best-value wines (p28-35). This is quite a challenge once you get beyond the south, but our experts have come up trumps and recommended an exciting array of wines that are more than worth every penny.

Also in this issue, we kick off a new monthly feature, My Passion for Wine (p126-127). Over the coming months we will speak to a variety of wine lovers. They could be successful in the arts - like our first interviewee, Antonio Pappano, musical director at the Royal Opera House - or in business, or sport. They may not all be household names, but they will all have one thing in common: a genuine passion for wine.



Amy Wislocki, Editor