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THE ULTIMATE BURGUNDY REFERENCE

149 Producers and 1607 Burgundies and Pinots Reviewed

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Statement of Principles

It is important that readers understand how I collect and evaluate the information that is reported in the pages of **Burghound.com** (the tasting notes and information are the sole responsibility of the author).

- I am personally responsible for all of my business expenses without exception. This includes airfare, hotels and effectively all of my meals. The purpose is as clear as it is simple: No conflicts of interest. *I do not accept nor do I seek any subsidy, in any form, from anybody.*
- Sample bottles are accepted for evaluation and commentary, much as book reviewers accept advance copies of new releases. I insist, however, that these sample bottles represent the final wines to be sold under that particular label.
- Finished, bottled wines are assigned scores as these wines are market-ready. Wines tasted from barrel, however, are scored within a range. This reflects the reality that a wine tasted from barrel is not a finished product.
- Wines are evaluated within the context of their *appellations*. Simply put, that means I expect a grand cru Burgundy to reflect its exalted status.

While the concept of *terroir* remains a controversial issue in the opinion of many people, it is not controversial to the Burgundian mindset—or to me, either. I attempt to convey, where appropriate, how certain wines are particularly good, or particularly bad, at expressing their underlying *terroir*. This is admittedly a difficult thing, rightly open to discussion among the Burgundians themselves, never mind an outside observer such as myself. Nevertheless, it is fundamental to great Burgundy. Mere "hedonism" is just that: empty pleasure-seeking. Burgundy can deliver so much more—if it is asked.

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A Brief Word About Scores:

Numerical scores are endlessly debated among wine lovers. Inevitably, critics tend to emphasize certain characteristics at the expense of others. What follows is an explication of scores at **Burghound.com** and the underlying taste values they reflect.

Simply put, Burgundies that emphasize purity, elegance, overall balance and a clear expression of the underlying *terroir* are rated more highly than Burgundies that don't deliver these qualities. Other important characteristics include typicity, richness, balanced extraction, length and harmony. For example, a Volnay should taste like a Volnay and a *grand cru* should deliver a *grand cru* drinking experience.

The score is a summation of the taster's thoughts about a wine. It does not actually express those thoughts. Clearly, a mere number cannot fully represent the nuanced, detailed impression conveyed by a tasting note.

Please note: Wines are scored based on their expected quality at peak drinkability. Many *grands crus* that will, I believe, "be" a 92 may not necessarily taste like a 92-point wine when young, thanks to the tannins or general inaccessibility.

Wines rated 90 points or above are worth a special effort to find and cellar. Wines rated 85 or above are recommended, **especially among regional and villages level wines**. There will be relatively few 90+ point wines, simply because there are relatively few outstanding and superlative wines. Finished, bottled wines are assigned specific scores as these wines are market-ready. Wines tasted from barrel are scored within a range. This reflects the reality that a wine tasted from barrel is not a finished, market-ready product.

95 – 100:	Truly incomparable and emotionally thrilling. A wine so rated is as good as wine gets. By definition, it is reference standard for its <i>appellation</i> .
90 – 94:	Outstanding. Worth a special effort to purchase and cellar and will provide memorable drinking experiences.
85 – 89:	Good to High quality. Wines that offer solid quality in every respect and generally very good typicity. "Good Value" wines will often fall into this category. Worth your attention.
80 – 84:	Average to Good quality. The wine is "correct", displays no noticeable flaws and will provide pleasing, if straightforward, drinking.
76 – 79:	Barely Acceptable quality. The wine is not worth your attention nor is it a good value.
75 and Below:	Don't Bother. A wine with noticeable, irremediable flaws.

Estimated Maturities:

Estimating a window of when any given burgundy will be at its peak is an extremely difficult thing to do with precision. The time frames that you see after the score is my best estimate as to when any given wine will likely be at its best. This is of course simply an educated guess about how the wine will evolve and assumes that the wine will have been responsibly shipped and stored, which as long-time collectors know is not always the case. Just as importantly, the time suggested windows are based on how I personally prefer my burgundies. This effectively means that for reds, there is still obvious freshness and vibrancy remaining to both the fruit and the flavors and while the tannic structure will be largely resolved, it by no means suggests that a completely smooth palate will exist devoid of any firmness. Especially tannic and or concentrated wines will necessarily have wider windows for obvious reasons. For whites, the windows are designed to indicate that point at which youthful fruit has passed into secondary nuances with more fully developed complexity as well as when the textures have rounded out and the sometimes pointed acidity has mellowed. Important note: what the estimated maturities do NOT suggest is how long a wine will remain structurally sound and still capable of providing some enjoyment as many burgundies are capable of remarkably long periods of graceful decline; however, beyond a certain point they will have passed their peaks and should be drunk, no matter how intellectually interesting they may be. As with anything this subjective, there is no substitute for your own experience and I offer these estimated maturities as a general guideline, not gospel and as the saying goes, your mileage may vary.

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Progress Report:

Domaine Pousse d'Or

Domaine Gros Frère et Soeur (Vosne-Romanée)

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2008	Grands Echézeaux Grand Cru	red	92
2008	Richebourg Grand Cru	red	93
2008	} Vosne-Romanée	red	89
2008	Vosne-Romanée “1er”	red	89
2008	Vosne-Romanée “Chaumes” 1er	red	90

Bernard Gros calls 2009 a “very, very good vintage. Mother Nature spoiled us with very ripe and impeccably clean fruit. I began picking on the 10th of September and brought in a crop that averaged between 13 and 14% potential alcohols. With the clones that my vineyards were planted with in the 1980s, they ripen almost one week earlier than traditionally planted vineyards. I concentrated many of the wines about 5%. Otherwise, the vinification was straightforward as everything was perfectly ripe. I think 2009 is going to be a very popular vintage as there is nothing not to like.” As to the Gros in-bottle ‘08s, they have turned out about where my predicted ranges suggested that they would. (Atherton Wine Imports, www.awiwine.com, Atherton, CA; Metro Wine, NY and Stacole Wines, www.stacolewines.com, FL; no sanctioned UK importers).

2009 Bourgogne – Hautes Côtes de Nuits: A notably ripe yet still very fresh nose of both red and blue pinot fruit that leads to vibrant, intense and racy middle weight flavors that possess mineral undertones on the delicious and well-balanced finish. This is worth considering. (86-88)/2012+

2009 Vosne-Romanée: (from 4 separate parcels). Mild wood influence sets off the spicy blue and black fruit aromas trimmed in discreet earth nuances that continue onto the delicious, rich and fleshy medium-bodied flavors that possess notably ripe tannins on the dusty, long, balanced and mouth coating finish. (88-90)/2015+

2009 Vosne-Romanée “1er”: (this is declassified Echézeaux from vines located in Loächausses). Here the nose is quite similar to that of the *villages* except that it’s more overtly spiced. The medium-bodied flavors are very rich, indeed almost tender with a dusty and sappy mouth feel, all wrapped in a mildly oaked finish that is quite sweet. (88-91)/2016+

2009 Vosne-Romanée “Chaumes”: The wood treatment here is more completely integrated though by no means invisible on the kirsch, plum, anise and clove suffused nose. The rich and very generous medium-bodied flavors are seductively textured and quite sappy as they coat the palate on the naturally sweet and reasonably persistent finish. (89-91)/2016+

2009 Echézeaux: (from vines planted in 1989 and 1995). Generous but not dominant wood fights a bit with the exceptionally spicy and fresh dark berry fruit and warm earth aromas that merge into full-bodied, powerful and solidly well concentrated flavors that brim with dry extract on the palate staining and impressively long finish. This is not an elegant wine but it is a well-balanced effort. (90-93)/2017+

2009 Clos de Vougeot “Musigni”: (from a 1.5 ha parcel that was replanted sequentially - 1985, 1988 and 1989; the wine carries the qualifier of Musigni because it comes from a parcel of vines at the top of Clos de Vougeot, directly across from the vineyard of Musigny). Here the less obviously oaked nose runs more toward the red side of the fruit spectrum before merging into rich and seductively textured broad-shouldered flavors that are also blessed with ample amounts of dry extract that renders the supporting tannins almost invisible on the detailed, youthfully austere and solidly persistent finish. (91-93)/2019+

2009 Grands Echézeaux: (from a .3 ha parcel replanted in 1985). A relatively similar if slightly spicier nose leads to concentrated and quite serious overtly muscular medium-weight plus flavors that are shaped by a subtle touch of minerality as

well as the dense but relatively fine tannins, all wrapped in a finish of outstanding length. Indeed, the length and firmer tannins are about the only aspects separating this from the Clos de Vougeot. (91-94)/2021+

2009 Richebourg: (from a .7 ha parcel that was partially replanted in 1985 and the remainder in 1989). A restrained but elegant nose of red currant, plum, blue berry and hoisin is trimmed in a relatively curtailed application of oak. The equally reserved but powerful and big-bodied flavors brim with dry extract that renders the dense tannins less obvious than they would otherwise be on the firm and hugely long finish. This is a big but classy effort that should require around 15 years to arrive at its full majority. (92-94)/2024+

Note that the Gros Frère '08s were bottled in February 2010.

2008 Bourgogne – Hautes Côtes de Nuits: A fresh and relatively high-toned red berry fruit suffused nose that also evidences hints of violets introduces relatively racy and detailed light to barely middle weight flavors, all wrapped in a round, clean and dry finish (in the best sense) that possesses good volume. This isn't elegant but it is satisfying. 85/2011+

2008 Vosne-Romanée: (from 4 separate parcels). A classic Vosne nose consists of very spicy and fresh red and blue berry fruit that possesses good ripeness levels, at least in the context of the '08 vintage, and this sense of high maturity also can be found on the velvety, concentrated and suave flavors that possess enough acid support that the finish avoids any sense of heaviness. I very much like the complexity here and this is a fine *villages*. 89/2013+

2008 Vosne-Romanée “1er”: (this is declassified Echézeaux from vines located in Loächausses). A very ripe nose of red currant, plum, cassis and Vosne-style spice is couched in mild oak influence that can also be found on the very rich, round and suave medium-bodied flavors that are delicious and easy-to-like and culminate in a tangy and sappy finish. There is more here compared to the villages but it's not quite as well balanced. 89/2014+

2008 Vosne-Romanée “Chaumes”: This is a bit more aromatically elegant with brighter and slightly spicier ripe purple fruit that is trimmed in a deft touch of wood and leads to equally ripe, rich, sappy and very suave middle weight flavors that possess slightly better detail on the textured and nicely persistent if youthfully austere finish. This could actually be drunk now as there is good mid-palate fat and a seductive mid-palate impression though personally, I would prefer to wait a few years first. 90/2015+

2008 Echézeaux: (from vines planted in 1989 and 1995). This is also relatively wood-influenced as the oak sets off ripe but fresh aromas of plum, spice and earth, all of which continue onto the powerful and well-muscled middle weight plus-sized flavors that possess good mid-palate concentration as well as a bit more depth, freshness and overall persistence. This is quite pretty and fashioned in a very suave style. 91/2016+

2008 Clos de Vougeot “Musigni”: (from a 1.5 ha parcel that was replanted sequentially - 1985, 1988 and 1989; the wine carries the qualifier of Musigni because it comes from a parcel of vines at the top of Clos de Vougeot, directly across from the vineyard of Musigny). Here the wood is better integrated, allowing free reign to the violet, plum, cassis and discreet wood spice aromas to introduce extremely rich, round and mouth coating big-bodied flavors that display a subtle touch of minerality on the lingering, mouth coating and youthfully austere finish. The structure is buried by all of the sap and as such, this appears more approachable than it will be once the baby fat melts away. 92/2018+

2008 Grands Echézeaux: (from a .3 ha parcel replanted in 1985). This also displays reasonably well-integrated wood treat which allows for a reasonably clear expression of the ripe and spicy black cherry and currant aromas that introduce the more precise but equally rich broad-shouldered flavors that finish with both verve and a subtle touch of minerality. I like the sense of harmony here and while this is not as complex as one might like at present, it should develop more in time. 92/2020+

2008 Richebourg: (from a .7 ha parcel that was partially replanted in 1985 and the remainder in 1989). The most elegant nose in the range displays almost invisible wood and superbly complex blue and black pinot fruit liberally laced with notes of hoisin, soy, clove and anise, all of which also appear on the suave, round and opulent well-muscled flavors that are extremely seductive, even velvety on the mouth coating, focused, linear and palate staining finish. The tannins are not as refined as the nose is but overall, this appears to offer excellent potential in a more forward though age-worthy style. 93/2023+