



## **Handford Wines Burgundy En Primeur 2012**

**James Handford MW and Greg Sherwood MW - January 2014**

### **Jean Chauvenet, Nuits-Saint-Georges**

Jean's cellars are just off the main road. Fork right as you go north out of town and you will be treated to what are fast becoming the best range in the village. Vineyard holdings are relatively large here but in Boussselots, Vaucraains and Perrieres, Jean has some of the finest 1er Cru vineyards in the Cotes de Nuits. Truly outstanding in recent years such as 2006, 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011. Son in law Christophe Drag is one of the biggest movers in quality terms. He harvests into very small crates and so cleaner and less damaged fruit can be moved directly into the fermentation vats without the need of auger or pump. There is always some pretty rich colour and extract here so I asked Christophe why. He believes he does nothing particularly different but hopes that his experience will show that slightly longer and cooler macerations are beneficial. He explained 'tapotage', used a little more in 2010 and 2011; pigeage, or pushing down the cap of fermenting must to rotate it and to allow gaseous exchange, risks extracting harder tannins. In 2012 there was minimal pigeage but tapotage, tapping the must rather than pushing it right down, keeps the fermentation smooth whilst avoiding over-extraction. Wines are not filtered and rarely fined here; Christophe adds a small amount of pectic enzyme that allows for natural settling prior to the final racking from barrel. Stunning range and the Vaucraains is world beater.

### **Bourgogne Pinot Noir 2012**

Largely from the very carefully tended vines around Jean Chauvenet's house on the northern edge of the village. Deep black red in colour and with depth to match on the palate. A little tight now this is a chunky red, much in the style of Nuits St Georges. 2014 to 2017

### **Nuits-Saint-Georges 2012**

Firm and chunky tannins balance layers of juicy, black cherry and berry fruit. These build nicely on the palate and there's a hint of nutmeg and liquorice too. There are stricter tannins here but once again it is purity and freshness of fruit that dominates the length. A classic Christmas dinner (or Thanksgiving!) red. 2017 to 2020

### **Nuits-Saint-Georges 1er Cru Aux Argillas 2012**

A south facing vineyard and so hasn't suffered the heat stress that some of the eastern facing vineyards have. It does have a warming feel to it with notes of dried fig and raisin, along side a bowl of fresh red fruits. 2017 to 2024.

### **Nuits-Saint-Georges 1er Cru Les Bouscelots 2012**

Just around the corner from Argillas, this vineyard did suffer a little from overheating. Vines tend to shut down and skins can develop harsher characters. So plenty of care here, and a very much reduced yield, to retain clear fruit characters, supple tannins and fresh acidity. There is a creamy finish to the wine as in vintages like 2002 and 2009. 2019 to 2025.

### **Nuits-Saint-Georges 1er Cru Les Damodes 2012**

One of the best known vineyards and deservedly so. These vines were planted by the young Jean Chauvenet and his father in 1953 and 1954. There's been reduction on this on both occasions, often a sign of plenty of guts and ageing potential. There is a plentiful core of ripe black fruits but the palate is dominated by chunky tannins and savoury characters. A real pile driver and one for the cellar, it is reminiscent of great years gone by, like 2005. 2020 to 2026

### **Nuits-Saint-Georges 1er Cru Rue de Chaux 2012**

Moving south of town these wines tend to be a little denser and slightly softer. There are only 2 barrels of this one (normally 4 or 5). What a change from Damodes! Much more in the style of Vosne Romanee, this flouts more feminine and delicate red cherry and raspberry juice fruits. The tannins are silky and elegant and, along with soft and chalky acids, they do keep the lid on much of the life of the wine for the moment. There are hallmarks of true greatness about the Rue de Chaux. 2019 to 2025

### **Nuits-Saint-Georges 1er Cru Les Perrieres 2012**

The final two need little introduction; they are two of the greatest 1er Cru in Burgundy. Again quite different, this emphasizes the more abrasive, stones and mineral aspect of Nuits. Plenty of spice, vanilla and great complexity of black fruits, crusty pastry and some nuts. Super expression without stretching the bounds of concentration and extraction beyond the natural limit that Pinot and its great terroirs determine. 2021 to 2028

### **Nuits-Saint-Georges 1er Cru Les Vaucrains 2012**

This should surely be considered for Grand Cru status; the politics though are that there are just a handful of local owners in les Saint Georges, including the Hospices, but, at neighbouring Vaucrains, there are 22, and those owners are more dispersed throughout the region. Christophe has 42 ares that produce a fairly healthy 8 barrels. The wine itself is truly exceptional and the closest 1er Cru to 100 points for me. The style is something in between the Rue de Chaux and the Perrieres; the concentration is a fair bit greater. Extraordinary length that rounds off a range of 1er Crus worthy of the greatest vintages here in the Cotes de Nuits. 2023 to 2034.