

Handford Wines Burgundy En Primeur 2011.

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Georges Lignier, Morey Saint Denis

I met Georges at a village tasting in 1994. His 1993 Bonnes Mares was the best of his extensive range and the star of the day. In good vintages, the Grand Crus are among the best in the region. Fermentation is allowed to run naturally resulting in high extract of both colour and flavour. Georges matures his best reds in 50% new oak. Situated in the heart of the Cote de Nuits, in Morey-Saint-Denis, the house of the Domaine Georges Lignier remains traditional in its conception. Georges works there with his wife, Elizabeth and nephew, Benoit, when they're not out in one of the 100 parcels making up 15 hectares of vines. Benoit says the 2011s are as close to 'normal' in quantity, and, he hopes, quality, as he has seen the decade or so he has worked the vines. The flagship Clos des Ormes is excellent and very good value.

- Morey Saint Denis 2011 £199.00

Supple, bright mid red in colour. Supple strawberry vanilla nose with hints of cinnamon. This is very easy on the palate; no hard edges, all ripe and pure fruit that persists well. 2014 to 2017

- Gevrey Chambertin 2011 £260.00

There is super complexity on the village Gevrey in 2011; crushed raspberry, cranberry, citrus zest, bright acids with an almost minty cool finish. Pure and fine on the finish. Mouth watering. 2014 to 2019.

- Chambolle Musigny 2011 £295.00

Thin, chalky soils result in a more austere style but with massive depth. On both tastings in 2012 this has shown a little reduction, often a sign of greater things to come. Indeed I have often found this to taste more Morey or Gevrey than Chambolle in infancy. There is a focus of riper red, if not blackberry on the nose. The ingredients of greatness are all there. 2016 to 2021

- Morey Saint Denis 1er Cru Clos des Ormes 2011 £299.00

Though one of the larger 1er Cru, this is wonderfully situated on the road out of Gevrey, immediately to the north of the great Grand Crus. Bright with a soft, strawberry compote nose and a touch of herbs. Well honed acids frame those fine red fruits that flit across the tongue. With great tension, finesse and balance this is perhaps the finest Clos des Ormes of recent years. 2016 to 2024.

- Gevrey Chambertin 1er Cru les Combottes 2011 £499.00

Sandwiched between Grand Crus, this always shows an extraordinary fullness and depth, often the result of smaller berry size and so lower yields. Deeper in colour and with ripe, strawberry, black cherry and vanilla cream. There is good density and a pliable texture that persists, along with brooding, darker fruits. 2018 to 2026

- Clos Saint Denis 2011 £299.00 (6)

Being exposed to the drying north winds fruit is often more delicate, but always clean and with mineral notes. So, like the Morey villages, this is more delicate red/plum in colour but star bright. Pure, vibrant fruits and with just the right density, a great character of the 2011s. Refreshing raspberry and redcurrant that build on the palate. There's a hint of milky chocolate on the finish too. Truly exceptional length and elegance. 2021 to 2032

- Clos de la Roche 2011 £380.00 (6)

Perhaps more restrained in its youth than 2009 and 2010, but possibly more complex too. Spiced cherry, pastry, cocoa and slatey minerals with a massive hit of fruit on the mid palate. This is hemmed in by the firm structure now but nuances of forest fruits and truffle on the finish, as well as that underlying concentration, are not so subtle pointers to a grand wine in the offing. 2022 to 2033.

- Bonnes Mares 2011 £475.00 (6)

A little under one third of a hectare producing 5 barrels (1500 bottles). Deeper in colour and with an immediate nose of raspberry roulade, white chocolate, a dusting of icing sweetness as well as dollop of cream. For the moment, the Bonnes Mares offers purity and ripeness over density. I'm sure there will be a wilder side to come. There are lovely, silky tannins to keep this for a few years yet. 2025 to 2040.