

Handford Wines Burgundy En Primeur 2011

James Handford MW and Greg Sherwood MW

Philippe Cheron, Nuits-Saint-Georges

New. Philippe Cheron has recently lost his long time management role at Domaine Belland following the sale of the business. He must have been pretty chuffed to learn that his grandfather, Paul Misset, purchased vineyard land in Clos Vougeot, Vosne Romanee and Chambolle Musigny in the 1930s and 1950s and the long leases had finally expired. We offered a few cases as Domaine Paul Misset last year but the 2011 vintage is registered as Domaine Philippe Cheron (this registration is done per harvest and not per bottling). There are 1.4 hectares in Clos Vougeot, split 50/50 between the high and low part; a stunning lieu dit above Richebourg in Vosne and 12 tiny parcels in Chambolle. With gentle handling, only a little de-stemming, cool settling and no fining and rarely any filtration, Philippe is going for a simple and natural style.

Chambolle-Musigny 2011

There is one significant holding in 'les Condemannes', immediately below les Charmes. The rest is tiny parcels both above and below the 1er Cru strip. I first tasted the 2011 as two separate wines; one from the best bit of 'les Condemannes', the other from the remaining parcels. Strangely, the latter has come out better, possibly down to older vines that have been quicker to respond to Philippe's new pruning regime. So these formed a larger than expected part of the final blend which has great colour and extract, almost black at the core. Though timid on the nose there is a great combination of power and soft texture on the palate. Pure, Pinot of great character; bright and chunky fruits to start and softer, white chocolate and fine raspberry to finish. Elegant indeed. 2016 to 2020.

Vosne Romanee 'les Barreaux' 2011

Perhaps the most exciting wine of the range as the vines are immediately above Richebourg. As in Richebourg, the vines are planted directly into the rocks as there is little or no top soil. Immediate freshness and elegance with a backdrop of chewy, red cherry fruits. Quite a positive and primary fruit style now (possibly a result of the cool maceration and minimal handling), but there are hints of spicy richness to come. It's rare to taste such an impressive village wine. 2017 to 2025

Clos Vougeot 2011

Unusually for the vintage there's a certain austerity that is often a marker of great potential. There's a very solid middle to this; though it's a sweet spot that needs knocking in a bit. And I found a nice wild side, smoked cheese, wild herb, with complexity growing on the finish. Last year I wrote 'dense, brooding, and almost sinister'. I am intrigued. M Cheron is a straightforward wine man riding a very dark horse. 2021 to 2030