

Value red Burgundy

You can easily spend a small fortune on a bottle of Côte d'Or Pinot Noir if you so desire – but you don't have to. Tim Atkin MW was impressed with the quality of these 32 best buys

TO LISTEN TO some people, good value red Burgundy is an oxymoron, right up there with friendly fire, jumbo shrimps and Hell's Angels. It all depends on what you mean by value, of course. If you're in search of a £5.99 bottle of Gevrey-Chambertin – the unicorn of the wine world – you are almost certain to be disappointed. But that doesn't mean that all Burgundy is second mortgage material.

The very top wines are indeed expensive, stratospherically so in some cases, but Burgundy also offers lots of reds that are comparatively affordable. Only 1% of what it produces, both red and white, is sold as grand cru, with a further 10.5% of premier cru. This leaves a lot of wiggle room for other wines. We looked for wines available at £25 a bottle or less, to see what the region could offer.

Burgundy is predominantly a white wine area, so there's less red to go round (28% by volume if you include a little bit of rosé). Most of this is made from Pinot Noir, of course, but don't forget that Burgundy grows some Gamay too, despite the grape's banishment by Philip the Bold in 1395. Gamay doesn't just pop up in generic appellations such as Coteaux Bourguignons and Bourgogne Passe-tout-grains, but also in the Mâconnais, especially the closer you get to the Beaujolais. As interest in cru Beaujolais has grown, so people are beginning to look at Gamays from southern Burgundy too.

But what about Pinot Noir? Any joy there? Yes, indeed. Drinking basic red Burgundy is much less of a risk than it used to be. There are several reasons for this: climate change (and generally earlier harvests); a run of good to very good vintages (the last awful crop was 2004); the widespread use of sorting tables,



Tim Atkin MW is a widely published and awarded wine writer, photographer, judge and communicator. Among other honours, he is a member of the Confrérie des Chevaliers du Tastevin in Burgundy

even for basic wines; and increased competition. Plenty of top producers make excellent Bourgogne Rouge, as well as their swankier wines.

Nor is the Côte d'Or completely off limits. Chorey-lès-Beaune, Fixin, Maranges, Marsannay, Santenay and Savigny-lès-Beaune are all capable of producing wines that won't assault your credit card. Further south, the Côte Chalonnaise provides even richer pickings in the Pinot Noir-focused appellation of Givry and Mercurey, as well as in more Chardonnay-dominated Rully. Reds from here stack up extremely well, not just against Côte d'Or wines, but against those from the more celebrated Pinot-producing countries of the New World, such as Australia, Chile, New Zealand and South Africa.

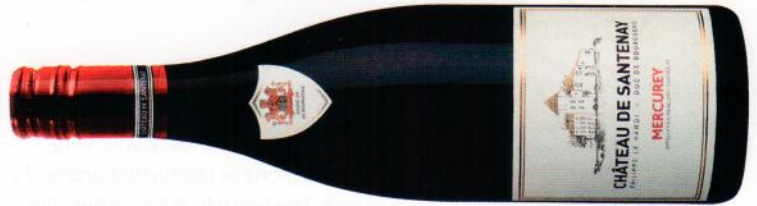
And yet for all that, any red Burgundy drinker looking for a bargain will generally find him or herself drinking generic or regional wines. The rules that apply to buying grander wines from the region apply here too. Choose your producer with care and know a little bit about vintages. The best growers and négociants (the latter often have extensive vineyards too) consistently produce good wines. And the warmer and drier the year, the more you can put a foot on the lower rungs of Burgundy's quality ladder. This tasting proves that, jumbo shrimps be damned, the region can indeed provide value for money.

'Plenty of top producers make excellent Bourgogne Rouge, as well as their swankier wines'

Château de Santenay, Vieilles Vignes, Mercurey 2016 94

£22.50-£25.99 **Exel, Liberty Wines**

Serious, dense, youthful and focused with deftly integrated oak. Needs time but this is a very impressive red Burgundy at the price, with the concentration that often comes from old vines. Subtle reduction, good palate length and layers of fruit. Great Burgundy for those of us on a budget. **Drink** 2019-2025 **Alcohol** 13%



Dominique Gruhier, Domaine de l'Abbaye, Bourgogne Epineuil 2015 94

£19.14-£22.95 **Domaine Direct, Richard Kihl, Slurp**

Fresh, spicy, savoury with some oak, showing sweet cranberry and raspberry flavours and the restraint and cool elegance of northern Burgundy. Complex and well balanced, with fine tannins, tangy acidity and lovely nuance. A Pinot that refreshes and caresses the palate at the same time. **Drink** 2018-2025 **Alc** 13%



Domaine Besson, Le Haut Colombier, Givry 2016 93

£21.95 **Jeroboams**

Impressive, sappy and alluringly perfumed with plenty of summer pudding fruit, notes of rose petal and violet and subtle vanilla oak. The tannins are very fine here, complemented by chalky minerality. Textured, youthful and long on the palate, this would reward cellaring. **Drink** 2019-2025 **Alc** 13%



Albert Bichot, Secret de Famille, Bourgogne 2016 92

£13.29 **Soho Wine Supply**

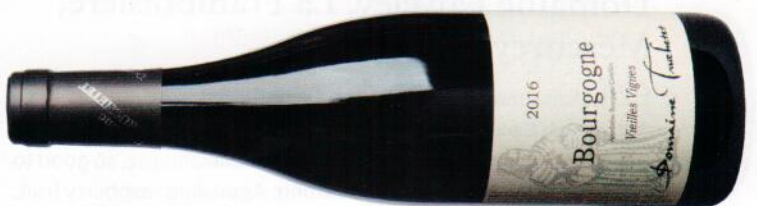
Scented, lily-perfumed Pinot that's appealingly light and ethereal on the nose and palate. It's the fruit purity that impresses here, highlighting the transparency of red Burgundy at its most appealing. The vanilla spice is just a whisper in the background, adding a layer of complexity. **Drink** 2018-2023 **Alc** 12.5%



Domaine Truchetet, Vieilles Vignes, Bourgogne 2016 92

£18.50 **Private Cellar**

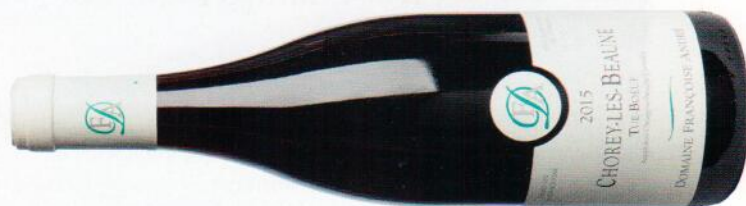
From the wilder shores of Burgundian Pinot Noir, showing a savoury bite, this needs more time in bottle to shed a little bit of what I call 'good' reduction. Intense raspberry and pomegranate fruit flavours segue into a palate that's bright and crunchy, with understated filigree tannins. **Drink** 2018-2023 **Alc** 13% ➤



Domaine Françoise André, Tue-Boeuf, Chorey-lès-Beaune 2015 90

£24.35 Christopher Piper

Showing more grip and firmness than many Chorey wines, even in their youth, this is a comparatively dense Pinot Noir that will reward cellaring. A little firm right now, but this has impressive structure, layers of plum and black cherry fruit and a note of subtle reduction. **Drink** 2018-2023 **Alc** 13%



Domaine Monterrains, Mâcon-Serrières 2015 90

£12.55-£13.99 Exel, Hallgarten, Strictly Wine, Wine Direct, Wine Poole

Don't forget about Gamay outside the Beaujolais, as it can be equally delicious in the Mâconnais. This is a case in point, showing scented spices and summer pudding aromas, a core of juicy, lip-smacking fruit, a nip of tannin and bright minerality. A mini Beaujolais cru. **Drink** 2018-2023 **Alc** 13%



Domaine Pierre Labet, Vieilles Vignes, Bourgogne 2014 90

£22.95 Corney & Barrow

Can you taste old vines? Sometimes you can. This has very good concentration for a generic red Burgundy, with noteworthy intensity of aromas and flavours. Savoury and slightly feral, with alluring sweetness, nuanced oak and underlying complexity that emerges slowly on the palate. **Drink** 2018-2021 **Alc** 13%



Henri Gouges, Bourgogne 2015 90

£24 Laithwaite's

Even at the generic level, Gouges wines are not made for immediate appeal or pleasure. This is built to evolve in bottle, with an undertone of meaty reduction that complements the bright, tangy, floral fruit flavours and underlying minerality. A chip off the larger block. **Drink** 2018-2021 **Alc** 12.5%



Jaffelin, Rully 2016 90

£21.95 Hennings

Rully is an appellation that produces under-appreciated reds, such is the dominance of Chardonnay in its vineyards. But this is very smart: delicate, gentle and nuanced, a wine that talks quietly rather than shouts. Fine tannins, aromatic oak and a lovely core of summer pudding fruit. **Drink** 2018-2023 **Alc** 13%

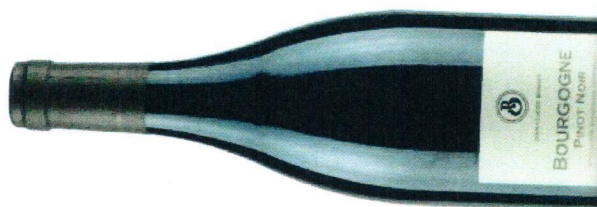


BEST BUY RED BURGUNDY

Jean-Claude Boisset, Les Ursulines, Bourgogne 2016 90

£18.05-£19.99 Exel, Liberty Wines, Symposium Wine Emporium, The Guildford Wine Co, Tivoli Wines

Another noteworthy showing from a large négociant house, this generic red is perfumed and alluring with nice bramble and tobacco pouch notes, plenty of juicy, crunchy red fruits and a faintly gamey undertone that adds to the complexity. **Drink** 2018-2021 **Alc** 12.5%



René Lequin-Colin, Santenay 1er Cru La Comme 2015 90

£21.95 Stone Vine & Sun, Top Selection

Santenay is one of the few villages in the Côte d'Or that can make premier cru wines at an approachable price. This wine underlines the point. It's still comparatively youthful, showing primary fruit flavours and a touch of reduction, but give it time to flower in bottle. Savoury, sappy and well defined. **Drink** 2019-2023 **Alc** 13.5%

Vignerons de Mancey, Les Cadoles, Mâcon-Mancey 2016 90

£15 New Generation

An intensely coloured Gamay that wouldn't look out of place in a line-up of Morgons or Moulin-à-Vents, showing aromas of clove and pepper spice, refreshing, thirst-quenching acidity, bramble and black cherry fruit and a long, tapering finish. Beaujolais, watch out! **Drink** 2018-2023 **Alc** 12.5%



Vignerons de Mancey, Les Essentielles, Bourgogne 2016 90

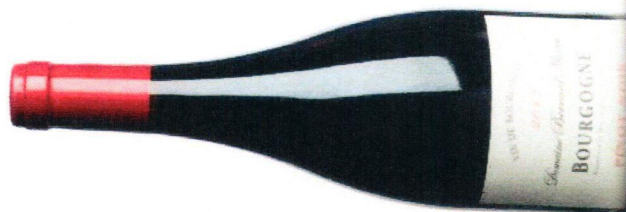
£19.50 New Generation

One of three wines selected from an up-and-coming cooperative in the Mâconnais, this is another wine that outperformed its lowly appellation and origin. Floral, savoury and comparatively light, with the faintest whisper of oak, tangy summer berry fruit and a nip of tannin providing some structure. **Drink** 2019-2024 **Alc** 12.5%

Domaine Bernard Moreau, Bourgogne 2017 89

£18 Stannary St Wine Co, Whole Foods Market

Pale in colour, but that's no bad thing with Pinot Noir. Spicy and aromatic, with a hint of Turkish Delight on the nose. Juicy, floral and appealing with heady wild strawberry flavours and supporting acidity. **Drink** 2018-2023 **Alc** 12.5%



BEST BUY RED BURGUNDY

Domaine Chapuis, Bourgogne 2016 89

£17.75 **New Generation**

Developed nose and colour, but the palate is juicy and fresh with good minerality and crunchy pomegranate and redcurrant fruit. **Drink** 2018-2021 **Alc** 12.5%



Domaine Chofflet-Valdenaire, Cuvée Jean Chofflet, Givry 2016 89

£24 **New Generation**

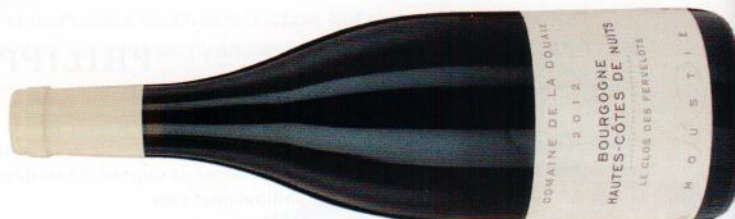
Complex, savoury and slightly meaty nose, with fresh acidity and some appealing fruit sweetness. Good length and focus with the ability to age. **Drink** 2019-2023 **Alc** 13%



Domaine de la Douaix, Le Clos des Fervelots, Bourgogne Hautes-Côtes de Nuits 2012 89

£23.50 **Lea & Sandeman**

Fresh, sappy, higher altitude style with minerality, zip and acidity. Light, tangy and fresh. **Drink** 2018-2021 **Alc** 12.5%



Domaine Dupré, Bourgogne 2016 89

£17 **New Generation**

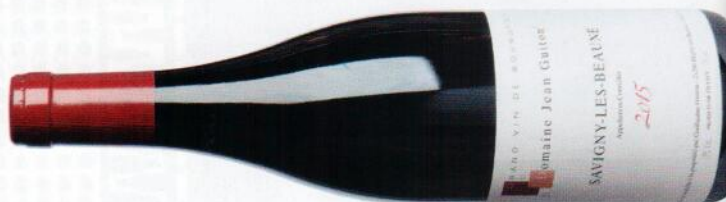
Spicy, fresh and stony on the nose and palate, showing bright, aromatic, summer pudding flavours framed by acidity. Peppery finish. **Drink** 2018-2022 **Alc** 12.5%



Domaine Jean Guiteau, Savigny-lès-Beaune 2015 89

£24.50 **Stannary St Wine Co, Stone Vine & Sun**

Fresh, sappy, aromatic and floral. Slightly bitter, oaky finish, but savoury and complex with good underlying concentration. **Drink** 2019-2023 **Alc** 12.5%



Domaine Michel Juillot, Les Vignes de Maillonge, Mercurey 2016 89

£24.95 **Jeroboams**

Vigorous and firm with some extraction. Good fruit focus, aromatic with some reduction. Just slightly lacks fruit sweetness. **Drink** 2019-2024 **Alc** 12.5% ➤



BEST BUY RED BURGUNDY

Domaine Pierre Laurent, Bourgogne Hautes-Côtes de Nuits 2017 89

£21.25 **New Generation**

Fresh, tangy, Hautes-Côtes style wine with some oak influence. Light and refreshing, and taut on the finish. Juicy and floral.

Drink 2018-2022 **Alc** 12.5%



Domaine Thenard, Givry 1er Cru Les Bois Chevaux 2013 89

£24.99 **Top Selection**

Light, fruity, pleasant and attractive. Sweet and well made, this is floral and focused with good acidity and some grip.

Drink 2018-2023 **Alc** 13%

Françoise & Denis Clair, Bourgogne Hautes-Côtes de Beaune 2015 89

£16.95 **Stone Vine & Sun**

Sweet oak, tangy and attractive, with some fruit sweetness.

Pleasant, if light. Subtle reduction. **Drink** 2018-2023 **Alc** 13%



Girardin Père et Fils, Vieilles Vignes, St-Romain 2015 89

£23.49 **Waitrose**

Light, floral, well balanced, aromatic, juicy, reductive and fresh.

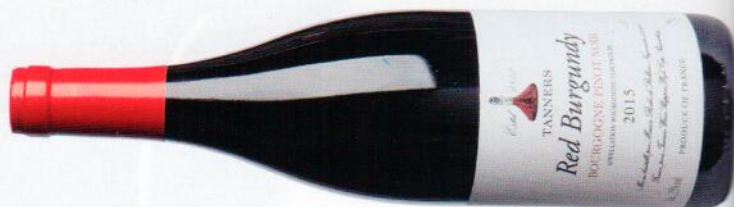
Lighter style. **Drink** 2018-2022 **Alc** 13%

Maison Roche de Bellene, Tanners Red Burgundy, Bourgogne 2015 89

£15.30 **Tanners**

Savoury, chalky notes on the nose. Some reduction, possibly a little too much. But this is young, serious and framed by oak. Needs time.

Drink 2019-2023 **Alc** 13%



Vignerons de Mancey, Les Essentielles, Mâcon-Mancey 2016 89

£16.50 **New Generation**

Dark, plush colour. Pepper and clove spice, suggesting some whole-bunch fermentation, with blackcurrant leaf and red plum flavours and a firm finish.

Drink 2018-2023 **Alc** 12.5% **D**