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The ultimate Burgundy reference

DOMAINE BITOUZET-PRIEUR (VOLNAY)

- 2017 Volnay "Les Aussy" 1er red 89**
- 2017 Volnay "Les Caillerets" 1er red 92**
- 2017 Volnay "Clos des Chênes" 1er red 93**
- 2017 Volnay "Les Mitans" 1er red 91**
- 2017 Volnay "Les Pitures" 1er red 91**
- 2017 Volnay "Les Taillepieds" 1er red 90**

When I tasted the Bitouzet 2017s in February I found aromas that resembled barnyard and/or brett-like aromas primarily in the unbottled wines. François Bitouzet was kind enough to invite me to retaste the now bottled reds and I'm glad that he did because they basically all showed markedly better. Such is the difficulties sometimes in tasting wines that have not completely finished their *élevage* because it's impossible to know whether they're just going through a phase. (Rosenthal Wine Merchant, www.madrose.com, NY, USA; Berry Brothers & Rudd, www.bbr.com, UK; SAQ, www.saq.com, Canada; Jebesen Beverage Co., www.jebesen.com, China/Hong Kong, Grand Millésime Wine, www.grandmillesime.com.au, Australia).

2017 Volnay "Les Aussy": A pretty and moderately deeply pitched nose of various red berries, plum, violet and spice slides into attractively energetic, detailed and mineral-inflected flavors that terminate in a firm and youthfully austere finale. This ever-so-mildly warm effort is sufficiently firm that it will require at least a few years of cellaring first. 89/2025+

2017 Volnay "Les Mitans": (from Mitans proper). A background whiff of reduction can be found on the otherwise fresh and airy red and dark cherry-scented nose. The finer medium-bodied flavors exude evident minerality that carries over to the well-detailed and firm yet seductively refined finish. This isn't quite as rich as the Les Aussy but it's *lacier* and flashes a bit more minerality as well. Worth checking out. 91/2027+

2017 Volnay "Les Taillepieds": More restrained though attractively perfumed aromas feature primarily notes of poached plum and violet along with hints of spice and mineral reduction. The sleeker if not finer middle weight flavors are even more mineral-driven and agreeably energetic, all wrapped in a youthfully austere, firm and ever-so-mildly drying finale. My sense is that the dryness will progressively dissipate as the tannic spine resolves. 90/2029+

2017 Volnay "Les Caillerets": Like the Mitans, there is enough reduction present to push the spicy dark berry fruit and soft wood nuances to the background and I would suggest a thorough aeration if you're tempted to crack a bottle young. The supple and delicious if slightly less mineral-driven medium-bodied flavors possess a sleek mouth feel before concluding in a dusty, sappy and youthfully austere finale that is lovely if not quite as tightly wound. 92/2027+ **Burghound.com October 2019** 16 2

2017 Volnay "Clos des Chênes": A restrained though very spicy nose combines notes of violet, raspberry and cherry with those of earth and a hint of underbrush. There is a sophisticated mid-palate mouth feel to the broad-shouldered flavors that display excellent power and plenty of salinity on the impressively long finish where the only nit is a hint of warmth. As classic examples of Clos des Chênes always are, this is very much ageworthy and a wine that's going to need it. In a word, excellent. 93/2029+

2017 Volnay "Les Pitures": (from 35+ year old vines). A relatively high-toned nose flashes notes of various red berries, rose petal and earth hints though once again there is a background touch of reduction that should dissipate with age. The mouth feel of the medium-bodied and muscular flavors is again nicely sleek with good detail and power both present on the stony, long and balanced youthfully austere finale where a touch of wood appears. 91/2029+

DOMAINE DU MEIX-FOULOT (MERCUREY)

- 2017 Mercurey red 88**
- 2017 Mercurey "1er" red 89**
- 2017 Mercurey "Clos du Château de Montaigu" 1er red 89**
- 2017 Mercurey "Les Saumonts" 1er red 90**



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2017 Mercurey "Les Veleys" 1er red 89

2017 Mercurey white 88

Agnes Dewé-de-Launay, who directs this 20 ha domaine, told me that 2017 "produced very charming reds that are built on their fruit. Thanks to the clement conditions we were able to pick slowly over 14 days and brought in clean and ripe fruit where the yields were reasonable but not high and certainly not as good as they were in 2018. The skins weren't particularly thick and the colors didn't come especially easily during the vinifications. As to the wines, they relatively easy-going and should be approachable young but should have no problem aging over the mid-term." The 2017 reds were bottled between December 2018 and March 2019 while the long white was bottled in August 2018. I would further note that the domaine prefers to present their bottled wines and that is why the 2018s are not reviewed. They will be covered next year. (Rosenthal Wine Merchant, www.madrose.com, NY, USA; Direct Wine, www.directwine.co.uk, New Generation Wines, all UK).

White:

2017 Mercurey: (with ~50% declassified 1er juice aged in 30% new wood). A mildly toasty nose possesses a whiff of the exotic on the petrol-suffused white peach, lychee and melon aromas. The nicely rich and textured medium weight flavors possess an opulent, indeed almost oily texture before concluding in an agreeably dry if mildly warm finale. 88/2020+ **Burghound.com October 2019**

Reds:

2017 Mercurey: (raised in 40% wood with the remainder in stainless). An airy and really quite pretty nose features notes of both red and dark pinot fruit that is trimmed in soft spice and earth wisps. The vibrant and delineated middle weight flavors possess reasonably good mid-palate density on the bitter fruit pit-inflected finish that flashes a touch of rusticity. 88/2023+

2017 Mercurey "1er": (from Barraults and Montaigu). A very fresh nose reflects slightly autumnal leaf nuances along with a whiff of underbrush on the mostly red berry fruit aromas. There is better volume to the slightly more voluminous flavors where the supporting tannins are a bit riper on the lightly stony finish if mildly drying finish. Due to the fact that the structure seems riper this may well successfully age out and my rating offers the benefit of the doubt. 89/2024+

2017 Mercurey "Les Saumonts": (the vineyard sits high on the slope and is the most northerly of all the Mercurey 1ers). Here too there an autumnal leaf character to the *sauvage*-inflected red currant and softly earth aromas. The sleeker and somewhat finer medium-bodied flavors possess good precision that also characterizes the mildly tangy yet persistent finish. This will need a few years to unwind but it should gradually mature into a satisfying effort. 90/2025+

2017 Mercurey "Les Veleys": A slightly fresher nose reveals notes of distinctly earthy and *sauvage*-inflected dark berry fruit aromas. There is both good vibrancy and density to the caressing medium weight flavors that exhibits reasonable persistence on the rustic and mildly short and edgy finish. Note that my rating offers the benefit of the doubt that the edginess will eventually dissipate as the tannins resolve. 89/2025+

2017 Mercurey "Clos du Château de Montaigu": An airy and quite pretty nose is comprised by notes of red cherry, currant and softly spiced wood. The sleek, punchy and delicious middle weight flavors terminate in a mildly edgy if persistent finale that also evidences traces of rusticity and dryness. Again, note that my rating offers the benefit of the doubt that as the tannins resolve the mild edginess should round out. 89/2025+

DOMAINE MICHEL BRIDAY (RULLY)

2017 Bouzeron - Cuvée Axelle white 87

2017 Rully white 87

NV Brut "Crémant de Bourgogne" sparkling 87

NV Brut "Crémant de Bourgogne Rosé" sparkling 85

(Vineyard Brands, www.vineyardbrands.com, AL and L'Esprit du Vin, www.esprit-du-vin.com, WA, both US).



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Whites:

2017 Bouzeron - Cuvée Axelle: A softly spiced apple, pear and citrus-suffused nose leads to agreeably textured medium weight flavors that possess reasonably good verve on the bitter lemon-inflected finale. This rich effort offers acceptable depth and persistence though there is noticeable backend warmth and it's enough to detract, if only mildly, from the overall sense of balance. 87/now

2017 Rully: Notes of petrol and matchstick dominate the nose at present though there are background wisps of citrus rind. There is fine richness and a notably finer mouth feel to the medium-bodied flavors that possess solid dry extract that imparts a sappy texture to the lingering if noticeably warm finish. I like the depth but this is definitively on the warmer side. 87/2020+**Burghound.com October 2019 87**

Sparkling:

NV Brut "Crémant de Bourgogne": A moderately fruity nose reveals just enough yeast and quinine elements to be interesting. The nicely vibrant is not particularly complex flavors are supported by a firm but not fine mousse on the ever-so-mildly sweet finale. This is better than its rosé counterpart but it's still not particularly distinguished. 87/now

NV Brut "Crémant de Bourgogne Rosé": Oeil de perdrix color. A fruity nose offers up notes of strawberry, cherry and raspberry that introduce moderately foamy flavors that terminate in a finish that is at once mildly sweet yet bitter and noticeably warm. This is drinkable but there are better versions On the market. 85/now