

Charles Curtis MW explores the history, producers and wines of an under-celebrated grand cru, which will more than reward any wine lover willing to take some time to understand it.

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Clos de la Roche. Credit: Album / Alamy Stock Photo

Clos de la Roche is the largest grand cru in the [Côte de Nuits'](#) Morey-St-Denis, producing sumptuous and ageworthy wines that easily last 50 years in the cellar.

Despite its enviable location and undisputed quality, Clos de la Roche sometimes lacks the star power of the grands crus of [Gevrey-Chambertin](#) to the north or [Chambolle-Musigny](#) to the south.

With more than 20 proprietors, Clos de la Roche doesn't have the cohesive, consistent image of Morey monopole [Clos de Tart](#), or near-monopole [Clos des Lambrays](#).

But for the astute wine lover who takes the time to understand this vineyard, there are some wonderful wines to discover.

Eight names to know, including : Domaine Georges Lignier



Domaine Georges Lignier is led today by Georges' nephew, Benoit Stehly, who farms a total of 16ha spread over 50 parcels, including 1ha of Clos de la Roche.

The vines here are scattered throughout the appellation, mainly in the lower part – Cabiots, Fremières and Mochamps – and a little in lieu-dit Clos de la Roche and Genavrières.

Stehly describes his winemaking as 'pure pumping over – the key is not in punching down; it is in the sorting table'.

The domaine picks earlier rather than later, 'more like Lambrays than Ponsot,' says Stehly, and likes a clean winemaking style, with limited use of whole clusters and a moderate ageing regime.

The results deliver lovely, perfumed floral fruit of considerable elegance.

[Domaine Georges Lignier, Clos de la Roche Grand Cru, Morey-St-Denis, Burgundy, France 2022](#)

The 2022 Clos de la Roche boasts rich, plummy fruit with hints of smoke and earth. The wine is full-bodied, with firm, grippy tannins, yet there is no trace of bitterness. Although the wine is still relatively closed, there is enough substance to draw it out on the palate to a lovely lingering finish. It should begin to open in five years and continue to develop beautifully for two decades or more.

Points : 94

[Domaine Georges Lignier, Clos de la Roche Grand Cru, Morey-St-Denis, Burgundy, France 2023](#)

A wine with moderate concentration and attractive aromas of ripe blackberry and plum, underscored with floral notes and a hint of earth. The texture is very silky and delicate, with medium weight and enough freshness to bring it into balance. This wine should be approachable early, yet will effortlessly age for a decade or more. Yields were generous, and this was 90% destemmed to make room in the tank.

Points : 93

[Domaine Georges Lignier, Clos de la Roche Grand Cru, Morey-St-Denis, Burgundy, France 2021](#)

Benoit Stehly turned out a lovely Clos de la Roche in the challenging 2021 vintage. The nose shows bright raspberry and pomegranate fruit with notes of violets and smoke. There is a bit of reduction that will fade with time. The texture is firmly tannic with bright acidity, drawing out the finish and giving the wine a classic Burgundian allure. Harvest began 20 September. This wine should open in two or three years and age well over the next decade.

Points : 93

