



# Handford

WINES



**Handford Wines Burgundy En Primeur 2017 Offer**

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# Burgundy 2017 Vintage Report

This is an attractive vintage with outstanding and sometimes age-worthy whites. Reds are fruit forward, fresh, easy on the eye and will give pleasurable drinking through the 2020s

The harsh frosts of April 2016 gave Burgundy a head start in 2017. With the disaster fresh in the minds of growers the milder frosts of 2017 were averted, largely by creating smoke blankets over the vineyards. The low yields of 2016 left plenty of pent up energy in the vines for a wonderful crop in 2017.

Flowering in May seems less exceptional than when I started in the 1980s. The growing season that followed was near perfect, just a little cooler and with some rain to refresh the soil in early August. There was the brief shock of a hail storm to the very south of the Cotes de Nuits that damaged one or two of the minor appellations. Millot's 'aux Faulques' suffered badly.

So an early harvest saw growers in the vineyard the minute they returned from holidays on 29<sup>th</sup> August. Whites came into the wineries in perfect order. Reds had to be managed a little more carefully as there were light rains across the region around both 15<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> September. The majority of these growers picked after the first rains had cleared and in reaction to the forecasted rains of 25<sup>th</sup>. There was a solid week or more of ideal conditions from 28<sup>th</sup> September: clear, sunny and with drying winds. The very few that left any fruit out offer something a bit different; try Nuits Saint Georges from Chauvenet, as one or 2 parcels were left until later, more by default than by design I fancy!

Whites are fabulous, some as good as in 2014. Reds are very much along the lines of 2002, 2007, 2012 and 2014. These are years that red Burgundy behaves as you would like it to: clear fruit driven Pinot Noir without idiosyncrasies that leaves you wondering why it costs more than the earth it is planted in, and whether it will be better this Easter or next, or indeed this week or next! Buy and drink for the joy of it.

## **How the Offer Works**

Prices are quoted per case of 6 (unless stated) in bond (i.e. duty free) at London City Bond. Wines may be stored by us or transferred in bond. Most wines will be shipped in the spring or autumn of 2018 for onward delivery. When you choose to receive wines the duty and V.A.T. on the total value (inc. duty) must be paid prior to delivery. (Duty is £13.41 per 6 bottles as from 1st February 2019)

Stocks of certain wines may need to be allocated subject to demand. In such case, we reserve the right to allocate the stocks amongst interested customers. Some customers may not therefore be allocated any or only some of the quantities they have ordered.

Transfer under bond and delivery to the UK mainland are free for deliveries over £500 (in bond value). Otherwise delivery charged at £20.00 per delivery/address. Wines may be collected from 105 Old Brompton Road. Storage with us at LCB is £0.96 per case per month inc. VAT. Due to the unique

nature of en-primeur sales we regret that orders cannot be cancelled unless delivery takes place within 30 days of the order.

Where possible I have included tasting notes to give an indication of style. More importantly Greg and I have tasted at least 10 wines for every wine chosen and most wines offered have been tried more than once during 2017. Drinking dates give an idea of when the wines will be ready. There are never fixed rules and wines should be enjoyed at as many stages of their life as possible. Village wines and generic Bourgogne should be tried, if not drunk in the early stages. In general we tend to be conservative on 'drink by' dates. Many of the 1er and Grand Crus from a great vintage like this will cellar for longer.

Given the very low availability orders will be confirmed by 19<sup>th</sup> January and invoiced for payment by return and by bank transfer or debit cards. We do not accept credit cards for en Primeur and in bond offers, or for duty payments.

**James Handford MW and Greg Sherwood MW**

# The Wines

## Frederic Esmonin, Gevrey Chambertin

These wonderful vineyards are still managed by Frederic's father, Andre, who was bottling quality reds here at les Estournelles long before the fashion for domaine bottled burgundy took off. The vines are managed not always with the aim of reducing yield to produce soupy concentration but to achieve a balance between expression and concentration: a good deal of finesse and some fat to the wines. Andre is, in his modest way, one of most knowledgeable of Nuits vigneron. He remembers details of vintages back to the 1950s and planted vines with his father in the 1940s. He is not a big fan of intervention, especially green harvesting, as he believes that 'more often than not, it is an attempt to correct mistakes that have been made in the pruning and longer term management of vineyards'.

Gevrey Chambertin Clos Prieur 2017

£315.00 (12)

This adjoins the 1er Cru vineyard of the same name, first planted by monks from the Abbey of Cluny. It's a great place to start in 2017 vintage as there seems more to it than recent years; a touch of bramble cream beneath the classic and lofty loganberry fruit that is the hallmark of Gevrey. With this smooth entry it drinks well young. 2019 to 2024

Gevrey Chambertin 1er Cru Estournelles Saint Jacques 2017

£595.00 (12)

One of the most classic of all red 1er Crus this is high up and beside the famous Clos St Jacques. Somewhat sandy and more friable soils spawns a more energized and spring water pure red. Again there is surprising substance to compliment the lively, frivolous, full fruit with raspberry leaf and white pepper. Plenty of youthful character. May be fun to have a bottle or two straight away but, for the most part, keep for 10 to 15 years. 2025 to 2032.

Ruchottes Chambertin Grand Cru 2017

£625.00

This is the wine that stood out all those years ago and so where our wonderful journey with Fred Esmonin began. They are the oldest vines of the domaine, and now over 60 years old. This seems to become more and more attractive as the years roll on. It's a pleasure to taste something so sophisticated and multifaceted in the company of a grower who seems to champion only the timeless techniques. 2026 to 2040.

## 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. George's nephew from Volnay, Benoit Stehly is usually found in one of the 100 parcels making up 16 hectares of vines. Along with Jean Marc Millot, Lignier has been earmarked by press and collectors as one to grab. There's a new cuvee of blended Morey 1er Cru in 2017.

Morey Saint Denis 2017

£130.00

Since the last offer we've been lucky enough to try some older versions and happy to report that they are a big success, especially at 3 to 6 years old (2012 and 2014 are particularly good now). There's an inviting mix of loganberry, strawberry and rhubarb with a hint of hops ... not a common descriptor in these, or any parts. Approachable and leaves you wanting more. Lovely. 2020 to 2024

Morey Saint Denis 1er Cru 2017

£165.00

A new addition in 2017 shows the poise and balance I would expect from a merger of 1er Cru vineyards. Raspberry and rhubarb crumble with in a delicate envelope of fine acid and ripe tannin. Superb. 2020 to 2025



*With Benoit Stehly*

Morey Saint Denis 1er Cru Clos des Ormes 2017 £215.00

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. This year's offering seems to be a good old fashioned, grainy tannined red with deep colour and flavours. Behind that structured facade are more ethereal, rose hip and cranberry fruits waiting to come to the fore. 2022 to 2029

Gevrey Chambertin 1er Cru les Combottes 2017 £345.00

Sandwiched between Grand Crus, this always shows an extraordinary fullness and depth, often the result of smaller berry size and so lower yields. It's a big, black monster of a wine and stands out in a vintage that seems more one of fineness and femininity. Black cherry and chocolate, redcurrant and tea leaf; unusual juxtapositions, but that's what this unique piece of land gives. A wine with a difference. 2024 to 2032

Clos Saint Denis 2017 £495.00

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. The 2017 was first into the winery; for the moment that has left it with a sappy and reductive attack that makes it tricky to taste from barrel. Underneath all that there are stacks of supple strawberry and raspberry fruit with a stripe of clean vanilla running through the glass. A great en Primeur wine that will need 4 or 5 years to flower. 2025 to 2033

Clos de la Roche 2017 £595.00

A small reduction in yield due to hail damage has focussed the concentration ripe plum and red berry. There are crunchy, firm acids and truck loads of that tension that so often seems to define a super premium, young wine these days. Hints of vanilla and sweet sandalwood on the finish. Very fine. 2023 to 2033.

Bonnes Mares 2017 £765.00

A little under one third of a hectare produces 4 barrels (1200 bottles). As well as the one new cask there is as much as 30% of whole bunch fermentation here; a small increase on a change that brought Benoit great success in the previous vintage. Very serious, with brooding red fruits and, though the iron rich soils have more in common with the softer Morey reds, there is classic, Gevrey style lift and energy. 2025 to 2035

## Christian Clerget, Vougeot

The first time I met Christian he was in a hurry to catch a plane to Nepal and climb the 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> highest peak in the world. In November he's found another mountain to summit, a bit closer to home I think. Fortunately his wife Isabelle and daughter Justine are equal parts of a wonderful family who strive to express what their vineyards offer. As Christian says, when he's there, 'don't try to cheat the vines'. These are very much in the elegant, feminine and silky style and 2017 is outstanding. Clerget is now a domaine of supreme quality.

Vosne Romanee 'les Violettes' 2017

£275.00

Aaaaah ... so cool and fresh with its lush and super ripe bramble fruit generosity and a touch of cream on the finish. Fit for a queen and impossible to resist, even before bottling! 2019 to 2026

Chambolle Musigny 2017

£250.00

What little of these wonderful Chambolles we could get in 2016 have possibly been trumped by the most elegant and energetic duo in 2017. The sheer length of flavour will bowl you over as layers of soft fruit, silky acid and tannin excite the palate. A super supple red with such feminine touch that daughter Justine must have had more than a small hand in this! 2019 to 2025

Chambolle Musigny 2017 1er Cru les Charmes

£375.00

As in 2016 there is just the perfect ripeness here, no mushy over-ripeness or harsh green character. A little more wild fruit and fine acid on a nervous start that explodes with ripe fruit and energy after a few seconds in the mouth. Charming. 2023 to 2030

Vougeot 1er Cru les Petits Vougeots 2017

£375.00

Although the Clergets have a little Echezeaux, this is the flagship wine. 5 generations have worked this land which is a stones throw from their house in the village. It lies just north east of the road that comes in from the Chateau du Clos Vougeot. There is more vigour and a savoury note to the 2017. It's a mammoth, mineral red but with underlying delicacy. Long and balanced, despite the contrasting forces at work here. 2025 to 2033

Echezeaux 2017

£595.00

There are 17 barrels in 2017; more than 5 of the past 6 vintages put together, so another allocation for us. This is a truly memorable and collectable red that sits with the very best in this vintage, or any other. 2028 to 2039



## Jean Chauvenet, Nuits Saint Georges

Jean's cellars are just off the main road. Fork right as you go north out of town and you will be treated to some of the best in town. Vineyard holdings are relatively large here but in Bousselets, Vaucrains and Perrieres; Jean has some of the finest 1er Cru vineyards in the Cotes de Nuits. Truly outstanding in recent years such as 2006, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2015 and 2016. Son in law Christophe Drag is one of the biggest movers in quality terms. He harvests into very small crates and so cleaner and less damaged fruit can be moved directly into the fermentation vats without the need of auger or pump. Almost all the fruit was de-stemmed and there is a cool pre-fermentation maceration for 5 to 6 days. There are two 1er Cru vineyards north of town and two south. As the village wine incorporates some of the 1er Cru and finer village vineyards it is a very good buy for drinking in 2 or 3 years. The 2016 is magical now.

Nuits Saint Georges 2017 £135.00

A great red for the medium term. We've been trying the 2016 which is delicious; fine now and for a few years yet. Fruit comes from 4 climats: Allots, Charmottes, St Jacques and St Julien. All but St Jacques are iron rich and with gravel or sand to give good drainage. The St Jacques is chalky and with mean soils. Bright and dense in appearance with just the perfect ripeness and balance of cranberry and rose petal. As well as such beauty, there is a certain fragility but plenty of richness on the finish. An outstanding village wine. 2020 to 2024

Nuits Saint Georges 1er Cru Aux Argillas 2017 £245.00

A south facing vineyard with rows planted east to west to reduce mid day sun burn. So there are weighty and chewy layers of red fruit with a touch of savoury too. More lifted, refined acids and silky tannin than in 2016, but equally inviting. 2024 to 2030.

Nuits Saint Georges 1er Cru les Damodes 2017 £275.00

From high up on the north side of the village the Damodes 2017, like Argillas, shows chiselled, red fruits with perky acidity and attractive aromatics. These two from north of the village are distinctive and desirable, the fingerprint of their vineyard qualities trumping the generic Nuits style. 2024 to 2031.

Nuits Saint Georges 1er Cru Aux Bousselets 2017 £275.00

Still north of the villages but sheltered, and a little lower down the hill. Soils are more clay and, in hot, dry summers, berries tend to be smaller and more concentrated. So here is something else very different; blacker, brooding fruits with a hint of coolness on the finish. 2025 to 2032.

Nuits Saint Georges 1er Cru les Perrieres 2017

£275.00

It's great to see the southern Nuits sites back on form after such devastating frosts in 2016. The super gentle maceration and pigeage reminds me of the delicacy of operations in places such as le Pin and Haut Brion. The result is the softest, most enticing of fruit compote balanced by the most breathtaking tension and energy. 2024 to 2024

Nuits Saint Georges 1er Cru Vaucrains 2017

£299.00

This should surely be considered for Grand Cru status; the politics though are that there are just a handful of local owners in les Saint Georges, including the Hospices, but, at neighbouring Vaucrains, there are 22, and those owners are more dispersed throughout the region. Christophe has 42 ares that produce a healthy 8 barrels. Despite very low yields the 2016 may prove to be the best Vaucrains ever; 2017 is not far behind with plenty of fruit layers, rich damson and jellied, black fruit compote. It's a little on the wild side with its myrtle and blueberry notes. Exceptional. 2026 to 2035

### **Jean Marc Millot, Nuits Saint Georges**

Jean Marc has been in charge of his family's small domaine for nearly two decades now. He has combined his experience with a relatively new chai at Nuits Saint Georges and is coming out with some very solid wines indeed. There is a tendency to pick a little later (though never the last for the Cotes de Nuits Villages), use careful selection and then vinify in the natural way. There is just a little new oak on the Grand Crus and the Suchots but the wines rely on a very natural feel and intensity of fruit. The Cotes de Nuits Villages has been a great value wine for some years. Jean Marc and Christine's second daughter, Alix is making her mark... this is her fifth vintage, she is now pretty much the boss, and the wines have now become highly prized.

Savigny les Beaune 2017

£199.00 (12)

This is from three plots of village Savigny. The majority is from Aux Fourches, next to 1er Cru Fourneaux on the Aloxe side; the rest is from the south facing and more generous soils of Les Gollardes and les Vermots to the west of the village. Jean Marc is clearly now ever more proud of this red. He enthuses over the whole process. The 2017 is pure, focussed and with croquant red fruits. As good as ever. 2019 to 2022.

Cotes de Nuits Villages 'Aux Faulques' 2017

£215.00 (12)

This is an old Clos within the rising vineyards at Comblanchien, at the southern tip of the Cotes de Nuits. With only two of the four walls remaining, and bureaucrats to feed, the word Clos is no longer allowed. So there are now two further plots, les Essarts and Cachottes in Premeaux Prissey and Comblanchien respectively. For the first time in 2017, only the better fruit is used for Faulques and there will be a junior version without the 'Faulques' moniker. Given this, and the nasty hail storm in the summer, there isn't much of this and so it will all sell en Primeur. A part of this is aged in cuve, as was the tradition for Vosne Romanee chez Engel. Super colour and sucrosity here; chewy and chunky to the point that you can eat it! Good for the medium term, too. 2020 to 2024.

Vosne Romanee 2017

£245.00

With only 4 barrels made, even in a decent vintage like this, it's tricky to maintain a fair consistency. This is where the measures that Alix has introduced at harvest come to the fore. The texture of this is remarkable, like stroking a rose petal. You can feel the care and love that has gone into ensuring that these few grapes have come back to the winery in the best of order. It will keep, but will be irresistible in the extra 2 to 3 years. 2020 to 2024.

Vosne Romanee 1er Cru Suchots 2017

£475.00

Between Echezeaux and Clos Vougeot, this is another of the great 1er Crus. The moniker Suchots holds many possibilities though it's likely to be named for tree stumps (souches) in what was a forested area. Soft spice, vanilla, deep raspberry juice notes but uplifting, jolly and with extraordinary length of flavours. Again, the texture is a thing of beauty. 2024 to 2029.

Clos Vougeot 2017

£675.00

The upper parts of the Clos were chosen as most suitable by the monks of the Abbey of Citeaux and first planted in 1098. Much of the area known as Grand Mapertui, where Jean-Marc's holding is situated, lies within this prestigious section. Again there is power, tannin and wonderful persistence in the middle palate. 2027 to 2043.

Echezeaux 2017

£695.00

Sandy soils in this part of Echezeaux allow free drainage. Still falling a little short of the quantity levels hoped for but no question of the quality. This is huge, peppery, savoury, gamey and with plenty of raspberry and vanilla too. Something in between the style of 2015 and 2016. Too early for an absolute judgement on these big monsters! 2026 to 2036

## **Philippe Cheron, Nuits Saint Georges**

Philippe Cheron lost his long time management role at Domaine Belland following the sale of the business. He must have been 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 leases had finally expired. 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, no fining and rarely any filtration, Philippe is going for a simple and natural style. It's wonderful to watch the development of a grower so determined to express wonderful fruit. He is now fully organic.

Vosne Romanee les Barreaux 2017

£235.00

This is the most heavenly situation. Just under the trees and looking down over Richebourg and Romanee Saint Vivant to the right and, to the left, over the great 1er Crus of Beaux Monts and Suchots towards Echezeaux and Clos Vougeot. There are only 3 growers to share a little over 3 hectares (one other being Anne Gros); quite a picnic spot! The wine feels homely, cuddly, warming but with plenty of Philippe's hallmark purity and clarity. 2020 to 2026.

Chambolle Musigny '40 Ouvrees' 2017

£235.00

A great comeback following the 2016 catastrophe that saw these Chambolle vineyards almost completely devastated by the April frost. This will need 3 or 4 years to develop its natural Chambolle charm. It oozes purity, tension and a clean, ripe fruit finish. 2022 to 2026

Chambolle Musigny 'Clos de l'Orme' 2017

£250.00

Bordering the 1er Cru les Charmes, this sits on a gentle, well drained slope, made up of a thick layer of limestone scree from the Chambolle valley. It's a dry and mean patch of land that yields a ripe but sturdy and gripping red. These edges do round off to mature into a perfectly formed Chambolle with a few years in the cellar. This has all the qualities of its neighbouring 1er Cru. 2024 to 2029.

## **Domaine Roche de Bellene, Beaune**

An exciting threesome here as the great, white Savigny bites back after last year's frost-out. There are some very old and well tended vines producing the Beaunes. Nicolas Potel gave up his organic certification in 2013 and more are following. Leaf minors that transmit virus can be destroyed by selective insecticides instead of the weaker, but non selective, 'flame thrower' solution that the organics allow. The 'reasonable' approach carries over to the winery too where the most gentle handling is done, where possible, in the absence of electricity.

Savigny les Beaune Blanc 2017

£99.00

This proved to be a knockout in 2014 and 2015 vintages. The 2016 was frosted; the 2017 is a ripper. We are so pleased with the bright, citrus and stone fruit complexity, massive length and an ice pick chill on the finish that will make this one such a head turner. 2019 to 2022

Beaune 'les Blanches Fleurs' 2017

£99.00

A stone's throw from the famous 1er Cru Clos du Roi and the first of an attractive pair of Beaunes that Nicolas has fashioned in 2017. Supple, easy going and thoroughly enjoyable. No hard edges, nothing to dislike and plenty to heighten the senses here. 2019 to 2023

Beaune 1er Cru Cinquantaire 2017

£155.00

From five vineyards, the youngest vines are 50 years old. On the Savigny side Clos du Roi, Les Bressandes and Toussaints are of the best known for softer, more appealing Beaune fruit. On the Pommard side, a little more dense and firm, are the neighbouring vineyards of les Sizies and Pertuisots. This idea works; it combines all the red berry, chocolate and vanilla complexity of Beaune with a softness and approachability that will not test the patience. 2019 to 2025

## **Maison Roche de Bellene, Beaune**

Nicolas Potel's latest trick is to manage the red wine cellars by candle light as normal lighting damages the resveratrol: a key compound in the cholesterol reducing properties of red wine. Ageing is more and more in larger barrels and there are now soft wax capsules for Grand Crus; just put the corkscrew straight through the wax... most satisfying!

Puligny Montrachet 1er Cru les Folatieres 2017 £395.00

Very tight, this, and so not giving much away. Like many of these top Bellene examples it seems to show potential over and above that of the vintage as a whole. Very good. 2021 to 2027

Bourgogne Pinot Noir Vieilles Vignes 2017 £55.00

Made from selected old vines, this has long been a popular red at Handford. Once again it has some Beaune and Volnay 1er Cru fruit. Supple, long, easy going crowd pleaser that will give a lot of pleasure once it's settled down in the autumn. 2019 to 2022.

Chambolle Musigny 1er Cru les Groseilles 2017 £295.00

The broken shale and low in clay soils of Chambolle result in a lightness, lift and elegance that defines the village. These few vineyards below Bonnes Mares tend to give a little extra texture and body. A red of great provenance and with super complexity. Exceptional. 2022 to 2039.

Charmes Chambertin 2017 £750.00

Idyllic! As in 2016, this is probably the pick, certainly at the lower price level of the Grand Crus. Pure, with rich layers of red fruits and endless length. A thing of beauty. 2026 to 2040.

Le Chambertin 2017 £1450.00

Much easier on the eye in 2017, but that doesn't mean it won't be a keeper. Red and black fruits, hints of salty, oyster shell, silky tannins, blackberry vanilla and multidimensional. A modern classic. 2031 to 2046

Richebourg 2017 £1495.00 (3)

Romanee Saint Vivant 2017 £1495.00 (3)

Dense, meaty and very long lived pair of Grand Crus. Richebourg is the fairer showing a certain delicacy but no fragility at all. RSV is slightly more coloured and with dark fruits and spice. 2027 to 2042

## **Domaine de Comte Armand, Pommard**

After a seven year apprenticeship, the capable Paul Zinetti has taken over here and has done an exceptional job under the tricky conditions. Fully organic since 2005 and now certified as biodynamic, the lower parts of the vineyard are worked by horse and the reduced compaction is already resulting in a better soil structure. Epeneaux is, of course, one of the great reds of the Cotes de Beaune.

Auxey Duresses 1er Cru 2017 £175.00

It has always felt strange that I have to work so hard for a few bottles of this one. Tasting it again I see the attraction in its gritty, earthy solidity married perfectly to a supple, forward and beautifully ripe fruit style. It's a little more piquant, Seville orange in 2017 but Paul has really worked out how to get the best from these vines. This one is more desirable than ever. 2021 to 2028.

Pommard 1er Cru Clos des Epeneaux 2017 £595.00

Magnums £650.00 (3)

At just over 5 hectares, this is one of the largest monopole vineyards in Burgundy. It is managed biodynamically and with utmost respect not only for the vineyard, but for the expression of its constituent parts. I tasted the young vines first and noted soft orange, red fruits that are light and lifted yet with sinews of from acid running through. The older vines yield a stronger wine that is more animal, spiced and with concentrated, dried fruit peel. Putting the two together only serves to enhance the complexity. Exciting. 2026 to 2034

## Michel Lafarge, Volnay

In recent years, Michel Lafarge's reds have become the most sought after in the Cotes de Beaune. He is a committed and studious man who appears to have arrived at a near perfect formula. Of his 8 hectares, only one is of 1er Cru standing, but their fruit combines delicious Pinot flavours with layers of firm mineral character and delicate vanilla from a short-ish oak ageing. I have noted consistent depth, complexity and perfect balance across the range. The domaine is now run by Michel's son Frederic, who is pictured with his not so new idea; a natural and gentle de-stemmer based on a device used in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.



Bourgogne Aligote Raisins Dorees 2017

£120.00 (12)

A patch of very old vines that tends to ripen with a heavier colour and flavour. Raisins Dorees is a clone or type of Aligote, perhaps best known at the Bouzeron estate of Aubert de Villaine. A remarkable wine that benefits from a couple of years in bottle. Picked quite late (18<sup>th</sup> September) this gives a malty crunch with pear and quince fruit. It's astounding stuff. 2017 to 2020.

Bourgogne Passetoutgrains a l'Exception 2017

£75.00

As ever this is half Pinot and half Gamay. The vines, planted by Frederic's grandfather, are now over 90 years old and the planting is mixed and so this is a 'field blend' from an exceptional site just below Meursault. Frederic tells me that, with such old vines, meagre yields and small berries it is not always easy to tell the Gamay from the Pinot in the field, especially as they seem to synchronise their ripening naturally. This was the first wine to be bottled and sold directly from the domaine in 1934. Fleshy cherry, plum, raspberry and apple. A fruit compote for drinking when it arrives in the late autumn. 2019 to 2023

Bourgogne Rouge 2017

£175.00 (12)

Another parcel of very old vines; these are 50+ years old. There's a bit of debate over the value of old vines at the moment. One of the strong arguments for is that the vigneron is in tune with the vine that they have grown up with. Frederic would have seen every vintage in the life of this vineyard. He offers a profound Pinot with focus, some density and opulence, and with complexity. Tastes higher than its rank and will cellar very well. 2019 to 2023.

Volnay 2017

£195.00

Focussed red fruit compote that seems to ripen in the palate to give a cool, mouthwatering freshness with that just mature, soft red fruit. Plenty of energy here and a hint of red cherry cream on the finish. Super refreshing! 2021 to 2027.



Volnay 'Vendanges Selectionnees' 2017 £225.00

Super powerful, distinctive and focussed black cherry, ripe plum and strawberry. Texture is deeper, richer and more creamy than the Volnay. Superb. 2023 to 2030.

Beaune 1er Cru Aigrots 2017 Lafarge £295.00

Deeply coloured, brooding, black and red fruits and full of body. Dense yet soft, appealing and lightens beautifully on the finish. 2022 to 2029

**There are small quantities of the famous Volnay 1er Crus. Please ask.**

### **Thierry Matrot, Meursault**

Now run by Adele and Ailsa Matrot, the third daughter, being established with her chef partner at the hotel le Chevreuil in Meursault – highly recommended, of course. There are bright fruits and super silky tannins on this exciting range of reds. Meursault, 'La Piece sous le Bois' is very smart. Volumes of the great whites have suffered a little from lack of rain throughout the growing season, but this element of stress has led to wines worth chasing after. A very good year here.

Bourgogne Chardonnay 2017 £65.00

Following a string of lower volume years, quality fruit for Chardonnay has become hard to come by. So there is a contract here with a Chablis grower to give 20% of the fruit and a seam of very bright, almost Riesling like, lime and lemon fruit. Fresh and aromatic at the outset; soft, honeyed and with a big hit of citrus to finish. 2019 to 2021.

Meursault 2017 £195.00

This is one of those wines you just want to own. Everything seems right about it; gorgeous, silky textured soft, orange and pomegranate fruits with just enough richness and custard cream. All perfectly in its place. It's a wine that gives a lot of pleasure over time. We have done many a vertical tasting going back 10 years or so and it really is such a satisfying experience. 2020 to 2027.

Meursault 1er Cru Blagny 2017 £250.00

The bowl shaped Blagny vineyard sits high up above the conjunction of Meursault and Puligny. It basks in the late summer sunshine to give intensity and minerality. The enormity of this wine renders it somewhat reduced and overpowering when tasting from the vat. I sense a note of Turkish delight and certainly feel plenty of guts to let this age for some time. 2023 to 2029.

Meursault 1er Cru Charmes 2017 £275.00

One of the great wines of the vintage, this has everything in the right place, a touch of sucrosity, softness and it's beautifully rounded. There's depth and lushness of 2015 and some of the sheer class and finesse of the great 2014. Spectacular; the charm of Charmes is an ideal juxtaposition to the brawn of Blagny. 2021 to 2027.

Puligny Montrachet 1er Cru les Chalumeaux 2017 £275.00

On the Meursault side but, in fine years like 2017, there is more lift and purity of a classical Puligny. Fine acids, white nectarine, some riper peach in appealing layers of fruit and with a more closed and saline finish. It's 2016 but with some potential to age in bottle. 2022 to 2028.

Puligny Montrachet 1er Cru les Combettes 2017 £360.00

Combettes and Perrieres tasted from tank very soon after fining and so quite turbid

Meursault 1er Cru les Perrieres 2017 £360.00

The Matrots have half a hectare here which is a pretty decent holding in what is possibly the finest 1er Cru white vineyard. The vines are 50 and 55 years old producing a miserly 200 dozen in a normal year but just half of that in 2017. Wines are allowed a longer rest in tank following the assemblage.

Maranges 1er Cru la Fuissiere Rouge 2017 £115.00

A red wine village just below Chassagne as the Cotes de Beaune tapers to a more undulating landscape. It offers generous cherry and raspberry fruits that are ripe for drinking in the first few years of life. Some tender and smooth tannic structure here that makes the Fuissiere ever more serious in comparison to recent vintages. 2019 to 2023.

Blagny Rouge 1er Cru la Piece sous le Bois 2017 £225.00

A favourite at Handford, but very rare in recent vintages; not since 2010 have close to normal yields been achieved. I said last year that Blagny fans will need to wait until 2017 to really fill the cellars and what a belter it is. Great lift and ethereal quality; tremendous in length, superbly put together and finishing with some chunky raspberry fruit and spice. Very good indeed. Clive Coates MW has said that this is 'one of the great reds of Burgundy' 2023 to 2028.

## **Domaine Francois Mikulski, Meursault**

Francois' father was a Free Polish fighter at Arnhem. After the war he married Pierre Boillot's sister and determined to follow a life in the vines. Francois himself has travelled the world, purely for research purposes of course, and has become a sought after name in white Burgundy circles. The domaine was born from land inherited from Pierre and has been supplemented his wife, Marie-Pierre's family holdings. The vineyards are fully mature now with the newest plantings in les Poruzots now a quarter of a century old. Fruit is carefully selected, de-stemmed. There is a cool settling before fermentation and ageing in barrels. Francois uses around 20% new oak. There are some 450 litre barrels in the cellar now. Francois and Marie-Pierre's stepson, Thomas 'le Boc' Boccon, is being groomed to take over. These are the safe hands of CS Beaune Rugby's long time number 8.

Bourgogne Aligote 2017 £75.00

Sadly this vineyard was badly affected by the frost so only a very little to offer. It's super concentrated, lime cordial nose is followed by a pretty but edgy concentration that belies the price. Tremendous and will be fun to keep one or two back for up to six years too.

Bourgogne Chardonnay 2017 £85.00

An annual treat for a few clients, this is as close to Meursault as you get without writing it on the label. It's from 2 parcels on the eastern border of the appellation, Herbeaux and Lombois (long wood). There was a bit of frost in 2017 so another year of only en Primeur for the Chardonnay (and Aligote, which is too little to offer at all). A more refined, silky, delicate Satsuma juice Chardonnay this year. Beautiful, refreshing and leaves you wanting more. 2019 to 2021.

Meursault 2017 £230.00

This has those 100 year old vines in Limousin (some likely to be released as a separate cuvee later on), some of the Poruzots fruit as well as the classic 3 parcels of Meix Chavaux, Charmes and Narvaux. The 2017 reflects the vintage and the purity of fruit on offer. Astounding depth, balance and length of flavour, this bodes well for another fabulous range. Hint of caramelised orange and lemon zest. Weighty, yet subtle; all the true hallmarks of fine white Burgundy. 2021 to 2025

Meursault 1er Cru Poruzots 2017 £375.00

Frisky acids frame a custard cream, stone fruit compote with a twist of uplifting citrus. A note of honeydew melon, too. There are some large rocks to work around in this vineyard and, perhaps more as a consequence of meagre soils in parts, there is a strong expression of minerality here. Some ageing in the larger barrels here. 2022 to 2026

Meursault 1er Cru Poruzots 2017 Magnums £399.00 (3)

Meursault 1er Cru Charmes 2017

£395.00

Two main plantings here, one in 1930 and one in 1968. There are still some vines from 1913 that yielded unusually well in 2017 and so, though they will be included here, look out for a separate bottling later. The older vines yield more core concentration and flateur. The younger tend to the more lifted and natural, cool acidic feel. So the blend is nigh on perfect. Plenty of complexity here but, as so often with wines blended from more distinct components, it is very difficult to taste in its youth. More of that melon note, and perhaps the classic lemon and peach. A little more charm than mineral, this will still need 2 or 3 years just to knit together. 2023 to 2028

Meursault 1er Cru Genevrieres 2017

£450.00

Wow! This has it all. Soft orange, citrus flower, a beautiful coolness and just a hint of crème caramel. There's a pink grapefruit note coming from left field, an example of the complexity of this astounding and perfectly poised Meursault. As I said last year, a perfectly formed rose bud. 2023 to 2029.

Meursault 1er Cru Genevrieres 2017 Magnums

£495.00 (3)



Bourgogne Pinot Noir 2017

£85.00

A year in barrel and racked into cuves and then, crucially, a 3 month rest on fine lees before bottling. This gives an extra dimension of cream texture, savoury notes and potential for ageing in bottle. There are many facets to this fine and firmly structured Pinot. One to keep for a couple of years before unleashing. 2020 to 2023

Volnay 1er Cru les Santenots 2017

£295.00

Often cited as the red burgundy from a white wine vineyard, the 2017 is a more austere, closed basket full of crunchy, red apple and raspberry crumble. Very tight now but with plenty there for down the line. Sweet and concentrated fruits with an element of chalk and flint to balance. These reds from Mikulski are serious! 2021 to 2026

## Domaine Leflaive, Puligny Montrachet

A total contrast to 2016 here. The threat of frost was averted and flowering began as early as May, leading to an early harvest, beginning on 29<sup>th</sup> August. Crucially the winter had been cold, diseases checked and vines fully dormant. It's a clean slate and a stunning range. At the time of my visit the Grand Crus were very recently racked and so not the time to make fair judgement.

Bourgogne Blanc 2017 £295.00

There is amazing power and concentration on the 2017. Perhaps this is partly because it doesn't quite have the grip of recent vintages and so more flavour is released early on. Juicy peach, melon and citrus and with terrific length. 2019 to 2022.

Puligny Montrachet 2017 £495.00

Again, huge persistence and power and appears more grapefruit and tropical fruits on the nose. The palate is more classical with mineral and more delicate fruit notes. Sheer joy. 2020 to 2024.

Meursault 1er Cru Sous le Dos d Ane 2017 £675.00

Still fairly fleshy but far more strict in structure and with a reserved mineral tone. Being just below the great Perrieres vineyard this is packed with minerality and expression. Likely to be more of a keeper than some of the Pulignys. 2023 to 2028

Puligny Montrachet 1er Cru Clavoillon 2017 £715.00

Perhaps the most opulent of the 1er Crus at this stage. Honeydew melon, pawpaw and hints of coconut from the barrels, too. Decadence in a bottle. 2022 to 2026.

Puligny Montrachet 1er Cru Folatieres 2017 £1175.00

More gritty, citrus and mineral notes that mask the floral and lifted feel that I would normally associate with this patch of vines. This needs a couple of years for that intense and immediate fruit to meld into the true form of Folatieres. 2024 to 2029

Puligny Montrachet 1er Cru les Pucelles 2017 £1395.00

Something of a merger of the two above, this is a little more approachable now yet with more depth and more layers of flavour. Exotic, citrus, soft caramel, honey and lifted white flower and pepper all in the same glass. Outstanding length and complexity. 2023 to 2031

Bienvenue Batard Montrachet Grand Cru 2017 £1295.00 (3)

Batard Montrachet Grand Cru 2017 £1395.00 (3)

Chevalier Montrachet Grand Cru 2017 £1725.00 (3)

## Domaine Paul Pillot, Chassagne Montrachet

'Domaine Paul Pillot is one of those producers making whites with a real gleam, a luminous clarity. I taste hundreds of wines in burgundy week, and have to scramble through my notes to check in with my views on many of them, but with Domaine Paul Pillot I remember where the table was in the room, and where I was standing as the wine hit my taste buds. You just do with wines like that.' Daily Telegraph, Jan 2015

Thierry Pillot and his father, Paul, are so understated that you wonder how anyone ever got to the end of the track at the end of the village. Their house, cellars and many of the vineyards are high up, overlooking Puligny and St Aubin. And this is the point; with many Chassagne properties farming low lying lands, this is an exception and the wines are exceptional.

Chassagne Montrachet 'les Mazures' 2017

£tbc

Thanks to Paul's shrewd acquisitions of vineyards his son Thierry has some wonderful plots to work with. What we love about 2017 is the retention of minerality and purity that not everyone has managed so well. This is very much closer to the greatest of recent vintages that is 2014. 2020 to 2025.

Chassagne Montrachet 1er Cru Clos Saint Jean 2017

£ tbc

This plot is high up and behind chez Pillot at the western end of the village and very close to the Domaine Gerard Thomas plot below. A tremendous success in this vintage with forceful citrus and peach skin notes, an attractive, zingy minerality and soft, soothing and cool tones on the finish. Very good indeed. 2020 to 2027

Chassagne Montrachet 1er Cru les Grandes Ruchottes 2017

£ tbc

Along with Cailleret and la Romanee, this is the most noted of 1er Crus here. They are high to the south west side, facing south and east, and bear some resemblance in aspect and altitude as well as the meagre soil profile of Meursault Perrieres. The tendency is to be very shy at the outset but explosive in 3 to 4 years time. There is a little feeling of that soft, creamy fruit in the mid palate but much of this is biding its time. 2025 to 2030.

Chassagne Montrachet 1er Cru les Caillerets 2017

£ tbc

As ever, Caillerets is much easier to get on with at this early stage. Open, pure fruit, rose hip and a dash of maple vanilla. Super fresh and enticing. Delicious. 2022 to 2028

Chassagne Montrachet 1er Cru la Romanee 2017

£ tbc

Made from 70 year old vines with 20% new barrels, this is a hulk of a white Burgundy. Bold, brassy layers of grape flesh, quince and lemon marbled with mineral, hazel toasty, vanilla oak flavours. 2025 to 2032

## **Gerard Thomas, Saint Aubin**

Gerard is a kindly, robust and ruddy faced year round Santa, whose life has been dedicated to his vineyards. He has rebuilt some unusually precarious terraces, replanted and maintained his Chardonnay vines with pride. The first Saint Aubin 1er Cru is endearingly known as 'dog's tooth' by many clients; old stone gate posts look like giant canines. The second takes its name from cats that bask in the sun. La Chateniere is one of the best wines of the village and represents great value. Gerard is on top form and having fun in the vineyards with his grandsons, Isabelle's twin boys. Isabelle and Anne are in control of a particularly good range of 1er Crus though sad to report, the lease on the Meursault has ended and so 2017 will be the last.

Saint Aubin 1er Cru Murgers des Dents de Chien 2017 £240.00 (12)

The vineyard borders Puligny 1er Garenne. It is named after the tooth like stones that form the gate posts. This Handford favourite offers classical and intense white burgundy characters of tangerine peel and white flower. Though the wines are similar, there is a little more soft caramel than in 2016. Perhaps a bit more 2014 character with the pronounced citrus and it's certainly very much in the Puligny mould. 2019 to 2024.

Saint Aubin 1er Cru la Chateniere 2017 £250.00 (12)

Down the slope, and close to chez Thomas at the southern end of the village, the vineyard is named for the wild cats that bask in the warmth of this sun trap on the lower slopes. The terraces were constructed by Gerard's own hand, though many years ago now. Lush, voluptuous stone fruits and, with so many dimensions, there are good legs in this. Slightly austere saline finish defines a certain shyness for now, so the 'cat' should sleep a while. 2020 to 2026.

Chassagne Montrachet 1er Cru les Chenevottes 2017 £365.00 (12)

The vineyard is mid slope and at the St Aubin end of Chassagne. This is tough, stony, loamy site that faces east and a bit north, so the long and fairly dry vintage has suited this site perfectly to give a wonderfully complex, orange blossom, citrus white with that hint of lushness. Full of character and with some potential to age. 2021 to 2027

Meursault 1er Cru Blagny 2017 £365.00 (12)

It's a super expression of Blagny: bright, high spirited acidity with great shards of minerality. There's a feeling of massive concentration without and obvious, primary fruit for now. Classic young white burgundy and something truly different. 2022 to 2028

Puligny Montrachet 1er Cru la Garenne 2017

£385.00 (12)

High up on the hillside and virtually contiguous to the Murgers des Dents de Chien vineyard of Saint Aubin, this offers something of everything. Density, pure mineral character, clementine, delicate white flower, lemon meringue and nectarine. There's a little step up in purity, balance and richesse. The wood is very well integrated (they use 20% new oak across the range). 2021 to 2026.

### **Domaine Faiveley, Mercurey**

Approaching two centuries of Faiveley expertise we see the fruits of that experience in this selection of domaine wines (from vineyards owned and managed by the family). Perhaps more importantly the brilliant Jerome Flous has now overseen the entire process from vineyard to bottle for a decade now. The project in Mercurey is fully mature now with the vineyards looking super healthy and happy in the summer of '17.



Mercurey 'Clos Rochette' Monopole 2017 Blanc

£80.00

This impressive site between Mercurey and neighbouring Rully was once shared between Pinot Noir and Chardonnay, but the prevalence of white limestone argued for replacing the former with more Chardonnay fruit. This delicious 2017 wine is a blend of 20% fermented in new barrels and 80% in stainless steel, arguably giving the virtues of both, i.e. some clean oak accents, lush creamy green apple and green melon richness and a lively freshness on the finish. A very good effort considering the price. Drink now to 2025

Mercurey 'la Framboisiere' Monopole 2017 Rouge

£99.00

Just a little more approachable, supple and concentrated, Framboisiere is a well sited, sunny plot meandering southward toward the village. Uplifting and typically Pinot for early drinking. 2019 to 2024

Mercurey 1er Cru Clos de Myglans 2017 Rouge

£110.00

The 2017 Clos des Myglans is only slightly more structured and broader than the Framboisiere, with more of an earthy cranberry, cherry character. Sweet, round and fleshy with great upfront fruit, moderate tannins and plenty of body, this mouth-filling wine should provide enjoyable drinking over the next 8 to 10 years.



**Please call 020 7589 6113 for more advice, or e-mail  
james@handford.net or greg@handford.net**

**James Handford MW and Greg Sherwood MW**