

AT HOME IN BURGUNDY

As we prepare to head off to Lake Como for our Fall 2009 Papillon tours, Ellie and I look back on this passing Burgundian summer and wonder. While the big world out there seems chopped and changed, here the rhythm is steady and familiar. The wheat harvest is coming in, abundant under sunny skies. The charollais make their rounds in the fields, stopping by our place every night at 6. Our vegetable garden is heaving, and we are eating the only Silver Queen in Burgundy! And of course the vineyards are loving it: long, cool days; just enough rain; nothing drastic. 'Prometteur', the winemakers are saying. It's been a model summer. But it's also been an active summer. The biggest news is that, at long last, Ellie's cookbook will be published. 'At Home in Burgundy—The Papillon Recipes' by Eleanor Garvin should be on sale on Amazon soon after this issue of 'Selections' reaches you. We've also had quite a few wine visitors staying with us since the beginning of summer. This gave us a chance to taste with a wide range of producers, new and known, and thus to have a good clear picture of what the past two vintages have given us. So we take this opportunity to bring your one of our irregularly-scheduled vintage reports. Finally, we want to share a little local culture. Back in April the Domaine Rapet presented a 'retrospective' of the career of Roland Rapet with a tasting of Corton Grand Cru going back to 1949. So while we are thinking about Italy, the cuisine of the Lombardian lakes and the Nebbiolo of the Valtellina, it's hard to interrupt a perfect summer here in the heart of Burgundy.

ELDEN

ISSUE #28

e

SELECTIONS

FALL 2009

LES LILAS, GRANDE RUE, 21500 FAIN-LES MOUTIERS, FRANCE - TEL/FAX: 33/380 967 830 - eldenwine@gmail.com

<http://eldenwine.com>

The reason that we're so thrilled with our perfect summer is that we haven't really had a summer here at all for the past two years. Both 2007 and 2008 were dismal wet and gray. For the winemakers, both years held moments of high anxiety, near despair and eventually salvation. The results in the bottle are surprisingly good considering, and astonishingly similar. Despite wildly different growing seasons, both years produced characteristic Burgundy, more characteristic perhaps than any other vintage in the past ten years. This deserves a closer look for two reasons. The first is that the over-all quality of vineyard work in Burgundy is improving dramatically. Yield control, judicious use of fungicides, careful sorting at harvest time all contribute to the quality of the fruit that eventually gets fermented. Secondly, both Pinot Noir and Chardonnay like to come to maturity slowly. Neither shows its true self in a hot climate. A quick review of the weather conditions in the two vintages will give you some idea of the role each of these factors played in the end result.

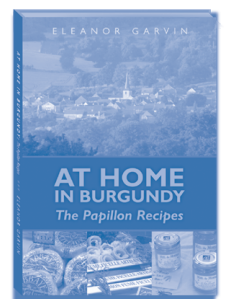
2007 was a most curious year. After a dry mild winter, summer came in April with four sunny weeks. Flowering took place three weeks early. Then the rest of the summer was rotten. Those who did not assiduously follow their treatments had a real mess on their hands. Even the best farmers were in trouble. When we left for Italy at the end of August, the Burgundy wine world was in mourning. After three months of really wet conditions, the vines were ripe...ripe for mildew and rot. But because the temperatures remained cool, the spread of rot was slowed. Lack of sun let the grapes develop thick skins, which in the end resisted splitting. Then came the 'miracle': the north wind blew in and the sun returned for two months of glorious autumnal weather, allowing the crop to dry out and ripen slowly. The harvest took place early (a hundred days after the precocious flowering), but under ideal conditions. The 'bad' growers had to pick, for fear of rot; the 'good' producers would wait for phenolic maturity. The grapes needed careful sorting before they could be vatted; but overall, for those who did their vineyard work, the harvest was safe and sound. 2008 was another summer to forget. Not so bleak as 2007, but dreary nonetheless. And worse, the rot took hold. Spring and early summer

were wet and miserable. Flowering was late and erratic, meaning that the harvest would be late and erratic. July was normal: sunny and warm, relatively dry. More rain in August though slowed maturity. Worse, the weather turned stormy and there was considerable hail damage. The damaged grapes were prone to oidium and rot as the wet weather continued. Once again, going into September, the mood in the cellars was somber. Then, in a repeat of the 'miracle of 07', summer returned with the north wind. The rain let up, the sun shone; the vineyards dried out and the rot dried up. The damage had already been done however, and an already small crop was further diminished on the sorting tables. There is an element of luck in any successful 08 Burgundy: hail strikes indiscriminately. But once again, those who did not do the vineyard work were penalized. Many growers did not even bother to harvest, the rot was so rampant. There is much disagreement about the quality of these two vintages. Those who want every year to be 2005 will never understand Burgundy. For our part, 2007 is perhaps the most 'Burgundian' vintage in memory. Good producers got the phenolic maturity needed to express 'terroir', and at the same time were able to keep the lacy finesse that is characteristic of fine Burgundy. Reds show as well as whites, but as always, you have to know who made the wine. 2008 is still up in the air. It was certainly a surprisingly good year for whites; like the 07s but fatter. It's the reds that may cause concern. Only the most severe sorting (some say they ditched half the crop) will keep the taste of 'botrytis' out of the bottle. But more and more producers see that quality is their trump card, and have been able to make Burgundy as it should be made: with hard work and humility.

BIG NEWS!

Ellie's cookbook is here!

(Details and sample recipe on back)



CELEBRATING RAPET PERE ET FILS

When the invitation came through the mail slot last April, Ellie and I could hardly believe our luck. The Domaine Rapet Pere et Fils, arguably our most prestigious producer, were staging a Prestige Tasting of Grand Cru Corton going back to the 1949 vintage. It was, in effect, a retrospective of the winemaking career of Roland Rapet (the 'pere' in 'Pere et Fils'). We figured it was going to be a media event, with serious journalists and nobby socialites. But in true Burgundian style, the Rapets put on a family celebration and invited their friends. We came prepared to take studious notes and photos, but ended up just joining in the fun and listening to a lifetime of stories. The tasting, though invitation only, was run like an open-house; it took place over two days, and you arrived when you wanted. Vincent was there at the *cuvier* door, handing out programs and glasses. His young son nervously poured a *mise-en-bouche* glass of Aligoté while folks said hello and looked over the list of things to come. We tasted through the domain's 07 whites (the three Pernand 1er Crus, the new Beaune 1er Cru 'Bressandes' and of course the Corton-Charlemagne), and rounded out this very hospitable welcome with a little flight of Corton-Charlemagne in 03, 96 and 83. The group then moved down the street

to the center of the village and the oldest cellar in the domain. The rooms were set up by decade, the 2000s, the 1990s, 80s, 70s; the stands were looked after by the Rapet family and the folks who work with Vincent. There's this thing in Burgundy about vintages that end in 'nine' (we're in one right now; stay tuned!), so the room was a-buzz: among the dozens of other wines and vintages on offer were Corton Grand Cru in 1999, 89, 79, 69, 59 and 49! So we started back through the years. We've been in Burgundy for 25 of them, so some of the first vintages we tasted were familiar, and it was a pleasure to see them at full maturity. As we moved into 70s however, the tasting took on a new dimension. These wines, though still accessible and full of life, were becoming rarities; those last few bottles. And then there at the end of the cellar sat the old stuff. There's a sense of privilege to be among the people who keep and respect such things, to hear them talk. A little sip, a shiver of understanding. Many of the people there were obviously life-long friends of Roland, so memories were dislodged as the years passed by again in the bottle. Talk of drought and hail turned easily to talk of birth and marriage; life is work and work is life. The things you can learn with a wine glass in your hand!

BIG NEWS!

The big news around here is that Ellie's cookbook is finished! As a matter of fact, it should be out on Amazon at about the time you receive this issue of 'Selections'. It's called 'At Home in Burgundy—The Papillon Recipes' by Eleanor Garvin, and it's a collection of over 100 of the recipes that she has prepared for guests either on board the hotel barge 'Papillon' or with our land-based Papillon tours here in Burgundy. It's also the story of how we arrived and made our home here. (Wine notes and photos by yours truly!) So of course we are all very excited. We are going on-line with foodstuff.eldenwine.com which will be a cuisine and lifestyle extension of www.eldenwine.com. There for the first time we'll be able to include all of our wine and food activities, be they here at home in Burgundy, or elsewhere when we're out and about. In essence, whenever and wherever we find something good, we can now share it with you.

VELOUTÉ DE NAVETS À LA MIREPOIX D'ESCARGOTS

Turnip Soup with a Mirepoix of Snails
10 Servings

This *mirepoix* (a very fine dice of mixed vegetables and herbs), made mostly of carrots, cabbage and mushroom, gives an earthy quality to this autumnal soup, which heightens the mineral, gravelly flavors of the snails. This is, in fact, a great vehicle for appreciating the snail.

For the turnip soup:

2 ½ pounds fresh small turnips
6 cups chicken stock
¼ cup *crème fraîche* or heavy cream
Fine sea salt
Freshly ground white pepper
A grating of nutmeg

For the mirepoix:

2 carrots peeled
¼ Savoy cabbage (the curly leaf type)
8 firm mushrooms
4 tablespoons of unsalted butter
3 cloves garlic minced
5 dozen small Burgundy snails ('*helix pomatia*')
2 tablespoons *crème fraîche* or heavy cream
3 tablespoons minced chives or chervil, or both

For the soup: Heat the chicken stock and add the peeled and coarsely chopped turnips. Season with salt, and cook covered over a low heat for 20-25 minutes. Puree the soup in a processor or with a hand-held blender; add the cream, season with the salt, white pepper and nutmeg to taste.

While the soup is cooking, make the mirepoix. Slice the carrots thinly lengthwise, stack and cut into strips, then cut crosswise into a fine dice. Slice the savoy cabbage thinly and then slice crosswise into a fine dice. Slice the mushrooms, and then chop them finely. In one tablespoon of the butter, sauté the mushrooms until all their liquid has evaporated. Transfer the mushrooms to a bowl and reserve. In the same pan melt the remaining butter and add the finely diced carrot, cabbage and garlic. Season with salt, cover and cook over a low fire until soft.

Meanwhile, in a separate pan, heat the escargots with their liquid and enough water to cover just until they come to a simmer. Strain the snails, rinse briefly under cool water and, if they are large, coarsely chop them. Add the snails to the mirepoix with the mushroom mixture and remaining cream. Let this cook covered over low heat for 5 minutes. Reheat the soup. Taste the mirepoix for seasoning and add the herbs. Ladle the hot soup into warm shallow bowls and spoon the mirepoix into the center of each bowl. Serve immediately.

RECENT ELDEN TASTINGS: AT HOME IN BURGUNDY

As Ellie's cookbook, 'At Home in Burgundy—The Papillon Recipes' comes out on Amazon, we've been thinking a lot about how good we have it here. Not to rub it in, but we do speak of 'everyday drinking' Burgundy. The following is basically a list of the wines we have tasted and enjoyed over this past year. We're still trying to dig out as many of the remaining 2005s as possible. (Your cellar should be full of them; the vintage is already justifiably legendary!) We are also keen on our continuing discoveries in the 2007 and emerging 2008 vintages. As usual, we bring you several new producers, and we update vintages on some of the producers you already know well. For the new stuff, we have a killer Cremant from a true artisan; we have the other Girard brother, Jean-Jacques, with his version of Savigny; then there's a new kid in town making Moulin a Vent cru Beaujolais; we have two (count 'em two) new wines from the venerable Maison Capitain; and the Fevres release a new Chablis 1er Cru 'Mont de Milieu'. Because of our Lake Como excursions, we are a little later than usual this year getting the Fall issue of 'Selections' to you. That means we'll also be a little later getting the shipment on the water. That puts the CUT-OFF DATE for ORDERS at 12 OCTOBER

DENIS FOUQUERANDET FILS Cremant Blanc de Noir

We met Denis Fouquerand nearly 20 years ago. We'd made friends with some English wine merchants who were importing his 100% Pinot Noir Cremant into the UK, where London couldn't get enough. There are very few small producers who specialize in quality Cremant; it's a lot of work and requires years of elaborate preparation before the wine can be released. If you can get Champagne prices, small production can be worth the effort. But here in Burgundy, most growers tend to give their grapes to bigger houses to produce the wine that they then buy back and label as their own. Not so Denis (he doesn't Fouquerand); this is a meticulous and masterful production. We particularly like the pure Pinot Noir. It's got the finesse of Champagne, but the vinosity of a Burgundy.

NATHALIE ET GILLES FEVRE Chablis 07 Chablis 1^{er} Cru 'Mont de Milieu' 07 Chablis 1^{er} Cru 'Vaulorent' 07 Chablis Grand Cru 'Les Preuses' 07

What a breath of fresh air it has been working with the Fevres these last few years. We've told you the story: she was the renowned oenologist at La Chablisienne; he's from the other branch of that famous Chablis family. They got together and have been laying the groundwork for a serious assault on the crass commercialism that is too often pawned off as Chablis. Together they have the vines, the savoir-faire and the class to become one of the top producers in Burgundy. And it is happening. This is one of the greatest wine start-ups we have ever witnessed. We brought you their Fourchaume 07 last Spring. Here we have the rest of the beautifully balanced 07 vintage. The Vaulorent is a gem; it's a 1er cru vineyard that joins Fourchaume to the Grand Cru Preuses. A rare and wonderful thing. And we present here the first vintage under their own label of their holding in 1er Cru 'Mont de Milieu', another right bank first growth, a bit further east on the opposite side of the Grand Cru bowl. Not so round as a Fourchaume, more obvious minerality. Anyway, it's all fantastic!

MAISON CAPITAIN-GAGNEROT Saint-Romain 08 Ladoix Blanc 1er Cru 'Les Hautes Mourottes' 08 Ladoix 1^{er} Cru 'La Micaude' 07 Vosne Romanee 07

2008 is without doubt a year for Chardonnay. White Burgundy from north to south has shown good ripe fruit and minerality with enough acidity to balance the mix. Here on the Corton mountain, the Capitain Ladoix whites are said to be mini-Charlemagnes. It's not surprising; the vineyard sits up high on the slope, a stone's throw from the Grand Cru. This is an insider's wine. We see it every year for a few months after the release, until the locals snatch it up. The Saint Romain is a new deal for the old house. Patrice Capitain's son, Pierre-Francois, has (incredible as it is for us to believe) come of age and is now producing his own 'cuvees', this Saint Romain among them. He's young and forward-thinking, and the wine is as biodynamic as he is. The reds are from the 07 vintage, and we have chosen our benchmark Capitain wine, the Ladoix 'La Micaude', a model of finesse in any vintage. And there is another new acquisition for the domain: Vosne Romanee, a village Cotes de Nuits to partner their Grand Cru Echezeaux and Clos de Vougeot.

JEAN-JACQUES GIRARD Savigny les Beaune Blanc 07 Savigny les Beaune 07 Savigny les Beaune 1er Cru 'Les Serpenteries' 07

The Girard brothers, Phillipe and Jean-Jacques, worked the family vines for years (amicably, it has to be said!) before dividing up the estate and pursuing their own ideas. We presented Phillipe's Savignys in the Spring 09 issue. And so we thought it might be interesting to present Jean-Jacques immediately afterwards. The wines are totally different one from the other. Phillipe's have an animal edge; Jean-Jacques are more elegant.

DOMAINE POTINET-AMPEAU
Meursault 'Les Rougeots' 06
Meursault 1er Cru 'Les Perrieres' 06
Puligny-Montrachet 06
Puligny-Montrachet 1^{er} Cru 'Les Champs Gains' 06
Volnay 1^{er} cru 'Clos des Chenes' 05
Pommard 1^{er} Cru 'Les Pezerolles' 05

DOMAINE MOUTON
Givry 1er Cru 'Les Grands Pretans' 07

RICHARD ROTTIER
Moulin a Vent 08 Cru de Beaujolais

DENIS BARRAUD
Saint Veran 08
Pouilly-Fuisse 'Clos de la Combe-Poncet' 08

DOMAINE BORGEOT
Santenay 1er Cru 'Clos de la Comme Dessus' 08
Chassagne-Montrachet 08
Chassagne-Montrachet 1er Cru 'Morgeot' 07
Santenay 1^{er} Cru 'Clos de la Comme' 07
Chassagne-Montrachet Rouge 'Champs de Morgeot' 07

MICHEL ARCELAIN
Beaune 'Sisérpe' 05
Pommard 'Noizons' 05

DOMAINE RAPET PERE ET FILS
Attention: All case of 24 half bottles
Pernand-Vergelesses 07 white
Pernand 1er Cru 'Clos du Village' 07
Corton-Charlemagne 07
Pernand-Vergelesses 05 red
Pernand 1er Cru 'Les Vergelesses' 05
Beaune 1er Cru 'Clos du Roi' 05
Aloxe Corton 05

I'm sitting here looking at the list of wines that the Domaine Potinet-Ampeau has to offer. What strikes you first is the quality of the appellations: Meursault 'Perrieres'; Volnay 'Clos des Chenes'. But then you see that they offer these wines in vintages going back to the 80s! I know of only one other domain in Burgundy that stores and sells older vintages in this way: Robert Ampeau. Yep, same family; same cellar. So what we have selected for you here is not nearly as old as some we could propose (I hesitate to ship really old wine), but they do have pedigree!

Laurent Mouton answers the e-mails these days; his parents are taking a step back.. Those of you who have been with us in the past know how much we have always championed their Givry reds. Their 'Clos Jus' is the one we've presented here most often. But this year for the first time they let us have a small allotment from their smallest vineyard, the 1er Cru 'Les Grands Pretans', considered the noblest of the Givry first growths. Elegant, round and juicy, it will be a wine that you can drink immediately, but which will hold admirably its freshness for years.

Here's yet another first. We met Richard Rottier at a tasting in Chablis ; he's related to the Tremblays. He has just released his second vintage in Moulin a Vent, the first Beaujolais that we have proposed in these pages. He got rave reviews from Allen Meadows for his 07, and rightfully so. This is what we call grown-up wine. We want to be in the vanguard of the coming Beaujolais renaissance, and Richard will help us get there.

Denis Barraud works five small parcels in appellation Pouilly-Fuisse, centered mostly on his home village of Vergisson. Each vineyard has its own character (soil make-up, exposition, age of the vines), and Denis meticulously cultivates and vinifies each to its needs; wildly different techniques given their proximity to one another. Old vineyards get plowed; young vines are sown with grass; there are new oak cuvees and no oak cuvees. It's passionate winemaking. Here are a couple of his 08 wines, a great vintage in white in the Maconnais (as elsewhere). This Pouilly-Fuisse 'Clos de la Combe-Poncet produces 3500 bottles a year; the vines are 15 years old (fairly young still) so he plants the vineyard half in grass to promote competition for water. He prunes short to add concentration. Fermentation takes place in oak, but not new oak. Pretty well thought out, eh? Terrific Saint Veran every year, too.

I really wanted to bring you a few Borgeot whites in 08, but Pascal told me that there is a bit of the Chassagne-Montrachet 1^{er} Cru 'Morgeot' left in the 07 vintage, and I can't resist. So there are two 08s, a Santenay 1er Cru 'Clos de la Comme Dessus' and the village Chassagne, which are both splendid. Also, the Domaine Borgeot struck gold with their 07 Pinot Noir. Every cuvee that we tasted has been full, fresh fruity, and with that Pinot wild side that we love. (However, a little peek into the future: I spoke to Pascal a few days back, and he says his 08 reds are very similar to the 07s....great news for next year.)

From the magical cellars of Michel Arcelain have surfaced two more 2005s that need your attention. The Arcelain production is perhaps the most traditional we know of. He has the same tractor he started with 50 years ago, he bottles and labels by hand; the vineyards are carefully tended gardens. And his attention to detail is amazing. Real Burgundy. If you want to have some 2005 that you can either drink or hold, have a good look here.

Sometimes you just have to take the time to sit down and talk to people. I was telling Vincent Rapet recently that I have people who would love to have a supply of great half bottles in their cellar. So he opens a door and shows me a few small bins with a few hundred bottles of each of these wines. We have presented all of these wines in the past...but here we have them in half-bottle format. Check out the 2005s! We're on a real high with the Domaine Rapet these days, especially after the Corton tasting we describe in the present newsletter.