



Burgundy Club

Spring 2021



Welcome to the latest edition of the **Caveau Burgundy Club** – a twice-yearly tutored tasting and exploration of the great wines and terroirs of Burgundy.

This club functions just like our **Champagne Club** - (and if you're not already a member, email us - scott@caveauselections.com). Also, check out our new **"House Wine" Clubs** if you're interested in a steady supply of delicious Burgs at \$20-25 per bottle.

The wines in each 6-bottle Burgundy Club shipment have been specifically selected to help educate and illustrate – each shipment is essentially a Burgundy seminar-in-a-box. You can use all of this to stage your own tasting seminar at home, or of course you can just drink the wines one by one. Whichever path you choose – there's lots of good Burgundy in your future!

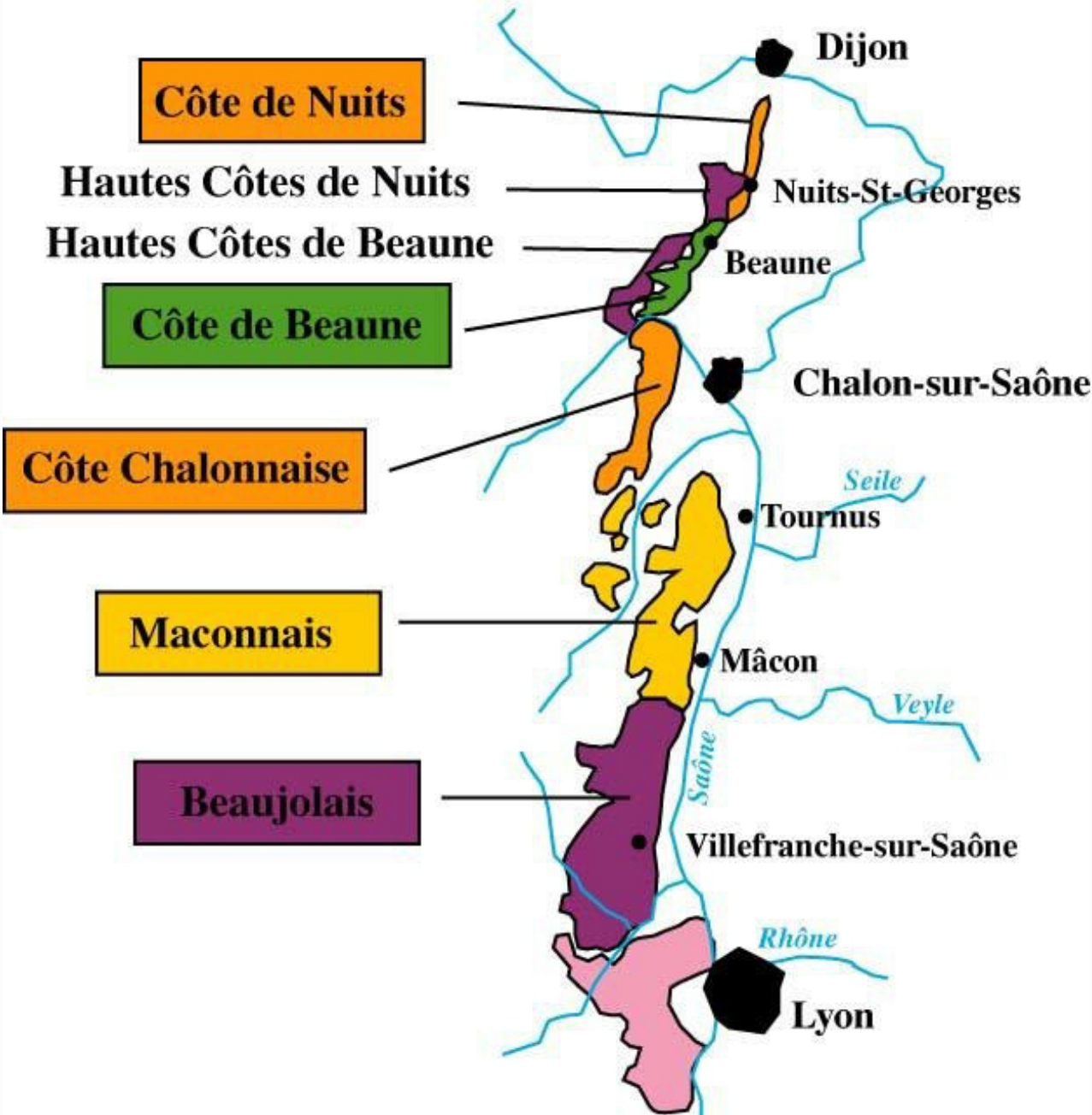
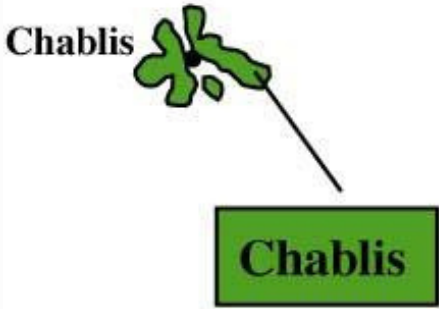
A Deep Dive into Volnay & Pommard

In this package we'll be exploring wines from two of Burgundy's best-know villages, as well as the **Hautes-Côtes de Beaune**, the little-known vineyard land high on the hillsides above the Côte. Will look at these appellations through the eyes and wines of two of our longtime favorite producers - **Domaine Violot-Guillemard** based in Pommard and **Huber-Verdereau** in Volnay. Buckle in - this is gonna be a good one!



Joannès Violot-Guillemard in the vines in Pommard

BURGUNDY



Pommard, Volnay, and the Hautes-Côtes de Beaune

Volnay and Pommard are two of the most well-known appellations in Burgundy - if only because they're both easy to pronounce in English! (The "d" is silent in Pommard, btw - now you can impress your friends with the proper pronunciation!). These names have been famous for centuries. The popularity of one versus the other has ebbed and flowed in different eras, with one being vastly preferred to the other at times. These days, Volnay may have a slight edge in overall popularity, but both are highly regarded, and your preference may just be a matter of personal choice.

The two villages sit directly next to each other, but the wines could not be more different. There is a geological fault that creates two distinctly different terroirs - the "mother rock" that underlies the vineyards changes dramatically when moving from one village to the other.

Pommard is the larger of the two, with a total of 831 acres under vine. The soils in Pommard are generally rich in clay, which typically translates into "big" wines of power, structure, and intensity. Pommard is often thought of as the Côte de Beaune's answer to Gevrey-Chambertin - another village revered for its majestic, powerful wines.

Volnay, at a total of 526 vineyard acres, is one of the smallest appellations in Burgundy, and stylistically a world apart. When you cross from Pommard into Volnay, you move onto land formed over ancient limestone beds - the same geological era of limestone that runs through Chambolle-Musigny in the Côte de Nuits - the appellation Volnay is most often compared to. With the highest degree of active limestone in the soils, the resulting wines from Volnay tend to be more refined, elegant, perfumed, lacy and veering towards delicate - the complete polar opposite of Pommard.

Within each of these two villages there are vast differences in terroir - not all Pommard or all Volnay is created equal - not by a long shot. In Pommard, for example, there's an elevation difference of over 500' from bottom to top, and a small valley that runs right through the middle of the village, which leads to some vineyards facing north, some south, and some to the east. On the northern half of the village the best sites tend to be at lower elevations, while the southern half favors parcels mid-slope. Like all things Burgundian, it's complex and fascinating.

Volnay is unusual for a Burgundy village, in that the town itself is perched higher up on the slope - most villages tend to be down in the flatlands, or at the base of the slope. (Thus the local expression "*Entre Volnay et Pommard, c'est toujours Volnay le plus haut*" - between Volnay and Pommard, Volnay is always the highest - as all the Volnaysiens are happy to point out!) There are dozens distinctly different terroirs across Volnay, with the most feminine, graceful wines, the ones that make the village's reputation, coming from the sector in the center of the appellation. As you move out toward the northern edge toward Pommard, or the southern end toward Meursault, the wines pick up more structure.

The two domaines we'll be exploring in this package both have vineyards in Pommard and Volnay. Huber-Verdereau is a Volnay-based producer, and Violot-Guillemard is from Pommard - so we'll have the rare opportunity to taste Volnay made by a Pommardois, and some Pommard from a Volnaysien. The two villages have been fierce rivals for centuries. As recently as a couple generations ago, it was considered somewhat of a sacrilege for a Pommard estate to own vines in Volnay, or vice-versa.

The Hautes-Côtes de Beaune

Climate change over the last 30 years has transformed what was a very marginal grape-growing area into one that has become a lot more interesting. A whole lot more. The Hautes-Côtes vineyards are high in the hills above the Côte de Beaune, and it's considerably cooler way up there. So much so that getting grapes sufficiently ripe enough to make good wine only happened maybe three years out of ten historically. Now, every year is a good year for the Hautes-Côtes, and it's become an excellent source for some delicious value-priced Burgs. We have excellent examples from each of our producers for you, and I hope you'll find these a delightful discovery.

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Burgundy Basics

The Burgundy region of France has been producing what are widely considered to be the world's finest Pinot Noirs and Chardonnays for nearly a thousand years. Burgundy is a relatively small area (only about 13,500 acres of vines in Burgundy's Côte d'Or, as opposed to Bordeaux's 235,000 acres or California's 515,000.) Oregon has recently grown larger than Burgundy, with some 18,000 vineyard acres now planted.

As in Oregon, most of the winegrowers and producers in Burgundy are small, family operations. The average estate size is about 15 acres, enough to produce about 3,500 cases of wine each year. Those 15 acres are often split into 10 or more tiny parcels of vineyards scattered around several different vineyards and villages — so production of each wine is often only a few hundred cases or less. While it can seem quite complicated, even perplexing at times, in reality Burgundy is fairly simple to decipher.

Red = Pinot Noir. If it's a red wine from Burgundy, it is made from the Pinot Noir grape. (Beaujolais, while technically part of the Burgundy region, is truly a different world altogether. Beaujolais reds are made from the Gamay Noir grape.)

White = Chardonnay. If it's a white wine from Burgundy, it's a Chardonnay. (Again, there are minor exceptions you'll rarely see — there's a white grape known as Aligoté that produces some very inexpensive, lower-level wines — but it will not come into play in anything we're discussing here.)

Unlike America, France has legal classifications for their wines. In Burgundy, the actual vineyards themselves, rather than the producer or wines, are given a level of classification. There are four levels:

Grand Cru — The best of the best. There are 32 Grand Cru vineyards in Burgundy, accounting for less than 2% of all Burgundy wine production. Grand Cru wines mention on the label only the producer and name of the vineyard — as in "Montrachet" or "Musigny" — the name of the village is not deemed necessary in the case of these great vineyards.



Our daughter Pirrie, with Thiébault Huber in Volnay

Premier Cru — (Also written as 1er Cru) One notch below the Grand Crus — there are hundreds at this level, and the quality varies widely. The best Premiers rival the Grand Crus, the lesser ones seem barely deserving of the ranking. These makeup about 10% of total production. A Premier Cru wine will mention the name of the village and possibly an individual vineyard on the label, as in “Pommard-Rugiens” or “Vosne-Romanée - Les Suchots” – if it indeed comes from a single vineyard. It will always bear the mark “Premier Cru” or “1er Cru”. If the wine is a blend of more than one 1er Cru vineyard within a given village, it will simply bear the designation “1er Cru” without any vineyard designation.

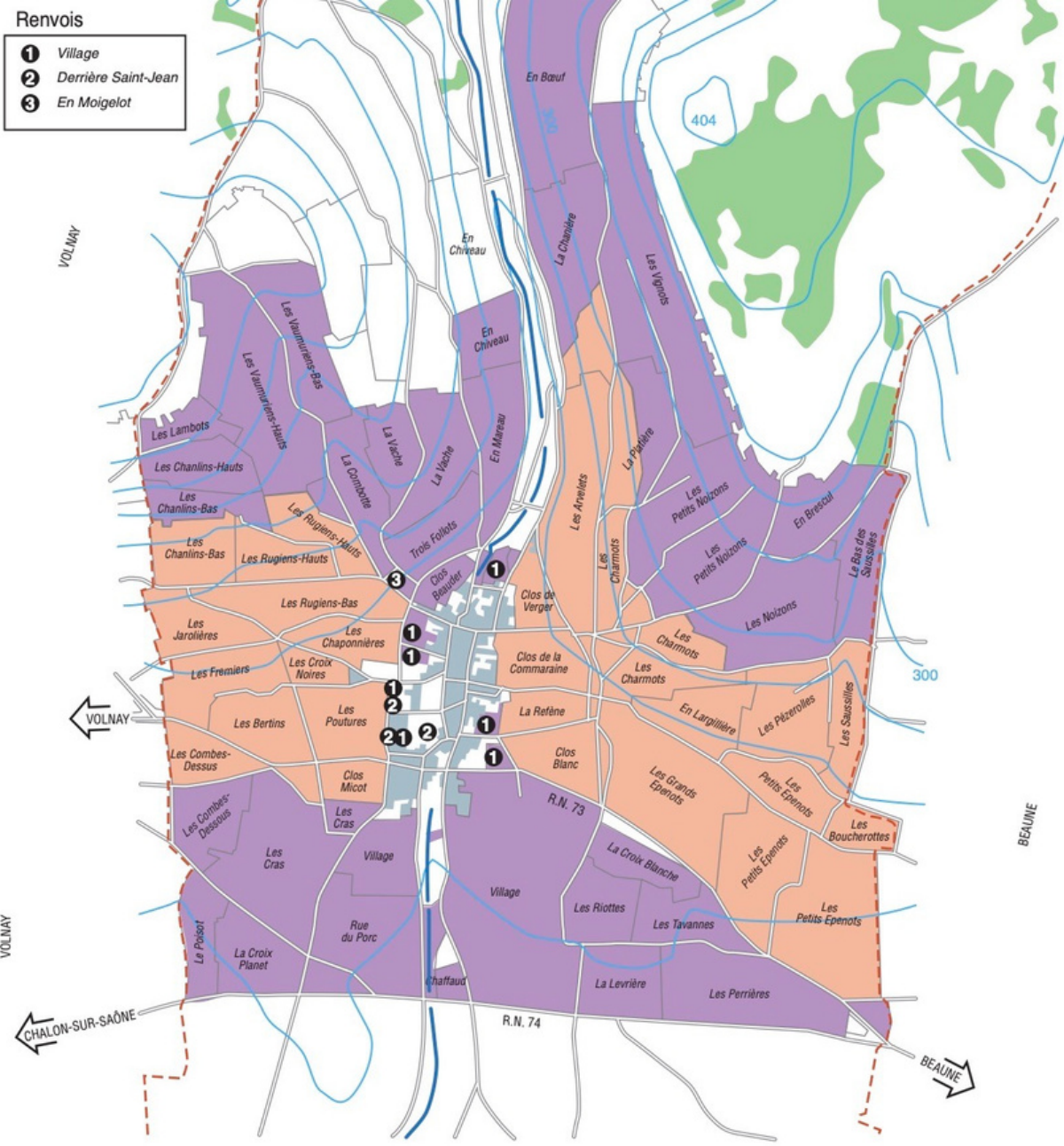
Village — Grapes for a village wine come from one or many vineyards surrounding a specific Burgundian village, for example Vosne-Romanée or Puligny-Montrachet. These are classified below the 1er Cru level, but can often be lovely wines and great values. Village wines are about 43% of the total pie. The label will simply state the name of the village (although in some cases the name of a specific vineyard will also be mentioned, even though it is not of Premier Cru status.)

Regional (Bourgogne) — A bit less than half of all Burgundy vineyards (45%) are classified at the regional level. In the hands of dedicated and talented producers these can be lovely wines. In the hands of others they can be thin, weedy, and rather unpleasant. These wines are labeled as Bourgogne Rouge or Bourgogne Blanc, or Bourgogne Pinot Noir or Bourgogne Chardonnay.

Most of the vineyards in Burgundy are owned by multiple owners — as many as 70 or 80 different owners in some cases. (In the rare cases that a single producer owns the entirety of a specific vineyard, this is designated as a “Monopole.”) This means that each winery may own only a few rows of the vineyard, and will make only a few barrels of that specific wine each year (but they are likely to own small pieces of several other vineyards as well.) So, not all wines from the same vineyard are created equal. The quality can vary widely from producer to producer. In Burgundy, the most important consideration is in fact the producer. **Get to know the styles of different producers, and zero in on the ones you like best.** They will likely give you the most enjoyment year in and year out regardless of the classification level.





Pommard



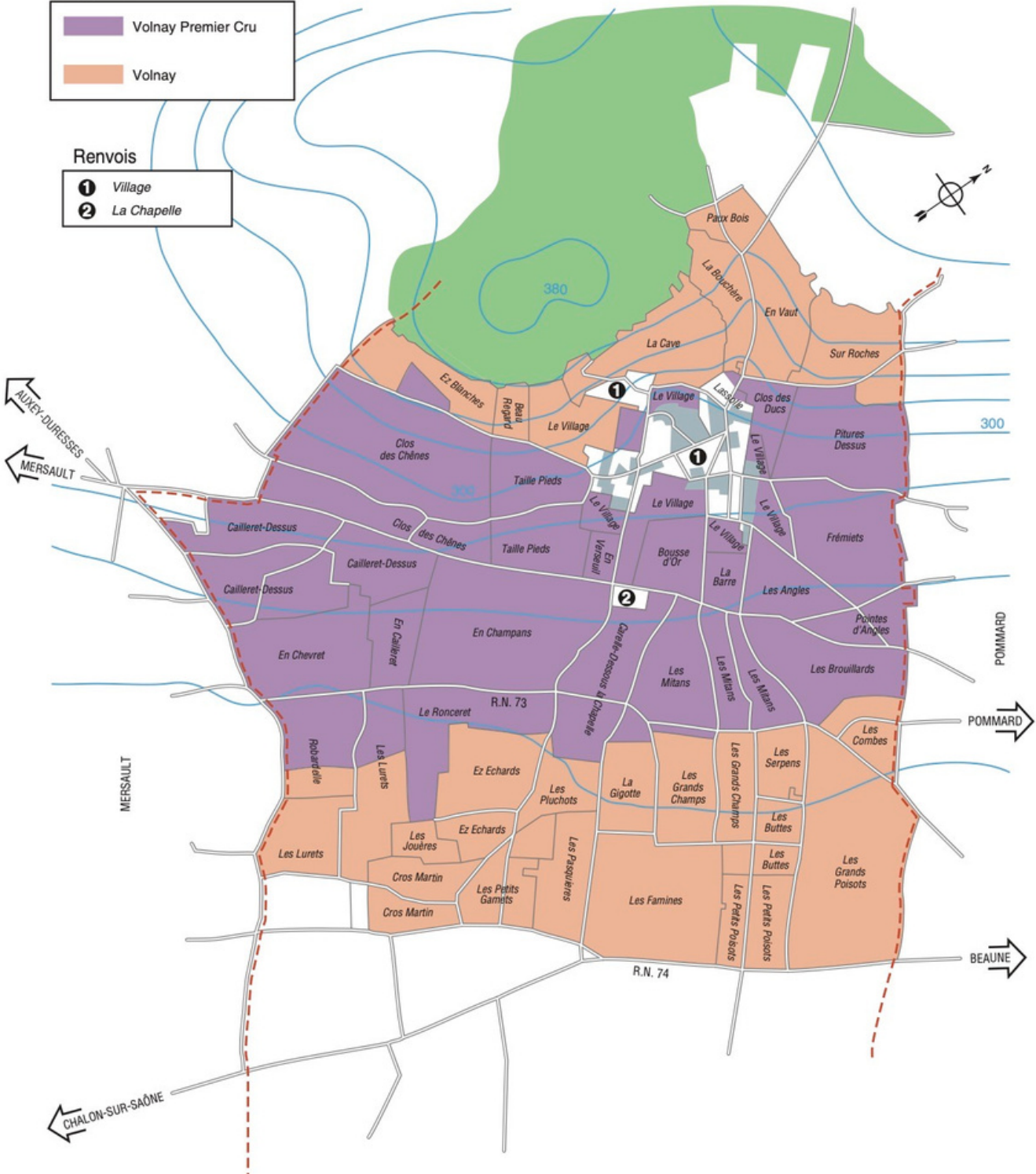
VOLNAY

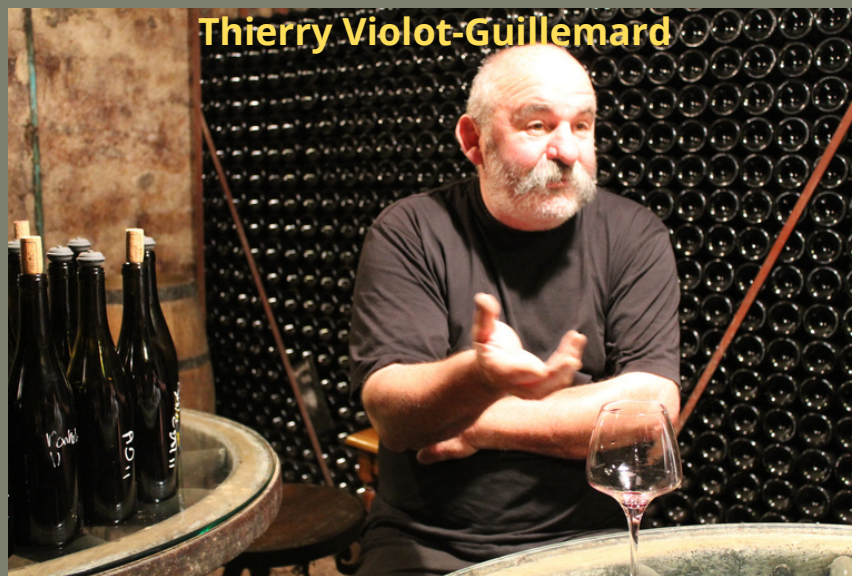
Legende

	Volnay Premier Cru
	Volnay

Renvois

	Village
	La Chapelle





Thierry Violot-Guillemard

Domaine Joannès Violot-Guillemard

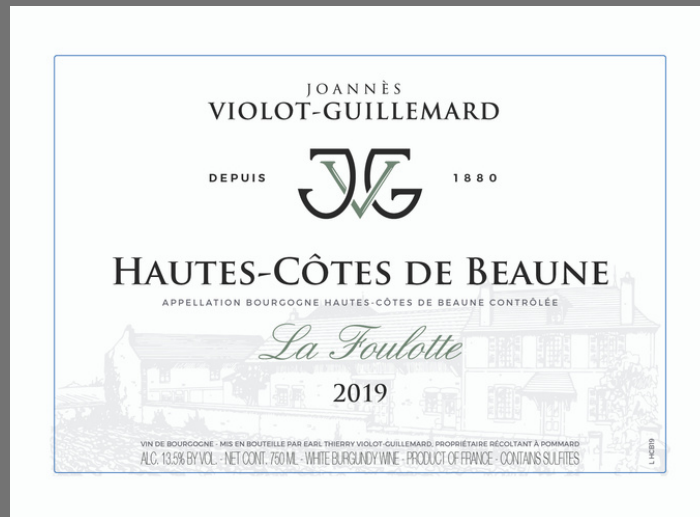
The transition has taken place, as of the 2019 vintage. Papa **Thierry** (above) has officially handed the reins to his son Joannès, who becomes the 5th generation of the family at the helm of this wonderful Pommard estate. Joannès' name now adorns the labels as well. The domaine has wonderful holdings throughout Pommard, including several 1er Crus, as well prime pieces of Volnay, Beaune, Monthélie, Auxey-Duresses and the Hautes-Côtes.

Violot-Guillemard has always been an outlier in Pommard, as their wines have typically been the most refined and elegant in the village. Pommard's reputation as wines of power and big tannins led many producers to focus on those characteristics, sometimes putting the pedal down a tad too far and forcing the wines in that direction. With Violot-Guillemard we see that there is indeed an underlying elegance to be found in Pommard. All of their wines, regardless of origin, tend to be beautifully balanced and seamless, walking the line between richness and finesse. I've been a massive fan for decades, and have been proudly importing these wines since the day we started.



Joannès Violot-Guillemard





2019 Hautes-Côtes de Beaune - "La Foulotte" - \$34

I was never much interested in Hautes-Côtes wines, until they started getting as good as this one! The same, meticulous organic farming and hands-off winemaking that make their 1er Crus so spectacular goes into this "humble" Hautes-Côtes bottling. Frankly, it beats the pants off a lot of folks' Village wines from "loftier" appellations.

This one's from an east-facing slope on a steep hillside high above Pommard. The warm and sunny 2019 vintage was a wonderful gift to the Hautes-Côtes, and the wine glistens with ripe berry-cherry fruit, layered nicely on a taut frame of minerals and earth notes. It is absolutely at its best with food - I love it with a roast chicken, hanger steak, or sausages on the grill. Enjoy now and over the next couple of years.

2019 Volnay "Cros Martin" - \$69

Thierry always told me that he had to wait until all of his ancestors had passed before he could buy a vineyard in Volnay (and he was serious!) The old-schoolers from Pommard wanted nothing to do with Volnay. Now, fortunately, we get to experience what Volnay can do in the hands of a 5th-generation Pommardois.

Cros Martin is on the low edge of the Volnay slope on the Meursault side, downslope from the 1er Cru Champans. The Violot-Guillemard parcel consists of 70+ year-old vines planted by Joannès' grandfather. Organically farmed, vinified with minimal intervention, this is a wine of supreme purity. Pretty red fruits, a heady perfume of flowers and wild berries, and a lovely texture that absolutely glides across the palate and lingers lovingly. Like most of the 2019s, it's drinking beautifully now, but you'll see it at its best in another 3-5 years.

2019 Pommard "en Brescul" - \$80

This hails from the most elegant sector of Pommard, at the very top of the slope on the northern half of the village. This parcel faces due east, as do most of the better sites through the Côte d'Or.

I know this site well, as the steep road that runs through it comes at about mile 9 of the Burgundy Half-Marathon that I used to run every November. You hit this hill just as you're starting to get tired and the tank is feeling pretty empty. I've seen grown men and women weeping as they struggle up that hill.

More importantly, it's a site that produces some very refined Pommard, a touch lighter in body and with more of a pronounced minerality than you'll find in most of the rest of the village. That said, it doesn't lack for power or muscle. It's nicely sculptured and toned, like an understated but serious body-builder. Black fruits predominate, and it's rich and full in the mouth, no rough edges, packed with flavor and ready to take on all manner of roasts, game, and grilled meats of all stripes. A mouthful of deliciousness!



Thiébauld Huber - a man and his tractor



Domaine Huber-Verdereau

In the 17 years we've been working with Thiéobault Huber and his beautiful Huber-Verdereau wines, he may have quietly done more for the good of Burgundy than anyone in recent memory.

He's evangelized for organic and biodynamic viticulture, and has succeeded in helping domaine after domaine become more sustainable. He's led the effort to create the anti-hail network that now defends the entirety of Burgundy. He created an eco-friendly tractor service station that is shared among many Côte de Beaune estates. He launched a shared enology lab to make it easier and more cost effective for everyone to access accurate info during harvest. For the past two years he's been the President of the Burgundy Winegrowers Assoc. - leading the effort to ban toxic weedkillers in the vineyards. Oh - and he also happens to make some killer wines :-)

Hats-off to Thiéobault for working tirelessly to help preserve the precious jewel that is Burgundy, and for providing our tables and cellars with so much good wine year after year.

He started with just over 7 acres in 1994, and has slowly expanded the domaine's holdings to 30+ acres, spread across Volnay, Pommard, Meursault, Puligny-Montrachet, Monthélie and the Hautes-Côtes de Beaune. Everything is farmed Biodynamically, with several parcels plowed by horse. These are wines of unadulterated purity - no artifice, no makeup - simply the purest expression of the terroir available.

2019 Hautes-Côtes de Beaune "Le Cretot à Droite" - \$29

Take the main road out of Beaune up in to the hills, and you'll arrive at the hamlet of Bouze-lès-Beaune, where high on the slope you'll find Thiéobault's little slice of a vineyard. It's a spectacular view up from up there, with the entirety of the Côte de Beaune spread out before you down below. The wine is as pretty as the view! Blackberries and griotte-cherries lead the charge across the palate, with a vibrant acidity underneath it all to keep it fresh and lively. A great choice for your next barbecue or pizza night, or simply to savor on its own at the end of the day. Just plain yummy!

2019 Volnay - \$50

The Huber-Verdereau Volnay comes from three different parcels in the village, all of which have been in the family for multiple generations. All three are on the Pommard side of Volnay, with two parcels in Les Grands Poisots that sit directly across from the Pommard border. The third parcel is in Les Famines, in the middle section of Volnay, and the more elegant of the three. The three parcels were planted 18, 46 and 50 years ago, and together total under 2 acres. All of them combined produced a rich and robust example of Volnay - bursting with raspberry fruit and a lovely silkiness on the mid-palate, picking up some structure and muscle as it glides along to the impressive finish.

Thiébault's wines typically start to show their best 3-5 years from the vintage, and this one has the potential to age nicely for 10+. Enjoy it now with a little air, or let it rest in the cellar to develop more layers of aromas and flavors over the years.



Pommard in the foreground, Volnay in the distance

2019 Pommard "En Vaumuriens Haut" - \$50

Up at the top of the hill on the southern half of Pommard lies another spot with stunning views - "En Vaumuriens Haut". Looking down on all of the vines from Beaune to Meursault, it's quite a lovely sight. Thiébault's parcels are 40 and 86 years old now, and are consistently producing beautifully concentrated and intense wine.

It makes a Pommard that is somewhat lighter on its feet, more mineral focused. The inherent power and structure of Pommard is still clearly present, but it allows a gentler, crisper side to show through. It would be a shame to drink this without some great food. A grilled ribeye, a pork tenderloin in mustard sauce, a pan-roasted veal chop - Yes, Please!!!

Next shipment in the Fall...

I hope you've enjoyed our continuing exploration of all things Burgundian. Thanks for joining us! Watch your email for information on our next Caveau Burgundy Club shipment coming in the fall, and for pre-arrival offerings on all the yummy wines headed your way throughout the year. All the latest information is always available on our website: www.CaveauSelections.com

Please let us know if we need to make any changes to your account. You can update us on our secure form online at <https://www.caveauselections.com/credit-card-update-form>

- If you have a new or updated credit card
- If you have a change of billing or shipping address
- If you want to change your order from "ship" to "pick-up", or vice-versa
- If you have any questions about your Club membership

Launched in 2005, Caveau Selections is owned and operated by Martha & Scott Wright, importers and winemakers in Oregon, Burgundy and Campagne since 1999. Scott has been drinking and studying the wines and regions of Burgundy and Champagne since the 1970s, and visiting regularly since the 1980s. He Co-produced and directed the award winning Burgundy documentary film **Three Days of Glory**, leads annual Insiders' Tours of both Burgundy and Champagne, and teaches seminars here and abroad. Email Scott@caveauselections.com for more information.

