

Some Best

QUICK GUIDE TO BURGUNDY

Villages to Know

Producers

GEVEREY CHAMBERTIN

Grand Crus: Le Chambertin, Chambertin Clos de Bèze, Mazis-Chambertin, Latricières-Chambertin, Ruchottes-Chambertin, Griottes-Chambertin, Chapelle-Chambertin, Charmes-Chambertin

Premiers Crus:

Combe au Moine, les Cazetiers, Estourmelles St Jacques, Clos St Jacques, Aux Combottes.

MOREY ST DENIS

Grand Crus: Clos St Denis, Bonnes Mares, Clos de la Roche, Clos des Lambrays, Clos de Tart,

Premier Crus:

Les Ruchots, La Bussière, La Faconnières.

CHAMBOLLE MUSIGNY

Grand Crus: Musigny, Bonnes Mares,

Premiers Crus:

Les Amoureuses, Les Beaux-Bruns, Les Cras, Les Fuées, Les Vérolles.

VOUGEOT

Grand Crus: Clos du Vougeot

VOSNE ROMANÉE

Grand Crus: Romanée-Conti, La Tâche, Richebourg, Romanée Saint-Vivant, Romanée, La Grande Rue

Premiers Crus:

Aux Raignots, Les Chaumes, Les Suchots, Aux Brûlées, Les Beaux Monts, Combe Brûlée.

FLAGEY-ECHEZEAUX

Grands Crus: Echézeaux, Grands-Echézeaux

NUITS ST GEORGE

Premier Crus: Les Caillies, Les Vaucrains, Les St Georges, Aux Murgers, Aux Boudots.

SAVIGNY LE BEAUNE

Premier Crus: Les Lavères, Aux Vergées, Les Narbantons, Les Grands Liards, Les Perrières, Les Foumeux.

BEAUNE

Premiers Crus: Les Epénots, Les Jarielliers, Les Fremiers, Les Charmots, Les Combes, Les Bressandes.

POMMARD

Premiers Crus: Les Epenots, Les Jarielliers, Les Fremiers, Les Charmots, Les Combes, Les Bressandes.

VOLNAY

Premier Crus: Champans, Les Caillerets, Les Angles, Clos des Chênes, Clos de la Pousse d'Or, Les Pucelots, La Gigotte.

MEURSAULT

Top Premiere Cru's: Les Perrières, Les Genevrières, Les Charmes

PULIGNY-MONTRACHET

Top Grand Cru: Le Montrachet, Chevalier Montrachet, Batard-Montrachet

Top 1er Cru

Les Demeiselles, Le Cailleret, Les Pucelles, Les Demeiselles, Les Combettes, Les Foaiettes

CHASSAGNE - MONTRACHET

Grand Cru (shared): Le Montrachet, Batard-Montrachet, Criots-Batard-Montrachet

Top 1er Cru

Bouchard Bichot, Rateau, Chanson, Boillot, Armand, De Courcel, Royer-Girardin, Mar's d'Angerville, Boillot, Lafarge, Montille, Rossignol

Ampeau, Bouzeres

30 1er Crus & uniquely "deuxieme" Crus that are exceptional lieu-dits awarded special status plus village wines. More growers (100+) bottling their own wine than anywhere else in Burgundy. The best wines are dry, round, rich, buttery, ripe, fruity with a signature hazelnut flavour. Best 1er Crus are Les Perriers from Bouchard, Ampeau, Morey, Les Genevrières by Jadot, Boisson, Bouchard, Les Charmes by Bocard, Bouchard, Jobard. The Lieux-dits are Les Narvaux, Les Tillets, Le Clous. Les Casse Tetes & Les Vieilles all worth a mention and slightly more steely and racy. Village wines tend to sell off the back of the brand but many are "empty & anonymous".

Carillon, Leflaive

PULIGNY-MONTRACHET - "the greatest white wine in the world" 2 Grand Crus of Chevaliers & Bienvenue-Batard plus half of each of Le Montrachet & Batard. 26 1er Crus produce 572,000 bottles inc. La Combette, Demeiselle, Le Cailleret, Le Pucelles plus a village wine. The style is more mineral than Meursault with green apple, blossom, hazelnut, lemon-grass and even honey notes. Well bred and beautifully balanced delicate and refined. There are 4-5,000 labels produced every year. Not all represent the quality you'd expect for the price.

Ramonet, B Collin

CHASSAGNE - MONTRACHET - shares borders with Meursault/Puligny (& Le Montrachet & Batard GC with Puligny) with Croit-Batard-Montrachet all of its own. 51 1er Crus the best of which are Morgot, Cailleret, Les Champ Gain, Les Chenevottes, Les Rochettes 25% of which is red (Les Boudrotte, Morgot, Clos St-Jean particularly by Ramonet). Village wines are 50/50 red/white. Whites display similar characteristics to its near neighbours depending on location of site. Generally not as full as Meursault and less floral that Puligny, nevertheless some exceptional wines displaying green apple, pear, almond, lime zest, butter-, described as complex, steely & structured. The reds can be great value even though a little austere in youth and never reaching the heights of finesse of its northern cousins. It is nevertheless a good, typical red Burgundy.

Hubert Lamy

SAINT-AUBIN - crisp, racy white wines resembling Puligny its near neighbour. Reds that are a smoother, more supple version of Chassagne reds. 29 1er Crus of varying quality, best of which Les Charmois, En Remilly, Les Murgers, La Châteniere. Both red & white Village wines are light, crisp and even though thin in poor vintages, can still represent good value.

Roger Bequin

SANTENAY - fourth largest commune in Burgundy producing 700,000 bottles red & 45,000 white. 13 1er Crus, the best of which are La Crisp, Comme, Les Gravières, Clos de Tavannes & La Maladiere which are lighter and quite refined. Village wines are earthy, solid and more rustic. Whites are crisp, medium bodied & fruity. Improving all the time but selecting good producer yields very good Burgundy reds.

JC Regnaudot

MARANGE - furthest south of Cote de Beaune, produces interesting, medium bodied Pinot Noirs that can be good value historically ended up in Cote de Beaune; Village blends. Now look for one of 10 1er Crus in one of three villages Cheilly (Clos de Boutiere, La Fusiere, Dezize (La Croix Moins) or Sampigny (Les Maranges Les Clos de Rois)

Denis Boussey,

MontHELIE - the 1er Cru wines of say Les Champ Fulliot, Le Clos de Vane or Sur la Velle are next to Volnay and while less concentrated can produce similar style, if not lesser quality wine that can be good bargains. Village wines are rustic, lacking any finesse.

Cote Chalonnaise

BOUZERON - Aligoté is the main grape with its fresh, mineral, buttermilk character that can be quite delicious.

Brnday, Breliere

RULLY - 4.5M Btls. of Cremant de Bourgogne are made here together with 2 m Btls. of still wine 65% white which displays a lemon/floral character with good acidity giving it a leaner, more interesting style than those of Montagny/Giry. The reds are light but not unappealing for the money.

Faveley

MERCUREY - one of largest communes in Burgundy, mostly Pinot Noir and most expensive red of Chalonnaise. Deep colour, fuller bodied, earthy & ageworthy. Bad vintages lack fruit and body. 32 1er Crus inc. La Cailloute and its top white wine, Clos de Barraults, Champs Martin & best of all Clos du Roy.

Guillemette, Parize

GIVRY - mostly red that fall between Mercurey & Rully. Lighter, more delicate but good fruit concentration and ability to age. 25 1er Crus inc. Les Grand Pretans, Clos de la Barraude, Clos de la Servoise.

Vignerons de Bux

MONTAGNY - white Burgundy with more body, more acidity, honeyed than other whites of the region. Everyone it seems is a 1er Cru (all it needed was 11.5%abv) Now 21 1er Cru have more stringent requirements and this is a good place to buy reliable, typical Burgundy white wine. Village wines can be ordinary.

Lugny M-coop

Maconnais Worth of mention are the medium bodied, mostly unoaked, supple yet fresh whites with pure apple and tangine notes. From inexpensive AOC to wines that rival the best of Burgundy, all of which represent excellent value from good producers. Vire-Clesse is a heady, full bodied white, lacks complexity but good fruit concentration, characteristics similar to Pouilly-Loche and Vinzelles. Generic Maco-Village is generally a good quality and very consistent from negociant producers like Jadot.

Cht. Fuisse

POUILLY-FUISSE - is a step up in quality and can rival Burgundies of Cote de Beaune and commands highest prices in the region. Communes of Fuisse, Solutre (POUILLY) produce fuller, richer wines while Vergisson and Chaintres at higher elevations make lighter fresher styles.

Beaujolais

Immediately south of the Maconnais this area produces 133m bottles a year, as much as the rest of Burgundy put together. Here the Gamay grape rules with its signature "bubble gum" flavour derived as much from semi-carbonic fermentation used here as the grape itself. AOC wines, including the branded Nouveau, can be sourced from anywhere in the region but in practice mainly come from the fatter, lower quality southern vineyards. Fresh, fruity, low intensity easy drinking wines that can be good and inexpensive. About 50% of production.

Basty; de Vergers;

Beune; Burgaud Village wines will have an individual village named on the label and represent a step up from AOC e.g. Lantigne, La Peron. More fruit intensity particularly with better producers where the wines can be very good or even outstanding displaying cherry, raspberry red plum and kirsch/banana characters making them purple in colour.

Louis Claude,

Metras; Terriere Piron; Lapiere Sunier; Tete; Brun Thivin; Voute des Crozes Cru Wines - In the hilly northern vineyards are the top wines or Crus. Altogether 10 of them that can represent some of the most innovative, outstanding value wines in the world. About 25% of production from Brouilly, Chenas, Chrolothes, Cote de Brouilly, Fleurie, Julienas, Morgon, Moulin-a-Vent, Regnie and Saint-Amour. St-Amour - rich, silky & spicy. Julienas - quite powerful, floral spicy. Chenas - supple, graceful, hint of roses. Moulin-a-Vent - full bodied, rich, well balanced, ageworthy. Fleurie - most feminine Cru; velvety, fruity & floral, ageworthy. Chiroubles - light body, low tannin, violets. Morgon - full body, masculine, deep purple, apricots, peaches, earthy, ageworthy. Regnie - full bodied, red currant, round, raspberry. Brouilly - fruity, raspberries, blueberry, pinkish colour.

Context - Burgundy is defined by its terroir first and foremost, then the structure of its wine business and most of all by the quality of individual producers. For whatever reason, the uniqueness of the soil, the weather systems and especially the aspect of the various slopes on the Cote D'Or (absent the frost, rain or hail that can destroy a harvest) continue even in this marginal area for grape growing, to produce the most sublime wines in the world.

From medieval times Benedictine & Cistercian monks recognised the best sites for ripening grapes which they enclosed with walls (clos) to protect them from plague, people & pests and in the process began the detailed classification of the individual vineyards which remains largely intact to this day.

The vineyards were small by say, Bordeaux standards, and even then the Church and aristocracy who owned them rarely grew the fruit themselves. Instead, they contracted a web of leasess & sub letttings to growers who tended the vines and sold their fruit to negociants who bought in economic enough volumes to make and sell the wines. Ownership may have changed with the bourgeoisie benefiting from the French revolution and the Napoleonic code of inheritance simply replaced the highly fragmented ownership with sons of the new owners diluting ownership over the generations; as a result, any given vineyard today has many owners whose style & quality can vary wildly even within vineyards of the same name and reputation. With increasing numbers of growers also now making the wine the quality of these new producers is critical to the quality of the wine.

Size - this is a small region. Just 80 miles north (Dijon) to south (Macon), along a narrow 1 m wide chalk ridge that broadens out and gains elevation in Chalonnaise and Maconnais where Pouilly Fuisse is the last stop before reaching the rolling hills of Beaujolais Cru's and eventually flattening out to Beaujolais Nouveau country! Unusually for a wine region, there is no river.

Negociants - this fragmentation of ownership meant that it was uneconomic for the individual families to make wine, let alone sell it as a finished product. The negociants would buy grapes, match various parcels and do that for them. As the price of these wines increased dramatically however the economics changed and the negociants began buying vineyards while many growers became petit negociants.

Vineyards - small and fragmented with several growers who own just a row or two and produce small quantities of wine or sell the fruit to negociants. The site of each vineyard is critical. Lower, flatter land produces basic Bourgogne wines with the fruit being sourced from a wide variety of AOC designated vineyards. Basic Village wines are designated vineyards close to the named village which are deemed better quality. 1er Cru fruit is grown on lower slopes with Grand Cru's almost always occupying the most prestigious mid-slopes preferably East and SE facing.

Sub Regions - Chablis, Cote de Nuits & Cote de Beaune (both in Cote d'Or) Cote Chalonnaise, Maconnais & Beaujolais (technically Burgundy even though it is 100% Gamay and is often overlooked)

Producers/Domains - in 1970's just 15% of Cote d'Or wines produced by domaines with negociant's dominating. Today however 60%+ as higher prices encourage smaller Domains to sell direct and supplement their volume by acting as petit negociants themselves. Negociants still dominate bottom end of market; larger ones like Jadot, Bouchard, Drouhin have acquired a comprehensive portfolio of vineyards that include several 1er and Grand Cru's Co-operatives are important only in Chablis where the excellent La Chablisienne accounts for 33% of production and in the Maconnais where the Cave du Lugny's 240 family-owned farms, and 3000+ acres of vineyards grow only Chardonnay. Note that Domains will own small sections of vineyards across very many communes, producing a wide range of wines that bear their name. Today, fine Burgundy can only really come from the Domains themselves.

CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM table with columns: Level, Grand Cru, Premiere Cru, Village, Regional/District. Rows: Number, % of Production, Examples, Note.

Quality - the net result of the issues described above is that at every quality level, even the most expensive, there is no guarantee of quality. It is only when you know the producer and are informed of the vintage conditions, can you be assured of quality. Even your Gevry Chambertin can be sublime from one producer or utterly hopeless from another on the next row. Another quality indicator is the yield. The number of vines planted per hectare should be less than 50.

The Burgundy classification system itself is deceptively simple being divided into 4 ascending quality grades, Bourgogne, Village, Premier Cru & Grand Cru. Unfortunately, each vineyard in Burgundy often have many owners (the 50 hectares of Clos Vougeot's 100 plots and 80 individual owners comes to mind) who produce widely different styles and quality levels which all have the same classified vineyard name on the label. Growers also only get one shot at harvesting in a region where weather can be challenging. If the minuscule amount of grapes are not perfect, because there is no declassification to a lower level as with say Bordeaux, this means that your Vosne-Romanée Premiers Cru Malconsorts, is what it is in any given vintage. Historically nearly 20% of whites suffered from a mysterious "premax" quality has improved but issue not gone entirely. Check the retailers returns policy! Perception of quality versus bolder alternatives. The Cote de Nuits is the northernmost region for red wine, and the thin skinned Pinot Noir naturally leads to finer, lighter wines. This is particularly true at lower price points where the grapes are grown on higher yields on the flatter land. Producers are not classified, the vineyard is. So the key to quality is to find a producer you like, and follow them!

Understanding the Label - confusing in the extreme as a number of producers appear to be selling exactly the same wine! Here are the basics: Grand Cru wines need only display the name of the vineyard e.g. Le Musigny. Because these are appellations in their own right, the only way of understanding what's in the bottle is knowledge of these prestigious vineyards. The label reveals little else to inform you as to quality. No Grand or 1er Cru. Premier Cru (and lieu-dits) however must have the name of the village preceding the vineyard name. Meursault "La Perrieres" is sufficient. Adding 1er Cru optional. A further complication is that several villages decided to append the names of their most famous vineyards to the name e.g. the village of Gevry was appended by Chambertin to give Gevrey + Chambertin Aloxe & Corton similarly. Even worse, both Puligny and Chassagne chose their shared best vineyard Montrachet! Village wines simply show the name of the village e.g. Chambertin (not to be confused by the GC vineyard) and the AOC wines simply Bourgogne.

Style - for such a small region dominated by just two main grape varieties, Pinot Noir & Chardonnay, Burgundy has a wide spectrum of styles. Still whites & reds to Cremant and even some Rosé. While the aspect (riper bolder) altitude (acidity) and latitude (colder) all influence the basic characteristics of the wine, it is the producer who ultimately determines the quality & style. For this reason, you can find widely varying wines produced from the very same vineyard as producers use key processes as extraction times, the use of oak & the proportion of new versus old, the time spent in barrel, and the size of the barrels etc. Is the wine filtered & fined and what level of acidity and alcohol is sought. Is malolactic fermentation allowed to take place - these and other decisions determine the style (& quality) of the finished product.

There are however some general styles that may be regarded as typical from each commune:

CHABLIS - a magnificent and understated cool climate Chardonnay. Typically green-gold, zesty, lean, high acidity, bright minerality with notes of gunflint, grilled nuts, green apple & lemon yet rich and concentrated at the same time. Traditionally unoaked but some now use limited new oak, adding hints of toast and vanilla. Grand Cru's and many 1er Cru's represent the best value whites in Burgundy. Generic Chablis is a mixed affair with significant expansion of vineyards over the past 20 years leading to highly variable quality. The lowest level Petit Chablis is dry and crisp but lacks the flavour intensity of even generic Chablis. The classy La Chablisienne co-operative produces 30% of all Chablis and is a great place to start buying. Drink Petit Chablis within 2 years of vintage, generic Chablis 4 years, 1er Cru's 8 & Grand Cru 12.

Cote de Nuits MARSANNAY - unique in Burgundy for producing Red (65%), White (20%) & Rosé (15%). Not however regarded as a serious Burgundy. Reds are medium bodied and lighter than those further south in Cote de Nuits, aromas of red and black fruit, can however be stylish and good value. The whites are equally light, crisp, lean, fruity but, interesting citrus, melon, peach, apple notes with Pinot Blanc used in the blend with Chardonnay. The better Rosé's can be quite elegant yet zesty from a blend of Pinot Noir and Pinot Gris, with up to 10 percent Chardonnay and Pinot Blanc. With few exceptions these are very good early drinking wines. (2-3 years max.) No 1er Cru's yet but look out for the excellent Clos du Roy and Les Longeroises earmarked for elevation.

FIXIN (Fissan) - an affordable introduction to red Burgundy. This northern Cote de Nuit commune is often overlooked but draws comparison with its near neighbour Gevry-Chambertin for its full flavored, well balanced wines. The eight 1er Cru's range from the feminine, elegant, lighter Les Arvelets & Les Hervelots to the more concentrated wines of its best known site, Clos de la Perrière. Village wines are described as "sauvage", many being very basic and austere, but over time the Clos du Chapitre and Domaine du Clos Napoleon develop interesting, softer characters with good depth. Domaine du Clos Saint-Louis is a serious Burgundy as are those produced by Pierre Gelin and Denis Bertha. Village wines drink in 2 years, 1er Crus 6-8 years many of which represent excellent value.

GEVEREY - CHAMBERTIN - the "King" of Burgundian wine known for its "sumptuous, savoury" style at all levels. Deeper colour & firmer than Chambertin/Romanée. There are 9 Grand Cru's, 26 1er Cru's & the largest production of village wines in the Cote de Nuits. Range from firm, full bodied wines to lighter, more perfumed wines. At the top of the tree is the Chambertin Grand Cru, austere in youth but develop into a full, firm, sumptuously masculine wine. Clos de Beze Grand Cru is more perfumed and more feminine. 1er Cru wines reveal some outstanding examples to rival the GC's Clos Saint-Jaques' are distinctive, full bodied wines with Combottes, Cazetiers and Combe aux Moines probably the best. What's interesting is that there are single vineyard Village wines that represent the best value. All the merchants are good and look out for Dugat, Drouhin-Lazare, Burget.

MOREY-SAINT DENIS - a lighter version of Gevry and almost all red. Less fragrant than Chambolle but less masculine than Gevry. Lush and fruity. There are 4 Grand Crus of which Clos St. Denis is quintessential & Clos de la Roche which is regarded as the best. 20 1er Cru's but most very small giving them each their own personality e.g. Les Chaffots with good acidity, red currant, cherry. Clos De Ormes & Les Milandes offer the best with ripe black cherry and blackberry. Good but not great are Clos Sorbé and La Riotte have less finesse and La Ruchots that can be full bodied and robust.

CHAMBOLLE-MUSIGNY - rich, velvety elegance. Lighter in structure but every bit as intense as Gevry and rivals the finesse of a Vosne-Romanée. Just two Grand Cru's Bonnes - Mares (full firm and sturdy but not a typical Chambolle) and Le Musigny (the most delicious red in Burgundy) 24 1er Cru's produce 272,000 bottles (Les Amoureuses is silky smooth, intense, or the classic Les Charmes with Les Sentiers, Les Baudes Aux Echanges and others being good value Chambolle. Village wines produce 540,000 bottles some of which represent great value Chambolle even though they command high prices.

VOUGEOT - this famous but tiny AOC village for red and white wines is dominated by the largest Grand Cru in the Cote de Nuit, Clos Vougeot. Unfortunately, as a result of the inferior terroir & the highly fragmented ownership this is described as a 2nd class GC that is light bodied and usually lacks the fruit concentration & finesse of its neighbours. Dense when young after 10 years beautifully rich, truffled. Look for 4 1er Crus La Cras and Les Petite Vougeot the best.

VOSNE-ROMANÉE - the greatest Pinot on earth. Rich, sensual, austere, masculine and aristocratic. It's world renowned Grand Cru's of Echezeaux, La Romanée St. Vivant & La Romanée Conti are complemented by 12 1er Cru's of which Cros Parantoux is regarded most highly. Village wines are red only, producing 625,000 bottles, none of which are anything but outstanding themselves. Two of the Grand Cru's originally of neighbouring Flagey - Echezeaux have been absorbed.

NUITS-SAINT GEORGE - mostly red with no Grand Crus but 27 1er Cru's of consistently high quality. Big, strong, Chambertin style wines from Aux Boudots Le Caille, Clos Ariot and particularly the Faveley monopole Clos de Marechale. Village level are large production, very ordinary wines.

HAUTES COTE DE NUITS & HAUTES COTE DE BEAUNE - above the more famous communes of the Cote d'Or lie particular sites that can produce some very good wines. Mostly reds, some of these Bourgogne village wines can be some of the best values in Burgundy now that warmer vintages see riper fruit even at the higher elevations. Look out for village Bourgognes from Arcenant and Concoeur. Whites used for Cremant by and large. Hautes Cote de Beaune are lighter, and whites good for early drinking from Devevey and Rollin worth trying as are reds from Chevrot, Carrie & Champy. Caves des Hautes-Côtes. Beaune is the Chablisienne of the region, and in warm vintages produce some particularly worthy wines.

Cote de Beaune PERNAND-VERGÉESSES - on the wrong side of the Corton hill, the grapes can struggle to ripen, however some Village wines are good. Whites are crisp, with vibrant acidity with flowery, herbal tones. The reds, are surprisingly robust, yet nicely structured Pinot Noirs both of which can be consistently good from Louis Jadot. The reds in particular represent an excellent and inexpensive introduction to Burgundy. There are 9 1er Cru's the best of which and a great bargain is le De Vergées that displays the characteristics of some of its more illustrious neighbours. Full bodied, black cherry, damson and intense.

LADOIX - SERRIGNY - cheap by Burgundy standards. Good value, fresh whites (& Grechons) and juicy, sometimes rustic reds (les Joyeuses). Bit inconsistent but improving. Of the 11 seek out, Cachat-Occidant et Fils, Chevalier Oere and Edmond Cornu; Faveley and especially Le Clos from Priueré-Roche

CORTON GRAND CRU & ALOXE CORTON - Corton is distinct from the communal Aloxe-Corton village so take care not to confuse the two. Corton is the largest Grand Cru in Burgundy (1/3 of total) but frankly some is not of GC standard. Mainly reds that are big & fruity, some can be tannic. Best are from higher slopes like Clos du Roi, Bressandes while those on lower slope can be quite simple wines. Corton - Charlemagne is the outstanding Chardonnay GC that on occasion, rivals the wines of Meursault. Aloxe-Corton are the lesser wine although better than Ladoix and Pernand. Mainly reds, where some of the 1er Crus can be quite substantial with plenty of colour and depth e.g. Les Vercots, Les Guereets, while others like Le Meix can however be a little harder, leaner. It really does depend upon which end of the Corton hill they are positioned.

SAVIGNY-LES - BEAUNE another less fashionable Burgundy village that offers good, inexpensive wines, both red and white. Depending upon which slope the vineyard lies on, the wines will be medium & elegant or more structured and earthier. The small amount of white is interesting but not as good as the Meursault further south, but is Chardonnay co-planted with Pinot Blanc which reduces acidity and adds spice. There are 22 1er Cru's of which Les Lavères, Aux Gravains and Les Marconnets are best. Village wines both red and white are good, especially the lieu-dits Les Gollards and Les Vermots.

CHORLEY - LES-BEAUNE - no 1er Cru's, mostly red and half sold as Cote-de-Beaune Village. Soft plump and fruit forward. Rather average, but affordable wine. Try Tilot-Beaut and of course Drouhin, Jadot.

BEAUNE AOC - mostly red, with three quarters of vineyards 1er Cru's the best of which are Le Clos de Mouche and Le Grevas that need 5-10 years in bottle. Good rather than very good but home to negociants Drouhin, Jadot, Latour & Bouchard.

POMMARD - red only, best in Cote de Beaune after Corton GC. 28 1er Crus best of which La Chaniere, Le Village, Les Rugiens (power) Les Epénots (stylish). Village to watch as warmer vintages occur but 1.2m bottles of Village wines otherwise quite ordinary. 1er Crus vary in style from earthy, round to rich & elegant. Known for being big, powerful & masculine. Producers Bichot, Boillot, Cht. De Pommard watch for Clerget, Lejeune, Commaraine.

VOLNAY - reds only that are elegant, delicate, velvety with finesse. Smallest commune with 34 1er Crus, the best of which are Clos de Chenes, Les Caillerets Santenots, Les Champans, Taille Pieds. Known for its delicacy & smoothness, in the same "feminine" group as Chambolle-Musigny. No Grand Cru. Reliably excellent including at AOC level where prices can be relatively inexpensive.

MEURSAULT - 3rd largest area under vine after Gevry and Beaune; produces as much white wine as all other communes put together. No Grand Cru but 30 1er Crus & uniquely "deuxieme" Crus that are exceptional lieu-dits awarded special status plus village wines. More growers (100+) bottling their own wine than anywhere else in Burgundy. The best wines are dry, round, rich, buttery, ripe, fruity with a signature hazelnut flavour. Best 1er Crus are Les Perriers from Bouchard, Ampeau, Morey, Les Genevrières by Jadot, Boisson, Bouchard, Les Charmes by Bocard, Bouchard, Jobard. The Lieux-dits are Les Narvaux, Les Tillets, Le Clous. Les Casse Tetes & Les Vieilles all worth a mention and slightly more steely and racy. Village wines tend to sell off the back of the brand but many are "empty & anonymous".

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SAINT-AUBIN - crisp, racy white wines resembling Puligny its near neighbour. Reds that are a smoother, more supple version of Chassagne reds. 29 1er Crus of varying quality, best of which Les Charmois, En Remilly, Les Murgers, La Châteniere. Both red & white Village wines are light, crisp and even though thin in poor vintages, can still represent good value.

SANTENAY - fourth largest commune in Burgundy producing 700,000 bottles red & 45,000 white. 13 1er Crus, the best of which are La Crisp, Comme, Les Gravières, Clos de Tavannes & La Maladiere which are lighter and quite refined. Village wines are earthy, solid and more rustic. Whites are crisp, medium bodied & fruity. Improving all the time but selecting good producer yields very good Burgundy reds.

MARANGE - furthest south of Cote de Beaune, produces interesting, medium bodied Pinot Noirs that can be good value historically ended up in Cote de Beaune; Village blends. Now look for one of 10 1er Crus in one of three villages Cheilly (Clos de Boutiere, La Fusiere, Dezize (La Croix Moins) or Sampigny (Les Maranges Les Clos de Rois)

MontHELIE - the 1er Cru wines of say Les Champ Fulliot, Le Clos de Vane or Sur la Velle are next to Volnay and while less concentrated can produce similar style, if not lesser quality wine that can be good bargains. Village wines are rustic, lacking any finesse.

