

Chablis

SOIL	2002
THE DANGER OF FROST	2001
THE <i>GRANDS CRUS</i>	2000
Blanchots	1999
Bougros	
Les Clos	
Les Grenouilles	
Les Preuses	
Valmur	
Vaudésir	
THE <i>PREMIERS CRUS</i>	
CHABLIS AND PETIT CHABLIS	
MANUAL VERSUS MECHANICAL HARVESTING	
OAK OR NOT	
THE WINE	
CHABLIS'S BEST SOURCES	
WHEN SHOULD YOU DRINK CHABLIS?	
RECENT VINTAGES	
2005	
2004	
2003	
	THE LEADING DOMAINS AND MERCHANTS
	Christian Adine
	Domaine de la Conciergerie
	Domaine Barat
	Domaine Jean-Claude Bessin
	Domaine Alain Besson
	Domaine Billaud-Simon
	Domaine/Maison Pascal Bouchard
	François Boudin
	Domaine de Chantemerle
	Domaine/Maison Jean-Marc Brocard
	Cave Coopérative La Chablisienne
	Domaine Christophe et Fils
	Domaine Jean Collet et Fils
	Domaine Daniel Dampit
	Domaine Agnès and Didier Dauvissat
	Domaine Jean and Sébastien Dauvissat
	Domaine Vincent Dauvissat
	Domaine Bernard Defaix
	Maison Sylvain and Didier Defaix
	Domaine Daniel-Étienne Defaix

Domaine du Vieux Chateau
 Domaine Benoît Droin
 Domaine Joseph Drouhin
 Domaine Gérard Duplessis
 Domaine Jean Durup Père et Fils
 Chateau de Maligny
 Domaine de l'Églantière
 Domaine William Fèvre
 Domaine Garnier et Fils
 Domaine Raoul Gautherin et Fils
 Domaine Alain Gautheron
 Domaine Corinne and Jean-Pierre Grossot
 Domaine Perchaud
 Domaine Thierry Hamelin
 Jean and Romuald Hugot
 Domaine de Pisse-Loup
 Maison Jadot
 Domaine Chantal and Claude Laroche
 Domaine/Maison Michel Laroche
 Maison Olivier Leflaive Frères
 Bernard Legland
 Domaine des Marronniers
 Domaine Long-Depaquit
 Lyne and Jean-Bernard Marchive
 Domaine des Malandes
 Domaine Louis Michel et Fils
 Domaine Alice and Olivier De Moor
 Domaine Christian Moreau Père et Fils
 Domaine Louis Moreau
 Domaine de Biéville
 Domaine du Cèdre Doré
 Domaine Moreau-Naudet
 Domaine Sylvain Mosnier
 Thierry Mothe
 Domaine du Colombier
 Domaine Christianne and Jean-Claude Oudin

Domaine Gilbert Picq et Fils
 Frédéric Prain
 Domaine d'Élise
 Domaine Pinson Frères
 Domaine Denis Race
 Domaine Raveneau
 Maison Regnard
 Domaine Guy Robin
 Domaine Francine and Olivier Savary
 Domaine Roger Séguinot-Bordet
 Domaine Servin
 Domaine/Maison Simmonet-Fèbvre
 Domaine Philippe Testut
 Gérard Tremblay
 Domaine des Iles
 Domaine Laurent Tribut
 Domaine Tribut-Dauvissat
 Maison/Domaine Olivier Tricon
 Domaine de Vauroux
 Maison Verget
 Claude Vilain
 Domaine de la Chaude Écuelle
 Domaine du Chateau de Viviers
 Domaine Yvon Vocoret
 Domaine Vocoret et Fils

OTHER WINES OF THE YONNE

Irancy

Saint-Bris

Bourgogne

Yonne Leading Domains

S.I.C.A. du Vignoble Auxerrois

Caves Bailly-Lapierre

Domaine Anita and Jean-Pierre Colinot

Domaine Ghislaine and Jean-Hugues

Goisot

EQUIDISTANT BETWEEN Champagne, San-
cerre at the eastern end of the Loire Valley and
the Côte d'Or, the isolated region of Chablis lies
on the banks of the small river Serein in the
Yonne *département*. A dozen kilometres away,
the Paris-Lyon *autoroute* cuts a great concrete
swathe through the fields of wheat, maize and
pasture. Across the *autoroute* you come to the

busy city of Auxerre, dominated by its cathedral
of Saint-Étienne.

But Chablis lies in a backwater, on the road
to nowhere of any importance. The town of the
same name is sleepy and rural—hardly more,
indeed, than a large village. There are no build-
ings of any note and nothing, really, to distin-
guish it from a hundred other small towns in

arable France—nothing except for what is produced from a single noble grape which has found here an ideal soil in which to thrive. This grape is the Chardonnay. The soil is a peculiar and highly individual mixture of chalky limestone and clay, and the resulting wine is one of the world's best-known dry white wines, but one quite different from other Chardonnays produced 150 kilometres further south in the Côte de Beaune.

A century or more ago, before the arrival of *phylloxera*, the Burgundian vineyard began at Sens and continued, uninterrupted, through the Auxerrois and down to Montbard and Dijon. There were then in the Yonne as many as 40,000 hectares under vine. Much of the resulting wine, no doubt, was thin and very ordinary, destined to be consumed directly from the cask in the *comptoirs* of Paris and the other conurbations of northern France. Chablis and the other local vineyards benefited greatly from this close proximity to the capital; however, with the arrival of the *phylloxera* louse—rather later than in the Côte d'Or, for it did not seriously begin to affect the Chablis vines until 1893—coupled with increasing competition from the Midi once the railway system connecting Paris with the south had been completed, most of the Yonne vineyards disappeared. This decline was further accentuated by World War I and the resulting economic stagnation and rural depopulation. By 1945, when a particularly savage frost totally destroyed the potential harvest—not a single bottle of Chablis was produced in this vintage—the total area under vine was down to less than

500 hectares. As late as the severe winter of 1956, the locals were skiing in February down what is now the *grand cru* of Les Clos.

Since then, however, there has been a gradual but accelerating increase in the total area of vineyards to 4,755 hectares in 2005. As more efficient methods of combating the ever-present threat of frost damage have been devised, as greater control of other potential depredations of the yield has been introduced and as more prolific strains of Chardonnay have been planted, production has risen disproportionately from an average of around 24,000 hectolitres per annum in the 1960s to more than ten times as much in the early 2000s.

The local *Bureau Interprofessionnel* announced in 2003 that the *surfaces délimitées* (i.e., authorised for production) are as much as 6,830 hectares. In case you might think that the extra, over what is planted today, is in marginal land, I can only tell you that their potential *grand cru* and *premier cru* figures are only 2 hectares higher than the 2001 levels. So you may well be right. Will these theoretical 2,500 extra hectares *really* produce good Chablis, or will they produce just a palatable non-oaky Chardonnay, hardly indistinguishable from a Mâcon?

SOIL

The heartland of the Chablis region is the southwest-facing slope north of the town. Here all the *grands crus* are situated in a continuous line, adjacent to some of the best of the *premier*

Chablis

	SURFACE AREA (ha)	PRODUCTION (hl)	MAXIMUM YIELD (hl/ha)	MINIMUM ALCOHOLIC DEGREE
<i>Grand Cru</i>	104	5,032	45	11.0°
<i>Premier Cru</i>	775	44,094	50	10.5°
Chablis	3,163	186,377	50	10.0°
Petit Chablis	713	41,883	50	9.5°
Total AC Chablis	4,755	277,386		

cru vineyards. These famous vineyards lie on a soil of crumbly limestone, grey or even white in colour, which is named after Kimmeridge, a small village in Dorset. Elsewhere, particularly at Beines to the east and in the communes of Maligny, Villy and Lignorettes to the north, the soil has a different appearance, being more sandy in colour and marginally different—Portlandian limestone as opposed to Kimmeridgian. There has been much argument over whether the wines from Portlandian soils are as good as those from Kimmeridgian. At times there has been heated opposition, even lawsuits, between those who favour a strict delimitation of Chablis and those who favour expanding the vineyards. The first camp stresses the overriding importance of Kimmeridgian soil; the second believes that an extension of the Chablis vineyards over further suitable slopes of Portlandian soil will relieve pressure on the existing vineyard and better enable the whole community to exploit and benefit from the worldwide renown of its wine. Each grower has his own opinion and will probably be a member of one or the other of the two rival *syndicats*, or producer groups. Le Syndicat de la Défense de l'Appellation Chablis, as its name implies, is in favour of the strict delimitation of Chablis and was led, until his recent retirement, by William Fèvre of Domaine de la Maladière. The second group, La Fédération des Viticulteurs Chablisiens, is led by Jean Durup of Domaine de l'Églantière in Maligny.

Following a decision by the INAO in 1978, which effectively diminished the importance of the soil in favour of microclimate and aspect when considering a further revision of the area, the expansionists have been ascendant. Since then, the total vineyard area has tripled. New *premiers crus* have appeared on the scene. No one who has tasted the new *premier cru* Vau de Vey alongside other *premiers crus*, such as Vaillons or Montmains from the same grower, can be in any doubt that it can be at least as good. Whether this extension of vineyard area will help avoid some of the extreme fluctuations in the price of Chablis which have occurred in the past remains to be seen. Greater stability, in

my view, is crucial to the continuing commercial success of the wine.

So, too, is a higher and more consistent level of quality. The run of recent vintages has been kind, but half the *vignoble*, especially in plain Chablis *tout court*, is young vines, and production figures tend to be much higher than in the Côte de Beaune (nearly 59 hl/ha in 2005), inevitably necessitating chaptalisation up to the limit, even in the very best of vintages.

THE DANGER OF FROST

The Chablis vineyards lie very close to the northernmost limit for rearing the vine successfully. The vine will not start to develop in the early spring until the average temperature reaches 10°C, and the fruit must ripen before the leaves begin to fall in the autumn. The incidence of frost, therefore, is an important concern. Chablis, particularly the lower slopes adjacent to the river Serein, lies in a frost pocket. The *grand cru* vineyards are the most susceptible, but even on the higher plateaux used for the generic wine or plain Chablis, the young shoots are vulnerable from the time they break out of the buds in late March through the middle of May. The exposure and angle of the slope is critical, and there are a number of techniques the grower can use in order to protect his or her vines from being harmed.

The most primitive method, but one now frowned upon by the ecologists, is simply to install a little fuel burner or a paraffin *chaufferette* in the vineyard. The grower must be in the vineyard, usually by three o'clock in the morning (the coldest part of the night is normally just before sunrise), to light his or her burners, and these must then be refilled in readiness for the following night. More recently, automatic fuel-heating systems, connected to a nearby tank, and infrared devices have been installed in some vineyards. These are expensive, both in fuel and in labour, but they are effective.

Another technique is the aspersion method. First, a system of water sprinklers must be set up in the vineyard and connected to a supply of water. (There is a large reservoir outside

Beines which serves over 80 hectares of vines, chiefly in the *premier cru* Fourchaume.) When the temperature descends to zero, the system is switched on, spraying the vines with a continuous fine stream of water, just as you might do if you were sprinkling your garden. Water freezes at 0°C, but the vine buds will not suffer until the temperature sinks below minus 5°C, by which time the bud is protected by a snug coating of ice. This aspersion method, however, is costly to set up and difficult to maintain. You will find it only in the *grands* and *premiers crus*.

There are some Chablis producers who argue that regularly imprisoning the embryonic leaf cluster in ice for 5 or 6 hours a day, perhaps for a month or more, will do it no good. Nevertheless, and despite the difficulties of keeping the nozzles unblocked, this is a technique which has spread rapidly since it was first introduced in the late 1970s. Installation costs are high and maintenance is crucial, but operating expenses are minimal.

EDF (the French nationalised electricity company) has been running trials with William Fèvre and Long-Depaquit with a new anti-frost concept. The idea is to run an electric wire along the rows at the level of the embryonic bunch. When the electricity is turned on, a cocoon of heat measuring roughly 10 centimetres in diameter is created which will protect the embryonic harvest. Although costly to install, it is, so EDF argues, both cheap to run and easy to maintain. Ecologists, however, are worried. The presence of electricity nearby causes mutated and abnormal growth, they argue. Might this be, even infinitesimally, a cancer risk?

Irrespective of the point above, there is another problem with this solution to the frost problem. Frost occurs when the barometer is high and the sky is clear. This frequently coincides with the

full moon. Not only can frost be a threat in early April, but it can still occur 4 weeks later. By this time the shoots can be much larger, 10 centimetres in extent, and the fruiting buds will be outside the cylinder of protection.

An alternative method, started in 1995, necessitates covering the vines with plastic sheeting, with holes at intervals for the sun's rays to enter and to prevent undue humidity. This effectively creates an artificial greenhouse effect. It is costly but effective. Strangely, it seems to be allowed here. Using plastic sheeting on the ground of the vineyards elsewhere (avoiding the effects of excessive rain in September) has been declared illegal by the INAO as it is "contrary to nature" and destroys the "uniqueness of the local *terroir*."

THE GRANDS CRUS

There are currently almost 4,800 hectares of vineyard in production in the Chablis area. Just over a hundred of these are the *grand cru* vineyards, a continuous slope of undulating vines facing southwest and directly overlooking the town itself.

If you look up at the slope from the town, these *grands crus* are, from left to right, Bougros; Preuses; Vaudésir, incorporating La Moutonne of Domaine Long-Depaquit; Grenouilles; Valmur; Les Clos; and Blanchots. It is generally agreed that Les Clos is the best *grand cru*, producing the most powerful and long-lasting wines, the ones with the most intensity and richest flavour. Valmur and Vaudésir are also highly regarded (Valmur, in particular, also needs time to age). Preuses

and Grenouilles produce more floral and delicate wines. Bougros and Blanchots are the least fine.

Opinions on these *grands crus* vary, and quite naturally, it is difficult to find a grower who can

⇒ Chablis <i>Grands Crus</i> ←	
	SURFACE AREA (ha) 2005
Blanchots	12.88
Bougros	15.47
Les Clos	27.61
Grenouilles	9.38
Preuses	10.70
Valmur	11.04
Vaudésir	16.83
Total	103.91
Production (2005)	5,032 hl
Maximum Yield	45 hl/ha
Grape Variety	Chardonnay

be totally objective. Michel Remon, erstwhile owner of the *négociant* Regnard, who could afford to be more dispassionate than most at this firm, and who did not at any time own any vineyards at all, held the following views: he described wine from Blanchots as the most rustic, and he condemned Grenouilles for its lack of class; in his opinion, it was only a *grand cru* because it lay alongside the rest. In his view Les Clos was racy and the most *nerveux*; Vaudésir was the roundest and richest, but occasionally a bit heavy; Preuses was similar, but with less style; and Bougros produced wine somewhat like it on its upper slopes, but it was more like Grenouilles on the lower land. Monsieur Remon gave first prize to Valmur—a feminine wine, the most elegant and full of depth.

The now-retired but until recently important grower William Fèvre sees three different categories. Leading his list is Les Clos, which he describes as intense and long on the palate, with a toasted, gamey flavour. Bougros is *tendre* and *douceâtre* (soft and sweetish) with elements of chocolate. The wine is less steely and more obviously fruity than Preuses. Grenouilles and Vaudésir come somewhere between the two in style—less powerful than Les Clos, with more delicate and floral perfumes and a touch of violets. Christian Moreau simply says that Les Clos, Valmur and Vaudésir are the three finest *climats*, and the remainder do not merit *grand cru* prices. Les Clos, he adds, is a combination of the finesse of Vaudésir and the structure of Valmur. Jean-Pierre Simonnet, an important *négociant-éleveur*, finds the quality-price ratio for all the *grands crus* to have ceased to be useful. These wines are difficult to buy, finance or sell, he will tell you. He concentrates now on *premiers crus*.

BLANCHOTS

SURFACE AREA: 12.88 ha

SIGNIFICANT OWNERS: Laroche (4.50 ha), Vocoret (1.77 ha), Long-Depaquit (1.65 ha), La Chablisienne (1 ha), Servin (0.91 ha), Vauroux (0.69 ha), Raveneau (0.60 ha), Viviers (0.50 ha), P. Bouchard (0.25), D. Defaix (0.20 ha), Robin (0.20 ha), Billaud-Simon

(0.18 ha), Droin (0.16 ha), C. Moreau (0.10 ha), J. Moreau (0.10 ha).

Blanchot, or Blanchots, is the most southeasterly *grand cru* and rises up above the road to Fyé, sandwiched between Montée de Tonnerre and Les Clos. The aspect is southeast, and the soil drains well. A typical Blanchots is a delicate wine, highly floral, maturing earlier than, say, a Les Clos or Valmur. Not having the backbone of these neighbours, Blanchots is more susceptible, I would suggest, to overproduction.

BOUGROS

SURFACE AREA: 15.47 ha

SIGNIFICANT OWNERS: Fèvre (6.20 ha), Colombier (1.20 ha), Long-Depaquit (0.52 ha), Robin (0.50 ha), Servin (0.46 ha), Drouhin (0.33 ha), Laroche (0.31 ha), La Chablisienne (0.25 ha).

There are two distinct wines produced in this, the most northwesterly of the *grands crus*. Most Bougros is fullish bodied, four-square, bordering on rustic. It lacks the minerally thrust of a typical *grand cru*. Within the *climat*, however, facing southwest rather than due south, is a very steep section which gives an altogether better wine, combining the power of Bougros with no lack of finesse. William Fèvre, whose estate was bought by Champagne Henriot in 1997, owns a large parcel in this part of Bougros which is labelled as Clos des Bouguerots.

LES CLOS

SURFACE AREA: 27.61 ha

SIGNIFICANT OWNERS: Fèvre (4.15 ha), J. Moreau (3.61 ha), C. Moreau (3.60 ha), Pinson (2.50 ha), V. Dauvissat (1.70 ha), Vocoret (1.62 ha), Long-Depaquit (1.54 ha), Laroche (1.12 ha), Drouhin (1.03 ha), Droin (0.99 ha), P. Bouchard (0.70 ha), Servin (0.63 ha), Raveneau (0.54 ha), Malandes (0.53 ha), La Chablisienne (0.50 ha), L. Michel (0.50 ha), Billaud-Simon (0.44 ha), Duplessis (0.36 ha), Robin (0.20 ha), Gautherin (0.18 ha).

Les Clos is the largest of the *grands crus* and lies between Blanchots and Valmur, facing south.

The soil is rocky and very well drained. Here we have Chablis at its very, very best: firm, austere, racy, mineral, full and long lasting, combining depth, intensity and great elegance. A bottle of Les Clos requires time, but it is worth it. The famous Clos des Hospices, a 0.8-hectare shared monopoly between Christian Moreau and his nephew Louis (see pp. 000 and 000) lies toward the bottom of the hill.

LES GRENOUILLES

SURFACE AREA: 9.38 ha
SIGNIFICANT OWNERS: La Chablisienne (7.50 ha), Testut (0.55 ha), L. Michel (0.54 ha), Regnard (0.50 ha), Droin (0.48 ha), R. Gautherin (0.22 ha).

Les Grenouilles forms a triangle at the bottom of the slope, bordered by Valmur to the east and Vaudésir to the north and west. It is the smallest of the *grands crus*. Much of Les Grenouilles is controlled by the cooperative, and most of this is labelled as Château de Grenouilles. This is one of La Chablisienne's flagship wines, vinified using new oak; it is an exotic and nutty wine, with size and even muscle. Louis Michel's example is also rich and full bodied, more ample but less mineral than his Vaudésir. In principle I prefer both Vaudésir and Valmur and place Grenouilles in the second division. *Chez Droin*, comparing the same wines, the Grenouilles is more powerful, but perhaps less elegant.

LES PREUSES

SURFACE AREA: 10.7 ha
SIGNIFICANT OWNERS: La Chablisienne (4 ha), Fèvre (2.55 ha), V. Dauvissat (1 ha), J. Dauvissat (0.74 ha), Servin (0.69 ha), Billaud-Simon (0.40 ha), Simmonet-Fèvre (0.29 ha), Long-Depaquit (0.25 ha), Drouhin (0.23 ha).

Les Preuses I rate in fourth place, above Les Grenouilles and Blanchots, but lower than Vaudésir and Valmur, and, of course, Les Clos. The *climat* lies on the northwestern edge of the flank of *grands crus*, between Bougros and Vaudésir. This is an undulating vineyard, facing mainly due

south and producing a Chablis which is typically ripe and succulent, balanced and elegant, but without the steeliness of Valmur and Les Clos.

VALMUR

SURFACE AREA: 11.04 ha
SIGNIFICANT OWNERS: Robin (2.60 ha), Bessin (2.08 ha), Fèvre (1.10 ha), Droin (1.02 ha), C. Moreau (1 ha), J. Moreau (0.99 ha), Raveneau (0.75 ha), Moreau-Naudin (0.60 ha), Collet (0.51 ha), Vocoret (0.25 ha), La Chablisienne (0.25 ha).

Valmur lies northwest of Les Clos, above Les Grenouilles. Only a small part reaches down to the main road. The aspect is southwest. Valmur is a firm, full-bodied wine; properly steely, it should be backward and austere in its youth, rivalling Les Clos in the time it needs to mature. A top Les Clos is classier and more complete, but Valmur ranks with Vaudésir as an equal in the second spot in my personal hierarchy.

VAUDÉSIR

SURFACE AREA: 16.83 ha
SIGNIFICANT OWNERS: Long-Depaquit (2.60 ha), Besson (1.43 ha), Drouhin (1.41 ha), Fèvre (1.20 ha), L. Michel (1.17 ha), Droin (1.03 ha), Malandes (0.90 ha), Gautherin (0.89 ha), Billaud-Simon (0.71 ha), P. Bouchard (0.60 ha), Tremblay (0.60 ha), La Chablisienne (0.50 ha), C. Moreau (0.50 ha), J. Moreau (0.45 ha), Robin (0.25 ha), Vocoret (0.11 ha), plus La Moutonne, Long-Depaquit (*monopole*) (2.35 ha).

Lying between Les Grenouilles and Les Preuses, and primarily high up on the slope in the form of a well-protected, south-facing amphitheatrical bowl, Vaudésir has long been regarded as one of the best of the *grands crus*. Many consider it as *the* best. The reason, as always, lies in the quality, individuality and finesse of the fruit. A good Vaudésir shows very subtle floral tones, a little more high-toned than Valmur and Les Clos, slightly more feminine, perhaps, but not a bit lacking the essential Chablis minerality. La Moutonne, a monopoly of Domaine Long-Depaquit (see p. 0000) lies in the Vaudésir *climat*.

THE PREMIERS CRUS

There are 775 hectares of *premier cru* vineyards today—70 percent more than in 1978. In 1967, to facilitate their commercialisation,

→ Chablis Premiers Crus ←

Total Surface Area (2005)	775 ha
Total Production (2005)	44,094 hl
Maximum Yield	50 hl/ha
Grape Variety	Chardonnay

what was then a total of twenty-six original *lieux-dits* (site names) was reduced to eleven *premiers crus*. The grower now had a choice: he or she could either use the main *premier cru* name on the label—and blend the wine from several subsidiary vineyards under this title—or continue to use the old *lieu-dit*.

In 1986 this list of *premiers crus* was extended to include seven other sites, some of which incorporated several *lieux-dits*. Today, there are forty *lieux-dits*, but generally only seventeen names in common usage.

Of these, the longest established—and still considered the best—are Fourchaume, Montée de Tonnerre and Mont de Milieu. It is no coincidence that these three *premiers crus* all lie on the right bank of the Serein, on either side of the *grands crus*, facing southwest just as the *grands crus* do. The largest and most important of the rest, Beauroy, Vau de Vey, Côte de Léchet, Vaillons and Montmains, are all in side-valleys on the left bank and face southeast. The wines from Vaillons and Côte de Léchet are better than the rest. These wines are shorter in flavour, less powerful and more floral than those from the right bank of the Serein. When made from ripe grapes, they have a peachy, Granny-Smith apple flavour, while Fourchaume wines are rich and plump, and Montée de Tonnerre and Mont de Milieu wines are firm, nutty and steely,

and are the closest in style to Les Clos, the best *grand cru*.

As I have observed elsewhere, spellings are personal and idiosyncratic in Burgundy. Thus Vaillon, Montmain and the village of Beines, for instance, can be singular or plural. The use of the definitive article (Les Clos, Les Preuses) is optional. It can be Sécher or Séchets, Vau de Ligneau or Vau Ligneau, and so on.

CHABLIS AND PETIT CHABLIS

Not surprisingly, the largest increase in surface area has been in those vineyards which are merely generic Chablis. Since 1978 there has been a 350-percent-plus rise to 3,163 hectares.

The area delimited as Petit Chablis, the lowest ranking of the Chablis appellations, has tended to fluctuate greatly. New vineyards have come into production, while others have been upgraded to Chablis or declassified entirely. There were 184 hectares in 1976, decreasing to only 113 in 1981, when we were led to believe that the authorities were going to eliminate this appellation entirely. However, as the result of new vineyards being authorised, the figure has risen to over 700 hectares today. Good intentions have found it hard to compete with local politics. Petit Chablis wine is dry and crisp, but not as intensely flavoured as Chablis, and should be drunk young.

→ Chablis ←

Surface Area (2005)	3,163 ha
Production (2005)	186,377 hl
Colour	White
Maximum Yield	50 hl/ha
Grape Variety	Chardonnay

→ Petit Chablis ←

Surface Area (2005)	713 ha
Production (2005)	41,883 hl
Colour	White
Maximum Yield	50 hl/ha
Grape Variety	Chardonnay

MANUAL VERSUS MECHANICAL HARVESTING

Along with the suitability of Portlandian soil and new oak (see the next section), the third great argument raging in Chablis concerns the use of picking machines. Machine harvesters began to arrive in the Chablis vineyards in the early 1980s. The harvesters were somewhat rudimentary in those days, difficult to control and abusive

Chablis *Premiers Crus*

LIEU TO DIT/ORIGINAL PREMIER CRU	COMMUNE	MAIN PREMIERS CRUS (OPTIONAL)	SIZE (Ha)
<i>Right Bank of Serein</i>			
Berdiot	Fyé	Berdiot	2.56
Chapelot	Fyé	Montée de Tonnerre	0.35
Côte de Bréchin	Fyé	Montée de Tonnerre	—
Côte de Fontenay	Fontenay	Fourchaume	0.25
Côte de Prés Girots	Fleys	Les Fourneaux	0.33
Côte de Vaubarousse	Fyé	Côte de Vaubarousse	0.99
Fourchaume	La Chapelle Vaupelteigne	Fourchaume	108.00
L'Homme Mort	Maligny	Fourchaume	7.02
Les Fourneaux	Fleys	Les Fourneaux	25.83
Mont de Milieu	Fleys	Mont de Milieu	41.42
Montée de Tonnerre	Fyé	Montée de Tonnerre	40.22
Morein	Fleys	Les Fourneaux	3.90
Pied d'Aloup	Fyé	Montée de Tonnerre	—
Vaucoupin	Chichée	Vaucoupin	40.96
Vaulaurent	Poinchy	Fourchaume	7.43
Vaupoulent	La Chapelle Vaupelteigne	Fourchaume	9.90
<i>Left Bank of Serein</i>			
Beuroy	Poinchy	Beuroy	56.15
Beugnons	Chablis	Vaillons	2.88
Butteaux	Chablis	Montmains	7.74
Chatains	Chablis	Vaillons	—
Chaume de Talvat	Courgis	Chaume de Talvat	—
Côte de Léchet	Milly	Côte de Léchet	50.34
Côte de Cuissy	Courgis	Les Beauregards	0.92
Côte de Jouan	Courgis	Côte de Jouan	11.90
Côte de Savant	Beines	Beuroy	2.21
Forêts	Chablis	Montmains	13.33
Les Beauregards	Courgis	Les Beauregards	18.26
Les Epinottes	Chablis	Les Beauregards	—
Les Lys	Chablis	Vaillons	9.45
Mélinots	Chablis	Vaillons	—
Montmains	Chablis	Montmains	89.29
Roncières	Chablis	Vaillons	0.88
Sécher or Séchets	Chablis	Vaillons	2.76
Troesmes	Beines	Beuroy	4.38
Vau de Vey	Beines	Vau de Vey	40.57
Vaillons	Chablis	Vaillons	109.57
Vaugiraut	Chichée	Vogros	6.24
Vogros	Chichée	Vogros	13.26
Vau Ligneau	Beines	Vau Ligneau	28.56
Vaux Ragons	Beines	Vau de Vey	—

Note: Size is according to the declaration of the 2004 harvest. In addition, 15.22 hectares were declared as *premier cru tout court*.

to the vine, whose life they cut short. Nevertheless they soon caught on. They were cheap and convenient. Working hours were more flexible. Vineyards could be cleared quickly if bad weather threatened. One was saved the expense of paying pickers for sitting around doing nothing when it rained. On Chablis's rolling hills the picking machine soon became dominant. By 1990 it was estimated that up to 95 percent of the vineyard was machine harvested. As the machines became more sophisticated, the damage to the vines lessened, and with more careful control, the vibrating rods could be adjusted to cause both unripe and rotten berries to fall to the ground and only the best fruit to be collected. For generic Petit Chablis and Chablis, this was the obvious route to adopt.

But what about the *premiers* and *grands crus*? The purists amongst the locals—and I agree—say no. Firstly, the harvesting machine, which picks berries and not bunches, inevitably splits the entry of the stem to the fruit, opening up the risk of oxidation. Secondly, how can you perform a really serious *triage* (sorting through of the fruit)? And how are you going to produce optimum quality if you can't isolate the bad from the good and ensure that you only vinify the former? It was noteworthy that in a vintage of uneven maturity and sanitation such as 2001, machine-harvested fruit produced musts which needed much more serious *débourbage* (setting out) or even clarification by centrifugation to cleanse them. Moreover, certain parts of the Chablis *vignoble*, the *grands crus* particularly, are too steep and are therefore unsuitable for the machine. A further downside to mechanical harvesting—I am not a scientist, but I repeat what I am told by those who have the expertise—is that it releases potassium, ultimately lowering the effective acidity in the wine.

Certain domaines, for instance Raveneau and Vincent Dauvissat, have always resisted the harvesting machine entirely, picking even their generic wines by hand. Others—and an increasing number of them, for the pendulum has reversed its direction—machine pick the basic wines and hand harvest their *premiers* and *grands crus*. The Union des Grands Crus de Chablis, a trade organisation of fifteen members, all of

whom, as the title indicates, possess *grand cru* vineyards, stipulates, inter alia, that as a condition of membership, these *grand cru* vineyards be handpicked. This is a logical commitment to quality. It is no coincidence that Raveneau and Vincent Dauvissat are the top two names in the area. I would like to see legislation outlawing the machine from all *grands* and *premiers crus* in the Chablis vineyard.

OAK OR NOT

In addition to the feud in Chablis between the restrictionists and the expansionists and the arguments for and against picking machines, there has been a vehement debate about whether the wine should or should not be vinified and matured in whole or in part in new or newish wood. William Fèvre, late of Domaine de la Maladière, used to lead the oak faction as he did that of the restrictionists. As a grower and the largest proprietor of *grand cru* vineyards, he was able to control the vinification of his wine from the start, as well as the *élevage* (most of the *négociants* buy must, not grapes), and he fermented all his own *grands crus* in wood. All his wines were partly matured in oak as well.

The non-oak faction has many supporters, including large landholders such as Jean-Marie Brocard and Jean Durup, the top growers Daniel Dampt, the Domaine des Malandes and Louis Michel, plus *négociants* such as J. Moreau and Maison Regnard.

All the above do not use any new oak at all. Their wine spends all its life in *cuve*, a stainless steel or glass and tile-lined concrete vat. Others, such as the much-respected growers Jean-Marie Raveneau and Vincent Dauvissat, do use oak, but it is old oak rather than new, and it imparts no oak taste to the wine.

Their general belief is that Chablis should not try to ape the Côte de Beaune. Chablis should be as natural a wine as possible; its flavours are subtle and delicate, and its essential gun-flinty, steely character should not be swamped by the supplementary aromas which result from vinifying or maturing the wine in oak.

There are arguments in favour of both sides. I have had many a well-matured, non-oak-aged Chablis which have proven that tank-matured wine need not be ephemeral. Ageing potential is as much a result of the correct balance between fruit and acidity (plenty of each and plenty of concentration) as of maturation and fermentation in wood per se. On the other hand, the extra weight and tannins added by the wood do help, especially in the weaker vintages. Fèvre's wines and those of Joseph Drouhin in Beaune—an important Chablis proprietor and also a believer in new wood—do keep extremely well. Moreover, their capacity for ageing is not so dependent on the vagaries of the vintage.

With greater numbers of growers today—and at the cooperative, La Chablisienne—the customer can have it both ways. There is no new oak for the lesser wines, but at least one special *cuvée* which has been “*élevé en fût de chêne.*” What should be born in mind is that wines age quicker in oak than in tank. Personally, I find many of these special oaky *cuvées* over-evolved, atypical and unbalanced. *Caveat emptor!*

THE WINE

Chablis, at its best, is a magnificent wine and is quite unique. The colour should be a full, in the sense of quite viscous, greeny-gold. The aromas should combine steeliness and richness, gun flint, grilled nuts and crisp toast. The flavour should be long, individual and complex. Above all, the wine should be totally dry, but without greenness. The aftertaste must be rich rather than mean, ample rather than hard, generous rather than soulless. Chablis is an understated wine, so it should be subtle rather than obvious, reserved rather than too obviously charming.

Far too often, however, Chablis is a disappointing wine. Very frequently when I first taste the wines in bottle, I find myself thinking that they were at their best after six months in cask: the evolution since then has been downhill. Now, many white wines, like reds, will enter an adolescent phase once they have been imprisoned in bottle. But far too many Chablis just

deteriorate further, becoming thin and attenuated. Why? There are several answers:

- Ninety-five percent of the Chablis vineyard is picked by machine. Elimination of substandard fruit is therefore impossible. The entire crop, unripe as well as ripe, rotten as well as healthy, is vinified together.
- The Chablisians overproduce. Overall in 2002, yields were 56 hectolitres per hectare in Petit Chablis, 59 in Chablis, 58 in Chablis *premier cru* and even 52 in Chablis *grand cru*. Compare this with the Côte d'Or: 53 hectolitres per hectare for village white wine, 51 for *premier cru* and 44 for *grand cru*. Moreover, consider Chablis's situation: it is much closer to the northerly limit of successful wine production. If anything, yields should be lower, not 10 to 15 percent higher!
- The vineyard, having expanded so fast in the last 25 years, is underage. Vines less than 20 years old are infants, incapable of producing wines of depth and concentration.
- Chablis is overmanipulated. I was struck by the times that I read, in the replies to the questionnaires that I had sent out to the best-known names, how many rackings, as well as finings, usually with bentonite, and filterings, usually with kieselguhr, the wines were subjected to. Some, in years of marginal ripeness and health such as 2001, had been clarified using a centrifuge in the first place. Côte de Beaune whites, which moreover are normally bottled later, are not racked three times! I also fear that most Chablis is over-*bâtonné*-ed. Too much stirring up of the lees brings out too much of the character and flavour too early, leaving nothing for the long term.
- Finally, there is the soil itself. Kimmeridgian is a younger limestone than that found in the Côte de Beaune. So is Portlandian. Moreover, the clays are different. These are not soils which will produce profound wine at yields of 58 hectolitres per hectare.

Those responsible for the wine will argue that at current prices, a reduction in yields is quite simply uneconomical. They are quite right. It is a vicious circle. But the circle will have to be broken. The world market will not accept weak, attenuated wine. As has been demonstrated in the Côte d'Or, those with the determination to make top-quality wine will flourish. The rest will go to the wall. Perfectionism is the only way forward.

CHABLIS'S BEST SOURCES

Many wine writers have been too diffident or too polite to come into the open with a hierarchy of the top Chablis growers and *négo-ciants*. The position is complicated for various reasons: first, the controversy over whether the wine should be matured in wood or not; second, the arm's-length presence of the *négo-ciants* in Beaune and Nuits-Saint-Georges, all of whom sell Chablis but few of whom, except Drouhin, own any Chablis vineyards; and third, the presence of a very powerful local cooperative, La Chablisienne, which accounts for a third of the Chablis crop. Not unnaturally, this latter concern has a major influence on the annual price of the wine. La Chablisienne was my major Chablis supplier throughout most of my professional life, and I never found anything in the quality of its best wines—obviously with such a large business you have to pick and choose—which was not of the very highest standard. You may criticise the cooperative for its policy of allowing commercial buyers to choose the name of one of the cooperative's members to put on its label: for example, Fèvre Frères for Fourchaume which, together with “*mise en bouteille à la propriété*,” is certainly misleading, but you cannot deny that the wine inside the bottle can be as good as anything the appellation can produce.

WHEN SHOULD YOU DRINK CHABLIS?

Top-quality Chablis—the *grands crus* and the best *premiers crus*, from a fine vintage and a star-rated grower or merchant—will last a long time, rather longer than one would expect. A *cuvée* of Fourchaume 1978 I chose at La Chablisienne was still alive and delicious in 1990. Sadly, these wines are the tip of the iceberg.

A general rule is as follows:

Petit Chablis	6 months to 2 1/2 years (after the vintage)
Chablis	1 to 4 years
Chablis <i>premier cru</i>	3 to 8 years
Chablis <i>grand cru</i>	5 to 12 years

RECENT VINTAGES

2005

In November 2005 I was in Chablis to taste the 2004s. “I can't tell you whether 2005 is the vintage of the century,” said Christian Moreau. “I'll tell you in 6 months' time. But I am sure it's very fine.” It was a small crop because of poor flowering. But after that the weather was very good. Despite a week of cloud and rain just before the harvest—which led to a fear of rot—the fruit was very healthy: rich and concentrated musts with good acidity. Chez Moreau, they started picking on September 19—very early for Chablis, and an indication of a good vintage. Jean-Loup Michel, of Domaine Louis Michel, began picking on September 21 and also boasted of a smaller than usual crop, with high alcoholic levels (up to 14° natural in the *grands crus*) and balancing acidities.

I visited Chablis again early in May 2006. It was abundantly clear that the enthusiastic anticipation I had found 6 months earlier was amply justified. The wines are both full and

→ Chablis Production 2005 (hl) ←

Grand Cru	5,032
Premier Cru	44,094
Chablis	186,377
Petit Chablis	41,883
TOTAL	277,386
Area Under Vine	4,755
Average Yield	58.30 hl/ha

concentrated, and are splendidly refreshing. To have both concentration and freshness at the same time is rare. Yes, it is a very fine vintage, and the wines should last well.

2004

This was a huge crop to compensate for the deficiency in 2003. A good summer was succeeded by a miserable August, but September saw a return to fine weather. The harvest began on September 29 and continued until October 11, interrupted by rain only on October 4. The wines are aromatic and have high natural acidities. Where the crop is not too excessive—there were many reports of yields in the range of 80 hectolitres per hectare—quality is very good. Elsewhere there is a great deal of dilute, ephemeral rubbish which should have been sold as *vin de table* or sent away for distillation. The best wines should keep well. I found few disappointments in the top estates when I was there in November 2005.

2003

As a result of April frosts, yields ranged from 20 hectolitres per hectare to the full amount allowed by the authorities and, naturally, were lowest where growers do not have frost protection—in Petit Chablis and Chablis itself rather than in the *grand* and *premier cru* vineyards. After an unprecedentedly hot summer, the harvest was the earliest on record. The *ban des vendanges* was declared on August 25. Many growers, fearful of both low acidities and high alcohols, rushed out to pick. Many of the best growers, though, preferred to wait. Despite the heat of the summer, they considered their fruit to be not ripe enough. These brave souls benefited from the decline in the heat wave and

some showers which, perversely, allowed both ripeness and acidity to concentrate. Many growers acidified. The wines are full, sturdy and atypical. I fear they will not age well. I sampled widely in February 2005, and a little less extensively when I returned to Chablis 9 months later in November to sample the 2004s. Many wines had declined in the meanwhile. Avoid this vintage.

2002

A cold winter was succeeded by a mild spring—so no frost damage for once. But May was cold, retarding development. The second half of June, when the Chablis vineyard flowered, was fine, however, and a large crop, a couple of percentage points more prolific than 2000 and 2001, set into grapes. July and August were dry and warm, rather than hot. The first two weeks

of September were unsettled, but from then on, the weather was fine, with a strong north wind. The fruit was healthy, and acidity levels were good. The grapes were concentrated, and sugar levels were all that could be asked for. There was no excuse not to make good wine. In my view—leaving the very promising 2005s aside—2002 is the most satisfactory of recent vintages. The wines in bottle have shown well, despite the high yields. They should keep very well.

→ Chablis Production ←
2004 (hl)

Grand Cru	5,726
Premier Cru	45,963
Chablis	191,677
Petit Chablis	40,951
TOTAL	284,317

Area Under Vine	4,469
Average Yield	63.60 hl/ha

→ Chablis Production ←
2002 (hl)

Grand Cru	5,325
Premier Cru	44,642
Chablis	179,798
Petit Chablis	36,198
TOTAL	265,963

Area Under Vine	4,460 ha
Average Yield	59.63 hl/ha

→ Chablis Production ←
2003 (hl)

Grand Cru	4,376
Premier Cru	37,036
Chablis	140,438
Petit Chablis	24,867
TOTAL	206,717

Area Under Vine	4,584 ha
Average Yield	45.10 hl/ha

2001

July was cold and wet, but August was sunny and warm. It was this month, when yields

→ Chablis Production
2001 (hl) ←

Grand Cru	5,329
Premier Cru	44,416
Chablis	171,723
Petit Chablis	33,421
TOTAL	254,889

Area Under Vine	4,308 ha
Average Yield	59.20 hl/ha

unced for October, the harvest beginning on October 1, a Monday. But the Wednesday was cold and wet, and this was followed by a violent storm on Saturday, October 6. After that, thankfully, the weather did improve, but the resultant fruit was nevertheless uneven in ripeness and far from being in perfect health.

The original musts and wine were slow to show their real character. Acidities, until the malolactic had taken place, were high. The wines seemed lean and fruitless. But they became suppler and showed better and better fruit as 2002 progressed. They proved to have, surprisingly, a very good *tenue à l'air* (resistance to oxidation). When I came across them, after bottling, opinions were relatively bullish. I found much to enjoy. But this is not as good a vintage as 1999, 2000 or 2002, and it should be drunk soon.

2000

Although the climatic conditions earlier in the summer had been by no means propitious, with July being particularly chilly, August was warm, and September was sunny, even hot. This led to a precociously early harvest, the *ban* being fixed for Saturday, September 23, with several growers obtaining permission to pick even earlier. The vintage took place in hot, dry conditions, with the exception of one storm on Tuesday, September 26, and another on Thursday, September 28. By that time, since Chablis is collected today almost entirely by machine, the harvest was more or less over.

The fruit was in almost perfect health, with natural alcoholic degrees between 11.5 and

→ Chablis Production
2000 (hl) ←

Grand Cru	5,621
Premier Cru	46,049
Chablis	171,437
Petit Chablis	33,022
TOTAL	256,129

Area Under Vine	4,171 ha
Average Yield	61.40 hl/ha

12.5. From the beginning it appeared that the wines were concentrated and balanced, and that 2000 would be the sort of vintage that would earn it the accolades given to 1990, 1997 and 1999. Indeed, to have had three splendid years out of four, all of them abundant (although 2000 wasn't quite as plethoric as 1999), seemed to the Chablisien to be fortune indeed. Sadly, the wines in bottle showed less depth, less class and less consistency than they had promised earlier. The vintages of 1999 and 2002 are finer and will last better.

→ Chablis Production
1999 (hl) ←

Grand Cru	5,522
Premier Cru	48,955
Chablis	182,432
Petit Chablis	34,583
TOTAL	271,492

Area Under Vine	4,171 ha
Average Yield	65.10 hl/ha

1999

This was a large crop, following a generous *sortie* and good weather during the flowering. Following that, the summer was cool, although not too wet, but after mid-August, a 6-week period of very fine weather

settled in. The *ban des vendanges* was announced from September 22, but many of the top growers

obtained permission to begin harvesting a couple of days earlier. The weather began to deteriorate after September 28, but by this time most of the fruit was safely fermenting in the cellars. This year is a full, rich, concentrated, fine vintage for Chablis. The wines are lasting well.

THE LEADING DOMAINES AND MERCHANTS

For simplicity I list all these by proprietor, in alphabetical order. The following sources may be better known under their domaine names:

Domaine de la Conciergerie, Christian Adine

Domaine de Chantemerle, François Boudin

Domaine du Vieux Château, Daniel-Étienne
Defaix

Domaine de Vaudon, Joseph Drouhin

Domaine de l'Églantière, Jean Durup

Château de Maligny, Jean Durup

Domaine de la Paulière, Jean Durup

Domaine des Valéry, Jean Durup

Domaine Perchaud, Corinne and Jean-Pierre
Grossot

Domaine de Pisse-Loup, Jean and Romuald
Hugot

Domaine de la Meulière, Chantal and Claude
Laroche

Domaine des Marronniers, Bernard Legland

Domaine des Malandes, Lyne and
Jean-Bernard Marchive

Domaine de la Tour Vaubourg, Louis Michel

Domaine de Biéville, Louis Moreau

Domaine du Cèdre Doré, Louis Moreau

Domaine du Colombier, Thierry Mothe

Domaine d'Élise, Frédéric Prain

Domaine des Isles, Gérard Tremblay

Domaine de Vauroux, Olivier Tricon

Domaine de la Chaude Écuelle, Gérard Vilain

★ *Christian Adine*

Domaine de la Conciergerie

Location: Courgis

Owners: Adine family

19.2 ha. *Premiers crus* in Butteaux, Côte de Cuissy, Montmains; Chablis Vieilles Vignes; Petit Chablis.

Across the road from the family house in Courgis, which is where one normally tastes, is a relatively new winery. The Adines, Christian and his daughter Marie-Gaëtane, supplement their white wine production with a red from near Béziers in the Languedoc, called *Domaine de la Bergerie d'Amilhac*. No wood is used here. These are stylish wines which normally develop quite soon.

★ *Domaine Barat*

Location: Milly

Owners: Barat family

16 ha. *Premiers crus* in Les Fourneaux, Côte de Léchet, Mont de Milieu, Vaillons; Chablis.

Michel Barat retired in 2003, and his son Ludovic is now in charge at this friendly family domaine. No wood is used. Enzymes are used to clarify the wine, and fining is by casein "in order to precipitate and isolate the oxidase elements: very useful in 2001." Very good 2000s and 2001s (for the vintage). Sadly, the 2002s seemed a little over-evolved in May 2004.

★ *Domaine Jean-Claude Bessin*

Location: Chablis; cellars in La Chapelle Vaupelteigne

Owner: Jean-Claude Bessin

6.15 ha (half of 12.3 ha he exploits *en métayage* from his father-in-law). *Grand cru* in Valmur (2.08 ha); *premiers crus* in Fourchaume, Fourchaume Vieilles Vignes, Montmains, La Pièce du Comte; Chablis.

Jean-Claude Bessin's cellar lies underneath the church in La Chapelle Vaupelteigne. Here he retains the yield of the old vines he share-crops. His father-in-law's portion is sold off in bulk. In 2000 he started using older barrels for the maturation of his wines: "à la Raveneau," as he puts it. Low yields (45–50 hl/ha in 2000 and 2001) and first-class quality exist here.

★ **Domaine Alain Besson**

Location: Chablis

Owner: Alain Besson

19.4 ha. *Grand cru* in Vaudésir (1.43 ha); *premiers crus* in Mont de Milieu, Montmains, Vaillons.

On the southern outskirts of Chablis lies Alain Besson's new, and recently enlarged, modern, over-ground, temperature-controlled cellar. Although he is in his mid-forties, he only decided to bottle the produce of his estate in 2000. He vinifies using 5 to 10 percent of new oak for the top wines. Despite this (and it is barely perceptible once the wine is in bottle), his wines are splendidly pure and minerally. The quality is usually impressive, but I was a little underwhelmed by his 2004s.

★★ **Domaine Billaud-Simon**

Location: Chablis

Owners: Billaud family

20 ha. *Grands crus* in Blanchots (0.18 ha), Les Clos (0.44 ha), Les Preuses (0.40 ha), Vaudésir (0.71 ha); *premiers crus* in Fourchaume, Mont de Milieu, Montée de Tonnerre, Vaillons; Chablis *premier cru*; Chablis Tête d'Or; Chablis; Petit Chablis.

Founded in 1815 when Charles Louis Noël Billaud, on his return from the Napoleonic wars, planted his first vines in the Mont de Milieu and then expanded on the occasion of the marriage between Jean Billaud and Renée Simon in the 1930s, this up-to-date and excellent domaine is today run by Bernard, Jean's son, and his nephew Samuel. You will find it alongside the river Serein, just south of the village. Across a courtyard behind the family house is a large, modern winery, constructed in 1991 and updated since, a new reception hall and a pneumatic press having been installed in 2001. Most of the wines are vinified and matured in stainless steel. Two of the prestige *cuvées*, the Chablis Tête d'Or and the Mont de Milieu (*vieilles vignes*), are partly vinified in 3- to 5-year-old wood. The Blanchots is entirely vinified in oak. Recent changes for the better include the restriction of the harvest to 35 to 45 hectolitres per hectare

for *grand* and *premier cru*, more ploughing and less use of herbicides and a return to manual harvesting in the *grands crus* and some *premiers crus*. High-class wines come from here. My favourite is the Clos.

Domaine/Maison Pascal Bouchard

Location: Chablis

Owner: Pascal Bouchard

33 ha. *Grands crus* in Blanchots (0.25 ha), Les Clos (0.70 ha), Vaudésir (0.60 ha); *premiers crus* in Beauroy, Fourchaume, Mont de Milieu, Montmains; Chablis; Petit Chablis.

Pascal Bouchard married into the Tremblay family and took over from his father-in-law André in 1979. New premises were installed in 1995 on the western side of the town of Chablis, at the same time Pascal Bouchard was expanding the merchant's side of his business. The *grands crus* and the old vine *cuvées* Fourchaume, Mont de Milieu and generic Chablis are vinified in oak, up to 15 percent of which is new. This is a little exaggerated, I feel. It makes the wines evolve too quickly. The 2000s already showed age in February 2003. A second label is Tremblay-Bouchard.

★ **François Boudin**

Domaine de Chantemerle

Location: La Chapelle Vaupelteigne

Owners: Boudin family

15.5 ha. *Premiers crus* in Fourchaume, L'Homme Mort; Chablis.

François Boudin now runs his estate on his own since his father Adhémar has retired. The estate is based in the sleepy village of La Chapelle Vaupelteigne, on the opposite bank of the river Serein from the domaine's first-growth wines. Boudin is one of the few who bottles and labels L'Homme Mort, from the location said to have been the burial place of local convicts denied sites in a church cemetery. The Boudin take on this is different: it was the site of a battle in the fifteenth century. The harvest is entirely manual, and there is no oak here. Boudin is a nice man who produces very good wines.

Domaine/Maison Jean-Marc Brocard

Location: Préhy

Owner: Jean-Marc Brocard

64 ha. *Premiers crus* in Beauregard, Côte de Jouan, Montmains, Vaucoupin; Chablis; Petit Chablis; Sauvignon de Saint-Bris and Irancy.

The village of Préhy lies, somewhat isolated, on the southwestern edge of the Chablis *vignoble*. It has little to offer the tourist except for a worth-a-visit fifteenth-century church and the modern (1989) premises of Jean-Marc Brocard. This is a recent success story. Brocard married Claudine, a young lady from Saint-Bris-Le-Vineux, further to the west on the other side of the motorway, in 1972 and inherited 1 hectare. He now exploits as much as 110, offering the *grands crus* of Bougros, Les Clos and Vaudésir, as well as the wines of his own domaine, one fifth of which is now run on biodynamic lines. There is no oak here. Brocard and his children, I find *sympas*. The wines are variable. This is a very good source for Sauvignon de Saint-Bris, however.

Cave Coopérative La Chablisienne

Location: Chablis

Number of Adherents: 300

1,200 ha. *Grands crus* in Blanchots (1 ha), Bougros (0.25 ha), Les Clos (0.50 ha), Grenouilles including Château de Grenouilles (7.50 ha), Les Preuses (4 ha), Valmur (0.25 ha), Vaudésir (0.50 ha); *premiers crus* in Beauroy, Côte de Léchet, Fourchaume, Les Lys, Mont de Milieu, Montée de Tonnerre, Vaillons, Vaulovent; Chablis; Petit Chablis.

Founded in 1923 and responsible for one third of the total appellation, La Chablisienne is up-to-date, well established and very powerful. Once you have signed up, you are effectively a shareholder, and it is difficult and expensive to extract yourself and set up independently. Hervé Tucki, who took over from his father Michel in the late 1980s, is a sensitive winemaker. Regrettably, in my view, the last decade has seen an increase in the amount of wood used here. They now have 600 casks, renewing 100 each year. The Château de Grenouilles is one *cuvée* which is regularly oak-abused. So are many of the rest

of the *grands crus*. You can find good wines here, but you have to pick and choose, especially if you are also looking for a wine which will last.

★ Domaine Christophe et Fils

Location: Fyé

Owners: Christophe family

5.5 ha. *Premiers crus* in Fourchaume, Montée de Tonnerre; Chablis Vieilles Vignes; Chablis; Petit Chablis.

In the middle of nowhere on the plateau above Fyé and the *grands crus* lies the Ferme des Carrières. In addition to cultivating sugar beets and maize, the youthful Sébastien Christophe runs a small vineyard. The Petit Chablis and the *premiers crus* are recent additions and young vines. The estate has only been bottling since 1999. I can only judge by the Chablis *tout court* and the *vieilles vignes* and by one vintage of the Fourchaume, for the first vintage of the Fourchaume was 2004, and the Montée de Tonnerre, 2005. There is no wood. These are lovely wines.

★ Domaine Jean Collet et Fils

Location: Chablis

Owners: Collet family

35 ha. *Grand cru* in Valmur (0.51 ha); *premiers crus* in Mont de Milieu, Montée de Tonnerre, Montmains, Vaillons; Chablis; Petit Chablis.

Gilles Collet and his wife Dominique have run this well-known domaine, well situated in Chablis, since 1979. It is a major owner in Vaillons, with no less than 9.6 hectares. The Valmur, Montée de Tonnerre and Mont de Milieu are vinified in old wood (1 to 6 years of age); the rest are vinified in stainless steel. The 2003 Montée de Tonnerre was fermented in oak, 10 percent of which was new. I found this to be a mistake. Generally speaking, though, the quality is very good here.

★ Domaine Daniel Dampt

Location: Milly

Owners: Dampt family

26 ha. *Premiers crus* in Beauroy, Côte de Léchet, Fourchaume, Les Lys, Vaillons.

Daniel Dampt's modern winery, temperature controlled throughout since 2002, lies out in

the vineyards on the eastern side of Milly. This is one of the very best domaines in the village. The building is spotless, and Daniel Dampt is a perceptive, as well as a punctilious, winemaker. There is no wood here. The products are fine, pure mineral wines. Some wines are also sold under the Jean Defaix label.

Domaine Agnès and Didier Dauvissat

Location: Beines

Owners: Agnès and Didier Dauvissat

10 ha. *Premier cru* in Beuroy; Chablis; Petit Chablis.

No relation to the other Dauvissats, Agnès and Didier are a charming young couple who make three nicely nuanced wines. The junior two are for early drinking. The Beuroy, not released until it is two years old, will keep well.

Domaine Jean and Sébastien Dauvissat

Location: Chablis

Owners: Dauvissat family

9 ha. *Grand cru* in Les Preuses (0.74 ha); *premiers crus* in Montmains, Séchet, Vaillons; Chablis Cuvée Saint-Pierre; Chablis.

This is the lesser and less well known of the two Dauvissat domaines. The owners are cousins of Vincent and his father René and have their premises round the corner next to that of the Raveneaus. The Cuvée Saint-Pierre (only sold, I am told, on the European market) is usually a selection from the Vaillons. The wines are vinified in barrel, 30 percent of which, in the case of the Cuvée Saint-Pierre and the Preuses, is new. This latter exaggeration is a mistake. The rest of the range is to be preferred.

★★ Domaine Vincent Dauvissat

Location: Chablis

Owners: Dauvissat family

12 ha. *Grands crus* in Les Clos (1.70 ha), Les Preuses (1 ha); *premiers crus* in Forest (sic), Séchet Vaillons; Chablis; Petit Chablis.

This Dauvissat domaine (it used to be René and Vincent Dauvissat) lies with that of the Raveneau brothers at the top of the Chablis hierarchy. Production methods are superficially similar: ploughing of the vineyard, total hand

harvesting and vinification and *élevage* in old barrels. The main difference is that Vincent Dauvissat does not stir up the lees in the barrel (*bâtonnage*), a technique almost universally employed elsewhere in the appellation. He is also against fining his wines. This is a great estate. The Clos is my favourite. This is a great Chablis. Some wines are sold under the Dauvissat-Camus label.

★ Domaine Bernard Defaix

Maison Sylvain and Didier Defaix

Location: Milly

Owners: Defaix family

25 ha. *Premiers crus* in the Côte de Léchet, Les Lys, Vaillons; Chablis Vieilles Vignes; Chablis; Petit Chablis.

Since Bernard Defaix retired in 1995, it has been his sons Sylvain (in the cellar) and Didier (in the vineyards) who have been in charge here, and since 1999 they have supplemented the produce of their family estate with purchases of must from Fourchaume and Bougros. This domaine is the largest owner in the Côte de Léchet, which rises behind the winery. They possess 7.5 hectares and produce two *cuvées*, the better labelled *réserve*. Half of this *cuvée* matures in old wood, and 100 percent oak is used for the Bougros. The rest of the wines spend all their life in stainless steel. I find their excellent domaine Côte de Léchet far superior to their merchant Bougros.

★ Domaine Daniel-Étienne Defaix

Domaine du Vieux Chateau

Location: Milly

Owner: Daniel-Étienne Defaix

25 ha. *Grand cru* in Blanchots (0.20 ha); *premiers crus* in Côte de Léchet, Les Lys, Vaillons; Chablis; Petit Chablis.

Almost everyone in Milly is related to each other. This Defaix is a cousin of those above, as well as of Daniel Dampt, Lyne Marchive (see the Domaine des Malandes below) and Gérard Tremblay. In addition to maintaining his cellar in Milly, Daniel Defaix is busy renovating some medieval buildings in the centre of Chablis,

behind his shop. He doesn't offer, or sell, *en primeur*. You will sample and be able to buy the wines when Defaix considers them ready for drinking. There is no oak here. These are very pure wines, with good *terroir* definition. They keep well too.

★★ **Domaine Benoît Droin**

Location: Chablis

Owners: Droin family

25.5 ha. *Grands crus* in Blanchots (0.17 ha), Les Clos (0.99 ha), Grenouilles (0.48 ha), Valmur (1.02 ha), Vaudésir (1.03 ha); *premiers crus* in Côte de Léchet, Fourchaume, Mont de Milieu, Montée de Tonnerre, Montmains, Vaillons, Vaucoupin, Vosgros; Chablis; Petit Chablis.

Benoît Droin took over from his father in 1999. His name appears on the label from the 2002 vintage. There is quite widespread use of oak here, although increasingly less than in Jean-Paul Droin's time, and most of the wines in most vintages can take it. Benoît is determined to treat each *cuvée* in a different way. Too much wood, he says, undermines the elegance and minerality of the wine. But each *cuvée* and each vintage reacts with the oak in a different way. This is a first-class estate. The Mont de Milieu vines are very young at the time of writing. Their first vintage was the 2003.

★★ **Domaine Joseph Drouhin**

Location: Beaune

Owners: Drouhin family

37.8 ha. *Grands crus* in Bougros (0.33 ha), Les Clos (1.30 ha), Les Preuses (0.23 ha), Vaudésir (1.41 ha); *premiers crus* in Montmains, Séchers, Vaillons, plus Mont de Milieu, Montée de Tonnerre, Morein and Roncières blended together as *premier cru tout court*; Chablis Domaine de Vaudon; Chablis.

The respected Beaunois house of Drouhin started expanding into the Chablis vineyard in 1968. The fruit is pressed here in Chablis, but the musts are transferred to Beaune for vinification and *élevage*. The *grands crus* and some of the *premiers crus*, as well as the Domaine de Vaudon, whose origins lie on slopes between the Montée de Tonnerre and the Mont de Milieu,

are fermented and stored at least partly in wood, with 15 percent being new for the *grands crus*. The percentage varies from vintage to vintage. As far as I am concerned, the Drouhins get the oak absolutely right. If you are going to have oaky Chablis, this is the model to follow, for the wines do not suffer from a lack of *typicité*. The Clos is the best wine, but the Vaudésir comes close.

Domaine Gérard Duplessis

Location: Chablis

Owners: Duplessis family

7 ha. *Grand cru* in Les Clos (0.36 ha); *premiers crus* in Fourchaume, Montée de Tonnerre, Montmains, Vaillon; Chablis.

Next door to Billaud-Simon on the Quai de Reugny on the left bank of the river Serein, presided over by the genial and splendidly bearded Gérard, is the Duplessis domaine. Vinification is in stainless steel, and *élevage* is split between tank and old wood. Bottling is late, after as long as 20 months. I used to rate this domaine highly, but in two recent visits, coinciding with a major programme of renovation to the cellars, running late and occasioning a multitude of disorder, I was underimpressed.

Domaine Jean Durup Père et Fils

Chateau de Maligny

Domaine de l'Églantière

Location: Maligny

Owners: Durup family

180 ha. *Premiers crus* in Fourchaume, L'Homme Mort, Montée de Tonnerre, Montmains, Vau de Vey; Chablis *premier cru* Cuvée La Reine Mathilde; Chablis Vieilles Vignes; Chablis Le Carré de César; Chablis La Vigne de la Reine; Chablis La Marche du Roi; Chablis.

The Durups dominate Maligny. Not only is their domaine the largest in Chablis after the cooperative La Chablisienne—and there are still 35 hectares to be planted once permission has been granted—but the family is also undertaking a major restoration of the twelfth-century Château de Maligny and its neighbouring thirteenth-century nunnery. Jean-Paul

Durup is the man in charge on the spot. The winery is spotless, without a stave of wood to be seen, and quality is impressive, especially given the size of the operation.

★★ **Domaine William Fèvre**

Location: Chablis

Owners: Henriot Champagne

Local Director: Didier Segulier

48 ha. *Grands crus* in Bougros (6.20 ha) (most sold as Clos des Bouguerots), Les Clos (4.15 ha), Grenouilles (0.57 ha); Les Preuses (2.55 ha), Valmur (1.10 ha); Vaudésir (1.20 ha); *premiers crus* in Beauroy, Les Lys, Montmains, Montée de Tonnerre, Vaillons, Vaulorent; Chablis.

William Fèvre sold his domaine in 1998, on his retirement at the age of sixty-seven, to Henriot Champagne, already proprietors of Boucharde Père et Fils in Beaune. It was a first-class domaine then; it is even better now. This is an estate which believes in wood for both fermentation and *élevage*, but there is much less new wood than previously (barely 2 percent), and the resultant wines are all the better for it, being more relaxed and having excellent *terroir* definition. Harvesting is by hand. The wines are not subjected to *bâtonnage*, are lightly fined only when necessary and are not filtered. Bottling takes place after the wines have had 4 to 8 months in wood, followed by the equivalent time in tank. This is a classy setup, producing very classy wines.

There is also a Fèvre merchant operation, offering inter alia Mont de Milieu and Blanchots.

Domaine Garnier et Fils

Location: Ligny le Château

Owners: Garnier family

19 ha. Chablis “Grains Dorés”; Chablis; Petit Chablis.

Xavier and Jérôme Garnier, the two *fils* , started planting vines on their family land above Fourchaume in 1986 and began to domaine bottle in 1992. Two thirds of the wine is still sold off in bulk. There are two *cuvées*. The basic is cropped at 60 hectolitres per hectare. The slightly oaky Grains Dorés, introduced in 1999, is from the

best parcels, where the yield is reduced to 35 to 40 hectolitres per hectare. This is an address worth exploring.

Domaine Raoul Gautherin et Fils

Location: Chablis

Owners: Gautherin family

16.6 ha. *Grands crus* in Les Clos (0.18 ha), Grenouilles (0.22 ha), Vaudésir (0.84 ha); *premiers crus* in Mont de Milieu, Montmains, Vaillons; Chablis Vieilles Vignes; Chablis; Petit Chablis.

Alain Gautherin’s winery and tasting room are located across a courtyard from his house in the centre of Chablis. Harvesting is by hand, lees settling is undertaken with the use of enzymes and, for the most part, maturation takes place in stainless steel. The *vieilles vignes* and the Grenouilles spend some of their time in old oak. Gautherin works with the lees but does not approve of *bâtonnage*. Quality is good but not outstanding. Recently I have preferred his Grenouilles to his Vaudésir.

Domaine Alain Gautheron

Location: Fleys

Owners: Gautheron family

18 ha. *Premiers crus* in Les Fourneaux including a *vieilles vignes* cuvée, Mont de Milieu, Vaucoupin; Chablis Vieilles Vignes; Chablis; Petit Chablis.

This family domaine—son Cyril has recently joined his father, Alain—is found on the eastern side of the village of Fleys under the Fourneaux *premier cru*. The *vieilles vignes* from this *climat* are hand harvested, and this and the Chablis Vieilles Vignes age in old wood. These are the two best wines; otherwise, quality is patchy.

★ **Domaine Corinne and Jean-Pierre Grossot**

Domaine Perchaud

Location: Fleys

Owner: Corinne Perchaud and Jean-Pierre Grossot

18 ha. *Premiers crus* in Fourchaume, Les Fourneaux, Mont de Milieu, Côte de Troesmes, Vaucoupin; Chablis “La Part des Anges”; Chablis.

The modern premises of the Grossot domaine are isolated beneath the Mont de Milieu on the

western side of Fleys. Part of the harvest is manual, and from the Part des Anges *cuvée* upward, the wines undergo part of their *élevage* in wood. I find this domaine produces very stylish wines and rate it the best in the village. My favourite is their Mont de Milieu.

Domaine Thierry Hamelin

Location: Lignorelles

Owners: Hamelin family

37 ha. *Premier cru* in Beauroy, Vau Ligneau; Chablis; Petit Chablis.

The large, robust Thierry Hamelin and his brother Bruno operate from an ugly, if functional, warehouse out in the sugar beet fields in the northern part of the appellation. The Chablis and the Petit Chablis come from Portlandian soils. There is no wood here. The wines are of sound quality, but not special.

Jean and Romuald Hugot

Domaine de Pisse-Loup

Location: Beines

Owners: Hugot family

13 ha. Chablis; Petit Chablis.

This estate, situated on the main road in Beines, dates from 1985 and is now run by Romuald, son of Jean Hugot. The family also owns the Château Lagarde-Rouffiac in Cahors. Since 2002 there has been an oaky special *cuvée* from hand-harvested grapes. The quality is sound but not special.

★★ Maison Jadot

Location: Beaune

Owners: Kopf family.

PDG: Pierre-Henri Gagey.

Winemaker: Jacques Lardière.

Although Jadot do not own any vineyards in the Chablis area, they are important players in Burgundy and sell some 100,000 bottles of Chablis a year. Vinification and *élevage* take place in their cellars in Beaune. The generic wines are fermented and matured in stainless steel; the *premiers* and *grands crus* are fermented and matured at least partly in old wooden casks. As with Jadot's other white wines, indigenous

yeasts are used, malolactic fermentations are blocked and the wines are bottled later than most. I admire Jadot's Chablis very much. They are made for keeping.

Domaine Chantal and Claude Laroche

Location: Fleys

Owners: Claude Laroche family

25 ha. *Premiers crus* in Fourchaume, Les Fourneaux, Mont de Milieu, Vaucoupin; Chablis Vieilles Vignes; Chablis; Petit Chablis.

Harvesting is by hand at this family domaine, founded in 1972, and until recently, no wood was to be found in the cellar. Today, the Fourchaume is 100 percent vinified and *élevé* in wood, 18 percent of which is new. This is too much. So, surely, is the Laroche habit of racking each wine four times. The Fourneaux is currently young wines.

Domaine/Maison Michel Laroche

Location: Chablis

Owners: Laroche family

98.8 ha. *Grands crus* in Blanchots (4.50 ha), Bougros (0.31 ha), Les Clos (1.12 ha); *premiers crus* in Beauroy, Côte de Léchet, Fourchaume (*vieilles vignes*), Montmains, Montée de Tonnerre, Vaillons (*vieilles vignes*), Vau de Vey; Chablis Saint-Martin (*vieilles vignes*); Chablis; Petit Chablis.

Although dating from 1850, the Laroche empire really started to expand in 1967 when Michel Laroche, then twenty-one, and his father, Henri, began to buy up land. The business is based at the Obédiencerie, a monastery which dates from the ninth century and is still a fine building. The *cuvée*, dating from 1992, lies west of the town, on the road to Auxerre. It works by gravity. Harvesting is done partly by hand, selected yeasts are used, and all the *grands crus* and most of the *premiers crus* are fermented and matured in wood. Although no new wood is used, I find the expression of oak in the Laroche wines excessive. The wine from a special half hectare of Blanchots, where Laroche is by far the largest landholder, produces a *Réserve de l'Obédiencerie*. Laroche buys in fruit at the village level.

Maison Olivier Leflaive Frères

Location: Puligny-Montrachet

Owners: Olivier Leflaive and associates. Winemaker: Patrick Duize

Olivier Leflaive Frères own no vineyards in Chablis but jointly possess, with Jean-Marie Guffens's Maison Verget in Sologny in the Mâconnais, a winemaking facility at Chitry. Leflaive's local manager here, reporting to Franck Grux back in Puligny, is the Canadian Patrick Duize. His contracts with his suppliers enable him to send in his own pickers to hand harvest in the best vineyards. After pressing, the wines are vinified in Puligny. Apart from a tendency to over-oak, the wines are very good here. Like their Côte de Beaune counterparts, they are for early drinking.

Bernard Legland

Domaine des Marronniers

Location: Prény

Owners: Legland family

20 ha. *Premiers crus* in Côte de Jouan, Montmains; Chablis; Petit Chablis.

Bernard Legland's domaine dates from 1976, when he planted his first vines. He is a conscientious winemaker, eschewing the use of oak and *bâtonnage* and producing neat, clean wines from the medium term. Recently he has been inclined to bottle later and later, provided the vintage allows it. The *tenue à l'air* (the ability of the wine to withstand oxygen) is greater, and consequently, he can reduce the sulphur content required to protect the wines.

Domaine Long-Depaquit

Location: Chablis

Owner: Albert Bichot

63 ha. *Grands crus* in Blanchots (1.65 ha), Bougros (0.52 ha), Les Clos (1.54 ha), La Moutonne (2.35 ha), Les Preuses (0.25 ha), Vaudésir (2.60 ha); *premiers crus* in Beugnons, La Forêt, Les Lys, Montée de Tonnerre, Vaillons, Vaucoupin; Chablis.

Long-Depaquit dates from 1791. Its elegant buildings occupy a spacious park, strangely calm in the middle of the town. In 1971 the company was sold to Albert Bichot, the large

Beaune *négociant*. The new owners retained Long-Depaquit's oenologue and resident manager Gérard Vullien and largely left him to his own devices. The era came to an end in 2001, however: Vullien retired, there was a change of management, and more importantly, there was a change in attitude at the Beaune end. Jean-Didier Basch succeeded Vullien as *régisseur*, yields were reduced and the viticultural approach became more *biologique*. Today all the *grands crus*, the Vaucoupin and the Montée de Tonnerre are harvested by hand. The wines are made here in Chablis but bottled in Beaune. Now all that remains is to reduce the wood so that the wine tastes like true Chablis.

A separate Bichot-owned estate is the Domaine du Château de Viviers (see p. 0000).

★★ Lyne and Jean-Bernard Marchive

Domaine des Malandes

Location: Chablis

Owners: Lyne and Jean-Bernard Marchive and the Tremblay family

26 ha. *Grands crus* in Les Clos (0.53 ha), Vaudésir (0.90 ha); *premiers crus* in Côte de Léchet, Fourchaume, Montmains, Vau de Vey; Chablis Vieilles Vignes "Tour du Roi"; Chablis; Petit Chablis.

Jean-Bernard and Lyne Marchive, a charming and welcoming couple, started this domaine in 1986, and they are now being joined by their eldest daughter, Marion, and her husband, Josh. Lyne Marchive was née Tremblay, and the entire domaine is *en ferme*, part of the Vaudésir owned by English wine merchant Mark Reynier. Vinification is in tank after a preliminary passage through the vines to cut out all the unripe or rotten fruit, but the *grands crus* are wholly or partly fermented in old wood. All the wines go through a cold stabilisation process the following summer. You will find fine quality here: very clean, pure wines. They keep well, too.

★★ Domaine Louis Michel et Fils

Location: Chablis

Owners: Michel family

23 ha. *Grands crus* in Les Clos (0.50 ha), Grenouilles (0.54 ha), Vaudésir (1.17 ha); *premiers crus* in

Fourchaume, Forêts, Montée de Tonnerre, Montmains, Vaillons; Chablis; Petit Chablis.

The Michel domaine was founded in 1850 and, following his father's death in 1999, is run currently by Jean-Loup Michel, making the domaine fifth-generation family owned. Attached to the house, on a street which runs down to the river Serein in the middle of Chablis, is the ivy-covered Domaine de la Tour Vaubourg, under whose label some of the wines are sold, and beneath which is the cellar where you will taste the wines. The *grands crus* and some of the *premiers crus* are hand harvested. Apart from a few empty casks which are strictly for decorative purposes, there is not a stick of wood in the Michel cellar. The wines are vinified at 18°C, a low temperature, and there is no *bâtonnage*. This technique produces splendidly elegant, pure and fragrantly expressive wines. They can be austere in their youth, but they keep remarkably well. This is one of the top domaines in the appellation.

Domaine Alice and Olivier de Moor

Location: Courgis

Owners: Alice and Olivier de Moor

6.5 ha (3 of Chablis). Chablis "Rosette"; Chablis "Belair"; Sauvignon de Saint-Bris; Bourgogne Chitry (*blanc*); Bourgogne Aligoté.

Neither Olivier nor his wife is from a viticultural background, although both are qualified oenologists. They set up in 1988, produced their first vintage in 1993 and were rapidly recognised as rising stars. Everything is done by hand here. Fermentations are in old barrels, and the wines are neither fined nor filtered. Sulphuring is kept to the barest minimum. The wines are forward but well made—very clean and stylish.

★★ Domaine Christian Moreau Père et Fils

Location: Chablis

Owners: Moreau family

12 ha. *Grands crus* in Blanchot (0.10 ha), Les Clos (3.60 ha, of which 0.40 ha is Clos des Hospices, Valmur (1 ha), Vaudésir (0.50 ha); *premier cru* in Vaillons, including a Cuvée Guy Moreau; Chablis; Petit Chablis.

The year 2002 was the first vintage for Christian Moreau and his son Fabien, following the end of

the lease of the family vines to Ets. J. Moreau et Fils, now owned by Boisset. Louis Moreau, his nephew, took on the other half (see below). Harvesting is entirely by hand, with the lesser wines fermented in stainless steel tanks and the *premier* and *grand cru* vinified 30 to 50 percent in wood. Christian Moreau describes himself as a "100 percent Chablisien." The 2002s and 2003s were an impressive start; the 2004s and 2005s are even better. Currently, because the vines are older, I prefer the straight Les Clos to the Clos des Hospices.

Domaine Louis Moreau

Domaine de Biéville

Domaine du Cèdre Doré

Location: Beines

Owners: Louis and Anne Moreau

DOMAINE LOUIS MOREAU: 50 ha. *Grands crus* in Blanchots (0.10 ha), Les Clos (3.61 ha including 0.41 ha which is Clos des Hospices (*monopole*), Valmur (0.99 ha), Vaudésir (0.45 ha); *premiers crus* in Fourneaux, Vaillons, Vaullignot; Chablis; Petit Chablis.

DOMAINE DE BIÉVILLE: 65 ha. Chablis.

DOMAINE DU CÈDRE DORÉ: 5 ha. Chablis.

Louis Moreau is the son of Jean-Jacques (Christian's brother; see above), who created the Viviers-based Domaine de Biéville in 1965 (Viviers lies on the eastern edge of the appellation). The Cèdre Doré followed, and Louis has since built up his own domaine. It now includes half the family vineyards once leased to merchants J. Moreau, which is no longer in the family hands (see above). Prior to the *grands crus* returning *en famille*, this was a no-wood, no-*bâtonnage* establishment, producing neat, clean wines for the medium term. The *grands crus* now go through a brief (4 to 8 weeks) *élevage en fûts*, 16 percent of which are new. They are good, but they lack the flair of those produced by the cousins above.

★ Domaine Moreau-Naudet

Location: Chablis

Owners: Moreau-Naudet family

22 ha. *Grand cru* in Valmur (0.60 ha); *premiers crus* in Beauregard, Côte de Jouan, La Forêt, Montée de Tonnerre, Montmains, Vaillons; Chablis; Petit Chablis.

Stéphane Moreau, who is no close relation to the above, took over from his father at the family domaine in 1999 and very quickly established it among the leading estates in the area. He harvests at low yields (35 to 45 maximum), hand picks the majority of his top wines, and has been experimenting with biodynamism (as far as I know, this is the only serious domaine in Chablis to move in this direction). The better wines are lightly oaked. These are concentrated, classy wines.

Domaine Sylvain Mosnier

Location: Beines

Owner: Mosnier family

17.2 ha. *Premiers crus* in Beauroy, Côte de Léchet; Chablis Vieilles Vignes; Chablis; Petit Chablis.

Sylvain Mosnier retired in 2005 and handed the domaine over to his daughter Stéphanie. This is a domaine which believes in low yields and uses no oak except for a passage in cask after fermentation for the *vieilles vignes cuvée* and the Beauroy. I have enjoyed the wines of this estate in the past, but I had a disappointing visit in February 2004 when I called to sample the 2001s and 2002s. This, however, seems to have been a temporary blip. The 2004s were very good indeed.

Thierry Mothe

Domaine du Colombier

Location: Fontenay-Près-Chablis

Owners: Mothe family

35 ha. *Grand cru* in Bougros (1.20 ha); *premiers crus* in Fourchaume, Vaucoupin; Chablis Vieilles Vignes; Chablis; Petit Chablis.

Thierry Mothe took over this domaine—Fontenay's best—in 1998 upon the retirement of his father, Guy, and has, I feel, further refined the quality here. There is no wood. The domaine produces intense, pure, elegant wines. This is the best source, along with William Fèvre, for Bougros.

Domaine Christianne and Jean-Claude Oudin

Location: Chichée

Owners: Oudin family

7.5 ha. *Premiers crus* in Vaucoupin, Vaugiraut; Chablis “Les Serres”; Chablis.

After 10 years in Paris as an aeronautical engineer, Jean-Claude Oudin returned to Chichée, south of Chablis, to take over the holdings of his wife's family. This was in 1988. There were 2 hectares then; now there are 7.5. Picking is by machine, but the land is ploughed, and a lot of attention is paid to ensuring a low harvest. There is no wood. The domaine produces very good wines.

Domaine Gilbert Picq et Fils

Location: Chichée

Owners: Picq family

13 ha. *Premiers crus* in Vaucoupin, Vosgros; Chablis Vieilles Vignes; Chablis.

Didier and his brother Pascal are in charge here at Chichée's best-known estate, created by Picq père in 1976. Vinification and *élevage* are entirely in stainless steel tanks, following pressing in a pneumatic apparatus; as of 2005, the fruit is picked through on a sorting table. The wines are left on their fine lees for 10 to 15 months before bottling. Neat, crisp wines are produced here. It is a good address.

Frédéric Prain

Domaine d'Élise

Location: Milly

Owners: Prain family

13.5 ha. *Premier cru* in Côte de Léchet; Chablis Cuvée Galilée; Chablis; Petit Chablis.

Not without difficulty (I got lost the first time, for there are no signposts), you will find the Prain domaine on the plateau above the Côte de Léchet. In 1982 Frédéric Prain retired from his job as a public works engineer in Paris. The house is still not finished. Prain picks by hand, not machine, sells half his crop to the *négoce* and bottles after 9 months. It is only recently that he achieved *premier cru* status for his 0.26 hectare of Côte de Léchet, which lies at the top of the slope and adjoins the rest of his estate, which is all in one piece. There is no wood here. Only the Cuvée Galilée undergoes *bâtonnage*. The domaine produces good wines for drinking fairly early.

★ **Domaine Pinson Frères**

Location: Chablis

Owners: Pinson family

11.8 ha *Grand cru* in Les Clos (2.50 ha); *premiers crus* in Les Forêts, Mont de Milieu, Montmains, Vaillons, Vaugiraut; Chablis.

Laurent and Christophe Pinson, cheerful, strapping young men in their mid-thirties, now run this popular domaine, whose headquarters is situated in the Quai Voltaire overlooking the river Serein. Father Louis is now retired. Noteworthy is that this is one of the very few Chablis properties which harvests entirely by hand. The wine is vinified in tank, with the top wines being aged for 6 months or so in wood, 10 percent of which is new, in a new extension to the cellar constructed in 2004. The Vaugiraut and Vaillons are currently from young vines. The wines are of fine quality.

Domaine Denis Race

Location: Chablis

Owners: Race family

15 ha. *Grand cru* in Blanchots (0.30 ha); *premiers crus* in Côte de Cuissy, Mont de Milieu, Montmains, Vaillons; Chablis; Petit Chablis.

Father Laurence is now semi-retired, and so this classy estate is now in the hands of his son Denis. You will find the headquarters next to that of Raveneau on the road to Chichée. The Races are firmly against wood. Of late, Denis has been pruning to the Guyot *simple* rather than *double*, with the intent of being able to control the size of the harvest more easily. Elegant wines for the medium term are found here.

★★ **Domaine Raveneau**

Location: Chablis

Owners: Raveneau family

7.5 ha. *Grands crus* in Blanchots (0.60 ha), Les Clos (0.54 ha), Valmur (0.75 ha); *premiers crus* in Butteaux, Chapelot, Forest (*sic*), Montée de Tonnerre, Montmains, Vaillons; Chablis.

Brothers Jean-Marie and Bernard Raveneau run Chablis's best domaine—a surprisingly small establishment. Older bottles will be found with the Christian name of father François on the

label. Harvesting is entirely by hand here. Yields are never excessive: 45 hectolitres per hectare in 2000 and 2001, 50 in 2002 and 35 in 2003—but 70 in 2004. The wines are vinified with natural or selected yeasts, depending on the vintage, and matured for up to 18 months in old barrels or half-barrels (*feuillettes*). Raveneau's corks are sealed with wax.

What is impressive about the Raveneau Chablis is that they are invariably very expressive of both their *terroirs* and their vintages. No two wines are alike. They are very pure and are capable of long ageing. This is the way to produce top-quality Chablis.

Maison Regnard

Location: Chablis

Owner: Baron Patrick de Ladoucette.

Régisseur: Philippe Rossignol.

10 ha. *Grand cru* in Les Grenouilles (0.50 ha). The firm buys in the equivalent of 125 hectares of fruit or must from some fifty growers.

Maison Regnard was founded in 1860, absorbed Maison Albert Pic in 1957, and was sold by Michel Remon, whose wife was *née* Regnard, to Patrick de Ladoucette of Pouilly-Fumé in 1984. Winemaking is entirely in stainless steel here, and the top wines are aged on their lees for 8 to 12 months before bottling. The firm produces about half a million bottles a year. All the *grands crus* are offered, plus the following *premiers crus*: Fourchaume, Montée de Tonnerre, Mont de Milieu and Montmains. Maison Regnard is clearly the best of the locally based *négociants*. Quality is generally very high.

Domaine Guy Robin

Location: Chablis

Owners: Robin family

20 ha. *Grands crus* in Blanchot (0.20 ha), Bougros (0.50 ha), Les Clos (0.20 ha), Valmur (2.60 ha), Vaudésir (0.25 ha); *premiers crus* in Mont de Milieu, Montée de Tonnerre, Montmains, Vaillons; Chablis.

The Robin estate consists of fine old vines. They pick entirely by hand. There is no reason why quality should not be splendid. Sadly, for many years the winery has been a hopeless mess, both dirty and smelly, and the bottles it has

produced have reflected this neglect. There are, however, some positive signs for the future: Guy's son Jean-Pierre is now increasingly in charge. He, at least, is aware that there is a problem.

Domaine Francine and Olivier Savary

Location: Maligny

Owners: Savary family

16.5 ha. *Premiers crus* in Fourchaume, Vaillons; Chablis Vieilles Vignes; Chablis; Petit Chablis.

Since 1984 the charming husband and wife team of Olivier and Francine Savary have built up their domaine from nothing. The expanding estate necessitated a new stainless steel winery, working by gravity, in 2000, at which time *lutte raisonnée* (reactive viticulture) and a more severe approach to yields was adopted. Only the Chablis Vieilles Vignes sees any wood here, but the wood is not a bit excessive. The wines produced are of impressive quality.

Domaine Roger Séguinot-Bordet

Location: Maligny

Owners: Séguinot-Bordet family

23 ha. *Premier cru* in Fourchaume; Chablis Vieilles Vignes; Chablis; Petit Chablis.

Jean-François Bordet, grandson of Roger, took over here at the beginning of 1998 and has since installed a brand new *cuvée chez lui* in Maligny, which was first used in 2002. In 2003 Jean-François started buying in fruit from Vaudésir, Côte de Léchet and Vaillons. He is picking later than was the practice when Roger Séguinot was in charge, but still by machine, and he is keeping the wine longer on its lees, with more *bâtonnage*. There is certainly an enthusiastic will to make good wines here, with the intention of producing *vins de garde*, but the results so far are merely so-so. There is no wood.

★ **Domaine Servin**

Location: Chablis

Owners: Servin family

33.6 ha. *Grands crus* in Blanchot (0.91 ha), Bougros (0.46 ha), Les Clos (0.63 ha), Les Preuses (0.69 ha); *premiers crus* in Forêts, Montée de Tonnerre, Vaillons; Chablis Cuvée Massale; Chablis; Petit Chablis.

François Servin and his Australian brother-in-law, Mark Cameron, are in charge at this well-reputed estate, whose headquarters lie just across the river Serein bridge from the heart of the town. All new plantations are now at 8,000 to 9,000 per hectare (as opposed to the normal 5,000 to 6,000), and pruning is to a single *Guyot* rather than the standard double: a net increase of riper grapes with less disease, the domaine reports. All the *grands crus*, the Forêts and old *massale* vines are hand harvested. The must is then cold-settled for 24 hours before fermentation using selected yeasts. The Bougros, Les Clos and Preuses, but not the Blanchots, are vinified in barrels, with the first two getting the newer wood. The Vaillons and the Chablis *sélection massale* are also gently oaky. All this takes place in a new gravity-fed cellar, installed in 2002. There are very good wines here, but the oaky wines are sometimes excessively so.

Domaine/Maison Simmonet-Fèbvre

Location: Chablis

Owner: Louis Latour

5 ha. *Grand cru* in Les Preuses (0.29 ha); *premier cru* in Mont de Milieu; Chablis village.

The domaine was founded by Jean Fèbvre in 1840, whose daughter married a Simmonet. In June 2003 the Simmonet family sold the business to Maison Louis Latour of Beaune. As well as Chablis, Simmonet-Fèbvre also offers Crémant de Bourgogne, and such Yonne appellations as Saint-Bris and Coulanges la Vineuse. Cultured yeasts are used, but not a stick of wood. Critics are divided as to whether the own-domaine wines are superior to the merchant offerings. I confess I have not been particularly inspired by either, but I have not yet tasted the wines produced subsequent to the change of ownership.

Domaine Philippe Testut

Location: Chablis

Owners: Testut family

11 ha. *Grand cru* in Grenouilles (0.55 ha); *premiers crus* in Beugnons, Les Forêts, Montmains, Montée de Tonnerre, Vaucoupin; Chablis; Petit Chablis.

Philippe Testut—currently assisted by his son Cyrille—started this domaine in 1966, having previously worked at Long-Depaquit. In 1970 he took over the lease of the Château Grenouilles, only to lose this to the cooperative La Chablisienne in 1974. Vinification is in tank, with their own Grenouilles raised partly in cask. I like the style here. Like Philippe Testut, the wines are gentle and relaxed, but they do not lack intensity.

★★ **Gérard Tremblay**

Domaine des Iles

Location: Poinchy

Owners: Tremblay family

34 ha. *Grand cru* in Vaudésir (0.60 ha); *premiers crus* in Beauroy, Côte de Léchet, Fourchaume, including a *vieilles vignes cuvée*, Montmains; Chablis Cuvée Hélène; Chablis; Petit Chablis.

Gérard Tremblay, his wife Hélène (for whom a special oaky village wine *cuvée* was created in 2001) and their son Vincent run this excellent domaine in Poinchy, which lies on the road to Auxerre. The Vaudésir is handpicked; the rest is harvested by machine. The Vaudésir and the *premiers crus*, and now the *Cuvée Hélène*, are matured partly in newish wood, but only the latter shows signs of this. Very classy, pure, elegant wines are found here.

★ **Domaine Laurent Tribut**

Domaine Tribut-Dauvissat

Location: Poinchy

Owners: Tribut family

5.2 ha. *Premiers crus* in Beauroy, Côte de Léchet, Montmains; Chablis.

Together with the Domaines des Iles, this is the best estate in Poinchy. Laurent Tribut and his wife, Marie-Clothilde (she is Vincent Dauvissat's sister), set up this domaine in 1987. Picking is by hand. The wines are fermented using natural yeasts and are kept in tank until the malolactic fermentations are complete. They are then raked into old wood. There is no *bâtonnage*, nor cold-stabilisation. Bottling takes place after 12 to 18 months. The domaine produces lovely mineral, clean, classy wines.

★ **Maison/Domaine Olivier Tricon**

Domaine de Vauroux

Location: Chablis

Owners: Tricon family

28.7 ha. *Grand cru* in Bougros (0.69 ha); *premiers crus* in Montée de Tonnerre, Montmains; Chablis.

Travelling a few kilometres south of Chablis on the route to Avallon will bring you to the isolated Domaine de Vauroux, acquired by the Tricon family in 1954. The grandson of the original owner Olivier, also named Olivier, runs the estate today. In addition to the merchant wines, Olivier Tricon has his own domaine of 6 hectares, which sells under the Domaine Olivier Tricon label. The Bougros and the Montée de Tonnerre are harvested by hand. The former is partly vinified and *élevé* in wood; otherwise, there is no oak here. These are stylish, racy wines for relatively early drinking.

Maison Verget

Location: Sologny (Mâconnais)

Owner: Jean-Marie Guffens

Jean-Marie Guffens is vociferous, rude and indiscreet, irritating rather than congenial. But he has shown with his own domaine Mâconnais wines that he not only loves his *métier* but knows how to do it. His Verget Mâconnais are very good, too. When it comes to Chablis, though, he has a vinification centre on the spot in Chitry, which he shares with Olivier Leflaive Frères. There can be some alarming inconsistencies, particularly in difficult vintages. Nearly all the wines are either *premier cru* or, a neat touch, individual village Chablis such as “Terroirs de Chablis,” “Terroirs de Fleys” and “Terroirs de Poinchy.” Some wines are over-oaked, though.

Claude Vilain

Domaine de la Chaude Écuelle

Location: Chemilly-sur-Serein

Owners: Vilain family

30 ha. *Premiers crus* in Montée de Tonnerre, Montmains; Chablis; Petit Chablis.

An *écuelle* is a bowl in which *vignerons* in the past reheated their midday meals. This estate

of the “hot bowl” is located in a sleepy village south of Chablis, enclosed by sugar beets and maize rather than vines. No wood is used. The estate produces minerally, quite full wines, with no lack of depth.

Domaine du Chateau de Viviers

Location: Viviers

Owners: Albert Bichot et Cie

17 ha. *Grand cru* in Blanchot (0.50 ha); *premiers crus* in Vaillons, Vaucoupin; Chablis.

This is a separate concern from that of Long-Depaquit, but run by the same team. The wines are vinified in stainless steel, after which the wine is transferred to Beaune for its maturation. There is no oak. Just as with the Long-Depaquit wines, quality here is improving.

Domaine Yvon Vocoret

Location: Maligny

Owners: Vocoret family

10 ha. *Premier cru* in Fourchaume; Chablis Vieilles Vignes; Chablis.

The Maligny-based Vocorets (the *c* is hard), Yvon and his father Maurice, are only distantly related to the Vocorets of Chablis (see below). Traditional winemaking is practiced here, with deliberately reduced harvests. No oak is used. These are quite substantial wines, and of good quality.

★ Domaine Vocoret et Fils

Location: Chablis

Owners: Vocoret family

47 ha. *Grands crus* in Blanchot (1.77 ha), Les Clos (1.62 ha), Valmur (0.29 ha), Vaudésir (0.11 ha); *premiers crus* in Côte de Léchet, La Forêt, Mont de Milieu, Montée de Tonnerre, Montmains, Vaillons; Chablis Vieilles Vignes; Chablis; Petit Chablis.

This Vocoret domaine lies on the main road next to the Hotel Ibis on the Auxerre side of Chablis, brilliantly situated to attract the maximum number of tourists. One should not fall into the trap of thinking that the quality of the wines is no more than acceptable, however. This is indeed a classy estate. It was founded in 1870 and built up by Robert Vocoret in the 1930s, and it is now run by his grandson Patrice

(in the cellar) and great-grandson Jérôme (in the vineyards). The bulk of the *grands crus* are hand harvested. Vinification and malolactic fermentation take place in vat, but the wine is then matured in wooden *foudres* until the following summer. So far, so good. But today there is also, or alternatively, a *passage en fût*, newish *demi-muids*, for the top wines. They are oakier than they used to be. This I regret.

OTHER WINES OF THE YONNE

After Chablis, the other wines of the Yonne can be divided into three groups: two separate village appellations, Irancy and Saint-Bris (although the latter only for its Sauvignon), and the generic wines. Some of these can be labelled with the name of the village after the word *Bourgogne* (e.g., Bourgogne-Coulanges-La-Vineuse). Others, where appropriate, can be labelled with the phrase *Côtes d'Auxerre*. Most of the wine does indeed come from the land south of Auxerre, but there are isolated pockets at Vézelay, Joigny, Épineuil near Tonnerre, and even Chatillon-sur-Seine. None of these areas is very large. The grand total of all of this comprises some 1,600 hectares producing 100,000 hectolitres of wine, one third of it red and *rosé*, two thirds of it white. These figures are dwarfed by Chablis: 4,670 hectares producing 284,000 hectolitres.

Outside Chablis, then, the grape is scarce. The climate is not propitious. We are rapidly approaching the point at which the vine will not ripen sufficiently to produce palatable wine. There is competition from cereals and pasture, and it is only in the most favourable pockets that the vine can thrive. Nevertheless, this is an expanding and thriving part of viticultural France. Land prices are not excessive, and the market for well-made wine of character is constantly growing.

As well as the Pinot Noir, the Chardonnay and the Aligoté, a number of rustic grape varieties, long since dispensed with elsewhere, continue to survive. To add to the Pinot Noir there is the César, which will beef up the colour and the alcohol. Officially, there is also the Tressot, although

this is hardly seen today. Two white grape varieties, the Sacy (the Tresallier in Saint-Pourçain) and the Melon (Muscadet), are permitted for the Crémant, as is the Gamay for the rosé. And then there is the Sauvignon (see Saint-Bris, below).

IRANCY

Irancy lies 10 kilometres southeast of Auxerre and is visually one of France's vineyard gems. Above the village, a natural amphitheatre faces due south and captures all the sun that is available. The slopes are full of vines and cherry trees, with a little road winding down from the forest above. In the spring, when the wildflowers are out, the place is enchanting. You can also eat very well on the side of the river Yonne in the village of Vincelottes, below that of Irancy, at the Auberge des Tilleuils.

The wine is red and is clearly the best of those in the Auxerrois—it is the only one which is more than a sort of half rosé. Drink it when it is between 2 and 5 years old. The hot year of 2003 produced some splendid Irancys.

SAINT-BRIS

This is a curious appellation. Until 1995 it was Burgundy's sole Vin Délimité de Qualité Supérieure (VDQS), relegated to the second rank because the grape variety used was considered not properly Burgundian—except that we are only 80 miles west of Pouilly-sur-Loire, and the Nièvre département, in which Pouilly lies, has historically always been part of greater Burgundy. Nevertheless, here we

have a wine from a variety not permitted elsewhere. It has had some difficulty competing with the improved quality of the local Chardonnays in past years, and the fact that Sauvignon is not allowed in the local Crémant has tended to discourage growers from planting it. Promotion to *appellation contrôlée* has given it a shot in the arm, though, and the surface area is increasing.

Saint-Bris lies on the road from Auxerre to Irancy and is really quite substantial. It is also a pretty town. We are in the centre of the Côtes d'Auxerre here, and most of the local growers make Bourgogne, in its various colours, as well as the local Sauvignon. This can be an attractive wine, but it has more in common with a generic Touraine than with a Sancerre.

→ Irancy ←

Surface Area (2005)	160 ha
Production (2005)	8,552 hl
Colour	Red
Maximum Yield	55 hl/ha
Minimum Alcohol	10.0°
Grape Varieties	Pinot Noir, César
Optimum Drinking	2 to 5 Years after the Vintage

BOURGOGNE

Chitry lies on the Chablis side of Saint-Bris and Irancy, and Coulanges-la-Vineuse on the other, some 8 kilometres due south of Auxerre, together with Saint-Bris-le-Vineux (to give it its full name) and eight other communes not grand enough to be allowed to use their names on the label. This comprises the Côte d'Auxerre. This is the home of increasing stylish light Chardonnays and almost *vin de l'année* Pinots, best drunk cool and soon.

Coulanges-la-Vineuse has made a speciality

of its reds, and it obviously has ambitions to join Irancy as an appellation in its own right. At Chitry we are on the borders of *appellation contrôlée* Chablis, and the bias is toward Chardonnay.

Épineuil is a suburb of Tonnerre and offers a small amount

of Pinot Noir from the south-facing slopes

→ Saint-Bris ←

Surface Area (2005)	103 ha
Production (2005)	6,953 hl
Colour	White
Maximum Yield	60 hl/ha
Minimum Alcohol	9.5°
Grape Varieties	Sauvignon Blanc
Optimum Drinking	Within 1.5 Years after the Vintage

above the river Armançon. This, too, is a light wine for early drinking. It, too, can have elegance.

Tonnerre was granted an appellation in its own right in 2006, for white wines only. Not surprisingly, these wines resemble a minor Chablis and are best for early drinking.

The vineyards at Côte Saint-Jacques, above Joigny to the north, and Vézelay to the south, are recent and minuscule, the product of a few brave souls—pioneering spirits who would have us remember what an important *vignoble* the Yonne was in pre-*phylloxera* days. Not surprisingly the two local multi-starred Michelin chefs, Marc Meneau of L'Espérance at Saint-Père near Vézelay and Michel Lorain of, appropriately, La Côte Saint-Jacques at Joigny, are at the forefront of this revival.

YONNE LEADING DOMAINS

S.I.C.A. du Vignoble Auxerrois

Caves Bailly-Lapierre

Location: Bailly

Members: 80

500 ha. Crémant de Bourgogne; Bourgogne Aligoté; Irancy; Saint-Bris.

Founded in 1971, the local produce having previously been sent to Germany as a base wine for *sekt*, this domaine is the producer of the best Crémant de Bourgogne. The up-to-date premises, with cellars cut out of an old limestone quarry into which you can drive your car at least part-way, are worth a visit. The flagship

Crémant is labelled *Bailly-Lapierre*—hence the recent change of name from Cave de Bailly.

Domaine Anita and Jean-Pierre Colinot

Location: Irancy

Owners: Anita and Jean-Pierre Colinot

10 ha. Irancy, including “Côte du Moutier,”

“Les Mazelots,” “Palotte.”

This is the source of the best Irancy, produced from 95 percent Pinot Noir and 5 percent César, with the *cuvées* from the best parcels being vinified and bottled separately. The fullest Irancy is the Côte du Moutier. The *cuvée* labelled *Palette* is supple and aromatic. Beware of Les Mazelots. This is pure César—not to my taste. The Colinots are charming, irrepressible and passionate about their wine, which does not see wood. Their 2003s are superb. A visit here is a delight.

Domaine Ghislaine and Jean-Hugues Goisot

Location: Saint-Bris-le-Vineux

Owners: Ghislaine and Jean-Hugues Goisot

27 ha. Bourgogne Côtes d'Auxerre; Bourgogne

Aligoté; Saint-Bris; Irancy.

This is a splendid source of neatly made, elegant generic wine. The Goisots live in the village of Saint-Bris, but this represents only a third of their production. The best is labelled *Gourmand Fyé Gris*. The top Côtes d'Auxerres, both red and white, are hand harvested, vinified in wood and bottled under the name *Corps de Garde*. On top of this, there is the white “Biaumont” and the red “Gondonne,” a superb selection. After a couple of years in bottle, these are admirable wines.