



# Burgundy

EN PRIMEUR 2020

# Vintage Report 2020

## SHOULD YOU BUY?

2020 is a great vintage for Burgundy – certainly the best overall since 2017 and arguably eclipsing that year for its white wines. From a quality perspective, there is no debate around whether there are wines worth adding to your cellar.

However, a serious consideration should also be given to the shortness of the following 2021 vintage. This was a year in which many quality growers who typically take yields of 30 – 35 hectolitres per hectare were only able to achieve production levels of 12 – 15. Growers who make ten barrels of a wine in a typical vintage may only have made two or three in 2021. Allocations will be dramatically cut.

As a result, those who fail to secure the exceptional wines of the 2020 vintage will both miss out on one of Burgundy's greatest years and will be unlikely to find replacements from 2021. The resulting lack of supply is likely to increase market pressure on pricing.

The 2020 growing season started early, with possibly the earliest flowering on record. In many years this would put the delicate developing buds at risk, yet 2020 was the first year since 2016 without any post-flowering frost, and a high potential for the vintage was seen.

This was followed by an exceptionally warm, dry summer, with average temperatures throughout the season akin to 2003. Unlike 2003, however, there were no great heat spikes in 2020 – just consistent warmth all the way through, leading to rapid accumulation of sugar ripeness in the fruit. While at one point it looked like physiological ripeness might struggle to catch up, the lack of rainfall throughout the summer meant that many vines shut down their accumulation of sugars in late July and early August. This allowed the flavour profile of the fruit to continue to develop without increasing alcohol potential.

Most growers started to pick their fruit around 20th August – one of the earliest harvests on record. While very early in an historical context, the fact that flowering also took place so early in 2020 meant that harvest took place around 100 days later, which is typical for Burgundy. The fruit had a very classic 'hang time' – just with everything taking place earlier than expected.

## THE WHITE WINES

**"Every producer I have been to of whites has made good white wines. It's unbelievably consistent."**  
*Jasper Morris MW*

The whites are remarkably fresh, crisp, and classically structured, despite the warmth of the

vintage. Unlike comparably warm years like 2003, the summer of 2020 saw distinctly cooler evenings, maintaining freshness in the fruit.

This coolness factor, combined with a general lack of heat spikes during the days, and water stress from lack of rainfall, concentrated sugar, acidity, and flavours in the white wines. There are no signs of over-ripeness.

Overall, the profile of the white wines is similar to 2017 or 2014 – considered the best vintages of the 2010s. They offer crisp, vibrant, classically Burgundian flavours. It is a textbook, impeccable vintage for Burgundy whites.

## THE RED WINES

**"Where the wines have been got exactly right, it's a great as anything I know."** *Jasper Morris MW*

2020 is also a great vintage for Burgundy's red wines. However, unlike the whites that are near-universally exceptional, the pattern for the reds is a little more mixed, with a wide range of quality and styles.

Where growers harvested later and followed a more traditional programme of extraction in the cellar, the wines can be deeply coloured and intense blockbusters, more typical of northern Rhone reds than Burgundy Pinot Noir. However, where growers picked earlier and practised very gentle winemaking, the wines offer exceptional terroir definition, with very 'correct' flavour profiles. Gevrey-Chambertin is distinct from Chambolle-Musigny, which is distinct from Vosne-Romanée..

Burgundy is booming and its value is more than just the price of a bottle on the secondary market.

# Burgundy Market Report 2020

After a tough couple of years caused by political unrest in Hong Kong and US sanctions, Burgundy has had an excellent year on the secondary markets in '21. Both Bordeaux Index and Live-ex report increased demand across the globe. The Burgundy 150 index hit a new high of 686.80 at the end of November, up 28% on last year and nearly 90% above the level of five years ago. And this is not just a flash in the pan. Burgundy is the top performing region since the launch of the Liv-ex regional indices in 2003 giving it 18 years of stellar performance. And although it is the blue-chip names driving much of this growth there is a greater range of Burgundy now being traded. For example, the number of producers being traded on Liv-ex is up 19% on last year, showing a real appetite for the whole category.

Both Liv-ex and Bordeaux Index are optimistic about the future, especially for the big-name producers. The tough conditions of the '21 vintage will mean scarcity is a real factor over the next few years but with demand likely to grow, so will the prices. However, higher prices, shortage of stock and external world events that are impossible to predict can put pressure on any category and it may mean that many are simply priced out of the market and look elsewhere.

Burgundy has performed well over the last 5 years. The prices for the most traded Grand Crus are stratospheric, but there is still value to be found for those who know where to look. Leading wine critic Neal Martin writes in his report for Vinous on the changing value of Burgundy, "the value of Burgundy's top wines is no longer measured solely in terms of pleasure in consumption and sharing, but also in pleasure of ownership".

So, whilst none of us can control the external market, we do control the value we personally place in having a superb bottle of wine from one of the world's greatest wine regions in our cellar.

# Credentials



## 30 YEARS' EXPERIENCE SOURCING INCREDIBLE WINES

Wimbledon Wine Cellar was founded in 1986 by Andrew Pavli, still the present owner today and on the scene most weeks in its Wimbledon shop.

From its earliest days, the Wine Cellar specialised in fine Burgundy from exclusive growers across the region, supplying these to high quality independent wine merchants, top London restaurants, and direct to private clients. While today it offers a comprehensive range from around the world, Burgundy remains at the heart of the business, and one of its largest in-store selections.

Andrew has been travelling to Burgundy for many years and knows the region intimately. He has relationships with many of its most acclaimed growers that stretch back for decades.

The Wimbledon Wine Cellar Burgundy EP collection will feature more than a dozen different growers. Further details and prices will be updated as the wines are released.

Whether you're looking to dip your toe in the waters of one of the world's greatest wine producing regions, or are a seasoned fan looking for some of its most exclusive wines, don't hesitate to get in touch.

# WILLIAM FÈVRE

“I was suitably impressed with the quality of the Fèvre 2020s... they are indisputably excellent.”

*Allen Meadows, Burghound*

## IS SMALLER ALWAYS MORE BEAUTIFUL?

It is true that, when it comes to Burgundy's winemakers, scale doesn't often correlate with quality. More vineyards means that the obsessional attention to detail needed to produce great wines is more thinly spread. Yet there are exceptions.

William Fèvre is both one of Chablis' largest owners of vineyard land and one of its finest producers. Its Premier and Grand Cru wines consistently rank amongst the best in the region. Fèvre's entry level wines offer some of the best combinations of quality and value available from Chablis.

Fèvre owns multiple parcels of old vines, which translate into sinuous, textured, gastronomic wines, which can age effortlessly. They are always true to their terroir, with concentration, minerality and acidity that vary across vineyard to vineyard.

### FÈVRE IN 2020

**“The wines of Domaine William Fèvre are stunning across the board.”**

*Andy Howard MW, Decanter Magazine 2020 Chablis Vintage Report*

Like many producers, Fèvre harvested early in 2020 – yet the exceptionally early flowering in March meant that the season was no

shorter than in cooler years, and the wines retain incredible concentration, balance, and fine mineral structure. Alcohol levels are not especially high.

2020 was Fèvre's best vintage since 2014, and with virtually no Chablis produced in 2021, there should be no question about filling the cellar with these exquisitely poised white wines.

Highlights include Les Clos Grand Cru, described by Andy Howard MW as showing **“perfect balance between precision, concentration, acidity and ripe fruits, with oak that's not at all apparent. A fresh, glorious wine. 97 Points.”**

In Premier Cru, the Vaulorent has **“complexity on both the nose and palate,” with “the richness and structure of the Grand Cru. 96 Points.”** It is an absolute bargain.

But perhaps there is no better value to be found in the range than Fèvre's village Chablis, which **“will age for many years,” with “great energy and focus. Spice on the finish, precise acidity.”**