



KAROLUS
WINE IMPORTS

HOME OF
Bonneau du Martray

Collector's Guide 2024



Table of Contents

Welcome	2
About Karolus Wine Imports	3
An Introduction to Burgundy	4
Bonneau du Martray at a Glance	6
Grands Crus Corton-Charlemagne & Corton	8
The 2021 Vintage in Burgundy	10
What's in a Name? Charlemagne.....	12
Corton-Charlemagne in Context: Tasting the 2019s in London	13
Vintage Variation & Why it Matters.....	15
A Look into the Library: 2013, 2014, 2015, & 2017 Bonneau du Martray.....	16

Highlights from Previous Collector's Guides:

On Balance: What it is & Why it Matters.....	18
The White Grands Crus in Context.....	19
Diverse Soils & Microclimates of Bonneau du Martray.....	21
Learn More about Burgundy: A Resource Page.....	22

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Welcome

To all of our wonderful members:

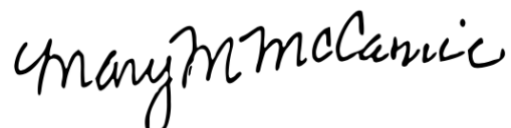
It is my privilege to write the sixth annual Collector's Guide for members of the Bonneau du Martray mailing list through Karolus Imports. Since writing the first guide, I have hoped that these pages will help you understand the wines you love even more by giving both general and unique insights into Burgundy, its Grands Crus, and Domaine Bonneau du Martray's current releases. As there are many resources for Burgundy lovers, this is merely an attempt to focus on particular areas of interest related to Bonneau du Martray. This year I have also included a resource page called Learn More about Burgundy that offers some of my favorite books on Burgundy as well as opportunities for further learning opportunities.

This year's Collector's Guide focuses on the 2021 vintage of Domaine Bonneau du Martray in addition to several other pieces inspired by recent tastings and travel. Of particular note, I attended a 2019 Corton-Charlemagne tasting in September of 2023 that included an impressive lineup of the top producers in the grand cru. This vintage is tiny but extraordinary, and one that you simply cannot miss.

Though all of the content has originated by Karolus Wine Imports via my personal experiences with Bonneau du Martray, it is important to note the resources used. All maps are credited to and were used with the permission of their authors, Sylvain Pitiot & Jean-Charles Servant. Information on current statistics related to Burgundy is sourced from the Bourgogne Wine Board (BIVB). And of course, no writing on Burgundy could be complete without consulting the extensive writings of fellow Masters of Wine Clive Coates, Jasper Morris, and Charles Curtis.

As always, let this guide be a gateway for you, one that I hope leads you down a long path of vines and up to the top of the Hill of Corton to Bonneau du Martray's highest parcels, where you can cast a reverent gaze down on all of its glory.

Cheers,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary Margaret McCamic". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mary Margaret McCamic, Master of Wine
General Manager, Karolus Wine Imports

About Karolus Wine Imports

Karolus Wine Imports is a U.S. importer that was established in 2017 in order to bring the wines from the revered Burgundian estate, Bonneau du Martray, directly to collectors. The name 'Karolus' pays homage to Charlemagne, or Charles the Great, known in Latin as 'Karolus Magnus.'



For Karolus, maintaining the quality of the wines we import is paramount, and it is considered in every step of the journey from Burgundy. Though nothing can compare to drinking Corton-Charlemagne while overlooking the beautiful limestone Hill of Corton in Burgundy, we aim to ensure that each bottle tastes as it was intended no matter where it is finally opened. All transport is done in temperature-controlled conditions so that the integrity of each bottle remains intact.



In addition to quality, Karolus Wine Imports assures provenance and provides direct access to Bonneau du Martray's two Grands Crus, Corton-Charlemagne and Corton, along with access to library vintages direct from the estate. Members of our exclusive mailing list can purchase allocations annually of Bonneau du Martray directly through Karolus Wine Imports, expediting the journey of each bottle between estate and wine cellar.

Karolus Wine Imports' General Manager, Mary Margaret McCamic MW, is one of less than 450 Masters of Wine in the world and one of fewer than 60 living and working in the United States. She works directly with members on the mailing list and visits Bonneau du Martray annually to taste current releases and select library vintages. For videos and writings, visit our 'Collectors' section of the website: www.karoluswines.com/collectors.html

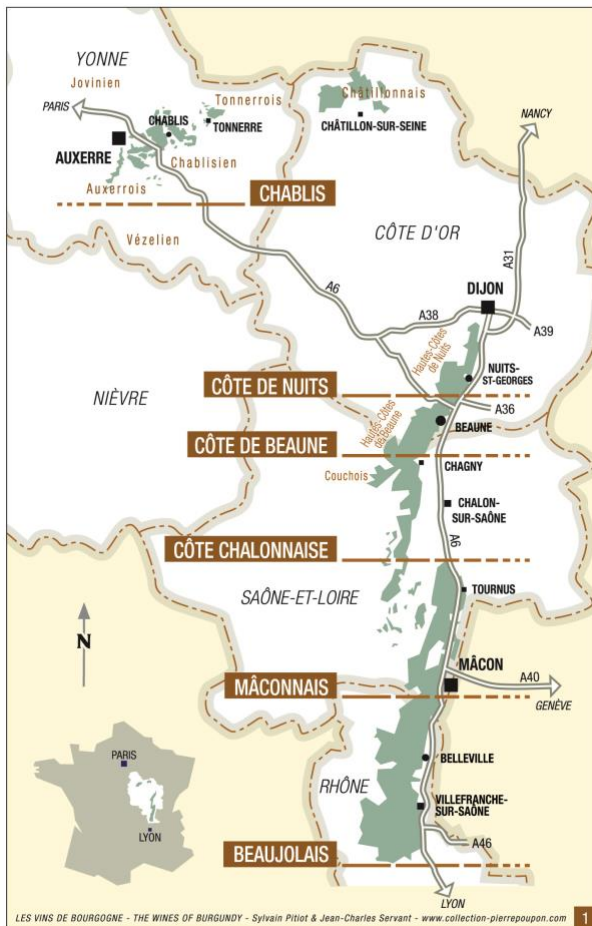
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An Introduction to Burgundy

Burgundy is one of the few wine regions in the world that allows collectors to truly see vintage. With its unique range of soils, altitudes, and aspects, it allows chardonnay and pinot noir to reach unparalleled heights in terms of quality, age ability, and nuance. It is home to some of the world's greatest wines, coveted by collectors globally, and yet its complexities can be daunting even to the most avid collectors and wine professionals.

Understanding Burgundy starts with understanding its landscape and defining characteristics, one of which is that Burgundy's great wines rely on two single grape varieties: **chardonnay** and **pinot noir**. Where they are planted in Burgundy will affect how a bottle is labeled as well as its quality designation.



- BURGUNDY AT A GLANCE -

SIZE

Burgundy is roughly 230km long (143 miles) from north to south

KEY SOILS

Varies with a mix of limestone, marl, with outcrops of clay and gravel

CLIMATE

Continental with summer temperature average of 68°F & average 700 mm rainfall per year (mostly May/June)

GRAPE VARIETIES

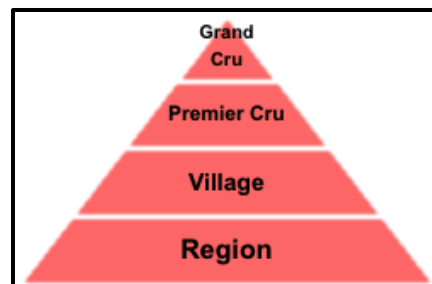
Chardonnay (~50%), pinot noir (~40%), aligoté, gamay & other minor varieties (~10%)

WINE STYLES

Still white (59%), red & rosé (30%), sparkling (11%)

The region of Burgundy sits in central eastern France, stretching from Chablis in the north down to Beaujolais in the south. It is hard to generalize about this region's climate, but generally speaking, it is continental, meaning that it is less consistent than a coastal, more moderated climate, and it experiences a significant shift between summer and winter months. Chardonnay and pinot noir can ripen sufficiently here, but the climate is moderate enough to let them ripen slowly and evenly throughout the growing season, depending on the vintage. Rain, frost, and hail can seriously impact a vintage in Burgundy, with effects ranging from decreased yields to damaged fruit and rot. This variation is part of what makes Burgundy so special, but what can also cause differences in vintage **quality** and **price**.

Burgundy's vineyards are divided into a hierarchy that helps indicate the quality of the wine in the bottle, a system that in many cases dates back to the Catholic monks who inhabited the area and their ability to distinguish a high-quality parcel of land from another. The Côte d'Or is considered the best segment of land in Burgundy, as it encompasses the Côte de Nuits and the Côte de Beaune with generally southeast facing slopes and the majority of the entire region's Grands Crus. It is throughout this strip of land where one finds such names as Le Musigny, Richebourg, Corton-Charlemagne, and Le Montrachet.



As the image to the right illustrates, vineyards such as the aforementioned are designated as 'Grand Cru' and are believed to be the highest in quality. They are also produced in the smallest amounts. In fact, Grands Crus account for a mere 1% of wine produced in Burgundy. Premier cru and village-designated wines account for 46%, while regional wines account for 53%.¹

There are many factors to consider when determining the quality of a wine, regardless of its legal designation, including if not more importantly the **producer**. Just as the region of Burgundy has been divided into many different quality segments, the vineyards themselves are also divided in ownership. For example, within the Grand Cru Corton-Charlemagne, there are many different landholders and producers, each making wine from grapes sourced from the same Grand Cru but from different locations within. Even though they are all labeled as Grand Cru, certain producers take more care in the vineyard, have better parcels, and/or are more detailed in the winery, thus producing styles that outperform their fellow producers of Grand Cru Corton-Charlemagne.

-The Rare Factor –

- Burgundy's area under vine accounts for only 4% of vineyard in France
- The wines of Burgundy account for just over 4% of all French wine production, and only 0.6% of global wine production – it is tiny!
- Grands Crus account for only 1% of wine production in Burgundy
- There are only 33 Grands Crus in Burgundy

Although Burgundy's central focus has always been its land, there is hierarchy of quality even within the best vineyards in Burgundy. Savvy collectors know to seek out top names like Bonneau du Martray, and they put their trust in the producer's ability to craft top wines vintage after vintage. The journey to understand Burgundy is endless, and there are many resources available that can provide in-depth looks at sub-regions, villages, and beyond. Now to the subject of interest, Domaine Bonneau du Martray, and how this revered estate fits into the larger picture of Burgundian wine.

¹ All statistics on pages 4-5 & remainder of this document were sourced from 2018 BIVB (Bourgogne Wine Board)

Domaine Bonneau du Martray at a Glance

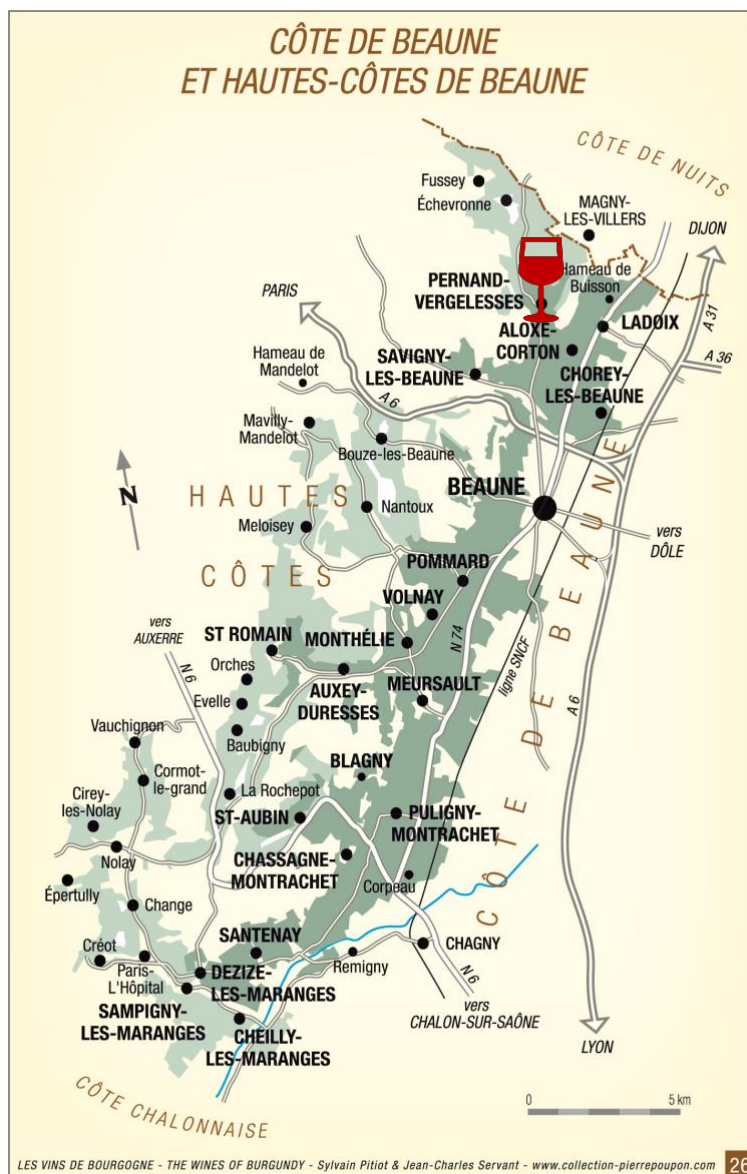
HISTORY

Bonneau du Martray can trace its roots back to the Emperor Charlemagne nearly 1,200 years ago, when he owned the vineyard atop the Hill of Corton. In 775, Charlemagne (Charles the Great) gifted the vineyard to the monks of Saint-Andoche in Saulieu, who called the vineyard ‘Clos Charlemagne,’ and who would own it for the next 1,000 years. The property changed hands to the Very family at some time in the late 1700s, and ultimately became part of the Bonneau du Martray family when Charles Bonneau du Martray and Eugénie Very were married in 1835, and her dowry included parcels in Pernand-Vergelesses, where the estate is today. In 2017, the Domaine changed hands for the fourth time in its history, when E. Stanley Kroenke became the proprietor. In addition to the wine produced by Domaine Bonneau du Martray, the estate also began leasing a small portion of its Corton-Charlemagne holdings to Domaine de la Romanée Conti in 2019.

LOCATION

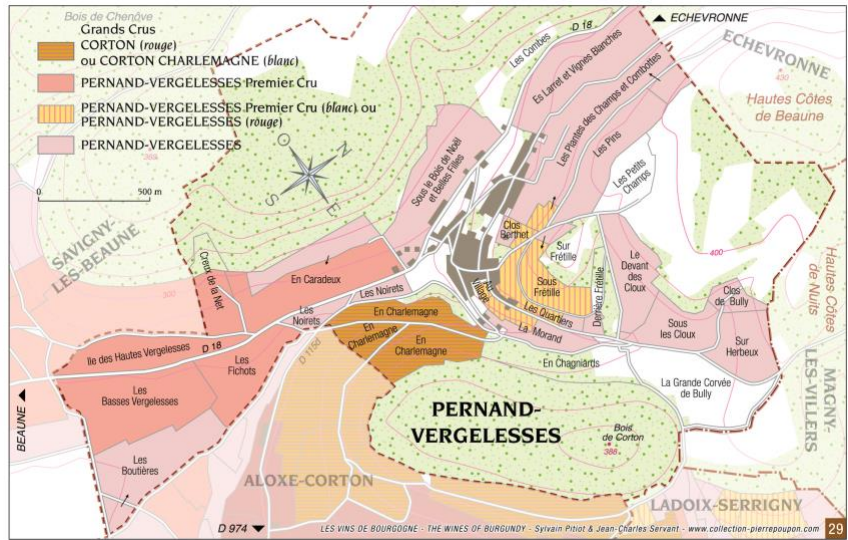
Within the grand scheme of Burgundy, Bonneau du Martray finds itself within the Côte d’Or, in the northern portion of the Côte de Beaune. More specifically, Bonneau du Martray’s estate sits in the sleepy village of Pernand-Vergelesses, which is roughly a ten-minute drive north from Beaune.

The village overlooks the majestic Hill of Corton as it rises over 300 meters, nestled between three Burgundian villages: Pernand-Vergelesses, Aloxé-Corton, and Ladoix-Serrigny.



IN THE VINEYARD & WINERY

Bonneau du Martray's vines stretch across the Grand Cru Charlemagne appellation, with vines in both famed climats *Le Charlemagne* and *En Charlemagne*. Uniquely, these vines are west and southwest-facing, which allows them to soak up less direct sunlight during the day but enjoy it for longer than their east-facing neighbors. Vines are planted at high density and have been farmed biodynamically since 2003.



What distinguishes Bonneau du Martray from its neighbors has always been that their stretch of parcels extends from the very top of the hill down to the bottom, allowing a complete expression of the Hill rather than just a single site interpretation. A small portion of the Domaine is planted with pinot noir, and it is used to produce the estate's rare and wonderful red, Grand Cru Corton.

Once the chardonnay is harvested each year, each parcel is vinified separately and begins fermentation in tank and complete it in oak barrels. The whites are matured for 12 months in 25-30% new French oak, then blended for the final cuvée.

Like the chardonnay, the pinot noir is hand-harvested to preserve the freshness and integrity of the grapes. Each parcel is vinified in wooden tanks so as to express the typicity of each. Bunches are entirely destemmed and sorted separately by parcel. Traditional punch-downs and pump-overs take place to extract the vintage's aromatic potential. The wine then rests 18 months in oak and stainless prior bottling.

Grands Crus Charlemagne & Corton

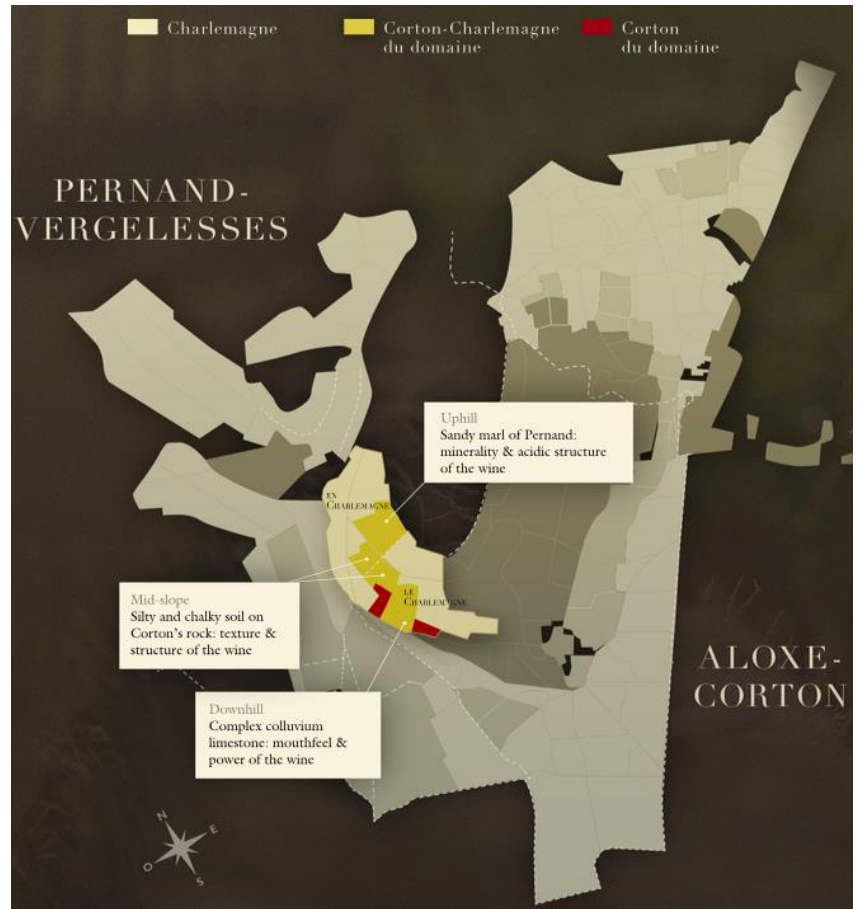
CHARLEMAGNE

With vines facing west, the Charlemagne climat, located in the heart of the Hill, enjoys the sun's light longer than other climats. The top of the Hill reaches altitudes over 300 meters above sea level, keeping the vines above the fog. Charlemagne's unique positioning allows for ample sunlight and gentle, cooling airflow, giving way to grapes that are perfectly balanced in the best years.

With parcels stretching from the top of Corton-Charlemagne all the way to the bottom, Bonneau du Martray has the ability to create a wine that represents the vineyard in its entirety. The different parcels of the estate collectively fall into three distinct microclimates, each influenced by altitude, aspect, soil type, soil quality, and drainage. Clay, silt, marl, limestone, and chalk are all make up the unique geology of Corton-Charlemagne.

The highest parcels are buffered by the forest, resulting in chardonnay grapes that are taut, tense, and focused. The heart of the vineyard produces grapes that are more giving, round, and floral. The plots at the very bottom of the vineyard produce grapes that are rich and intense, yielding the most powerful expression of Corton-Charlemagne.

Individually, these three microclimates are musical notes. When blended together, there is harmony. Domaine Bonneau du Martray produces a unified expression of Corton-Charlemagne, labeled simply as Charlemagne beginning in 2021.



CORTON

Reds made from pinot noir bearing the name ‘Corton Grand Cru’ have a long, respected history. There is no question that this terroir has the capacity to make some of the region’s best reds, especially if yields are kept low and if vines are planted where they thrive best.

The Hill of Corton is also divided into many different climats, which can be listed on the label with the name ‘Corton.’ For example, ‘Corton Clos du Roi’ or ‘Corton Les Renardes’ are names of specific climats that collectors may see on the label. Much of the pinot noir is planted on the Ladoix and Aloxe-Corton sides of the hill, but some is also planted in Corton-Charlemagne on the lower parts of the hill where there is more clay. This is the case for Bonneau du Martray.

Bonneau du Martray’s plantings of pinot noir are divided into 3 plots, and the estate remains one of the only producers of Corton within Corton-Charlemagne. The red from Bonneau du Martray is quite aromatic, fresh, and intense, making it a beautiful, though rare, complement to their flagship white Grand Cru Charlemagne.



The 2021 Vintage in Burgundy

Vintage Snapshot

2021 was a year of miniscule quantities due to weather challenges, including severe frost in the spring and rain over the summer. Top producers with the experience to handle what such challenges provides produced lovely wines with gorgeous aromatics, crisp and vibrant acidity, and wines with immediate and long-term drinking potential. One might call the 2021 vintage more “classic” than the warmer, richer vintages preceding it. Producer is extraordinarily important in vintages like this, and Domaine Bonneau du Martray again produced an elegant, fine-tuned expression of Charlemagne Grand Cru and Corton Grand Cru.

2021 Bonneau du Martray Charlemagne Grand Cru



At yields of a merely 8 hectoliters per hectare, the 2021 vintage at Bonneau du Martray was extremely tiny. The resulting wines were focused, pure, and vibrant.

According to William Kelley of the Wine Advocate when writing of Domaine Bonneau du Martray Charlemagne:

“The 2021 Corton-Charlemagne Grand Cru has nevertheless turned out beautifully, offering up aromas of tangerine oil, crisp stone fruit, clear honey, white flowers and freshly baked bread. Medium to full-bodied, fleshy and textural, with terrific depth at the core, tangy acids and a precise, saline finish, it will only gain with further élevage.”

2021 Bonneau du Martray Corton Grand Cru



A more “classic” vintage than 2018, 2019, and 2020, Domaine Bonneau du Martray’s Corton Grand Cru offers precision and elegance. Firm, fine-grained tannins and vibrant acidity provide the structure required for ageing, but alluring red fruits, floral perfumes, and earthy undertones make it a wine that can bring pleasure in the short term.

What's in a Name? Charlemagne

The Hill of Corton encompasses vines in three villages: Pernand-Vergelesses, Aloxe-Corton, and Ladoix. This majestic hill is home to both white and red grand cru vines. Many drinkers see these grands crus in their simplest forms; wines labeled as Corton-Charlemagne are



typically white and those labeled as Corton are typically red. Of course, it is never that simple. Generally, it is best to try to explain these subdivisions at the beginning of a glass of wine rather than at the end because – well, it can get a bit complicated. So pour yourself a glass as you read, but do not drink it too quickly.

There are 160 hectares of vines atop the Hill designated as *grand cru*. All of these hectares could be planted red and called Corton Grand Cru, but there are 72 hectares within the grand cru that if planted with white, can be called Corton-Charlemagne. Of that 72 hectares that can be called Corton-Charlemagne if white, 62 hectares can simply carry the name Charlemagne grand cru. Are you still with me? There's just a bit more to go. You might be asking yourself, "What if there are white grapes planted in the remaining 89 hectares of Corton that do not allow for the name Corton-Charlemagne?" Then those white wines are technically called Corton Grand Cru, but they can be white, and so it seems best to call these wines Corton Blanc Grand Cru in practice to avoid confusion.

How does all of this relate to Domaine Bonneau du Martray? Beginning in the 2021 vintage, the name of the white wine will shift from Corton-Charlemagne Grand Cru to Charlemagne Grand Cru. Domaine Bonneau du Martray's magnificent chardonnay vines stretch across the climats *En Charlemagne* and *Le Charlemagne*, both nestled within the climat broader *Charlemagne*. The estate's style is grounded and built from these blocks. *En Charlemagne* is situated closest to Pernand, where the vines face more to the west. *Le Charlemagne* is nearest to Aloxe-Corton, and have more southern exposure. Both produce extraordinary wines. Only a handful of producers have such luck and distinction.

Luckily, the complexities of the Hill of Corton translate into a delicious wine. And if you have made it this far, it is now safe for you to continue drinking your glass. May it be filled with Domaine Bonneau du Martray!

Corton-Charlemagne in Context: Tasting the 2019 Vintage

Last September, I was invited to attend what turned out to be an extraordinary tasting of 17 different producers of Corton-Charlemagne from the 2019 vintage. The beautiful event was hosted by Klaus Umek, a generous collector and founder of Petrus Advisers. It was led by fellow Master of Wine, Jasper Morris. It was a delight to listen to his commentary and impressions on all of the wines. He published his thoughts on the tasting, and concluded that the top three wines (for him) were indeed the 2019 Coche-Dury Corton-Charlemagne, the 2019 Domaine de la Romanée-Conti Corton-Charlemagne, and the 2019 Domaine Bonneau du Martray Corton-Charlemagne.

What makes the Hill of Corton so interesting is that it is quite a large grand cru; there are many producers with holdings atop the hill. The diversity of soil types, aspects, and altitude are all factors that affect how a Corton-Charlemagne ultimately expresses itself in the



glass. While both Bonneau du Martray and Domaine de la Romanée-Conti tend parcels that span across the Hill of Corton – offering the focus of the top of the Hill, the floral bouquet and tension of the middle of the Hill, and the breadth of the bottom of the Hill – most producers reflect a tiny portion of the greater whole. Add to this the effect of vintage conditions, and there really is the potential for a wide range of styles from Corton-Charlemagne despite all being labeled as the same grand cru.

If pressed to make generalizations, though, Corton-Charlemagne typically offers tense and vibrant wines that can straddle the style of Chablis Grand Cru and Le Montrachet Grand Cru. There is ample fruit without being plush. There is tension without being too lean. In my view, it offers the best of both worlds.

The tasting provided much to contemplate, not least of which how quality, style, and longevity play together within this grand cru. While most of the wines offered immediate pleasure and ample fruit – characteristic of the warm 2019 vintage – the best wines offered the potential to

improve for decades. Bright acids, complex layers of stone fruit, citrus, and flinty minerality, and silken textures were hallmarks among the top examples.

Of course, I have tasted the 2019 vintage many times, and every time it impresses me. Tasting it among its fellow grands crus only further highlighted the elements in the glass that define Domaine Bonneau du Martray – astoundingly bright floral aromatics, vibrant acidity, and satin texture. While the tasting was not blind, I immediately recognized Bonneau du Martray when I put my nose in the glass. “Ah,” I remember thinking. “There you are, old friend. You are showing beautifully today!” As a Master of Wine, I appreciated every bottle on the table. But it is hard not to be proud when a loved one shows up at a party and shines.

At the end of the tasting, I was asked to share some of my thoughts as another Master of Wine sitting at the table. The comprehensive look at Corton-Charlemagne Grand Cru undoubtedly excited my intellectual side, but ultimately, the most exhilarating part of the tasting was my emotional response to the wines. Professionally, I am required to analyze and evaluate wines. But the reason why I fell in love with wine – specifically the wines of Burgundy – is because the best wines of the world stir something within us emotionally. I was struck by the element of beauty that so many of the bottles possessed, how this historic and revered grand cru carries with it so much history and so much hedonistic pleasure. My comment was short and simple – that beyond quality, style, and longevity, the best wines expressed sheer beauty.

I encourage to pop your own bottles of Domaine Bonneau du Martray in celebration of such an exquisite showing. Cheers!

Vintage Variation & Why it Matters

Over the past fifteen years, I've worked with a great many collectors and Burgundy drinkers. The notion of "vintage variation" comes up frequently, as Burgundy is one of the few regions in the world that can so accurately reflect the conditions of any given growing season. It is able to do so because of a wide variety of legal controls in the region, including requisite grape varieties, yields, planting densities, and beyond.

Recently, I was chatting with a fellow wine professional about the issues I have when vintages are broadly generalized as "good" or "bad." I simply do not believe that such categorizations are accurate or useful. Certain years can be harder than others to produce wines of exceptional quality across the board, and other years can be easier. To reduce a harvest to such black and white terms strips us of the ability to appreciate the different styles that can be produced. It also oversimplifies a rather nuanced topic. Take 2010 versus 2011, for example. The 2010 vintage in Burgundy was exceptional, with textured, tense white wines with bright acidity and overall structure for longevity. The reds also showed excellent quality and structure, with firm and fine-grained tannins, layers of complexity, and the potential to improve for decades in bottle. The 2011 vintage, on the other hand, resulted in white wines that opened early, that could be slightly more delicate on the palate, and perhaps have a shorter drinking window – or so we thought. The reds offered less density and more liveliness, and were approachable far sooner than the 2010s. Both reflect the challenges and triumphs of their given year, and truly tell an authentic story of both time and place. The years offer different styles, different drinking windows, and ultimate, different chapters of a wine regions book of life.

You see – vintage variation is part of what makes great wine exciting. It is part of what brings it to life in the glass. I *can* imagine a world where every vintage of Bonneau du Martray Charlemagne Grand Cru tastes the same, but it sounds pretty...boring. Pleasure in wine comes from our senses, and that absolutely includes intellectually stimulating ones.

My advice – drink enough Burgundy to know which vintages are your favorites. But do not forget to drink the vintages that may offer something different in your glass. Drink wines from producers you trust, who have the wisdom to know how to craft extraordinary wines in years where the conditions are the most challenging. Revisit them as often as you can. I guarantee that the greater story of a wine – including every vintage – will be so much more rewarding.

A Look into the Library: 2013, 2014, 2015, & 2017 Bonneau du Martray

“Library Wine” is a term that often evokes a sense of history and grandeur; members of our mailing list have been fortunate enough to have exclusive offers from Domaine Bonneau du Martray’s library, including vintages as far back as 1987. We have taken great pride in being able to share these wines with perfect provenance, with almost all vintages being checked prior to leaving the cellar in France for soundness and consistency. It is hard to believe that the 2013 vintage is now over ten years old, and is therefore the perfect starting point for a reflection on the decade!

Recently, my colleague, Kyo, and I had the opportunity to taste the 2013, 2014, 2015, and 2017 vintages of Domaine Bonneau du Martray Charlemagne. Each vintage experienced a distinctly different weather conditions: 2013 was defined by a difficult flowering period and hail along with a long and slow growing season; 2014 experienced a rather cool summer and early harvest; 2015 was a warm vintage yielding wines with ample fruit; 2017 gave way to a series of ups and downs in temperature as well as a few significant spikes in heat. While the growing conditions are the cause of wine style in any given year, what becomes more interesting is the effect and just how these wines present in the glass. Of the four vintages, the 2014 was touted upon release as exceptional quality and age ability, while 2015 was believed to be a bit more approachable in its youth due to slightly less precision and focus. But no one can ever really predict how a wine will develop over time; like people, wines take on a life of their own in the bottle and oftentimes surprise us.

Most notable of these surprises for Domaine Bonneau du Martray’s Charlemagne is 2013. Lighter on its feet with laser-like focus and a distinct salinity, we loved it early on for its freshness and purity. Time has allowed it to broaden and soften a bit, and it now shows beautiful honey notes, flinty minerality, and hints of key lime. A decade on, it is an absolutely beautiful bottle to enjoy now and over the next five years.

The 2014 is always an exciting vintage to taste, especially from Bonneau du Martray. Early on, the 2014 Charlemagne indicated that it had a long life ahead; the wines wowed us with tension, texture, and complex layers of lemon curd, white flower, salinity, and a captivating depth of flavor. A decade later, the 2014 shows no sign of slowing down, and would likely trick even the best of blind tasters into thinking it was younger vintage. Hints of honey dance amidst bright lemon curd, and while there is a silken texture to the vintage, it continues to show finesse alongside taut acidities. Drink over the next 15 years.

Onto 2015, a vintage that many thought would charm us young. It did just that, but Domaine Bonneau du Martray's Charlemagne has hardly peaked early. In fact, its structure has firmed up a bit, its acid and fruit balance walks a tightrope on the palate. Fresh stone fruit and lemon tart refresh the palate, and the finish is long. We love this vintage now, but cannot wait to see how it reveals itself in 5-7 years.

Finally, tasting the 2017 vintage was exhilarating, not least because this vintage is still a baby. At 7 years old, it reminds us of 2014, but perhaps with a little more charm. This is a bottle you can drink now or hold for another decade, and anytime in between it will bring you pleasure.

For those of you who have these bottles in your cellar, we encourage you to explore and enjoy them. For those who do not, we welcome your inquiries and are always happy to scour the cellar to see what treasures we can offer.

Highlights from Previous Collector's Guides

On Balance: What it is & Why it Matters

Balance is a term that is used often in the wine world. It is undeniably a positive in a wine – after all, who wants to drink a wine that seems out of balance in any way? This term encapsulates many different elements of a wine, and brings them together in a way for us to evaluate the relative importance of each individual component. A well-balanced wine should not have any elements that stand out too much. In other words, its acidity, alcohol, fruit, and overall texture should all feel as if they are in harmony.

Youthful wines often have more prominent fruit, oak, and tannins (if red) than older wines, which have had the opportunity to marry all of their elements in bottle over time. For this reason, wine professionals consider balance somewhat of a moving target; balance is something that can evolve. Some wines may seem slightly out of balance in their youth, yet they find their stride with age. Barolo, for example, is made from the Nebbiolo grape and is naturally high in tannin. In its youth, Barolos can seem austere. Thirty years later, however, the same Barolo may feel softer and more “in balance.” White wines made from Riesling, which naturally has high levels of acidity, can seem overly sharp in their youth. Yet over a period of twenty years, great Rieslings can settle into their acidity by way of fruit (and sometimes sugar).

Now to the most important part about balance – why it matters. Balance is something that is related to a wine's quality, in addition to length, intensity and complexity of aromas and flavors, and sometimes, age-ability. A wine with balance at the very least has the potential to be of good quality, all other aforementioned aspects withstanding.

In Burgundy, balance is extremely important, in large part because vintage can vary so greatly from year to year. Warmer vintages have the potential to provide plenty of fruit and well-ripened tannins, but they can also offer lower levels of acidity. Cooler vintages might have vibrancy, but they lack the fruit complexity, and in reds, the tannins can seem coarser or harder on the palate.

White Burgundy proves particularly interesting when it comes to balance because the most important Grands Crus reveal it in very different ways. Le Montrachet, for example, is further south than Corton-Charlemagne. Its natural state is one that is much riper and more opulent, thusly its balance must incorporate fresh acidity and moderate alcohol. If the pendulum swings too far on ripeness in a warm year, the Grand Cru can risk seeming too round. In Corton-Charlemagne, on the other hand, cooler vintages risk being too sharp and focused without the fruit to even things out. Burgundy is indeed a walk on the tightrope, but one thing we can all agree on – when everything is in balance, there's no thrill quite like it.

The White Grands Crus in Context

Many collectors are familiar with the range of Grands Crus in Burgundy producing red wine, but the whites seem more elusive. Overall, Grand Cru vineyards make up a tiny fraction of the whole of Burgundy, and as of 2018 accounted for a mere 1% of wine production. The vineyards that produce **white** wine of this caliber can be counted on two hands – they are very special and rare indeed.

Outside of Grand Cru Chablis (which is comprised of seven vineyards that fall under the classification), Grand Cru Corton-Charlemagne is the largest of the vineyards producing white wines, which in some ways may account for its recognition. Though its size may allow for larger production, make no mistake that there is differentiation of quality atop the Hill of Corton, and within Corton-Charlemagne. Producers who hold vines at the bottom of the hill, for example, may produce styles that are richer and fuller, while producers who hold parcels at the top of the hill may have lighter, slightly leaner expressions of Corton-Charlemagne. Its range of terroir and of course, influence of winemaking philosophy, makes one single style of Corton-Charlemagne hard to pin down given the greater context of Grands Crus.

While it is hard to generalize, it can be helpful to have an idea of what great Corton-Charlemagne can be, and for that, Bonneau du Martray is an ideal model. With parcels from the top, middle, and bottom of the Hill of Corton within Corton-Charlemagne,



Bonneau du Martray offers intensity on the front and middle palate, opulent stone fruits, and a taut, tense acidity that gives the wine tension and nerve. Even in warmer vintages, Bonneau du Martray's Corton-Charlemagne offers an energy unlike any other. The Domaine's marked style also makes it a standout when tasted alongside Grands Crus to the north or south.

At risk of simplifying such a complex subject, the below outlines factors that influence the styles of white Grand Cru vineyards. Of course, nothing can be quite as educational as a comparative tasting, so I encourage you to place Bonneau du Martray alongside your Le Montrachet or your Chevalier-Montrachet to explore the nuances of each.

White Grands Crus at a Glance

Grand Cru	Key Soil Elements	Notable Topography	Style
Chablis (includes all 7 climats)	Kimmeridgian (crumbly white and grey limestone)	Southwest-facing slope 100-250m altitude	Ranges depending on climat, from firm, racy and floral (Les Clos) to fuller and slightly richer (Bougros). All show distinct flinty minerality.
Le Musigny	Mix of limestone & red clay	260-300m altitude 8-14% slope	Unique to de Vogüé; full wine, almost red-fruited, with floral and citrus zip
Corton-Charlemagne	Top: whiteish marl, hard limestone (Oxfordian) Pernand: Flintier soil than Aloxe	Range of exposition; Pernand side has southwest-facing slopes 250-330m altitude Steep incline	Styles vary, but the best combine intensity and verve; more tense than Montrachet; long-lived
Chevalier-Montrachet	Marl & stony rendzina; thinner soils	Southeast exposure; Higher up on the slope than Montrachet 265-290m altitude	Full yet fresh; offers more finesse than neighboring vineyards; structured
Le Montrachet	Hard Bathonian limestone with light brown topsoil; quite stony; some iron	Southeast exposure; 260m altitude Protected from harsh winds Near perfect exposition	Ripeness and power often define the wine; long-lived
Bâtard-Montrachet	More clay than Montrachet; deeper, richer soils with brown limestone, more gravel	Southeast exposure; 240-250m altitude	Slightly fatter styles than Montrachet or Chevalier
Bienvenues- Bâtard-Montrachet	More clay than Montrachet; deeper, richer soils, more gravel	Southeast exposure; 240-250m altitude	Fuller and less structured than Chevalier; often honeyed and floral
Criots- Bâtard-Montrachet	More clay than Montrachet; deeper, richer soils, more gravel	South of Bâtard-Montrachet; southeast exposure; 240-250m altitude	Slightly less elegant, with more citrus and floral notes than Bâtard & Bienvenues

*All data gathered is either original from personal experience; soil & topography from BIVB or Clive Coates MW *The Wines of Burgundy*.

Diverse Soils & Microclimates of Bonneau du Martray

The Hill of Corton is comprised of many different soil types, each allowing the vines to absorb water and nutrients in a unique way. **This combined with altitude, aspect, vine density, and farming philosophy can affect the resulting grapes in terms of their yield and quality.** While so much of soil is oversimplified – for example, we cannot say that a wine tastes chalky because it grows on chalky soils – we do know that soil combined with the aforementioned elements (among others) is a fascinating and critical factor in growing grapevines. Read below a brief overview of the factors that define Bonneau du Martray’s vineyard parcels.

Bottom of the Hill



- Soil made primarily of stones, clay, limestone, and marl.
- This is the lowest altitude portion of Bonneau du Martray’s holdings.
- In terms of style, the wines from this section are rounder, with fleshier fruit.

Middle of the Hill



- Soil shares some similarities to the bottom, but with limestone toward the top, less red color, and more stones.
- This is the middle altitude portion of Bonneau du Martray’s holdings.
- In terms of style, the wines from this section are floral, with fresh ripe fruit and very acidity.

Top of the Hill



- Soil dominated by a limestone slab & whiter soils.
- This is the highest altitude portion of Bonneau du Martray’s holdings, nearly 330 meters.
- In terms of style, the wines from this section are pure and focused with more restrained lemon and stone fruit notes.

Learn More about Burgundy: A Resource Page

So many of you have enjoyed our educational videos and collector content over the years and have asked for books and resources to learn more about Burgundy. Below is a list of excellent options for learning more!

BOOKS

***The Wines of Burgundy* by Clive Coates MW**

Requisite reading for any Burgundy lover, Clive Coates details Burgundy's history, the producers, how Burgundy "works" and much more.

***My Favorite Burgundies* by Clive Coates MW**

A collection of Clive Coates' favorite wines and the stories behind them.

***Inside Burgundy: The Vineyards, the Wine, and the People* by Jasper Morris MW**

A comprehensive overview of Burgundy, including up to date ownership records, commentary on particular wines, and of course, the region's history.

***The Original Grands Crus of Burgundy* by Charles Curtis MW**

A translation from works that describe the classification of Burgundy before the official Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée in 1936.

***The 100 Burgundy: Exceptional Wines to Build a Dream Cellar* by Jeannie Cho Lee MW**

A guide to some of the top wines for drinking and collecting in Burgundy.

***Grand Cru: The Great Wines of Burgundy through the Perspective of its Finest Vineyards* by Remington Norman**

A wonderful exploration of Burgundy's top vineyards.

EDUCATION SERIES

[Chasing Burgundy](#) with Mary Margaret McCamie MW

A 9-class virtual education series exploring the wines of Burgundy. Classes includes a Burgundy Primer, Deep Dive classes, and a Collector's Lounge classes.

MAPS

***The World Atlas of Wine* by Hugh Johnson and Jancis Robinson MW**

[Collection Pierre Poupon](#)

The Climats and Lieux-Dits of the Great Vineyards of Burgundy

by Marie-Hélène Landrieu-Lussigny and Sylvain Pitiot (in French)

RESOURCES FROM KAROLUS WINE IMPORTS

[Past Collector's Guides](#) • [Tasting Videos](#)

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