



France: Burgundy 2014 – Chassagne-Montrachet & Saint Aubin

by Neal Martin

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Marc Colin 2014

I am stuck inside my car. Helpless. Marooned. Damien Colin (*pictured*) is in his tasting room looking out at me. I can't get out, not unless I want to drown in the deluge that has struck the village of Gamay. I sit there helplessly. Maybe I should read a book? Perhaps peruse my last Burgundy 2013 report where I praised Damien and brother Joseph's wines, proclaimed them to be some of the best white Burgundy around. After ten minutes, the 'shower' is switched off, literally. From biblical downpour to not a drop in a second. Not knowing when the heavens will open, I hurry out of the car and into Damien's tasting room where he has a full complement of 2014s waiting for me.

"There was not a lot of warmth, which made wines with less maturity and more acidity," Damien explained. "It [the 2014s] was made by the September. It is a less flattering vintage. We have the same acidity as in 2013, but the style of the wine is different. The 2014s are more

generous and open and perhaps more easy to understand for customers."

"We commenced picking on September 11 and harvested over the following eight days. There was a big storm on September 20, no hail, but lots of rain. We finished the harvest two hours before the storm, so we were very lucky! It fell during the final day when we were having party with the harvesters, just when we were all eating. So fortunately there is no rot in 2014. The premier crus all spend around ten months in barrel, with around 15% new oak. Around half the wines, the village and some of the lesser premier crus, were bottled in August and the rest will be bottled in February."

Damien also told me that after the 12 months in oak, he will let them rest for six months in stainless steel vat, something that I find more and more winemakers doing (for example, Dominique Lafon with one or two of his cuvées, when he has the opportunity). I asked Damien the factors that have influenced the 2014 vintage...

"Orientation and soil type were important, for example, the vines on limestone soils are very expressive, I think more so than in 2013. The 2014s are more complete than 2013 in my opinion. They are better constructed and with greater density, though I'm worried that people will drink the 2014s too early."

I tasted the full range of 2014s from the domaine, an impressive and comprehensive portfolio that includes some 26 labels, though the final vintage of their Santenay 1er Cru Comme was 2013 since they were buying in grapes and this contract has ended. As I have found consistently over recent vintages, these are top flight wines that revealed in what is a great white Burgundy vintage. There's no airs and

graces surrounding these wines -- just pure expressions of Chardonnay, each reflective of their *terroirs*. I was particularly impressed by Colin's Puligny-Montrachets in 2014, including the Le Trezin that, as I remarked to Damien, is more Premier Cru in quality. Perhaps a couple of the Chassagne-Montrachets needed to demonstrate more complexity, though the Vide-Borse and Les Caillerets are both from the top drawer.

Okay, I'm going to say it. Shoot me if I'm wrong. Domaine Marc Colin are currently making some of the greatest whites in Burgundy.



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