



France: Burgundy 2014 – Gevrey-Chamberin, Fixin & Marsannay

by Neal Martin

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Jean Fournier

Driving through the thick fog to Marsannay, Kendrick Lamar on the radio, I wondered whether Laurent Fournier's wines would be as captivating as his 2013s earlier this year. The answer? Oui. Along with Sylvain Pataille, Laurent's wines are putting Marsannay on the map with or without premier cru elevation (decision scheduled for this century...maybe). I just think Laurent has a knack for producing wines that deliver way above their village cru level, with finesse, precision and complexity. When we broached the touchy subject of the *suzukii* fruit fly, Laurent had the same contradictory viewpoint as his fellow Marsannay winemaker, Sylvain Pataille...

"For the whites, I like to do a long and strong press. My dream is to buy a Champagne press. The whites were picked from September 18 and I try to add SO₂ as late as possible."

"I don't think it was a problem of the *drosophila* that caused the acid rot," he told me, echoing Sylvain, although Laurent went on to cite other evidence. "Records at Domaine Bart showed that there was a vintage with acid rot in the 1920s. So it is not new. I worked in Switzerland before and we had acid rot along the wall [of the vineyard] every year. I think in 2014 in Burgundy, in the beginning it is grey rot and then afterwards it may be attached by drosophila, but I am sure it is not the beginning of the problem."

I cannot recommend these wines highly enough. I think they are undervalued by cognoscenti and they continue to represent fantastic value. The 2014 Bourgogne le Chapitre, from vines that gaze straight onto Dijon's suburbs way up in the lost appellation of Chenôve, would pose stiff competition to many a premier cru - and that is not exaggerating once you examine its history, once the prime vineyards belonging to the "Chapître des Chanoines de la Collégiale d'Autun." *Terroir* is *terroir* and it shines despite urban encroachment, and thanks to winemakers such as Laurent and Sylvain Pataille, these less acclaimed vineyards will survive and give wine lovers a great deal of pleasure.

