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This *domaine* must possess one of the most enviable portfolios in the Côte de Nuits, with several *grands crus* to their name scattered across 11,5-hectares of prime vineyard. So I guess one must ask the question why Drouhin-Laroze is not better known? I suppose you could argue that in the past, the wines had an air of commerciality about them, wines that were commendable and enjoyable, yet rarely approached the profundity of say Rousseau or Bachelet. Their intrinsic quality was not in doubt. The trouble is that when you have such a roll call of iconic *grands crus* to your name, the bar is simply raised. Personally, I have found much pleasure in previous vintages that always seem to show well in barrel. I have always found winemaker Philippe Drouhin to be a conscientious *vigneron* usually with his wife Christine by his side, either in the office or pouring wines at tastings. And there is now a gradual changing over to the sixth generation as their son Nicolas and daughter Caroline, gain more involvement in the running of the estate that now includes a *négociant* arm overseen by Caroline.

Tasting through their 2012s, there does remain a slight “heaviness” to the wines that you could align with say, Bernard Dugat, and that does not mean they are inherently inferior – just that it is a perceptible leitmotif that means they rarely contain the finesse of effortlessness of those aforementioned growers. I always come away thinking if that if they just tweaked their practices a little, they could suddenly see their wines capture that sense of magic – perhaps pick a little earlier, extract less and moderate the level of new wood that has always made an impression e.g reconsider using 100% new oak for all the *grands crus*. This is an estate to watch. They have always quietly gone about creating very good wines, but it would not take much with those *grands crus* to see them suddenly elevated to the top league.

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2012 Gevrey-Chambertin 1er Cru "Craipillot"

87 - 89

Which was blended into the *village cru* until 2005, has a pleasant bouquet with strawberry pastille and touches of forest floor. The palate is well balanced with fine, supple tannins on the entry and a slight lactic note towards the sweet, candied finish. Quite forward in the mouth, this should form pleasurable, relatively early drinking.

2012 Gevrey-Chambertin 1er Cru

"Clos Prieur"

88 - 90

Has a perfumed, expressive bouquet with vibrant red cherry and fresh strawberry fruit that displays fine delineation. The palate is rounded and supple on the entry. There is a layer of plush red berry fruit here laced with spice and a savory aspect that comes forth towards the finish. It just needs to gain a little more focus but that might be delivered with 3-4 years in bottle.

2012 Gevrey-Chambertin 1er Cru

"lavaut-St-Jacques"

89 - 91

(yes – it *is* spelled with a "t" here) offers pleasant raspberry leaf and forest floor scents on the "correct" nose. The palate is medium-bodied with ripe, plump tannins. There is plenty of raspberry and redcurrant fruit, candied orange peel with a hint of mushroom on the finish that needs a touch more *nervosité* that would beg another sip.

2012 Gevrey-Chambertin 1er Cru

"Au Closeau"

90 - 92

Has a very attractive "bonbons" bouquet - like walking into a sweet shop - very pure and fragrant. The palate is medium-bodied with supple, ripe tannins. There is plenty of redcurrant and Morello fruit, a nice build into the mouth towards a harmonious, slightly chewy finish. This is a little showy, but enjoyable.

2012 Chapelle-Chambertin

91 - 93

Demands coaxing from the glass, unfurling to reveal blackcurrant and fresh strawberry scents, joined by a hint of violet with time. The palate has a good backbone. This is a more masculine take on the vineyard, nicely balanced, linear and taut with fine precision and nuance on the finish. This should age with style.

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2012 Latricières Chambertin

90 - 92

Has an airy, lifted, floral bouquet with rose petals and cold limestone taking precedence over the fruit intensity at the moment. The palate is medium-bodied with a touch of hardness on the entry. Again, this is a compact, linear *grand cru*, “correct” but fresh with a touch of spice on the finish. Fine but just a little conservative.

2012 Clos de Vougeot

93 - 95

Has a very fragrant bouquet with scents of blueberry, blackcurrant pastilles and dried rose petals – all very well delineated. The palate is medium-bodied with crisp, grainy tannins, good depth and great precision towards the finish. This is one of the *domaine's* best wines this year – real class.

2012 Musigny

94 – 96

Is limited to one 350-litres barrel this year. It has a sensational bouquet that is extremely pure and opulent, though focused and mineral-driven. Of all the Musigny barrel samples I have encountered, this is the most decadent. The palate is very well balanced, very intense in the mouth with blackcurrant pastille, cassis, raspberry and orange zest. Silky smooth in texture, it feels almost opaque on the finish, such is the density. This is a sumptuous Musigny packed with pleasure.

2012 Bonnes Mares

90 - 92

It has an opulent, vivacious bouquet with small dark cherries, blueberry and crème de cassis that is deliriously gorgeous. The palate is sweet on the entry with fleshy boysenberry and bilberry fruit. There is a good presence and length here, although it needs just a touch more nuance on the finish. Always a solid performer, this comes recommended.

2012 Chambertin Clos de Bèze

92 - 94

Has a fragrant bouquet with wild strawberry and redcurrant scents, forest floor and wild mint that expands in the glass. The palate is medium-bodied with succulent ripe tannins, good acidity and push blackberry and cassis fruit encasing the finish that is reminiscent of the Bonnes-Mares. Good length here – this is very fine, though not quite reaching for the stars.



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