



DOMAINE DROUHIN-LAROZE

GEVREY-CHAMBERTIN, FRANCE

CE QUE LA PRESSE EN PENSE...



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MILLESIME 2018

Philippe Drouhin's children, Caroline and Nicolas, now both work at the domaine full-time and are increasingly assuming full responsibility for the wines. I met this trip with Caroline, who described the 2018 vintage as one of "contrasts as the early spring, up to most of May, was quite rainy and cool whereas the conditions thereafter were very hot and dry. Thank goodness we had so much water accumulation early on as there would have been drought-like conditions otherwise. We picked from the 1st to the 12th of September for the domaine wines and picked the Laroze de Drouhin wines beginning on the 8th. The fruit was ripe and phenolically mature with very good sugar levels. Yields were good without being high as they were between 25 and 30% less abundant than what we realized in 2017. We used varying amounts of whole clusters, usually around 25 to 30% for most wines, though some had none and the Très Girard had 100%. As to the wines, they're ripe, concentrated and ageworthy and should be very popular with our clients." As the reviews will confirm, I found some of the wines to have hard and/or very grippy tannins. The fruit does seem ripe and there is good underlying material for most wines but whether these will ultimately harmonize is difficult to predict though with that said, in several cases I have my doubts. See also the wines from Maison Laroze de Drouhin below. (Atherton Wine Imports, www.awiwine.com, CA, Terlato Wines International, IL, USA; The Wine Society, www.thewinesociety.com, FINE+RARE Wines Ltd, www.frw.co.uk, Davy & Co., www.davywine.co.uk, Goedhuis & Co., www.goedhuis.com, Decorum Vintners, www.decvin.com, Averys Fine Wine Merchants, www.averys.com, Tanners Wine, www.tanners-wines.co.uk, Laytons, www.laytons.co.uk, Cru World Wine, www.uk.cruworldwine.com, Justerini & Brooks, www.justerinis.com, Anthony Sarjeant, anthony@anthonySarjeant.co.uk and Fields, Morris & Verdin, www.fmwines.com, all UK; Watson's Wines, 852.2606.8828, www.watsonswine.com, Hong Kong).

2018 - Morey-Saint-Denis Très Girard

(86-88)/2025+

"Très Girard": (from a .18 ha parcel planted in 1946; vinified with 100% whole clusters). Here too moderate wood frames intensely floral-suffused aromas of very ripe black raspberry, cassis and soft earth nuances. There is both good energy and delineation to the middle weight flavors that again culminate in a slightly dry and chewy finish. It's not clear that time will soften this enough for it to become better balanced.



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www.drouhin-laroze.com

2018 - Gevrey-Chambertin

« Dix Climats »

(85-88)/2023+

("Dix Climats" means 10 vineyards). This is carrying quite a bit of wood influence and in particular menthol that fights somewhat with the ripe red and dark raspberry aromas. Once again, the mouthfeel of the medium weight flavors is supple, round and relatively easy-going which contrasts somewhat with the slightly edgy and mildly drying finish.

2018 Gevrey-Chambertin

"En Champs":

(86-89)/2024+

More moderate though hardly invisible wood treatment sets off the notably ripe earthy black pinot fruit aromas. The texture of the juicy and fleshy medium weight flavors once again contrasts with the dusty finish that displays spiky and slightly tough tannins.

2018- Gevrey-Chambertin

« Sans Soufre »

(86)/2022+

Moderate reduction presently dominates the fruit so I would suggest decanting this for a few minutes first. Otherwise there is good richness to the round, suave and easy-going flavors that terminate in a somewhat raspy and short finish where a hint of bitter pit fruit character emerges

2018 - Gevrey-Chambertin 1^{er} Cru

"Craipillot"

(86-89)/2025+

from a parcel measuring .26 ha planted in 1943 and 1953; vinified with 25% whole clusters). Once again there is enough wood to notice suffusing the aromas of violet, dark pinot fruit and discreet earth nuances. The medium-bodied flavors possess a somewhat finer mid-palate mouthfeel that is really quite seductive yet it also contrasts with the dry, short and raspy finish.



2018 - Gevrey-Chambertin 1^{er} cru

« Au Closeau »

(86-89)/2025+

(Drouhin is only producer of this tiny .53ha vineyard and owns 83% of it, or .44ha; from vines planted in 1943; vinified with 25% whole clusters). Prominent wood and menthol scents sit atop the earthy and softly spicy red and dark currant-scented nose. The delicious, round and supple mediumweight flavors again culminate in a mildly warm, dry and short finish that is borderline tough. It's hard to see this recovering though with the right foods it could still be interesting.

2018- Chapelle-Chambertin

Grand Cru

(88-91)/2030+

(from a .52 ha parcel in En La Chapelle; vinified with 25% whole clusters). The wood treatment, while certainly evident, is better integrated on the poached plum, spice and violet-suffused nose. There is reasonably good vibrancy to the delicious, supple and pliant medium weight flavors that terminate in a dusty and sappy mocha and bitter cherry pit-infused finish. There is a touch of edginess present though it may well dissipate with a few years of age.

2018- Latricières-Chambertin

Grand Cru

(88-90)/2030+

from a .67 ha parcel of extremely old vines; vinified with 25% whole clusters). Strong menthol influence fights a bit with the very ripe essence of essence of cassis, spice and forest floor. The vibrant, better detailed and more mineral-driven flavors also terminate in a mildly edgy finish as the tannins are raspy though not tough.

2018 - Gevrey-Chambertin 1^{er} Cru

« Clos Prieur »

(86-89)/2026+

(from a parcel of .30 ha that was planted in 1954 though a section was replanted in 2003; vinified with 25% whole clusters). This is aromatically quite similar to the Closeau though the wood treatment is slightly less obvious. The medium-bodied, round and quite supple flavors possess a slightly finer mouthfeel though the dusty and grainy finish is again short and mildly drying. Once again, it's difficult to see this recovering its balance.



2018 – Chambolle-Musigny

(87-89)/2026+

(a mix of parcels of .18 ha in Les Baudes and .04 ha from the villages portion of Les Véroilles; vinified with 25% whole clusters). A very spicy and menthol-inflected nose speaks of violet and ripe cassis aromas. The supple, round and energetic medium weight flavors flash good minerality though the robust and muscular finish is raspy and borderline tough. Again, it's hard to see this regaining proper balance even with age though I like the depth.

2018- Clos de Vougeot

Grand Cru

(89-92)/2033+

(from a superbly situated 1 ha parcel high on the hill). Like the Bonnes Mares the wood treatment, and especially the menthol element, completely dominates the underlying fruit plus there is an odd note of tar. More interesting are the sleek and intense middle weight plus flavors that possess evident muscle and power on the grippy, raspy and youthfully austere finale. This may come together but I doubt that it will ever be especially refined.

2018 – Bonnes Mares

Grand Cru

(89-92)/2033+

(from a 1.5 ha parcel that is almost entirely in the terres rouges section; vinified with 25% whole clusters). Here the wood treatment overwhelms the nuance of the dark berry fruit aromas. Otherwise there is slightly better size and weight to the medium-bodied flavors that possess a succulent and juicy mid-palate before terminating in a chewy and serious but not drying finish that offers notably better persistence..

2018- Chambertin-Clos de Bèze

Grand Cru

(89-92)/2035+

from a parcel of 1.5 ha of vines planted in 1949; vinified with 30% whole clusters). More moderate though definitely not neutral wood influence sets off the ripe and overtly spicy liqueur-like poached plum scents. Once again there is good vibrancy and detail to the lightly stony larger-scaled flavors that are also shaped by somewhat grippy and grainy tannins on the mildly warm finish.

2018- Musigny

Grand Cru

(90-92)/2035+

(from a .12 ha parcel; vinified with 30% whole clusters). Very generous wood again fights with the spicy and ripe red and dark currant aromas that are cut with pretty floral wisps. There is excellent richness to the punchy and wonderfully textured medium weight flavors that flash good minerality on the somewhat dry and spiky finish that avoids being tough though it would be fair to observe that this is not an elegant version of the appellation. Once again, this is not without interest but the balance isn't what it could be and whether it will ameliorate in time is an open question but I doubt it.

Philippe Drouhin's daughter Caroline directs this small négociant operation called Laroze de Drouhin. This is obviously a play on words to suggest The Rose of Drouhin. She buys in fruit rather than must and her first vintage was 2007. Please see the domaine summary above for general vintage comments. (Justerini & Brooks, www.justerinis.com, Averys Fine Wine Merchants, www.averys.com, Tanners Wine, www.tanners-wines.co.uk, and Anthony Sarjeant, anthony@anthonymsarjeant.co.uk, all UK).

2018 - Bourgogne Pinot Noir

« Cote d'Or »

86-88/2022+

(vinified with ~30% whole clusters). A fresh and ripe nose combines notes of both red and dark currant that is cut with an abundance of earth elements that can also be found on the solidly intense flavors that also culminate in a firm and rustic finish that is borderline robust.

2018 - Moulin à Vent

89/2023+

(vinified with 100% whole clusters). Very ripe liqueur-like aromas display plenty of earth, pepper and the sauvage. Supple, round and delicious middle weight flavors possess reasonably good concentration and punch while offering nice complexity on the moderately firm and slightly rustic finish.

2018 - Fixin

86-88/2023+

(80% from En Coton; vinified with ~30% whole clusters). Moderately generous wood and menthol scents are present on the very ripe aromas of plum liqueur and cassis that are nuanced by hints of warm earth. The wood can also be found on the medium weight flavors that possess a seductive and plush mid-palate that contrasts somewhat with the rustic and somewhat raspy finish.

2018 - Marsannay « Longeroies »

88-90/2024+

(vinified with ~30% whole clusters). Here too there is good freshness to the slightly cooler aromas of red berries, violet and discreet forest floor influences. There is fine intensity to the lightly mineral-inflected middle weight flavors that deliver good if not special persistence. This will need to develop more depth with time in bottle, but the underlying material appears to be up to the task.