

BEAUNE 1^{er} CRU « LES AIGROTS » 2012

Domaine de Montille

COLOR:	White
GRAPE VARIETY:	Chardonnay
VINTAGE:	2012
SURFACE AREA:	0.49 Hectare
PRODUCTION :	125 cases (12 x 750ml)
% NEW BARRELS:	10%
ALCOHOL :	13% VOL
PH :	3.20



The appellation

The heart of the city of Beaune beats to the rhythm of wine. Tucked into the heart of one of the most prestigious vineyard areas, the area surrounding the wine capital of Burgundy is one of its biggest appellations: 410 hectares planted mostly to Pinot Noir with 42 Premier Cru vineyards. But the Beaune *blancs* have nothing to be ashamed of, and certain bottlings from "Les Grèves" and "Clos des Mouches" are the great references.

Though it may appear otherwise, the word "Aigrots" has nothing to do with the terms "Aigre" or "Aigreur", "Sour" or "Sourness", but indicates the presence of holly, a thorny scrub bush, which comes from an old dialectical word, "Argifolium".

Our parcel of Beaune Premier Cru "Les Aigrots" of 0.49 hectares is located at the foot of the hill on gently sloping clay, marne and limestone soil. It offers a fruit-driven, ample and generous wine that is usually accessible early on.

The wines, the style

Our wines are known for their great aromatic purity. We always favor balance and elegance over power and extraction. The wines are classic expressions of Burgundy, of their appellations in general and of their specific terroirs in particular. The farming methods we use contribute to this individual style, and our winemaking methods aim to avoid excessive outside influences in order to bring out the equilibrium that can be found naturally in Burgundian terroir.

All our fruit is hand-harvested. Thanks to pneumatic presses, we can calibrate our presses to fit the quality of the grapes and the profile of the vintage. After a light settling, the musts are placed mostly in 600-liter barrels as well as in 228-liter barrels, where the alcoholic and malolactic fermentations take place.

We use approximately five to twenty percent new casks primarily made from Allier wood that sees a long yet light toasting. The first racking occurs after about one year of wood aging, after which begins the second, four- to six-month phase in stainless steel, which preserves the wine's freshness and tension. We finish the aging with a light fining followed by a similarly light and respectful filtration before bottling.

Tending the Vines

The Domaine has practiced organic viticulture since 1995. Today, our wines are certified by Ecocert. Additionally, since 2005, biodynamic practices have been implemented to show our full respect for these living soils.

The vintage

The harvest began September 17 and continued through the end of the month.

Recalling the 2012 vintage brings on two different sentiments. For one, there is the great satisfaction to have an excellent vintage in terms of quality, especially in red. For another, there is the profound disappointment of tiny yields accompanied by the hail devastation of many vines, from Santenay up to Pommard. The weather was difficult at the beginning of the season but improved around mid-July, which saved the quality of the vintage. Concerning the yields, they are very low, and everything that could have contributed to lowering them happened in 2012: small flowering, poor fruit set, uneven berry size...and unfortunately, hail.

Because of hail, the vintage is dense and unctuous. The tiny yields did not bring on higher alcohols - the levels are typical and between 12.5% and 13% - but they did provide a beautiful texture of viscosity. Very happily, the acidities are sufficient to provide the wines with balance.

The aromas are fresh and profoundly expressive. They offer a lovely aromatic richness of white peach and grapefruit with mineral and floral notes as well as an exotic touch of apricot and even lychee.

The attacks are brisk, yet the wines are voluminous on the palate. The textures are suave with generous material and lovely lengths. The finishes are epic, salty and sometimes even rocky. If the Bourgogne level and village wines may taste well early on (within five years), the crus will live a decade.

Tasting notes

- Reduction and sulfur aromas push the fruit to the background. The textured and attractive mouth coating middle weight flavors exude a fine bead of minerality onto the balanced, delicious and solidly persistent finish. This is really quite pretty and should drink well young as well as reward a few years of cellaring too. Score: **89-91** Tasted: Jun 15, 2014 Drink: 2017+ Issue: 55 - **Allen Meadows**