

# BEAUNE 1<sup>er</sup> CRU « LES AIGROTS » 2014

## Domaine de Montille

<b>COLOR:</b>	White
<b>GRAPE VARIETY:</b>	Chardonnay
<b>VINTAGE:</b>	2014
<b>SURFACE AREA:</b>	0.49 Hectare
<b>PRODUCTION :</b>	130 caisses (12 x 750ml)
<b>% NEW BARRELS:</b>	10%
<b>ALCOHOL :</b>	12.5% VOL
<b>PH :</b>	



### 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

Everything started smoothly with a warm and dry spring. Thanks to an early bud-break, the vines were a few weeks ahead of our usual schedule. Then, for the third year in a row, it arrived, hail, on June 28<sup>th</sup> 2014. Once again Volnay, Pommard, Beaune and Meursault were the most badly hit villages, with variable losses between blocks but a 50% average.

Characteristically, the vines entered a period of dormancy and healing that spanned two to three weeks, thus losing its vegetative head start. The cool summer did nothing to improve that but August and early September's ideal conditions gave us the serenity to begin harvest on September 12<sup>th</sup>. Low yields, dry conditions and a relative homogeneity of the bunches allowed us to pick everything in a little more than a week.

The early bud break and cool summer resulting in a relatively late harvest - compared to the recent past - allowed for a slow maturation of the berries and gave us an exceptional white vintage. Wines with tension, complexity and intensity of aromas are undoubtedly establishing 2014 amongst the very best Burgundian vintages.

While tasting our 2014, a famous wine critic was telling us with his famous British restraint "I can't say 2014 is the best white vintage ever... but I can't remember a better one".

### Tasting notes

*There is enough reduction present to dominate the underlying fruit. Otherwise there is a really lovely sense of energy to the racy and intense middle weight flavors that possess excellent delineation on the citrus and mineral-inflected, clean and bone dry finale.*

Score: **88-91** Tasted: Jun 15, 2016 Drink: 2019+ Issue: 63

**Allen Meadows - Burghound**