Burgundy

Background

- This region,[1] spanning over 200 miles from Auxerre in the north to Lyon in the south, following the Saône, a tributary of the Rhône, is France's most magical wine region
    - Covers multiple French departments, including Côte-d'Or, Saône-et-Loire, Yonne, and Nièvre
    - These were former duchies combined after the French Revolution. They still maintain their local character going back to the time they were Germanic tribes in what was then known as Gaul.
    - The Roman Army defeated the leader of the Gaul's in the Cote d'Or, a brutal defeat after which society became more structured and instituiontalized.
- The Duchy of Burgundy was ruled by the House of Valois from ruled from the early 11th until the late 15th century
    - The capital of Dijon was one of the great European centres of art and science, a place of tremendous wealth and power
    - Western Monasticism was also centered here, a great benefit to the local vineyards who would come to benefit from the detailed guides of the monks in the years to come
    - The Duchy of Burgundy was more like an independent state than a part of a united France during their rule, and was very active in international politics. This led to condemnation by the French state in the late 15th century
- 6,000 domaines exist today in over 100 appellations
- Terroir is key, as a result of centuries of work by the Cistercian and Benedictine monks, large vineyard owners here since the 900s
- Negociants/eleveurs are necessary due to small vineyard holdings[2]; an average grower has 15 acres; some vineyards have up to 80 owners (Clos Vougeot)

History

- Celtic tribes appear to have grown vines prior to arrival by the Romans in 51 BCE
- Romans settled in Chardon and brought wine in barrels (a practice adopted from the Gauls, who used barrels to transport beer)
- 450 - German tribe called the Burgondes settled the area after the Romans
- 6th century - Franks conquer and consolidate Germanic tribes in the area
- 591- Gregory of Tours called the wines "as good as Falernian"
    - High quality wines of this era were probably made from Fromenteau (pinot gris) and Gouais Blanc
- 900s - Cistercian monks develop the earliest foundation for naming of Burgundy cru sites, using stones to designate "clos"

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[1] "Bourgogne" is the preferred term by the French.
[2] However, almost all grand cru and about half of premier cru are domaine-bottled.

    - Names were given to famous vineyards for the fauna or vegetation that could be observed (partridges, oak trees, snakes, etc.)
    - They found Clos Vougeot in 1336
- Middle Ages
    - Following the Black Plague in the late 1300s, Duke Philip the Bold declared the "vile and disloyal Gamay" as unfit for Bourgogne vineyards
    - Dukes of Burgundy ban the import of non-Burgundian wines beginning in 14th century
    - Papacy in Avignon made the wines of Beaune famous
- 1700s - As the roadways improved, the first négociant houses established and Burgundy begins competing with Champagne for the Paris wine market
- After 1789, the church's vineyards were broken up and sold off
- 1804 - Napoleonic Code changes inheritance laws so that offspring inherit equally; this leads to large numbers of fractional owners of vineyards
- 1850s - Nascent classification system begins, recognizing Grand Cru and Premier Cru vineyard sites
- 19th century saw phylloxera and powdery mildew, leading to neglect of many vineyards
- 20th century - soils become depleted due to overplanting and over fertilizing following two world wars fought here
- 1976 - Montrachet loses to Chateau Montelena

Climate

- Continental climate with unpredictable rains, hail, and frost, leads to vintage variation
- Grand cru sites are all cultivated at an altitude between 820 and 980 ft and planted on slopes with a gradient of up to 20 degrees
- Hills to the north and west buffer the winds from the Atlantic; all top vineyards are oriented southwest on the hillsides (called côtes)
    - The highest part is called the Hautes-Côtes and is hard limestone.
    - The lower third is marlstone.
    - Erosion from above creates ideal vineyard sites mid-slope.
- Kimmeridgian clay is the famous chalky soil formed by microscopic shellfish from an ancient sea that formed the Paris Basin during the Jurassic era (Kimmeridgian period); Burgundy is situated along an important fault line aka the “Escarpment” that exposes the unique soil
    - Same as England’s Dover cliffs and Salisbury plain; also found in the Loire and in Champagne
    - Eastern-facing escarpment formed from a graben (just like we discussed with Alsace!)
    - Marine fossils which are responsible for its significant lime content
    - High water retention, heat retention and heat reflection are key traits

Grapes

- White[3]
    - Chardonnay
        - Product of Gouais Blanc and Pinot Noir
        - The name is thought to derive from the Maconnais village of Chardonnay[4]
        - Burgundian clones, such as Pommard and Dijon, are world famous
        - Grape known for its versatility and ability to reflect its terroir
        - Signature grape of Chablis
        - Famous in Côte de Beaune where Chardonnay really comes to the fore
            - Corton Grand Cru, Meursault, Chassagne and Puligny-Montrachet are most-lauded areas
    - Aligoté
        - Member of the Pinot family
        - Planted alongside Chardonnay
        - Known for its dry style, high in acidity with floral and herbal notes
        - At its best in the wines of the regional Bourgogne Aligoté appellation, in Bouzeron (Côte Chalonnaise) and Crémant de Bourgogne wines
- Red
    - Pinot Noir
        - Seems to have arrived with early Celtic tribes
        - Pinot Noir is a parent of Chardonnay, Aligoté and Gamay (Gouais Blanc is the other).
        - Called “Noirien” in the Middle Ages
        - Thin-skinned grape variety with moderate to high acidity, a low level of phenolic compounds, low to moderate levels of soft tannins
        - Over 40 clones with a tendency to mutate that is linked to its age, possuibly over 2,000 years)
    - Gamay
        - Direct offspring of Pinot Noir and Gouais Blanc
        - Prolific grower and blends well with Pinot Noir
        - Prone to rotting during harvest
        - Fingerprint is violet.

Wine Styles

- Dry (white, red, and rosé) and sparkling

[3] Pinot gris and Pinot blanc are minor varieties here..
[4] (Named “Chardon” by the Romans.)

Wine Law

- Grand Cru
    - Highest Class – 33 total vineyards
        - 32 in the Côte d'Or
        - 1 in Chablis[5]
    - 1-2% of production
    - Each vineyard is its own appellation
    - Label lists the vineyard name and "Grand Cru" (not the village)
    - The best villages hyphenate the Grand Cru vineyard to their name, hence village names such as "Puligny-Montrachet" and "Aloxe-Corton"[6]
- Premier Cru
    - Next Highest – Over 600 total vineyards
    - 10-12 % of production
    - "1er" appears on label with the village name (and usually a vineyard name as well)
- Village Wines
    - 44 Villages covered
    - 35-37% of production
    - A lieu-dit is permitted on the label along with the village name
- Regional Wines
    - Covers overarching appellations, such as Crémant de Bourgogne, Bourgogne Aligote or red Bourgogne Passe-Tout-Grains
    - 52% production
- Subregional Wines - larger than a village, ex: Macon-Villages
- Generic - Bourgogne AOP

Important Terms

Lieu-dit - literally "said location"; the smallest piece of land which has a traditional vineyard name assigned to

Climats - microclimates within a vineyard that warrant their own designation; most are within classified vineyards

Monopole - vineyard having one owner only; very rare in Burgundy

[5] Note: Chablis has its own ranking system that differs from the rest of Burgundy (See: Chablis)

[6] Gevry was the first to do this in 1848 (when it officially became Gevrey-Chambertin).

Regions

- Chablis
    - Northernmost region, about 100 miles from Dijon, comprises 25 communes bisected by the river Serein in the Yonne department
        - Separated from the rest of Burgundy by the Morvan hills
        - Late addition to the Duchy of Burgundy in the 15th Century (formerly part of Champagne); retains unique identity today
    - Climate
        - Continental with maritime influences
        - Kimmeridgian and Portlandian soils
            - Limestone is more highly regarded
            - Portlandian soils are not as rich in clay and fossils
    - Style
        - Light, dry, Chardonnay with flinty minerality and crisp acidity
        - Stainless steel aging or neutral oak
    - Appellations
        - Chablis Grand Cru
            - 3% of overall production
            - Covers 100 hectares on gentle southwest-facing slopes north of the town of Chablis along the Serein river
            - Technically only one Grand Cru, but there are 7 individual climates[7]
            - Age well with floral honey notes and a flinty acidity (up to 15 years)
            - Note: These can taste dissimilar to the rest of Chablis because many are aged in oak
        - Chablis Premier Cru - 40 climats qualify, subdivided into roughly 80 specific vineyards
        - Chablis - covers both Chablis "villages" (the basic Chablis) and Chablis Premier Cru; often benefits from 8-10 years of bottle aging
        - Petit Chablis - covers lesser-rated sites, mostly those on Portlandia soil and without the benefit of southwest facing vineyards; however, great values can be found here
        - Smaller appellations also exist
            - Irancy (for Pinot)
            - Saint Bris (for Sauvignon Blanc)[8]

[7] Blanchot, Bougros, Les Clos, Grenouilles, Presuses, Valmur, and Vaudésir. Labels will list one of these sites and “Chablis Grand Cru”

[8] This is the ONLY place in Burgundy where SB is grown instead of Chardonnay!

- Côte d'Or - 30 mile long from south of Dijon to the Maranges, known as the "Golden Slope"; less than 10% of overall production of Burgundy
    - Côte de Nuits – 24 out of 25 red Grand Crus here[9]
        - Named for the town of Nuits-Saint-Georges
        - 90% of the wines produced here are Pinot Noir, rest are either Chardonnay or rosé
        - Villages, from North to South:
            - Gevrey-Chambertin
                - Known for full-bodied reds
                - 9 Grand Cru vineyards here
                - Vineyards are on both sides of Route 74
            - Morey-Saint-Denis
                - Similar to Gevrey-Charmbertin
                - 5 grand cru vineyards
            - Chambolle-Musigny
                - Most famous and expensive come from here and Vosne-Romanée
                - Les Charme Vineyard is outstanding
            - Vougeot
                - Home to famous walled Clos de Vougeot Grand Cru
                - The Cistercian monks went to great effort to keep the 51 hectare vineyard intact for over 700 years
                    - It has 118 lieux-dits, reflecting the fact that ownership of the land was historically divided between the Cistercian monks who planted the original vines, the Roman Catholic Church, and the French crown.
                    - It was kept together until 1889, when it was sold to local négociants
                    - This is how the vineyard today hos over 80 owners
                - The terroir of the climat is varied, with an array of different soils and aspects, depending largely on the slope.
                - The challenges with ownership and vintage variability mean this vineyard can be hit or miss
            - Flagey-Echezeaux
                - Flagey-Echézeaux is a small, often overlooked commune
                - Home to the famous Grand Cru vineyards Echézeaux and Grands Echézeaux
            - Vosne-Romanée
                - The relatively small village is only 1.5 square miles in total area
                - 6 grand cru sites (4 of which are monopoles)
                - 14 premier cru vineyards

[9] Except Corton is in Beaune.

- Côte de Beaune – 7 out of 8 white Grand Cru vineyards here[10]
    - The eastern flank of the Côte d'Or escarpment has 18 villages with their own appellations
    - Exposure is south-easterly
    - Grand Cru sites
        - North - Corton (Grand Cru for Pinot)[11]
            - North of Beaune at the foot of the Mountain of Corton
            - Situated in Aloxe-Corton[12] village, but also extends into Pernand-Vergelesses and Ladoix-Serrigny
            - Largest Grand Cru in Burgundy at 145 hectares
            - Has its own escarpment, separate from the main one
        - South - Montrachet
            - 7.99 hectare vineyard located between villages of Puligny and Chassagne
            - Mostly Chardonnay[13]
            - Limestone-marl slope predominantly faces southeast
            - 4 other grand cru climates use the Montrachet name
                - Chevalier-Montrachet is considered the best and at the top
                - Bâtard-Montrachet sits below C-M
                - Next is Bienvenues-Bâtard-Montrachet on the Puligny side and Criots at its southern end on the Chassagne side
    - Villages
        - Beaune
            - Produces more red than white wines, although white wine production is increasing
            - Known for premier cru sites for red wines
            - Since 1859 the town hosts a charity wine auction called the Hospices de Beaune to benefit the Hôtel Dieu
        - Pommard
            - Famous for rich and powerful reds
            - No white wines
            - Critics note that some vineyards here are good enough to be Grand Cru[14]
            - Like Beaune, a large number of premier cru vineyards are here
        - Volnay
            - Known for smooth, delicate reds

[10] Except Musigny Blanc is in Côte de Nuits.
[11] Grand Cru for Chardonnay is Corton-Charlamagne
[12] Pronounced “Ah-Loss”
[13] Pinot blanc is permitted in small amounts
[14] Les Epenots and Les Rugiens

            - No whites allowed, except up to 15% Chardonnay, Pinot Blanc and Pinot Gris as long as these are found interspersed within the vineyard (field blends)
        - Meursault
            - Its whites are regarded as highly as Puligny-Montrachet, but no grand cru vineyards
            - Buttery and rich style
        - Puligny-Montrachet
            - 1879 - “Montrachet” added to honor Grand Cru vineyards here
            - Mostly white wines
            - 17 Premier Cru vineyard sites
            - Said to have a more mineral character and a firmer structure than Chassagne
        - Chassagne-Montratchet
            - Mostly white wines, but about 30% are red
            - 55 Premier Cru vineyard sites
        - Santenay
            - Known for lighter style of Pinot Noir
- Côte Chalonnaise
    - Named for the commune of Chalon-sur-Saône, in Saône-et-Loire department
        - Due south of Côte d'Or department with similar geography and climate, although slightly less rainfall
        - Limestone escarpment ends here, and limestone patches mixed with sand and clay are scattered throughout the area
    - Main varieties are Chardonnay and Pinot Noir; Gamay, Aligote, and other minor red and white mutations of Pinot also planted
    - 5 communes
        - Bouzeron, Rully, Mercurey, Givry and Montagny
        - All except Bouzeron have Premier Cru sites (no Grand Crus here) on south-facing vineyards atop limestone
            - Bouzeron - Only 3 miles from Chassagne-Montrachet; planted mainly to Aligoté; style is similar to Chenin Blanc (silky, light, floral); sometimes barrel-aged and/or fermented
            - Rully - appellation covers red and white wines made from vineyards around Le Montagne de la Folle; known for youthful reds and vibrant Chardonnays as well as Crémant
            - Mercurey - area with largest production (more than other areas combined); 1/4 of all Premier Cru vineyards are here; style here is for long-lived and well-structured Pinot Noirs that are richer than neighboring areas (more similar to Cote de Beaune)
            - Givry is the most well-regarded and smallest area with 17 Premier Cru vineyards
                - Mostly Pinot Noir with around 10% Chardonnay

        - Best sites are south and southeast facing above Givry village
        - Vineyards reach up to 1,000 ft, exposing the soil structure composed of sandstone and clay-limestone
    - Montagny - All Chardonnay from villages of Buxy, Jully-les-Buxy, Montagny-les-Buxy and Saint-Vallerin; over half the areas are Premier Cru; range in style from austere to buttery; often barrel aged and/or fermented
- Mâconnais
    - Named for town of Mâcon in the Nievre department
    - Varieties are mostly Chardonnay, with small amounts of Pinot Noir and Gamay[15]
    - Appellations
        - Mâcon - large appellations for white, rosé and red wines[16]
        - Mâcon-Villages - white wines only; 43 villages
        - Village-level
            - Viré-Clessé, for high-quality bone-dry Chardonnay
            - Pouilly-Fuissé, a white wine appellation surrounding the Mont de Pouilly, with the two junior partners Pouilly-Loché and Pouilly-Vinzelles.
            - Saint-Véran, a white wine appellation which covers most of the Chardonnay vineyards that used to make white Beaujolais in the commune of Saint-Vérand, around Pouilly-Fuissé[17]
    - Wine Style
        - Traditionally known for small amounts of residual sugar, but today is mostly undetectable
        - Barrel fermented and barrel aged whites and reds (this area was the inspiration for Cali Chardonnay!)
- Beaujolais
    - Gamay grape
    - Granite soils
    - Carbonic maceration
    - 10 cru villages

[15] Gamay is grown in the Beaujolais crus of Moulin-à-Vent and St Amour, which extends into the Mâconnais.These wines covered by Beaujolais appellation.
[16] There is no Premier Cru/Grand Cru system here.
[17] St. Veran is the appellation; St. Verand is the town. This is the appellation for white wines made in St. Amour and Moulin-à-Vent.

Beaujolais

Background

- 38 villages and 10 crus; some years they produce more than the rest of Burgundy
- Located in the Rhône department near Lyon, the gastronomic capital of France
- 3,000 growers and 18 cooperatives today; many still use negotiants
- Named after the town of Beaujeu, its capital until the 14th century
- In 1395, The Duke of Burgundy outlawed cultivation of the Gamay grape in his territory, regulating it to Beajolais
- Signature wine is a vin de primeur, fermented for just a few weeks before being released for sale on the third Thursday of November for the harvest celebration
    - Post WWII - Georges de Boeuf, former negociant, begins bottling it and driving it to cafes in Paris
    - 1981 - He ships it to the US and it becomes popular due to its light and fresh style
    - 1990s - fell out of style
- Reputation declined in 2005 due to a chaptalization scandal
- Today quality has increased and there is a strong movement towards organic/sustainable farming and biodynamic winemaking

Climate

- Haut Beaujolais - sits on granite shist from an extinct volcano
    - The granite helps moderate growth and prevents high yields of Gamay
- Bas Beaujolais - richer, sandstone and clay based soils with some limestone patches (less beneficial for Gamay)

Wine Style

- Rosé from Carbonic Maceration
    - Whole cluster fermentation in a closed top which reduced bitter tannins and preserves delicate fruit flavors
        - Grapes are uncrushed and no yeast added
        - CO_2 is used to create an anaerobic environment
    - Carbon dioxide begins fermentation inside the grape
    - Different alcohols and esters result, such as amul ester, lending a light fruit flavor often described as strong banana, lifesaver, or bubble gum
- Rosé from Semi-Carbonic Maceration is more often used now
    - Using a cement or stainless steel vessel that remains open and no addition of CO_2
    - The bottom 10-30% of grapes are crushed by the weight of the top grapes, releasing $C0_2$ for carbonic maceration
    - Typically takes 4-10 days

Cru Villages

- Fleurie - high acid; fresh red fruit and violet; ageworthy
- Juliénas- named for Caesar, fruity and spicy
- Chenas - tiniest cru; peach skin and violet; ageworthy
- St. Amour - light and fresh
- Chiroublese - high elevation grapes; light and vinous
- Regnie - fuller than St. Amour but not as interesting
- Morgon - fuller bodied; notes of apricots and earth; ageworthy
- Moulin-à-vent - rich and well-balanced; ageworthy
- Régnié - round, red fruit
- Brouilly - largest cru with pink-colored granite soils; mix of red and dark fruit
- Côte de Brouilly - high elevation atop an extinct volcano; lends power and freshness to fruit

Lightest to Fullest

1. Chiroublese
2. St. Amour
3. Fleurie
4. Régnié
5. Brouilly
6. Côte de Brouilly
7. Juliénas
8. Chenas
9. Morgan
10. Moulin-à-vent