



The New York Times

Wednesday, March 10, 2010

Dining & Wine

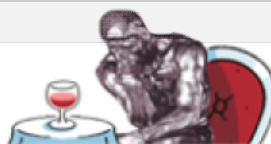
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The Pour

Eric Asimov



March 9, 2010, 4:03 PM

Ode to Burgundy



Owen Franken for The New York Times

Jean-Marie Fourrier of Domaine Fourrier in Burgundy, which he took over from his father.

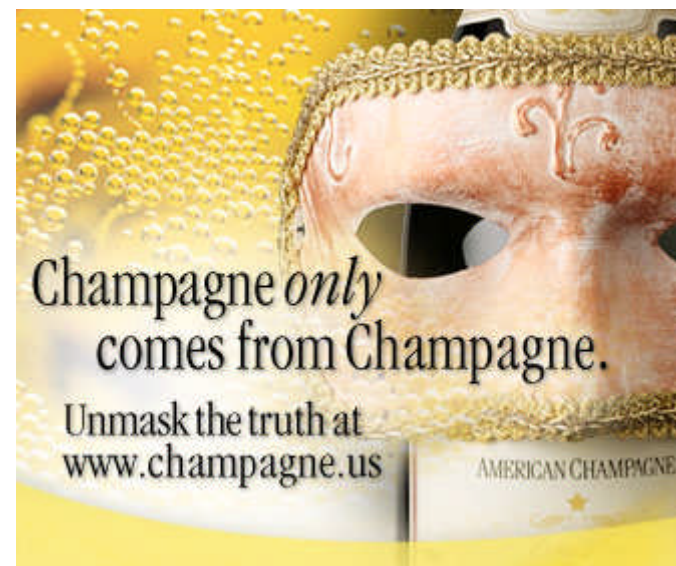
As some of you may have guessed from my column this week in the

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As some of you may have guessed from [my column](#) this week in the newspaper, I love Burgundy. I love to drink it, think about it, talk about it and write about it.

Thankfully, I can say that about a lot of wine regions in the world, not least because becoming overly obsessed with Burgundy – a little obsession is fine – might interfere with the college educations of my children.

Nonetheless, I would hazard a guess that, as far as wine obsessions go, Burgundy most likely leads the way. The complexities of the region, the sheer number of possible combinations of producer and vineyard, the profound effect of vintage on the wine and the relative scarcity of bottles creates possibly a perfect combination of circumstances to draw in the sort of wine geek who can't help but dive in deeply and passionately.

What's more, Burgundy continues to exist on a profoundly human scale. Champagne and Bordeaux are far more corporate, Napa Valley and Tuscany are far more jet set, but Burgundy is still primarily a region of small, family-run estates, where vigneronns farm the vines and turn the grapes into wine. Of the world's leading wine regions, possibly only Barolo and Barbaresco in the Piedmont region of Italy can also make that claim.

Anyhow, my column focused on the 2007 vintage for red Burgundy. The wines, I think, are highly appealing, and offer the service of being fairly easy to drink young. This is an important thing as many restaurants are serving the '05 and '06 Burgundies currently, wines that will require far more aging to enjoy than the '07s.

It's a sad but true economic fact that most restaurants cannot afford to store wines for aging before putting them on their wine lists. They must recoup whatever investments they've made in wine by selling bottles as quickly as they can. This unfortunately serves neither the consumer nor the wine.

Very occasionally, I will find a restaurant that has a store of well-aged wines at reasonable prices. This was true of both [Veritas](#) and [Cru](#), New York's two wine meccas, when they opened, although prices at both have gone up. In Long Island City, Queens, the wonderful wine list at [Manducatis](#) has been an open secret for years, as has the list at [Tommaso](#) in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn.

Less well known – oh, how I hate to give this up – is the list at [Bar Henry](#), a relatively new little bistro on West Houston Street, which includes a number of aged bottles for relatively reasonable prices. Last week – still on my Burgundy kick – I had a 1998 Gevrey-Chambertin from [Denis Bachelet](#), whose wines I like very much. The '98 Gevrey, a village-level wine, could not be more different from Bachelet's '07 Gevrey, and it's not just a question of age.

The '98 – not one of my favorite vintages – may well be at its peak now. It was open and friendly, not complex but loveable like a big tail-thumping dog. The '07 is far more discreet – *feline* might be a good word. Oh, did I mention

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The 07 is far more discreet – maybe might be a good word. Oh, did I mention that the price for this 12-year-old wine was \$99?

Just for comparison's sake we had another bottle of Burgundy, a 2001 Ile de Vergelesses, a premier cru Pernand-Vergelesses, from [Chandon de Briailles](#). I happen to like the '01 vintage very much, and I like this producer, too. The wine was characteristically closed, but exposure to air coaxed out complex, lovely flavors that were quiet and subtle. It has many more years to it, I think.

This bottle was \$88, except that it wasn't. Bar Henry has an appealing policy of selling you half of any bottle on its list for half the price. In other words, if, like us, you want to get a second bottle for comparison's sake but don't want to drink it entirely, just order half, and the restaurant will serve it in a carafe. Here's what [WineChap.com](#) had to say about the Bar Henry list.

Alright now, I've told you about one of my secret lists. How about giving up a few of yours'?

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burgundy, wine

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3 Comments

1. March 9, 2010 5:34 pm
[Link](#)
Although perhaps too well known, and not in NY, [Legal Sea Food](#) in Boston's hard to beat for wine price. Their bigger branches have a pretty great selection of older wines. The sea food's nicely done, though not nearly as exciting as the wine list.

— *Bob Carpenter*

2. March 9, 2010 7:15 pm
[Link](#)
I am loving the 2007 vintage from Burgundy. I think the 2005's are shut down and drinking way too hard right now, the 06's a little more friendly but the 07's... delightful. There is something pure that is running through the wines I have been lucky enough to try

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through the wines I have been lucky enough to try, (Chandon de Brailles being one of the estates wines I have been lucky enough to run through...Claude was here in SoCal tasting us on her wines and dude, they are just like her, regal) while finicky are so vibrant. Not weighty or rich but flirty and full of intrigue...dig em'.

— *Samantha Dugan*

3. March 9, 2010
9:20 pm

[Link](#)

I agree about the 2000 red Burgundies, in my experience, many are drinking well now; these days we're enjoying splits from Bouchard's Vigne de l'Enfant Jésus, a superb wine available (at auction) for a reasonable price due to the poor reputation of the vintage... Thank you Mr Parker.

As for restaurant with fun wine lists in NYC:

August: Loire, Savoie, Germany, Austria, a few rosés, a few inexpensive sparklers etc... + a nice (albeit small) beer selection and a couple of ciders; many wines are very well priced (and hard to find), and the cuisine is enjoyable.

Basso on 56: Good Italian wine list, many under \$40; again very enjoyable food and service.

Pylos: Expansive (and inexpensive) selection of Greek wines, Comfort food (if you hail from Athens...)

— *Yann*

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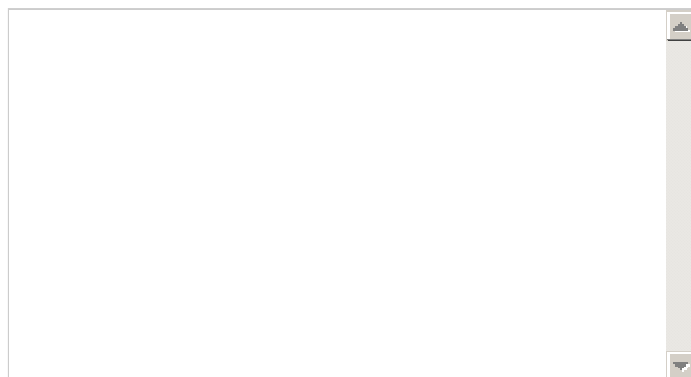
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