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## 2011 New York Wine Experience: 2009 Red Burgundies

Four small-production Pinot Noirs from a top vintage

Jennifer Fiedler

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"Today Burgundy is making some of its best wines," said senior editor Bruce Sanderson, introducing a tasting of limited-production Pinot Noirs from the highly rated 2009 vintage. "And for us Burgundy lovers, we can thank growers like the four sitting in front of you today," he continued, describing a sea change that happened roughly 20 years ago, in which vintners began to taste each other's wines and share winemaking techniques instead of guarding secrets, as had been the case for generations.

With the tasting split evenly between one *premier cru* and one *grand cru* each from the Côte de Beaune and the Côte de Nuits, the seminar was not only a glimpse into the vintage character and the *terroir* of Burgundy, but also an exploration of the role that winemakers play in creating a great wine.

Abundant sunshine, warm weather and rain at the right time made for near-perfect growing conditions in 2009, said Sanderson. But that didn't let vintners off the hook. For such a ripe vintage, said Nathalie Tollot, who was presenting the soft, elegant Tollot-Beaut Corton-Bressandes, the challenge was to "keep fresh fruit and pick quite early."

Etienne Grivot echoed that sentiment: When it comes to deciding when to harvest the grapes, "Three to four more days [on the vine] can mean an additional 1 percent of alcohol." The Clos de Vougeot he brought, one of 18 cuvées from Domaine Jean Grivot, was the most structured and powerful of the four in the tasting.

Christophe Roumier, whose grandfather planted the tiny appellation of



Jon Moe

From left: Natalie Tollot, Guillaume d'Angerville, Christophe Roumier and Etienne Grivot.

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Morey-St.-Denis in 1999, sees similarities between the 1990 vintage and the 2009s, and predicted the wines would be best after eight to 10 years. However, Sanderson noted that the wines were more approachable in their youth than the more acidic 2008s.

Sanderson asked the winemakers to discuss the differences between the Côte de Beaune and the Côte de Nuits for audience members unfamiliar with the geography. Guillaume d'Angerville—whose Volnay Clos des Ducs on the table is from the Côte de Beaune—got a laugh from the crowd for his quick response: “I love Côte de Nuits wines.” He continued, “Generally speaking, Côte de Beaune wines are not as big.”

Sanderson agreed, describing Côte de Beaune as sensual, generous wines, while Côte de Nuits reds have more structure, spice and minerality. The examples in the glasses certainly illustrated what a difference a few miles can make.

## Wines in Order of Tasting

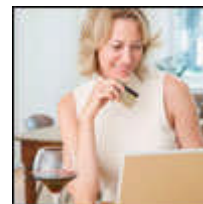
- Marquis d'Angerville Volnay Clos des Ducs 2009 (\$150, 100 cases imported)
- Tolle-Beaut Corton-Bressandes 2009 (\$100, 50 cases imported)
- G. Roumier Morey-St.-Denis Clos de la Bussière 2009 (\$120, 228 cases imported)
- Jean Grivot Clos de Vougeot 2009 (\$180, 135 cases imported)

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