

DOMAINE DE LA ROMANÉE-CONTI

2019 VINTAGE OFFERING



WILSON DANIELS

WILSON DANIELS HAS PROUDLY REPRESENTED
DOMAINE DE LA ROMANÉE-CONTI
EXCLUSIVELY IN THE U.S. SINCE 1979

*View of the eastern part of La Tâche (left side of the road)
and the village of Vosne-Romanée in the background*



DOMAINE DE LA ROMANÉE-CONTI 2019 VINTAGE HARVEST REPORT

In 2019, the singular genius of the climats of Burgundy erased the negative impact of excessive heat and adapted itself to extreme conditions to offer elegant wines with an extraordinary freshness. Even though it is a bit early to have a definite opinion, this freshness and “classical Burgundian” style will be the main characteristics of the vintage.

For vigneron, each vintage remains a mystery until the wine is run off into barrels where it will age. It is somewhat like waiting for a child to be born without being able to predict its future. More than any other, this 2019 vintage was born without providing clues to make comparisons with previous vintages.

This year the grapes were born and grew accompanied by the sun, heat and drought. Winter was not very rainy. Beautiful weather set in at the beginning of spring and lasted thanks to the continuous North wind. The usual works — pruning, debudding and ploughing — were carried out easily, but sometimes also at a speedy pace, when for instance, right in the middle of debudding, the vegetation started to develop with incredible energy. The *vigneron* then has no alternative but to give in. Treatments were reduced to a historical minimum. The same was true for the infrequent ploughing that was performed according to the old saying “a good hoeing is worth two waterings.”

As of May, it was hot and we, like vines, were already lacking water. The vines however were apparently not suffering since they kept on developing with the same exceptional vigor. Flowering began early, at the very beginning of June, but was difficult and spread out over more than 15 days. This caused significant *coulure* (shatter) and a lot of *millerandage* (mixed size berries) which are always the sign that vines are fighting against stressful conditions.

From flowering we were expecting the harvest around September 20th, but this was without taking into account that the North wind and the beautiful weather were not going to leave room for the Western wind and humidity that normally balance hot periods. So, the door stayed open to the heat that was becoming unusual in the afternoons. Fortunately, the nights remained cool except during two heatwaves: one at the end of June (24-30) and the other that lasted one week at the end of July when veraison began. At that moment, we were really surprised by the capacity of the vines to persevere. While we were suffering night and day, inside and outside, leaves remained green and grapes were reaching a maturity that we wouldn't have dared to hope for in such extreme conditions.

Heat had two effects on the vines: during the spring until the first heatwave, vegetation developed at a crazy pace and, as mentioned, with a vigor that took us by surprise. Then, from the end of June, especially during the second heatwave in late July, its evolution



was often blocked. Intense heat made the vines withdraw onto themselves, abandon their grapes in the sun and adopt a survival regime until temperatures were back to normal again. As a result there were some burnt berries (which were removed at harvest time) and a few “blockages” in the development of vines from flowering to veraison.

The extraordinary resistance of our vineyards was remarkable. This 2019 vintage proves that vines are clever and have the instinct of life — they have their own intelligence and try to adapt whenever they are faced with extreme conditions. Remember that this was often the case in the past. Our role is to help them by choosing good vegetal material and appropriate ways of cultivation.

According to the figures we have, the increase of temperatures, i.e the amount of heat, this year was superior to 2003, which is the contemporary reference year. But in 2003 the vineyards really suffered (apart from very rare exceptions like Romanée-Conti whose resistance was amazing) and we were close to surmaturity, a maturity that isn't reached by the effect of photosynthesis but by the concentration of the grape elements, which fortunately did not happen.

That was not the case this year either. Vineyards remained green until the end, overcoming the heatwave more easily than we, humans, did and in late season, they knew how to ripen, nourish and bring their grapes to complete maturity with a perfect balance of sugar, acid and phenolic components.

The ease with which the vineyards went through those very difficult conditions was of course reinforced by biodynamics, by the high average age of vines that are deeply rooted, and by the resulting low yields, since they fight better when they have fewer grapes to bear.

However, on the eve of harvest in mid-September, we had not the slightest idea of what the wines would be like: would the remarkable resistance of the vines be found in the grapes and the wines?



Vineyard views towards Beaune from Pernand-Vergelesses and the Hill of Corton on the left

The maturity of sugars rose very fast in August with a potential of 11° on the 26th, 12.5° one week later on September 2nd, and even 13° in the younger vineyards. Maturity then stagnated during the following week, only to start up again with renewed vigor and reach 13.5°-14° and even more in Chardonnay. We would have liked to wait so that the phenolic maturity of skins, stalks and pips could balance even better with the high sugar content of berries, but with the latter rising quickly, on September 14th we decided to harvest the plants — the younger vines of La Tâche first, then of Romanée-St-Vivant where we had already a potential of 14°. The grapes were wonderful, even if there was not much juice, the heat and the sun having partly dried the berries.

On the 15th, it was the turn of Montrachet. The hydric regime of the Chassagne-Montrachet area was more favorable in June, and thanks to a few beneficial rains, the vineyards could accumulate water reserves, which hastened both flowering and ripeness. There too, we brought back into the winery a wonderful crop, with small *millerands* grapes and rather low yields if we compare to the 2018 vintage that was exceptionally abundant.

In the afternoon of the 15th, we started with the Richebourg and then all the other vineyards, one after the other, under hot weather that became more intense each day. The vines that were weakened as they were approaching the end of their growing cycle were visibly affected. Fortunately, nights were cool and this weakness had no impact on the grapes that were already ripe and ready to live out their new lives.

Here are the harvest dates and approximate yields:

Richebourg	September 15-16	21 hl/ha	Grands Échézeaux	September 19-20	28 hl/ha
La Tâche	September 16-18	23 hl/ha	Romanée-St-Vivant	September 20-21	27 hl/ha
Romanée-Conti	September 17	22.5 hl/ha	Échézeaux	September 22-23	23 hl/ha
Corton	September 19	15 hl/ha	Corton-Charlemagne	September 22 & 25	26 hl/ha

Our team of harvesters, more professional than ever, picked wonderful grapes at a very good pace, under the expert supervision of Nicolas Jacob, our vineyard manager. The grapes were very ripe and had homogeneous maturity without the slightest trace of botrytis or any other diseases; only sun-roasted berries were eliminated. Once again the sorting table did a *haute couture* job, meticulously cutting the tails of the grapes in order to diminish the volume of stalks that were put into vats. Consequently, the traditional vinification with “whole harvest” and long fermentation, that was masterly controlled by Alexandre Bernier and his devoted and efficient team, was even more respectful of the grapes of the year.

2019 marks the first harvest and vinifications of our Corton-Charlemagne vineyards. The plots that are situated on the upper part of the hillside could wait. For this reason we let two days pass after ending our harvest of red grapes and only finished on the 25th. There too, we harvested golden grapes that were very ripe and very healthy. After pressing, the greatest part of the must was run off into new high-quality barrels, and the smaller part into a lovely oak vat that was made specially for the occasion. Fermentations are underway. We are waiting with great curiosity for the finished wine.

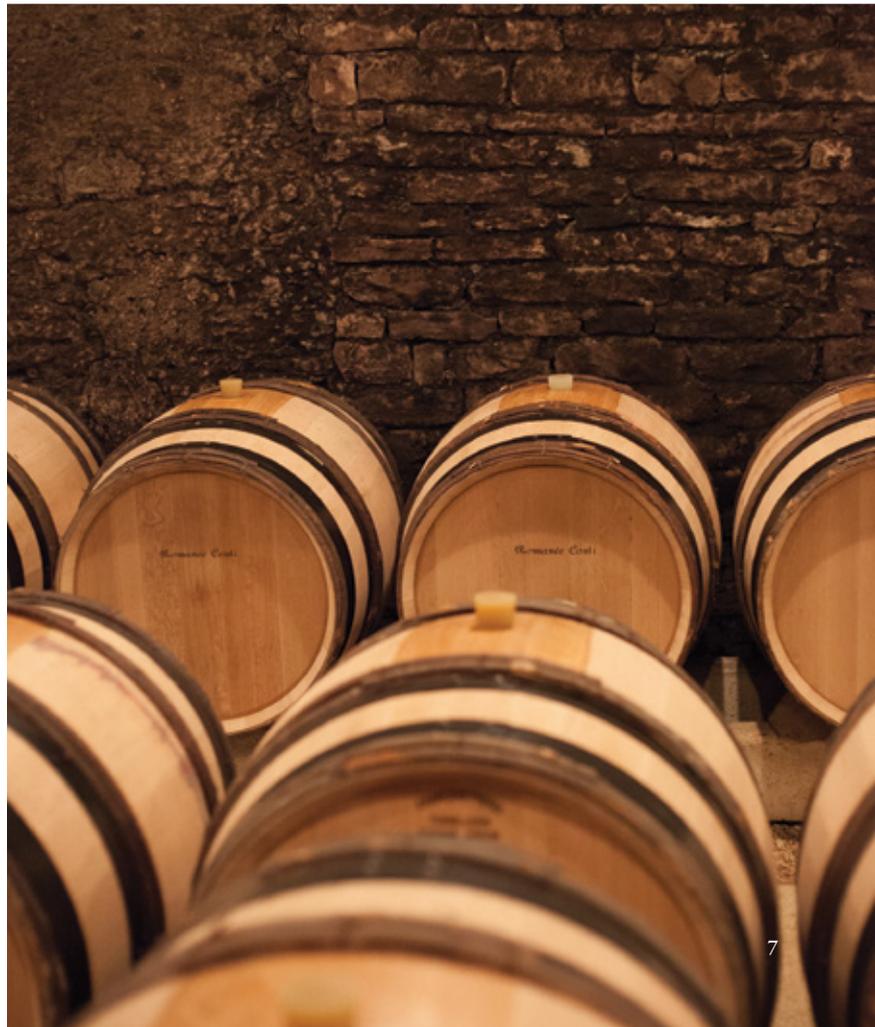
What is sure is that two extremely hot vintages followed each other, but produced extremely different wines. What makes them different was not due to the heat, but to their hydric regime and the flowering period: in 2018 the flowering was very early. It took place without any problems and was completed in the space of three days. The vineyards were not stressed thanks to the regular rains that we had from Spring to July, before heat and drought set in during August and September. In 2019, the flowering was more difficult because of the drought we had in Spring and the lack of water reserves. Fortunately, there were a few rains in the first part of August and although they were not abundant, the freshness they brought to the grapes was kept until the harvest.

— *Aubert de Villaine, Co-Director*
October 30, 2019

*View of the Romanée-St-Vivant vineyard on both sides
of the road leading to the church of Vosne-Romanée*



*Perrine Fenal and Aubert de Villaine,
Co-Directors*





CUVÉE DUVAULT-BLOCHET

Lesser known but brought to light again this year are the few holdings that the Domaine owns in the village of Vosne-Romanée. For the seventh time since 1999, the Domaine is releasing a small number of bottle of its premier cru holdings. The name is a tribute to Jacques-Marie Duvault-Blochot, founder of the Domaine de la Romanée-Conti as we know it today and ancestor of Aubert de Villaine.



CORTON

Since November 11, 2008, the Domaine has consented to lease the AOC Corton Grand Cru vineyards of Domaine Prince Florent de Merode, for a total of 2.2746 hectares in the climats of Clos du Roi, Bressandes and Renardes. Clos du Roi: 0.5721 hectares; Bressandes: 1.1944 hectares; Renardes: 0.5081 hectares



ÉCHÉZEAUX

Of all the Domaine's wines, this is the most forward. It opens up sooner than the others, with a ravishing clarity of expression, uncomplicated and cleanly etched; a caressing softness cloaks a steely skeleton which permits it to evolve with elegance. He is the younger brother of Grands Échézeaux, the glorious elder whose fortune Échézeaux aspires to equal. It sometimes comes very close when it speaks with the muscular language of the conquistadors. Surface area: 4.6737 hectares



GRANDS ÉCHÉZEAUX

It is "Grands" before being Échézeaux. It is a country gentleman, aristocrat and dreamer, who idles willingly with the unhurried step of his horse in a forest filled with the scents of sundry mushrooms, moss, decaying leaves and of furtive small game, which spill forth in a multitude of shifting alliances. All of that is expressed with feeling, in a refined language — musical, concise and pure like the message of a Mozart quartet. Surface area: 3.5263 hectares



ROMANÉE-ST-VIVANT

Romanée-St-Vivant is flirtatious; one cannot help loving it. Behind this grace resides a strength in such perfect balance that, at first, it is imperceptible. Surface area: 5.2858 hectares



RICHEBOURG

This immediate neighbor of la Romanée-Conti escorts Her Majesty with good-natured ribaldry. It is a king's musketeer who likes company, likes to laugh and to sing, to feel that the somewhat brutal strength of his athlete's body is admired. Surface area: 3.5110 hectares



LA TÂCHE

Nothing evokes La Tâche so much as the wonderful portrait of Richelieu by Philippe de Champaigne, which expresses the Cardinal's fiery and angular authority, a nervous hand posed on the hilt of his sword, while the sword itself is drowned in a luxurious cascade of ermine and velvet. La Tâche is elegance and rigor. Beneath the frequent firmness of its tannins, passion is aflame, restrained by an implacable, courtly elegance. Surface area: 6.0620 hectares



ROMANÉE-CONTI

"As if, in this square of earth, the gods had bequeathed us a memory of the fascinating vestige of a timeless perfection." — *Richard Olney*

The wine of Prince de Conti, she is velvet, seduction and mystery. It is the most Proustian of all great wines: Concealed in the secret perfume of fading rose petals of a Romanée-Conti 1956, is it not the intense and pure sensation of the recaptured past which arrests and enchants us? Surface area: 1.8140 hectares



MONTRACHET

"Incontestably of the first order of white wines from the Côte d'Or and probably of all the white wines of the world." — *Dr. Lavalley 1855*

Le Montrachet is a wine of unparalleled complexity, its elegance and power make an exceptional wine. Surface area: 0.6759 hectares



CORTON-CHARLEMAGNE

The Domaine was able to gain access to over 2.9ha of vines after the harvest of 2018 and is presenting here its first ever vintage of Corton-Charlemagne. Their four plots are located in the two Lieux-dits Le Charlemagne in Aloxe-Corton and En Charlemagne in Pernand-Vergelesses. With one plot on top of the hill, one at the foot of the hill and the last two plots half way through the slopes, the Domaine's Corton-Charlemagne will present a perfect picture of what this famous hill can offer. Surface area: 2.9142 hectares



Road between two plots of Romanée-St-Vivant leading to the famous cross and Romanée-Conti vineyard



*Sunset over Vosne-Romanée from the top
of the premier cru Aux Reignots*

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