

The wines called forth pleasure, of course, and desire, but also wistful sadness and resignation. The worldwide demand for Burgundy is going up, which means the supply can only go down. Many of the wines we tasted are already hard to find.

Factor this into the dispiriting equation: the 2010 vintage was small, and the next two even smaller — Allen Meadows, who writes Burghound.com, estimates that from 2010 to 2012, the equivalent of an entire vintage was lost — and, well, you get the idea. Prices are already high, and they will only go higher.

The 2010s in our tasting are expensive, mostly \$50 to \$90 a bottle, and we capped them at \$100, eliminating some of the most sought-after producers. Yet in the inflated mathematics of Burgundy, I have to consider these wines good values, or at least as good as they will be in the foreseeable future.

Burgundy lovers may find little consolation in this, but a vintage like 2010 demonstrates that the quality of the red wines has never been higher or more consistent. I love the vintage. The best wines are precise, graceful and subtly but firmly structured, while transparently showing the characteristics of their particular terroirs.

They are not as rich and powerful as the 2009s, but they emphasize finesse and balance. If what we sampled was representative, I will simply say the wines are gorgeous. For the tasting, Florence Fabricant and I were joined by John Slover, a sommelier late of Le Bernardin, and Carla Rzeszewski, wine director of the Spotted Pig, the Breslin and the John Dory Oyster Bar.

The narrow north-to-south strip known as the Côte de Nuits comprises an honor roll of red-wine villages that induces panting the world over: Gevrey-Chambertin, Morey-St.-Denis, Chambolle-Musigny, Vougeot, Vosnes-Romanée and Nuits-St.-Georges, along with a few less-known lights like Marsannay and Fixin. Wondrous reds come from the Côte de Beaune to the south as well, particularly from Volnay, Pommard, Corton and the Beaune appellations. But for red Burgundy, the Côte de Nuits is the heartland.

Within the Burgundian hierarchy, the grand-cru vineyards, with hallowed names like Chambertin and Musigny, Richebourg and La Tâche, are sacred territory, with single bottles ranging from around \$150 to 10 times that, depending on the vineyard and the producer. These days even fanatical Burgundy lovers can mostly just fantasize about drinking the best of these wines.

Many astute buyers used to find a sweet spot among the premier crus, the level right below grand cru. Premier-cru vineyards are judged to have desirable attributes worthy of being singled out, though the wines they produce, theoretically at least, don't have the potential depth, complexity and age-worthiness of the grand crus. But prices have also gone up for premier crus, and some wines from the best premier-cru vineyards, like Les Amoureuses in

Chambolle and Clos St.-Jacques in Gevrey, can cost several hundred dollars. For many of us, that leaves mostly village wines from the most vaunted communes as the sole affordable dip into Burgundian terroir. These wines come largely from vineyards not judged to have particularly distinctive characteristics beyond reflecting the villages in which they are situated. So, a village-level Chambolle-Musigny ought to offer the distinctive characteristics of Chambolle, even if it will not permit the deeper parsing of specific vineyard traits so beloved by Burgundy fanatics.

A word about our tasting: we sampled 20 bottles and recommend 10. This is obviously not a complete report, simply a cross-section. You may not find the bottles we cite as the best in our tasting, but please don't feel discouraged. Many other fine producers and wines are out there, including some that were in our tasting but didn't make our top 10 because we simply had too many we liked. I will name them as well.

Let me also say that this tasting and vintage ought to lay to rest the cliché that Burgundy, at least red Burgundy, is a minefield. Nonsense. Red Burgundy is no more of a crapshoot than any other wine region.

In fact, through hard work, it has achieved a far higher level of consistency among good producers than many other vaunted regions that are never assailed by such criticism. Perhaps the stakes are higher in Burgundy because of price and scarcity, but as with anywhere else, learning who the good producers are helps to assure reliability.

I'm happy to say that most of the producers on our list have earned consumer confidence. Our No. 1 bottle, a Morey-St.-Denis, came from Domaine Dujac, which makes scintillating wines year after year. Not surprisingly, this was on the high end of our price scale at \$89, but it's a village wine of rare depth and complexity. Dujac also has a small négociant operation, Maison Dujac Fils et Père, which offers good less-expensive bottles.

Our No. 3 bottle was also a Morey-St.-Denis, the spicy, complex Clos Solon from Domaine Fourrier, where Jean-Marie Fourrier has done remarkable work in the last decade or so. The world has caught on: we paid \$68 for the Clos Solon, which cost \$40 or less five years ago.

Our Nos. 2 and 4 were surprises. No. 2 was a Gevrey-Chambertin from Marc Roy, a tiny domain now run practically single-handedly by the young Alexandrine Roy. I've now tried several vintages of this wine, and they are worth seeking out. This wine combined typical Gevrey staying power with grace; just lovely. No. 4 was a Vosne-Romanée from Mongeard-Mugneret, a producer that I confess has not been on my radar in recent years. But I was impressed with the focus and finesse.

Most of these wines offered clear insights into their villages. Les Verailles from

Bruno Clair showed great delicacy, as a Chambolle-Musigny should, while Joseph Drouhin's Gevrey-Chambertin was pure, balanced, properly earthy and, by the way, our best value at \$48.

The Cheillon and Faiveley were excellent examples of Nuits-St.-Georges, deep and structured, the Cheillon more brooding and the Faiveley more savory. Over the years, I've come to appreciate more and more what Nuits has to offer.

Among the wines we liked that didn't make our top 10 were a Marsannay Clos du Roy from Sylvain Pataille, a Gevrey-Chambertin from Dominique Gallois, a Chambolle-Musigny from Virgile Lignier-Michelot and a Vosne-Romanée from Cécile Tremblay.

Many regions in which wine once required significant aging now make wines that can be consumed young. Perhaps even some of these wines could be opened now and provide some pleasure. Personally, though, I would set these wines aside for five years at a minimum. They will only get better, deeper and more magical. And sadly, by then, they may seem like bargains.

Tasting Report

Domaine Dujac, \$89, *** 1/2

Morey St.-Denis 2010

Lovely flavors of red fruit, minerals and spices; great length, depth and texture.

(The Sorting Table, Napa, Calif.)

Marc Roy, \$60, *** 1/2

Gevrey-Chambertin Vieilles Vignes 2010

Elegant, silky and gracefully structured with gorgeous floral and fruit flavors, finesse and staying power. (Michael Skurnik Wines, Syosset, N.Y.)

Domaine Fourrier, \$68, *** 1/2

Morey St.-Denis Clos Solon Vieilles Vignes 2010

Exotic, complex aromas and flavors of flowers and spices, concentrated and subtly structured. (Rosenthal Wine Merchant, New York)

Mongear-Mugneret, \$58, ***

Vosne-Romanée 2010

Supple, rich, earthy and graceful, with flavors of red fruit and chalky minerals.

(Vineyard Brands, Birmingham, Ala.)

Bruno Clair, \$70, ***

Chambolle-Musigny Les Verailles 2010

Persistent flavors of spicy fruit, with great finesse and delicacy. (A Becky Wasserman Selection/Martin Scott Wines, Lake Success, N.Y.)

BEST VALUE

Joseph Drouhin, \$48, ***

Gevrey-Chambertin 2010

Floral, earthy and somewhat closed, but pure, balanced and graceful. (Dreyfus,

Ashby, New York)

Robert Chevillon, \$75, ** 1/2

Nuits-St.-George 2010

Structured and brooding with earthy, dark fruit flavors. (Kermit Lynch Wine Merchant, Berkeley, Calif.)

Domaine Faiveley, \$63, ** 1/2

Nuits-St.-George 2010

Deep, dark, rich and deep with savory notes. (Frederick Wildman & Sons, New York)

Dominique Mugneret, \$60, ** 1/2

Vosne-Romanée 2010

Lively and fine, with spicy red fruit flavors. (A Becky Wasserman Selection/ Selection Pas Mal, New York)

Domaine Trapet Père et Fils, \$72, ** 1/2

Gevrey-Chambertin 2010

Pleasant flavors and aroma of earthy minerals and red fruit. (Polaner Selections, Mt. Kisco, N.Y.)