



PIEDMONT WINE DINNER AT COLVIN RUN

On October 23, Italian winery GD Vajra will team up with Colvin Run Tavern for a **Piedmont Wine Dinner**. The dinner will be paired with wines selected by winemaker Giuseppe Vajra. To make a reservation, contact Allison at 202-747-8570.

SCOTT GREENBERG *Vine Guy*

White Burgundies

that won't bust your budget



Finding value in one of the most storied wine regions

It is not often that you read the words “value” and “Burgundy” in the same sentence, but this is exactly the kind of good news that’s coming out of France these days. Value Burgundies are here.

Why is this big news? Many wine lovers consider wines from Burgundy, France, the Holy Grail of wines. Made from mostly chardonnay (whites) or pinot noir (reds), Burgundy wines are often sought after by serious collectors for their perfumed aromas, seductive flavors and remarkable ageability. And because great vintages come along about as often as a legitimate cure for baldness (which I need), demand can often exceed availability, forcing prices to hit astronomical levels.

Burgundy is located about 130 miles southeast of Paris and is a region full of culture, history and rich soils. Until the latter part of the 18th century, Burgundy was actually owned by the Dukes of Burgundy, descendants of the Scandinavian conquerors who spread their influence and control throughout the region for hundreds of years.

But it was the Church that controlled the vineyards. After the French Revolution, the plots were divided up and given to the people who had been working the land. Through successive generations, the vineyards have been subdivided and split into lots so small that today some growers might only own a single row or two of vines in a vineyard.

As you can imagine, this system was not only inefficient when it came to making wine, but it was almost impossible to keep track of which producer to buy wine from. For example, the famous Grand Cru vineyard of Clos de Vougeot currently has more than 75 independent growers on just 125 acres. Not a lot of elbow room. Enter the “négociant,” who aggregates several growers and then produces a single wine from a vineyard.

Nowadays, many of the family vineyards have combined their plots into larger parcels where they can grow enough of their own grapes to make “Domaine” wines. These family-run operations, along with improved grape-growing techniques and state-of-the-art winemaking equipment, are providing better wines on a more consistent basis. The result is a wider selection of well-priced Burgundian wines and happier consumers.

But words like “happiness” and “value” can be subjective, so for the sake of this column — and next week’s on red Burgundies — I define both in this way: A good Burgundy wine for less than \$30 is a value and makes me happy. Retail prices are approximate.

2005 Cave de Prissé-Sologny-Verzé, POUILLY-FUISSÉ, Burgundy (\$17)

Remarkable scents of acacia and vanilla on the nose. The mouth-filling flavors of ripe apples, pear and a touch of cinnamon play out on the beautifully round finish. I could drink this wine by itself, but why deprive a roast chicken of the company?

2004 Domaine Daniel Rion, Bourgogne Hautes Cotes de Nuits, Burgundy (\$18)

It’s hard to believe this wine is under \$20. With its floral bouquet and distinct flavors of apples, citrus and butter built on a creamy texture, it drinks like a wine twice its price. Try it with roasted halibut.

2005 Domaine Jean Durup Père & Fils, Chateau de Maligny 1er Cru “L’Homme Mort”, Burgundy (\$30)

A great price for a premier cru Burgundy, especially one that features such intense flavors of crisp apple, green melon and ripe pear. Throw in a touch of citrus on the slightly flinty finish and you have a wine to enjoy with grilled pork or veal. I’d buy a few, just to see how it evolves over a couple of years.

2004 Gerard Tremblay, Chablis 1er Cru Fourchaume “Domaine des Îles,” Burgundy (\$25)

Very floral for a Chablis, with hints of honeysuckle and gardenias on the nose. This wine has a great mouth feel that features full flavors of baked apples, melon and figs, with just a whisper of mineral notes on the well-delineated finish. My bet would be sautéed scallops as a great match.

2004 Chateau de la Maltroye, Chassagne Mon-trachet, Burgundy (\$30)

Made from 40-year-old vines, the aroma of gardenias and citrus leads to deep flavors of green apples, melon and touches of oak

on the crisp finish. Perfect starter with a cheese course.

2003 Jean-Claude Boisset, Bourgogne Chardonnay, Burgundy (\$20)

Graceful notes of acacia and melon on the lovely nose compliment the flavors of green apples and pear. The balance is delightful, featuring a clean, crisp finish that would pair well with fresh oysters.

A friend of mine once told me, “When Burgundy is good, it’s great. But when Burgundy is great, there is nothing better.” Well, the only thing I think is better is Burgundy less than \$30. Stay tuned for the red Burgundies next week.



Do you have a favorite royalty of wine? E-mail me at scott@vineguy.com.

