

Jacques-Frédéric Mugnier (Chambolle-Musigny)

1999 Bonnes-Mares Grand Cru	red	(88-90)
1999 Chambolle-Musigny	red	(85-87)
1999 Chambolle-Musigny "Les Amoureuses" 1 ^{er}	red	(89-91)
1999 Chambolle-Musigny "Les Fuées" 1 ^{er}	red	(86-88)
1999 Musigny Grand Cru	red	(91-93)
1998 Bonnes-Mares Grand Cru	red	91
1998 Chambolle-Musigny	red	85
1998 Chambolle-Musigny "Les Amoureuses" 1 ^{er}	red	89
1998 Chambolle-Musigny "Les Fuées" 1 ^{er}	red	87
1998 Musigny Grand Cru	red	94

The news here is that M. Mugnier has now retired as a full-time airline pilot and will devote his energies entirely to managing his small 4 ha domaine with its impressive holdings. I suspect that part of his decision to retire as a professional pilot also involves the anticipation of preparing for the expiration of the lease with Domaine Faiveley of the huge 9.55 ha Nuits *premier cru* of Clos de la Maréchale (a *monopole*), that will revert to Domaine Mugnier in 2002.

While it is of course entirely possible that M. Mugnier will elect to simply exploit the vineyard himself, the more likely scenario is that there will be some sort of compromise between Messrs. Faiveley and Mugnier. Domaine Faiveley clearly has a vested interest in retaining all, or a large portion anyway, of the Clos de la Maréchale as the vineyard is so closely identified with Faiveley name. And Frédéric, for his part, is interested in supplementing his *gamme* (range) of wines as he has plenty of cellar space to accommodate them.

My prediction is that some sort of trade will be worked out, with rights to work certain parcels of vines being exchanged, much the way domaines Chartron and Ramonet exchanged the rights to work certain parcels of Chevalier and Batard, respectively. Faiveley has an extensive range of attractive holdings and thus, some sort of exchange along these lines would not surprise me. Possibilities include Echézeaux and Clos de Vougeot, especially the latter as Domaine Mugnier once owned a parcel of Clos de Vougeot and it would be an obvious complement to the Amoureuses, Bonnes-Mares and Musigny holdings.

Turning to the recent vintages, M. Mugnier is of the view that while his 1999s are good, he prefers both the 2000s and the 1998s. In fact, in the case of the 98s, he believes they may ultimately approach the quality of his 93s, high praise indeed. Average yields for the 2000s were 45 hl/ha, 55 hl/ha for the 99s and 20 hl/ha for the 98s. The 99s were 100% destemmed, chaptalized between .5 and 1.0% degree, macerated for 3 days at 15 degrees Celsius (but without any sulfur) and the total *cuvaison* lasted between 17 and 18 days. New oak here averages 25% and the *mise* is currently scheduled for April, *ni collage, ni filtration* (neither fined, nor filtered). The wines had been racked three weeks prior to my visit and appeared to have largely, if not completely, recovered from this.

Regarding the quality of the Mugnier 99s, I must demur somewhat from M. Mugnier's view as I am definitely more impressed with them than he is, or at least more than he lets on.

1999 Chambolle-Musigny: From two different parcels of vines, one located in the *premier cru* Les Plantes (planted in 1968) and the second from the *villages*-level portion of La Combe d'Orveau, which is presently young vines. Exquisitely elegant Chambolle fruit, excellent attack and ripe round red fruit flavors that are all about finesse and delicacy. This should need 5 years in the cellar and then drink well for another 5.

1999 Chambolle-Musigny “Les Fuées”: (from 50 year old vines – this is M. Mugnier’s favorite vineyard in terms of its fruit quality). A clear step as it delivers the same exquisite Chambolle fruit yet with a touch more nuance and complexity that is textbook in its precision. Supple yet intense flavors with buried tannins and solid length. To drink between 2007 and 2012.

1999 Chambolle-Musigny “Les Amoureuses”: Wonderfully expressive with buckets of spicy black fruit and seductive flavors; the wine has so much material that it kept changing and evolving on the spot, revealing one fascinating nuance after another. Not a big wine but it is very “Mugnier” in style with its pure fruit, tightly focused flavors, excellent balance and stately reserve rather than anything overt and obvious. In short, this is sex in a glass.

1999 Bonnes-Mares: Similar in style to the 99 Les Amoureuses though less forward and sexy with stylish fruit, reserved though intense, medium weight flavors, velvety tannins and fine length. Should make a terrific bottle in 8 to 10 years despite the relatively young vines.

1999 Musigny: Given how powerful good Musigny always is, it was odd that this, out of all these wines, would be the one that still seemed a little tired from the recent *soutirage* (racking – the process of siphoning clear wine from one cask to another in order to eliminate the lees). But, I am fully confident it will recover because this is indisputably excellent with a superb range of fruit, intensely powerful yet silky flavors and a finish that just goes on and on. I just shook my head after tasting this and said “Brilliant”! Cellar until 2008 and drink to 2020 or perhaps longer.

The Mugnier 98s are extremely strong and every wine here, with the possible exception of the straight Chambolle, is worth your attention.

1998 Chambolle-Musigny: Serious and dense with clean, high quality Chambolle fruit and flavors yet the wine comes across as somewhat hard and severe. There is excellent material but it will be a horse race between the fruit and the tannins.

1998 Chambolle-Musigny “Les Fuées”: Deep ruby tones, richly nuanced flavors and while the wine is already expressive, there is clearly plenty hiding beneath the surface. Much like the straight 98 Chambolle, the sizeable tannins are somewhat severe though this is more convincing in its fruit/tannin balance. Drink from 2006 to 2012.

1998 Chambolle-Musigny “Les Amoureuses”: Shows the same spicy, come-hither character as the 99 Les Amoureuses and is not as obviously big and tannic as the 98 Les Fuées. This has better overall balance and better potential than the 98 Fuées. Drink from 2008 to 2015.

1998 Bonnes-Mares: Austere but intense with brooding power and superb material. This is definitely not a charm school burgundy yet despite the austerity typical of classic young Bonnes-Mares, the flavors just etch themselves onto your palate and the finish is almost as long as the 99 Musigny. Textbook Bonnes-Mares.

1998 Musigny: One of the greatest wines I tasted on the entire trip. In a word, breathtaking. It took no effort at all to coax the explosive and almost decadently opulent fruit from the glass with its fabulous array of spices and flowers followed by flavors that are almost painful in their intensity yet everything is in perfect harmony. I simply could not believe the length on this wine. This is Musigny as it should be but so rarely is. Drink from 2010 to 2025.