



Jacques-Frederic Mugnier
Photo Credit: Stephen Tanzer

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Domaine Jacques-Frederic Mugnier

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By Stephen Tanzer

Freddy Mugnier started picking on September 22 in 2008, with what he described as good sugar levels in the 12% to 12.5% range. He eliminated more rotten than green grapes and emphasized that "ripeness is no longer a problem in Burgundy." When he started in 1985, he explained, "a great vintage was when we could pick grapes at 11.5%, and even 11% was okay." Phenolic ripeness, of course, is another issue, and Mugnier told me he's more concerned with phenolic ripeness in dry years, when the juice can be riper than the skins. That's why he waited to harvest in 2009 and got very high sugars. "I would have been happy if I could have done a negative chaptalization in 2009," he told me. Incidentally, when I mentioned that many growers get higher sugars today partly due to lower crop levels, Mugnier noted that his own yields are not lower today than previously. In fact, he said, they were lower in the early '90s, when he used different farming methods. (A Becky Wasserman selection; importers include Martin-Scott Wines, Ltd., Lake Success, NY)

2008 Domaine Jacques Frederic Mugnier Chambolle Musigny 89-91

(racked two weeks before my visit) Medium red. High-pitched aromas of raspberry, rose petal, white pepper and orange peel. Juicy, precise and mineral-driven, with lovely purity to the blueberry and blackberry flavors. Finishes with noteworthy energy and mounting length. Real wine-class Chambolle.

2008 Domaine Jacques Frederic Mugnier Chambolle Musigny Les Fuees 90-92

Medium red. Black raspberry, flowers and a musky minerality on the nose, along with a cooler suggestion of menthol. Tighter and more medicinal than the village wine, with a youthful toughness to the briary black fruit flavors. Not as high-pitched as the village example, but this backward wine displays impressive palate-staining sweetness on the broad, spicy back end.

2008 Domaine Jacques Frederic Mugnier Bonnes Mares 91-93

Medium red. Soil-driven aromas of blackberry, mocha and menthol, lifted by white pepper. Dense, structured and sweet, but with penetrating acids and a savory character giving the mid-palate outstanding clarity and energy. Not a particularly fleshy wine but possesses a deep core of spice and a firm spine of tannins and acids. This finished its malo in March but had been racked and sulfited shortly before my visit.

2008 Domaine Jacques Frederic Mugnier Chambolle Musigny Les Amoureuses 92-94

Bright, moderately saturated medium red. Zesty aromas of red raspberry, orange peel, mint and pungent crushed stone, with a captivating candied quality. Dense, layered and sweet; at once fully ripe and sappy, with an exhilarating high pitch to its flavors of raspberry, stone and licorice. This wine is always sexy in the early going, but this 2008 shows a serious structure and seems quite backward today.

2008 Domaine Jacques Frederic Mugnier Musigny 93-95

Good bright, deep red. Pungent aromas of blackberry, black raspberry, black tea, violet, licorice pastille and crushed stone are distinctly darker than those of the Amoureuses. Suave on entry, then more intense but also more imploded in the middle than the Amoureuses, conveying an almost painful impression of energy. Seamless in texture and broad and sweet on the back, but this laid-back, powerful wine is austere today. This finished its malolactic fermentation in July, relatively late for this cellar.

2008 Domaine Jacques Frederic Mugnier Nuits Saint Georges Clos de la Marechale 89-92

Bright red-ruby. Black fruits, licorice, game and a whiff of leather on the slightly reduced nose. Sweet but muscular in the middle, with medicinal black cherry and cassis flavors that come across as less refined than Mugnier's examples from Chambolle (duh!). A backward, powerful, tannic wine that should age very slowly.

2007 Domaine Jacques Frederic Mugnier Chambolle Musigny 89

(\$87) Medium red. A cocktail of red fruits on the nose. Lush and sweet but without the brilliant definition or lift of the 2008. A somewhat more muscular style, with dark fruits complicated by notes of leather and flowers. Still a bit youthfully subdued.

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| 2007 Domaine Jacques Frederic Mugnier Nuits Saint Georges Clos des Fourches (\$61) Good deep red. Very fresh, pure aromas of blackberry and violet. Sweet on entry, then a bit firmer and more minerally in the middle. Turns a tad tough on the end, finishing with dusty tannins. The 2006 version of this village offering was mostly from the young vines in the northern portion of the Clos de la Marechale but this 2007 is mostly from the upper part of the vineyard. | 87 |
| 2007 Domaine Jacques Frederic Mugnier Nuits Saint Georges Clos de la Marechale (\$87) Good deep red. Blueberry, licorice, brown spices and menthol on the complex nose. Richer and broader than the village wine, with more intense and complex flavors of spicy black and red berries, leather and minerals. Finishes dense, broad and spicy, with substantial fine tannins. An excellent Nuits-Saint-George wine. | 90 Compare Price |
| 2007 Domaine Jacques Frederic Mugnier Chambolle Musigny Les Fuees (\$146) Good bright, deep red. Very ripe suggestion of cherry liqueur on the nose. Sweet, pliant and fat with fruit, with the musky red fruit notes nicely complemented by smoky minerality. Less detailed than usual for this cuvee but finishes broad and classically dry. | 89 Compare Price |
| 2007 Domaine Jacques Frederic Mugnier Bonnes Mares (\$302) Pale, bright medium red. Reticent but complex nose combines red fruits, brown spices and red licorice. Sweet, rich, pliant Bonnes-Mares with excellent volume and depth to its red fruit flavors. Can't match the 2006 version for complexity or thrust, but the rich, building finish nonetheless shows good power for the year. At this point in our tasting, Mugnier noted that his 2007s resemble his 2000s, while the 2008s are more like the 2001s. | 91 Compare Price |
| 2007 Domaine Jacques Frederic Mugnier Chambolle Musigny Les Amoureuses (\$317) Bright medium red. High-toned aromas of sweet red fruits, mint and spices; the most detailed and delicate nose among the 2007s today. Wonderfully sweet without being exaggerated in any way, conveying lightly saline, soil-driven flavors of cherry, raspberry, minerals and flowers. Here the terroir speaks more loudly than the vintage. A 2007 of uncanny energy, finishing with fine-grained tannins and enticing lingering perfume. | 93 |
| 2007 Domaine Jacques Frederic Mugnier Musigny (\$508) Bright, deep red. Knockout aromas and flavors of black cherry, black raspberry, crushed stone and smoky minerality. Wonderfully deep, tangy and sweet, with a captivating creamy texture making this deceptively tastable today. Impressive today for its volume, and finishes very long, broad and classically dry, with substantial fine-grained tannins. As delicious as this is right now, its overall balance suggests it will reward a decade of aging. For his part, Mugnier says that virtually every vintage of his Musigny needs ten years in the bottle. | 93 Compare Price |
