



# Domaine de Bellene

## NICOLAS POTEL'S NEW BURGUNDY DOMAINE



### THE ORIGINS OF DOMAINE DE BELLENE

The new domaine was born in 2005, when some of the growers Nicolas Potel had been working with decided to stop their own production and proposed that he take over their vineyards. Nicolas saw this as the ideal opportunity to realize his long-held desire to control the entire production chain, from vineyard to market, in order to ensure the highest level of authenticity and quality.

In 2006, Nicolas acquired the Domaine, located on Faubourg Saint Nicolas in Beaune. Originally a Cistercian abbey built in the 16th century, the cellars and buildings are being renovated according to very strict environmental standards (following Canada's Haute Qualité Environnementale regulations). Nicolas takes environmental responsibility very seriously and it is being integrated into all aspects of the estate: buildings, vineyards, cellar work, energy conservation and generation, and packaging materials.

With a winemaking facility secured, it was time to equip it with all the tools needed to produce pure, expressive wines that respect the innate quality of the fruit: temperature-controlled, stainless steel tanks for fermentation; a gentle destemming machine; a vibrating sorting table; a pneumatic horizontal press for the reds and a stainless steel vertical basket press for the whites — all in a gravity-flow arrangement that eliminates the need for harsh pumping.

**THE FIRST HARVEST AT THE DOMAINE** was in 2007, which at that time comprised 13.85 hectares (34.2 acres) of vineyards from Santenay to Côtes de Nuits-Villages. In 2009, the Domaine acquired a small estate that had 4.5 hectares of beautiful vineyards in Nuits-Saint-Georges and Vosne-Romanée.

From the beginning, the Domaine vineyards were farmed according to organic principals, to preserve the unique soil structure and microbial life of each parcel. In 2009, they began to use draft horses to work certain vineyards, in order to have a gentler footprint and to reduce erosion and soil compaction. The Domaine now has two draft horses of their own, named Quezy D'Beauvais and Romeo du Moulin.

In 2010, three more parcels were acquired in Meursault Premier Cru, Beaune Villages and the excellent Beaune Premier Cru "Les Bressandes." This year also saw the beginning of some vineyard renewal work. A few of the oldest parcels were cleared and planted with cover crops to restore the soil before being replanted (the cover crops also provided natural forage for the draft horses!).

**AFTER FOUR YEARS OF WORK** to convert all of the vineyards to organic viticulture, the Domaine received certification in 2011. But, after the 2013 harvest, they voluntarily gave up this certification because of the leafhopper infestation. The only approved organic insecticide is very effective but not at all selective — it kills everything. During the 2013 harvest, they saw that the fruit was coming in without the desirable insect life (bees, ladybugs, earwigs). So they decided to switch to a synthetic insecticide that is highly selective and protects the good bugs, including the very important pollinators.

Another 1.5 hectares of vineyards were added in 2014, in Auxey-Duresses, Monthélie and Aloxe-Corton. These parcels are being revitalized to restore soil health, replace dead or diseased vines with the Domaine's own massal selections, and to establish a new, higher trellis system that will encourage better foilage for healthier vines and higher fruit quality.

# THE VINEYARDS AND WINES OF DOMAINE DE BELLENE

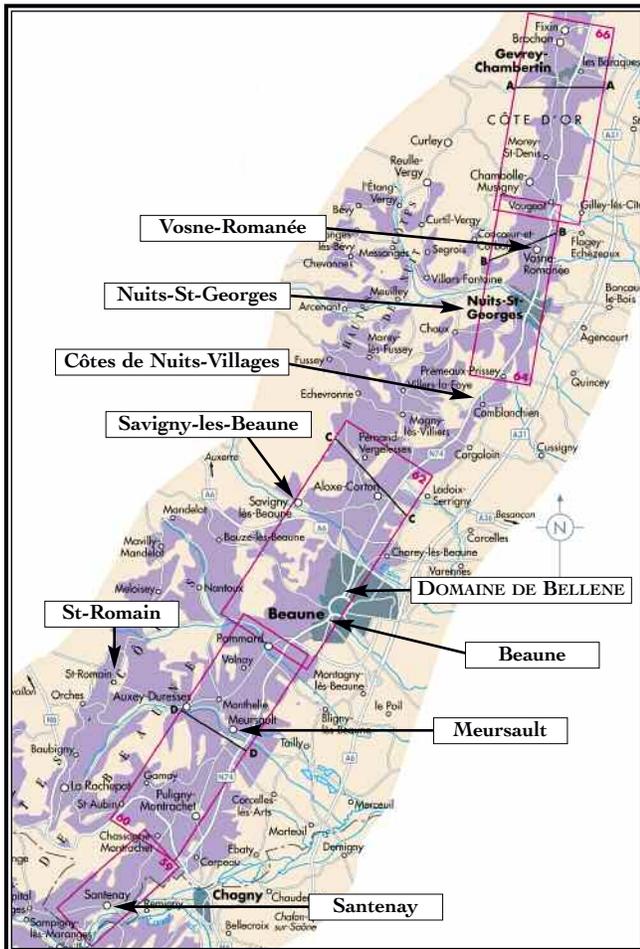
## THE VINEYARDS

Domaine de Bellene now owns 60 acres of vineyards throughout the Côte d'Or, from Santenay in the south, to Vosne-Romanée in the north. The focus is on *vieilles vignes* (old vines – 40 years or older) in distinctive terroirs. Newly acquired parcels of very old vines are being renewed and, in some cases, replanted by *sélection massale* — no clones are used.

### Appellations include:

- Saint-Romain, Vieilles Vignes
- Savigny-les-Beaune
- Santenay, Les Charmes Dessus
- Côte de Nuits Villages, Les Monts de Boncourt
- Meursault, Les Forges
- Côte de Nuits Villages, Vieilles Vignes
- Beaune 1er Cru, Cuvée Cinquantenaire
- Beaune 1er Cru, Les Grèves
- Nuits-Saint-Georges, Vieilles Vignes
- Nuits-Saint-Georges 1er Cru, Aux Chaignots
- Savigny-les-Beaune, Les Hauts Jarrons
- Savigny-les-Beaune 1er Cru, Les Peuillets
- Volnay 1er Cru, Les Grands Poisots
- Vosne-Romanée 1er Cru, Les Suchots

## THE CÔTE D'OR



*Nicolas Potel, an irrepresible Burgundy vigneron and raconteur, who is also the owner of Domaine de Bellene.*

## THE WINEMAKING

At harvest time, very careful and selective hand picking into small bins ensures that the best fruit reaches the winery in perfect condition. At the winery, a finer selection is done on the vibrating sorting table, which also removes insects, burst berries and any other unwanted material.

In the cellar, vinification is minimalist. Fermentation starts naturally, with indigenous yeasts. No enzymes, cultured yeasts or acid adjustments are used and filtration is avoided. Depending on the vintage, the Pinot Noir fruit is gently destemmed, but not crushed, and the whole berries are transferred to the fermenters by gravity. In most years, a few days of cold maceration are allowed before fermentation begins to extract color and natural enzymes from the skins.

During fermentation, no artificial light is allowed in order to minimize the loss of beneficial, light-sensitive compounds, such as resvératrol. Pump-overs of the must are also done with gravity, and *pigeage* is employed to gently break up the cap.

The Chardonnays are pressed in a manually operated, vertical basket press, which allows for long, gentle pressing over six to eight hours. This results in clear juice that does not need filtration. It also allows immediate oxidation of those compounds that are sensitive to oxygen, thus reducing the risk of premature oxidation of the finished wines and minimizing the need for sulfur. Gravity flow is then used once again to move the wines gently from the fermenters to the barrels.

NICOLAS POTEL'S GOAL AT DOMAINE DE BELLENE is to produce pure, characterful wines that are clear expressions of their classic Burgundy terroirs. And he wants to do this in a way that works with nature as much as possible, with minimal impact on the land and the environment.

*“What I am searching for is definition — definition of place.”*

— Nicolas Potel