

Wine & Spirits | 27th Annual BUYING GUIDE

SPECIAL ISSUE

Best Wines of the year

Top 100 Wineries of 2013



WINTER 2013

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Mounir Saouma &
Rotem Brakin

Founded: 1999
Owners/winemakers:
 Mounir Saouma & Rotem Brakin
Acres owned: None
Annual production: 2,500 cases
Known for: Artisanal premier and grand crus Burgundy sourced from top growers.
Importer: Vintus, Pleasantville, NY
Website: lucienlemoine.com



Pierre Vincent

Founded: 1999
Winemaker/viticulturist:
 Pierre Vincent
Acres owned: 95
Annual production: 6,000 cases
Estate grown: 100%
Owner: Boisset, La Famille des Grands Vins
Known for: Elegant Burgundy from a domaine focused on Vougeot.
Importer: Boisset Family Estates, Sausalito, CA
Website: domainedelavougeraie.com

Lucien Le Moine

LUCIEN LE MOINE IS A LEADER in Burgundy's growing micro-négociant movement—small houses that own little or no vineyard land and buy grapes or juice from the best growers they can find. Proprietor Mounir Saouma first learned about wine while working at a Trappist monastery in Israel. (Le Moine is French for “the monk”). Saouma and his wife, Rotem Brakin, operate this small winery together, focusing on premiers and grands crus and producing just one to three barrels (300 to 900 bottles) of each. As a négociant, Saouma can change his selection of crus based on which vineyards performed best in a given vintage. Getting this selection right is critical since, with such small quantities, he cannot rely on blending to smooth out anomalies.

Saouma lets his wines enjoy a long, slow *élevage* in a cool cellar. Late malolactic fermentations, which sometimes linger into the summer, produce natural carbon dioxide that protects the wines from oxidation and allows him to minimize the use of sulfur dioxide. Since he doesn't fine or filter his wines, carbon dioxide may remain in the bottle, something that Saouma encourages as a natural protectant; to dissipate the CO₂, he recommends decanting the wines before serving. Saouma keeps all of the crus on their lees until bottling, stirring gently but rarely racking. This gives the wines density and weight, something you can sense in the rich and powerful Puligny-Montrachet Folatières, with its golden fruit and spicy, honey-toned accents.

The structure and concentration of the 2010 vintage is on full display in Le Moine's reds. Vosne-Romanée Les Malconsorts is a burly wine with an unrelenting earthy intensity that still manages to show a rich and supple side. It will stand up to steak au poivre. The exuberantly powerful Charmes-Chambertin offers bold and spicy fruit framed by fine-grained tannins, with savory and smoky notes reminiscent of grilled venison. Youthful and energetic now, it needs another ten years to reach its peak. —S.J.



Domaine de la Vougeraie

JEAN-CLAUDE BOISSET FOUNDED A NEGOCIANT business in Burgundy in 1961, which has since grown into France's third-largest wine company, now managed by his son Jean-Charles. In 1999, Jean-Charles and sister Nathalie combined the family's Burgundy holdings across 27 appellations into one estate, naming it Domaine de la Vougeraie with a nod towards Vougeot, where more than a quarter of their vineyards lie.

Vougeraie is Burgundy's largest certified organic producer and has followed biodynamic practices since 2001, creating an “herborium” at the estate, where herbs are grown and dried for biodynamic treatments and infusions. Pierre Vincent manages a cellar with 31 temperature-controlled wooden vinification vats in sizes that correspond to each different plot. He typically destems the reds and cold soaks for around five days, aging the wines in barrels ranging from 30 to 50 percent new. He avoids fining the wines, with the goal of heightening the expression of each vineyard. Our highest-scoring wine, the Clos de Vougeot 2010, bursts with cherry and floral scents accented by notes of damp earth. It's packed with flavor that mirrors the nose and continues playing across the palate for minutes. This is a true grand cru wine, sourced primarily from plots near the top of Clos de Vougeot, and is best kept for another ten years.

One of the assets of the domaine is Le Clos Blanc de Vougeot, a triangle of chardonnay vines surrounded by reds. First planted to white varieties by Cistercian monks in 1110, this five-acre monopole is also one of the few vineyards to remain undivided after the French Revolution. The monks knew something, as these vines consistently produce an impressive white wine. The 2010 is a golden color, with ripe fruit aromas ranging from lemon to pineapple, held together by a tight structure that will keep it focused for several years. Vougeraie also owns a plot in Les Pierres Blanches, a *climat* perched on the slopes between Savigny-lès-Beaune and the Montagne de Beaune. Named for the white, calcareous slab stones that dot the vineyard, this is an airy, fresh white with orange citrus notes and creamy vanilla that finishes with a spark of tart acidity. —S.J.



TOP-SCORING WINES

- 95 '10 Charmes-Chambertin Grand Cru \$236 (4/13)
- 92 '10 Vosne-Romanée 1er Cru Les Malconsorts \$186 (4/13)
- 91 '10 Puligny-Montrachet 1er Cru Folatières \$148 (4/13)

TOP-SCORING WINES

- 95 '10 Clos de Vougeot Grand Cru \$200 (4/13)
- 90 '10 Côte de Beaune Les Pierres Blanches \$60 (4/13)
- 90 '10 Vougeot 1er Cru Le Clos Blanc de Vougeot \$150 (4/13)