

TASTING REPORTS

Burgundy's 2022 Surprise

Vintners adeptly managed the scorching 2022 vintage to deliver fresh and balanced whites



Philippe Colin made a number of outstanding white Burgundies from the classic-rated 2022 vintage, including the year's top-scoring bottling, a silky and harmonious version from the Chevalier-Montrachet *grand cru*. (Jon Wyand)

■ From the Oct 15, 2024, issue

The 2022 vintage for white Burgundy is among the best of the past decade, delivering excellent quality across the region. Although the summer was hot, there was ample rainfall in the spring and early summer, promoting good ripening. In the end, the quantity of yields was significant, adding to the year's good fortune.

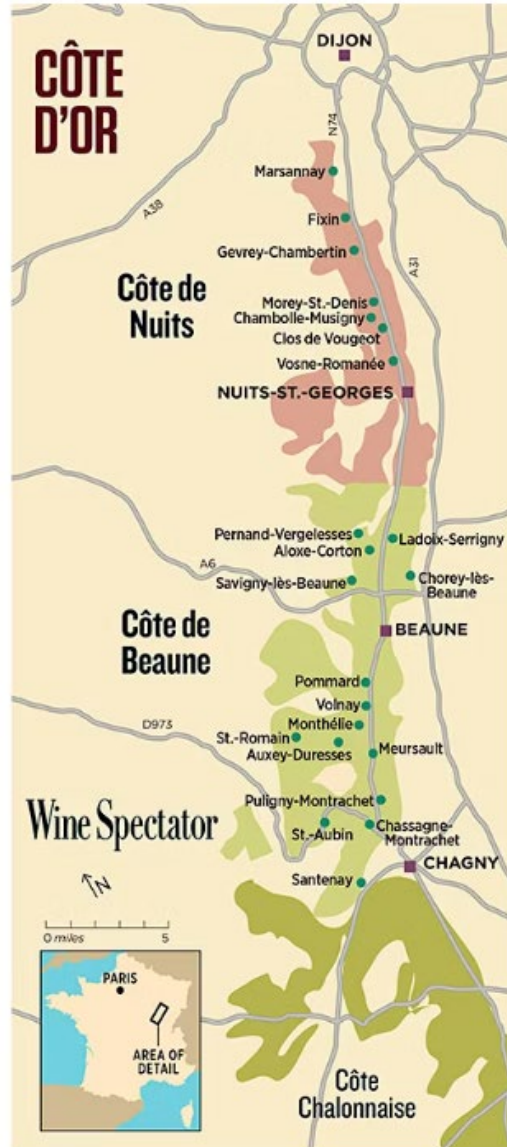
According to some vintners, the ripening of the **Chardonnay** vines was slowed during the heat of the summer, and this helped to preserve the acidity in the developing grapes. At the same time, rain at the end of June, as well as in mid-July and mid-August, kept the vines from drought stress. As has become the new normal in this era of warmer growing seasons, picking times were crucial to ensure that proper balance was achieved.

"The challenge of 2022 was to harvest at the right time, especially Chardonnay, to keep the acidity and balance," says **Domaine de la Vougeraie** general manager Sylvie Poillot. "If you waited too long, the grapes got too ripe, too heavy. With the whites, we know we are in Chassagne or Puligny, the *terroirs* are respected."

"The whites are a beautiful surprise," says **Bouchard Père & Fils** technical director Frédéric Weber. "It's similar to 2017, showing white flowers, beautiful acidity, balance and freshness." (I tasted the 2022s from both Vougeraie and Bouchard earlier this year **from barrel at the domaines**; samples of the finished wines did not arrive in time for this report.)

Overall, the 2022 vintage was hot and dry, making the rain in June—8 inches in the Côte d'Or and 6 inches in Chablis—crucial to ushering the vines through summer. Yet there was a slowing of photosynthesis—and, in some cases, blocked maturation—that allowed the sugars to keep accumulating while preserving acidity, according to Laurent Delaunay, whose family owns **négociant** Edouard Delaunay.

The flowering was perfect, leading to a normal yield. Dry, breezy conditions for two weeks before picking resulted in healthy grapes. Harvest started for most in August and was finished by the first week of September. During this recent period of hotter vintages and August harvests, many growers have commented on the resilience of the vines to adjust to the new climatic conditions.



Many of Burgundy's top Chardonnay sites are located within the Côte d'Or, between Dijon and Chagny. (Lisa Aurigemma)

Among the 2022 whites reviewed for this report, the ethereal **Philippe Colin Chevalier-Montrachet** (96 points, \$975) stands at the pinnacle, offering notes of lime blossoms, lemon curd, hazelnut and citronella aligned with an elegant frame. A pair of Corton-Charlemagnes also achieved classic ratings of 95 points or higher on *Wine Spectator's* 100-point scale: **Domaine Faiveley** (95, \$550) and **Pierre Meurgey** (95, \$541). The former leads off with a whiff of briny oyster shell, showing excellent harmony, finesse and length, while the latter shows both power and precision on a lush profile, evoking peach, orange Creamsicle, lemon oil and baking spices.

Louis Latour rounds out the classic-scoring 2022s with the creamy-textured **Montrachet** (95, \$1,290), which reveals grandeur with its flavors of peach, hazelnut and white flowers, and the opulent **Puligny-Montrachet Les Referts** (95, \$240), featuring peach, apple tart, lemon cake, praline, butterscotch and mineral notes.

“We find our whites to be fresh, well-structured and powerful—as powerful as the 2018s,” says Maison Louis Latour president Eléonore Latour. “We feel that they benefited from the maturity that a particularly hot summer brings while retaining the balance of acidity and ripeness that is the hallmark of great Burgundy vintages. The key for us was not to rush—we changed our plans last minute and delayed the start of harvest by one week, to Aug. 26. That extra week was pivotal in getting us to the maturity we were looking for. The grapes were pressed only after they had enough time to cool down, especially for the ones harvested later in the day, and we limited the aging time in our oak barrels to eight to 10 months to preserve the freshness and crispness of the vintage.”

The quality of the 2022 vintage is also on display from Chablis. Verging on creamy, **Christian Moreau Père & Fils' Chablis Les Clos** (94, \$134) turns more defined as its bracing acidity emerges. Billaud-Simon's expressive **Chablis Montée de Tonnerre** (94, \$97) offers a mix of peach, apple, lemon, oyster shell and fresh herbs.

According to Christian and Fabien Moreau, the 2022 vintage was the warmest ever in Chablis. "There was a good flowering and a hot, dry summer," Fabien recalls. "We had 6 inches of rain the second half of June and 0.6 to 0.8 inches in August. Harvest began on Aug. 29, with full maturity and concentration in the grapes."

These are the highlights from among the **more than 400 white Burgundies** I have reviewed in our New York office since my previous report ("**Burgundy's Elegant 2020s**," Oct. 15, 2023). The 2022s represent nearly 60 percent of the wines under review, while late-release 2021s and 2020s make up the bulk of the remainder (29 percent and 9 percent, respectively). Based on my tastings, I give the 2022 vintage an **overall rating of 95 points** and the 2021 vintage 93 points.



Eléonore Latour, president of Maison Louis Latour, credits much of the 2022 vintage's success to an extra week of vine ripening before harvest. (Jon Wyand)

Whites from the frost-damaged 2021 vintage are in short supply, with roughly half the number of wines reviewed compared with 2022 and one-third less than 2020. The top wines are dominated by two domaines: **Domaine Leflaive**, which fields five classic-scorers, including its **Bâtard-Montrachet** (96, \$1,863) and **Chevalier-Montrachet** (96, \$2,197), and Lucien Le Moine, with four bottlings reaching that rarified status, led by the **Chassagne-Montrachet Cailleret** (96, \$287).

A handful of other 2021s make their appearance on the leaderboard. Look for the intense **Champy Corton-Charlemagne** (95, \$290), the lush **Bouchard Père & Fils Montrachet Domaine** (95, \$1,500), the bracing **Domaine Clos de la Chapelle Corton-Charlemagne Cuvée Exceptionnelle** (95, \$345) and the powerful yet balanced **William Fèvre Chablis Les Clos Domaine** (95, \$250).

“The 2021 vintage was very complicated, because in addition to frost, **mildew** and powdery mildew pressure was very strong,” says Pierre Vincent, who vinified and aged both the 2021 and 2022 vintages at Domaine Leflaive (as well as at its Mâcon holdings, Domaines Leflaive). “It was absolutely necessary to carry out severe sorting in the vineyard and on the sorting table. I then separated the first juices and the press juices. The press juices were fined with bentonite to eliminate the risk of mushroom odor.”

This was markedly different from Vincent’s experience in 2022. “The 2022 vintage was much easier,” he says. “There was mildew pressure in the spring, but the beautiful summer saved us. In the end, the health status was very satisfactory. Above all, we had to be vigilant when choosing the harvest date. We started Aug. 25 in 2022—and Sept. 20 for the 2021 vintage.”

A handful of late-arriving 2020s are also included in this report. Notable among them are the *grands crus* of **Domaine Jean-Claude Ramonet**. The opulent **Montrachet 2020** (98, \$3,500) is almost like a red wine in white wine's clothing, revealing its pedigree and potential on the finish, while the **Bâtard-Montrachet 2020** (97, \$1,300) is distinctly floral, and the **Bienvenues-Bâtard-Montrachet 2020** (97, \$1,200) is all about elegance.



Winemaker Olivier Bailly delivered a lineup of impressive 2022s at Chablis standout Domaine Billaud-Simon, ranging from rich and round to vibrant and precise. (Jon Wyand)

With the best of the 2022s, '21s and '20s costing upward of \$250 and many *grands crus* clocking in at more than \$1,000, it seems that white Burgundy is now out of reach for many of its fans. There is some truth in that, yet there are several Burgundy domaines and négociant houses sufficiently concerned about both prices and supply that they have been looking for vineyards in more affordable appellations.

Joseph Drouhin, [Domaine Chanson](#) and [Domaine Jacques Prieur](#) have all purchased new vineyards to control their grape sources for reasonably priced white (and red) Burgundy. Additionally, with the high cost of purchasing grapes, Chanson and Bouchard Père & Fils in the Côte d'Or and [William Fèvre](#) in Chablis are phasing out their négociant activities.

Finally, the subsequent 2023 crop was large by recent Burgundy standards, even larger than 2022, which should exert downward pressure on prices—or at least stabilize them.

That said, Chablis in the north, Mâconnais and Côte Chalonnaise in the south and the regional appellations are all areas to search for value. Each of them offers the authentic character and flavor profiles of white Burgundy.

Chablis at its best delivers flinty, stony, mineral examples of Chardonnay, with steely backbones specific to the area's Kimmeridgian soils and northern climate. In warmer years, fleshier, more opulent versions can emerge. William Fèvre is a good starting point for textbook Chablis with its [Domaine 2022](#) (92, \$47), bursting with peach, apple, lemon and flint flavors. The [Patrick Piuze Chablis Terroir de Courgis 2022](#) (92, \$38) is fleshy yet with a whiff of the sea. [Billaud-Simon's Chablis 2022](#) (91, \$44) is clean and briny, while Albert Bichot's sleek and mineral [Chablis Domaine Long-Depaquit 2022](#) (90, \$30) shows fine intensity, and Christian Moreau Père & Fils' ripe [Chablis 2022](#) (90, \$42) offers a light tactile feel.

In the Côte Chalonnaise, Givry, Montagny and Mercurey are generally closest to the Côte de Beaune in style, whereas the whites from Rully tend to be more delicate and elegant, with floral and lemon flavors. For well-priced examples from across the region, seek out Jean-Marc Boillot's rich [Montagny 1er Cru 2022](#) (91, \$45), Louis Jadot's bright and balanced [Givry White 2021](#) (91, \$50) and Joseph Drouhin's vivid and chalky [Rully 2022](#) (90, \$45).

From the Mâconnais, there are two options: Pouilly-Fuissé, where the southernmost region of Burgundy reaches its quality pinnacle, and the rest of the region, where there are fine values to be found. Among several producers from the Côte d'Or that have become significant players in the Mâconnais, Domaines Leflaive is now one of the quality leaders, fielding seven outstanding Mâcon whites. Among the 18 labels under review in this report, nearly half are from the recently elevated Pouilly-Fuissé *premier cru* appellation. Although these tend to be higher-priced, there are value plays to be found, such as the **Louis Latour Pouilly-Fuissé Premier Cru 2022** (91, \$40). At the villages level, look for the **Domaine Frantz Chagnoleau Pouilly-Fuissé Pastoral 2022** (92, \$45) and the **Joseph Drouhin Pouilly-Fuissé 2022** (91, \$48).

Nearby St.-Véran tends to offer a richer style, with less tension than Pouilly-Fuissé. Excellent versions include **Joseph Drouhin's St.-Véran 2022** (91, \$30) and **Château Fuissé's St.-Véran 2022** (90, \$43). Elsewhere from the region, the **Albert Bichot Mâcon-Milly-Lamartine 2022** (90, \$28), **Jean-Marc Boillot Mâcon-Lugny Les Genièvres 2022** (90, \$35) and **Meurgey-Croses Mâcon-Uchizy 2022** (90, \$37) are outstanding examples from three of the 26 communes allowed to append their names within the Mâcon-Villages appellation. Two alluring Bourgognes round out this value section: **Philippe Colin's Bourgogne 2022** (90, \$40), and **Jean Pascal & Fils' Bourgogne Côte d'Or Les Riaux 2022** (90, \$36).

Although the high quality and large quantity of the 2022 vintage are both positives for white Burgundy lovers, the soaring cost of the best wines is a barrier to entry. Yet determined fans will be able to find a number of excellent whites at more reasonable prices, though not without some diligence. Don't delay, though, because any values are sure to disappear quickly.

Senior editor Bruce Sanderson is Wine Spectator's lead taster on white Burgundy.



Under managing director Brice de la Morandière, Domaine Leflaive's Mâcon venture, Domaines Leflaive, has become a powerhouse in the region. (Jon Wyand)

Bruce Sanderson's Recommended White Burgundies

More than 400 wines were tasted for this report. A [free alphabetical list](#) is available. WineSpectator.com members can access complete reviews for all wines tasted over the past year—including all [2021 and 2022 White Burgundies](#)—using the online [Wine Ratings search](#).

Top Wines

Albert Bichot

Mâcon-Milly-Lamartine 2022

Score: 90 | \$28

WS Review: A kiss of vanilla weaves throughout the peach, pear and floral flavors in this delicate, lively and charming white, showing lemon freshness.