



BY APPOINTMENT TO
HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN
WINE MERCHANTS
CORNEY & BARROW LIMITED
LONDON



BY APPOINTMENT TO
HRH THE PRINCE OF WALES
WINE MERCHANTS
CORNEY & BARROW LIMITED
LONDON

CORNEY & BARROW

INDEPENDENT WINE MERCHANTS

Established 1780



BONNEAU DU MARTRAY
2008 VINTAGE

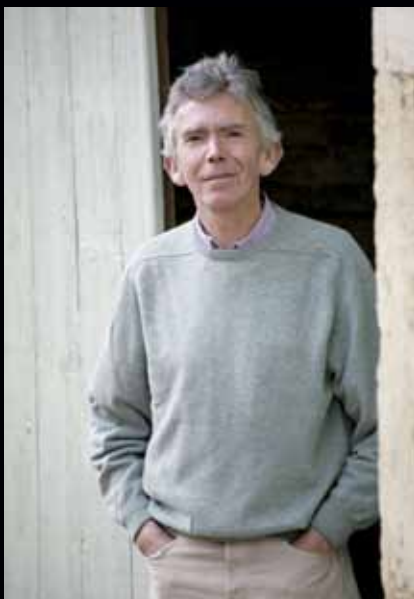
Introduction

To most, Domaine Bonneau du Martray is Corton-Charlemagne – one of the very greatest of all Grand Cru white Burgundies, synonymous with a style that combines an aching richness, length and concentration with an incomparable finesse and purity. Jean-Charles le Bault de la Morinière whose family is only the third set of owners in over twelve centuries calls his wine the product of light rather than heat – a consequence of the Domaine's unique aspect, facing west and south west, that formidably increases the influence of light on the vines, particularly in the afternoon and early evening, without running the risk of excessive heat.

It is the only other domaine in Burgundy, apart from Domaine de la Romanée-Conti and Clos de Tart to produce only Grand Cru wines with the further advantage of its vineyards being sited in a continuous block stretching between 'En Charlemagne', next to Pernand-Vergelesses, and 'Le Charlemagne', reaching towards Aloxe Corton.

The estate remains the single largest holding in Corton-Charlemagne at just 9.5 hectares, with a tiny 1.5 hectare parcel dedicated to Pinot Noir producing Grand Cru Corton of uniquely rich minerality. Corton-Charlemagne itself traces its roots back to the Emperor Charlemagne who gifted his vineyard to the Abbey of Saulieu in the year 775, precisely the same plot now owned by the le Bault de la Morinière family.

It is this dauntingly ancient tradition of stewardship that now rests so lightly on Jean-Charles le Bault de la Morinière since he took over the running of the Domaine in 1994. His engaging charm and languid demeanour mask an almost febrile attention to detail, a restless pursuit of perfection and an acknowledgement that same tradition relies on change, sometimes broad, sometimes finely tuned but always fluid. Domaine Bonneau du Martray has achieved a fundamental and even majestic quality that is now acknowledged throughout the winemaking world. This is today one of Burgundy's greatest wines.



“It is for its white wine, one of the greatest in all of Burgundy that this Domaine gains three stars.”

Clive Coates MW, *The Wines of Burgundy*,
2008 University of California Press



The hill of Corton showing the parcelled nature of the vineyard. Note the wood that circles the hill.

The Vineyards

The Domaine lies in one entire parcel at the heart of the Charlemagne *climat* and is the largest single holding at 11.09 hectares. The hill of Corton offers a layering of Jurassic soil over limestone and is one of the most famous and familiar landmarks in Burgundy described eloquently by Alexis Lichine as akin to ‘a well formed breast’. The Domaine’s holdings are categorised by 16 different parcels, each of which gives a particular quality to the wine. Those higher up the hill are of limestone, marl and clay and provide more elegant floral aspects to the wine (see photo). The mid section offers more full-bodied aspects and the lower plains of limestone and iron topsoil greater sweetness and alcohol. Each parcel is vinified separately.

The average age of the vines is very high – around 45 years – and yields are correspondingly low, as low as 32 hectolitres per hectare for the Corton-Charlemagne in 1995, though the average is 45hl/ha and around 30hl/ha for the red Corton (see the holdings). Herbicides and fertilisers are banned and yields, whilst naturally controlled by the age of the vines are further reduced by severe pruning in the early part of the growing season and *eclaircissage* (green pruning) when necessary in the final approach to the harvest itself.

The Domaine is highly unusual in its aspect, facing as it does west and southwest. This guarantees long, slow maturation of the grapes helped by the heat reflected off the distinctive white marl soil. Its elevated position on the hills allows for excellent drainage at the same time as allowing cold humid air to slide to the bottom of the slopes. The wood that circles the top of hill (see photo) protects the highest parcels from the cold of the plateau. It is this feature that perhaps more than any other influences the character of the wines and gives them both richness and supreme elegance.

Bonneau du Martray, 2008 Vintage

31.93 hectolitres/hectare. Or put more simply, it took the product of almost three vines to make just one bottle of Corton-Charlemagne 2008. The wine is extraordinary within or without the context of the vintage, and even at this embryonic stage, repays profoundly the very great investments in the vineyard that the Domaine has undertaken these last ten years. Jean-Charles le Bault de la Morinière is the driving force behind this.

In the past we have referred to Jean-Charles's febrile attention to detail and restless pursuit of perfection. Both qualities were of use throughout the growing season of 2008. For this was a rollercoaster of a vintage which had much good in it, as well as bad, but seemingly never in the right order. It was truly a *vigneron's* year in which opportunities – and difficulties – in viticulture had to be either maximised or finessed with intricate detail and patience. There were no short cuts in 2008; those who, for economic reasons, were forced to take them, (or lazy enough to try) will have only the mediocre to offer.

2008 Vintage Notes

A hint of the potential greatness of the vintage began in February after a moderate, mild winter with few frosts. As early as the 9th February, tiny buds were visible on the vine; almost a month and a half earlier than 2006 and 9 days earlier even than the precocious 2007. Early budding can lead to an early flowering which can lead to an early harvest and this is almost always a key to greatness. But not in 2008. There the path was more circuitous with April frankly dull and May alternating between cool mornings (good), warm afternoons (better), and storms (bad) towards the end of the month. Huge work on green pruning the vines was effected at this time and during the first two weeks of June.

Flowering was slower than normal, taking place from the 10–19th June in cool and frequently rainy conditions with both *coulure* (dropping off of the nascent berries) and *filage* (aborted fruit set). Literally double the amount of work was required in the vineyards with an extra 410 hours spent aerating the soil and controlling weed growth between the vines, all of it by hand, occasionally by horse. To put this figure into perspective, full winter pruning takes around 600 hours with secondary pruning some 400 hours.

July was variously cool (9°C/48°F) and classically hot (32°C/90°F) with the fattening and closing of the grape bunches obvious on the 13th July, a month later than 2007. *Véraison* (when grapes change colour) began on the 4th August in what was a muddled month; intermittently cool and humid, cloudy and hot – fine conditions for mildew but not necessarily for ripening.

Then, once again, a miraculous change as September coughed into sunny life, becoming progressively warmer and drier until quite glorious anti-cyclonic conditions prevailed allied to a fresh, clean, drying wind. The grapes gained sugars greedily, fattened and ripened and a small crop was harvested in splendid weather beginning on the 30th September and lasting just 6 days (compared to 11 days in 2007.) This was a massive tribute to the immense amount of work effected during the growing season and, more importantly, the spectacular health and ripeness of the grapes.

Interestingly, the red Corton was picked first as the team waited for the 16 different Corton-Charlemagne parcels to trip into maturity during 1-5th October. As interestingly, the 6% of deselection of the Corton berries after picking was more due to dehydration than any odd traces of rot, and was the result of hydric stress during that miraculous September. A yield of just 22.9 hl/hectare was the price to pay, hugely below the permitted Grand Cru yield in 2008 of 42 hl/hectare. The Corton was put to cask on the 4th October and the malolactic fermentation (the vital conversion of spiky, malic acids into softer, creamier lactic acids) was completed by the end of July 2009. As I write the wines are in the process of being racked (where the wines are drawn off the lees into fresh casks).

The Corton-Charlemagne completed harvesting on the 5th October at yields of 31.93 hl/hectare (authorised yield in 2008 was 48 hl/hectare) and was put to a cask for its primary fermentation which was completed at the end of December. Malolactic fermentations began slowly in January and were completed by May 2009. The 16 different lots were racked on the 26th and 27th August 2009 and they will now rest on their fine lees until bottling in spring 2010.

Allocation Process

It is now almost 16 years since Jean-Charles le Bault de la Morinière took over full time management of the Domaine. It is the story of maintenance of great tradition through a reliance on change and a restless pursuit of perfection in the vineyard, now culminating in the official adoption of biodynamics after many years of rigorous, detailed and obsessive trials.* It is therefore not altogether surprising that official, third party confirmation of the Domaine's supreme reputation should follow and that the UK customers, with our privileged position as the Domaine's representative, should be the principal beneficiaries.

Nevertheless, the quantities available are miniscule compared to the great growths of Bordeaux and our allocation is, monotonously perhaps, always oversold. We continue to do our best to ensure the wines are offered as evenly and fairly as we know how. In the interest of speed of response we will allocate on a daily basis as the orders come in.

Do please speak to your usual salesperson or any member of the sales team for further help and advice. The contact numbers are detailed on the back of this brochure.



Adam Brett-Smith
October 2009

*After a number of years of trials and detailed agronomic studies, the Domaine confirmed on the 18th June 2008 its formal commitment to Ecocert certification. This is the official body that governs and authenticates biodynamic cultivation. Full authentication will be confirmed in 2011, with the 2009 and 2010 vintages in 'conversion.'

Tasting Notes

Corton-Charlemagne 2008 Grand Cru

100% Chardonnay

Corney & Barrow Score 17–18 plus plus

White-green gold in colour. The nose is quite beautiful with creamy white fruits, lush and intricately rich, matched by a zesty, citrus perfume. The palate is eerily balanced with taut, pure, perfectly ripe sweet fruits, and an intense, focused, delectably contained richness and concentration to the finish. Concentrated and long, this is an outstanding achievement.

Recommended drinking from 2014 to 2017

£780/case of 12, in bond UK

Corton 2008 Grand Cru

100% Pinot Noir

Corney & Barrow Score 17–18

This is the tiny vineyard that has been the insider's secret since 1995, making terrific wine from ludicrously low yields (22.9 hectolitre/hectare in 2008). In danger of achieving cult status like its elder sister Corton-Charlemagne, the 2008 defies the context of the red wine vintage with a deep, consistent ruby colour to the rim and a lovely, plummy, earthy, almost root-like nose, profound and creamily fresh. The palate combines silky, pure Pinot Noir fruits with a grainily rich structure, supple, full and generous to the finish. Here is a wine that offers both richness and delicacy. Quite an achievement.

Recommended drinking from 2014 to 2020

£390/case of 6, in bond UK

Tasting Guide

Our tasting notes provide full details but, at your request, we have also introduced a clear and simple marking system. We hope these guidelines assist you in your selection.

14–16 A very good to excellent wine.

16–18 An excellent to outstanding wine.

18–20 An outstanding to legendary wine.

- *Wines are judged within their peer group.*
- *A definitive score of a young wine is almost always impossible. We usually offer a 'spread' (e.g. 14–16) which relates to the potential to achieve a higher mark. A 'plus' adds further to that potential.*
- *A score is a summary only. The devil is in the detail, so please focus on the tasting notes.*

The Holdings



Corton-Charlemagne Grand Cru

Grape Variety
Chardonnay

Vineyard Holding
9.5 Hectares (23.47 Acres)

Average Age of Vines
45 Years

Average Production
4,150 cases



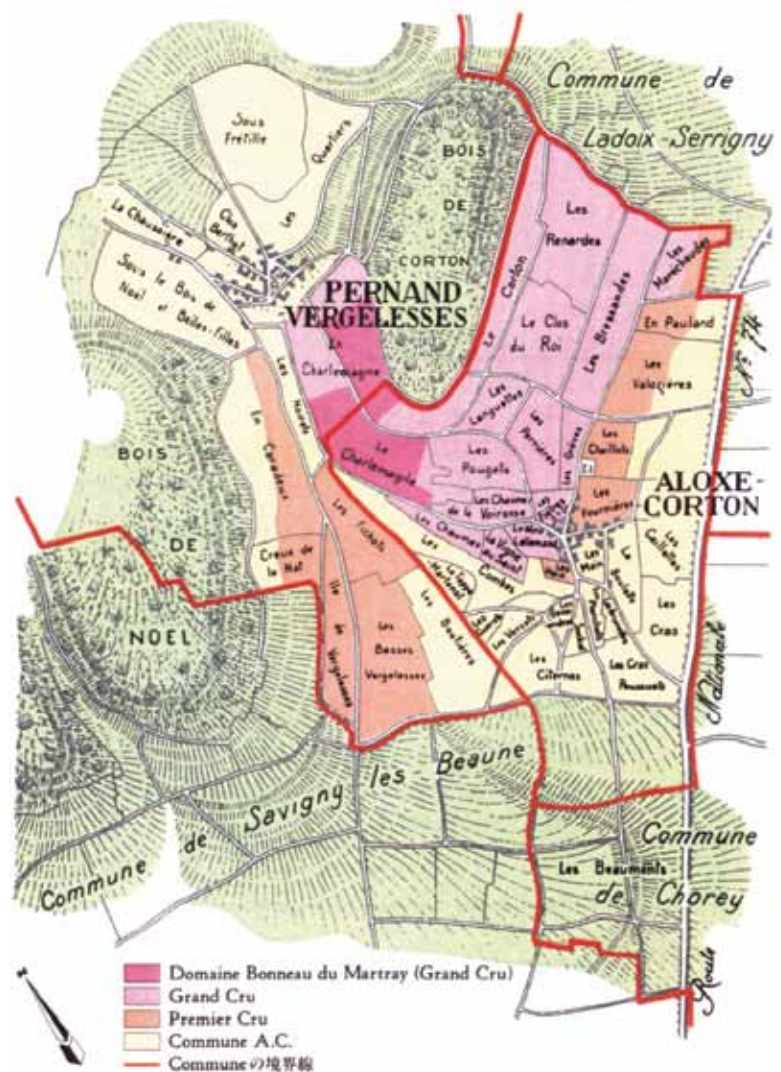
Corton Grand Cru

Grape Variety
Pinot Noir

Vineyard Holding
1.5 Hectares (3.71 Acres)

Average Age of Vines
45 Years

Average Production
590 cases



Map showing 'En Charlemagne' and 'Le Charlemeagne' vineyards

