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CORNEY & BARROW LIMITED
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HIS HIGHNESS THE PRINCE OF WALES
WINE MERCHANTS
CORNEY & BARROW LIMITED
LONDON

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INDEPENDENT WINE MERCHANTS-1780



DOMAINE LABRUYÈRE

2015 VINTAGE

EXCLUSIVE TO CORNEY & BARROW IN THE UK

DOMAINE LABRUYÈRE

This is a beautifully simple offer. Four wines, all from the same village and the same grape variety. The differences are almost entirely down to the personality of the vineyards.

Domaine Labruyère is the oldest estate in Moulin-à-Vent, dating back to 1850. It consists of 14 hectares of vines, all in the Moulin-à-Vent appellation. Geographically, this is Beaujolais, but stylistically it has more in common with its illustrious neighbours, Burgundy to the north and the Rhône to the south. As winemaker Nadine Gublin says, “I do not make Beaujolais. I make Moulin-à-Vent.”

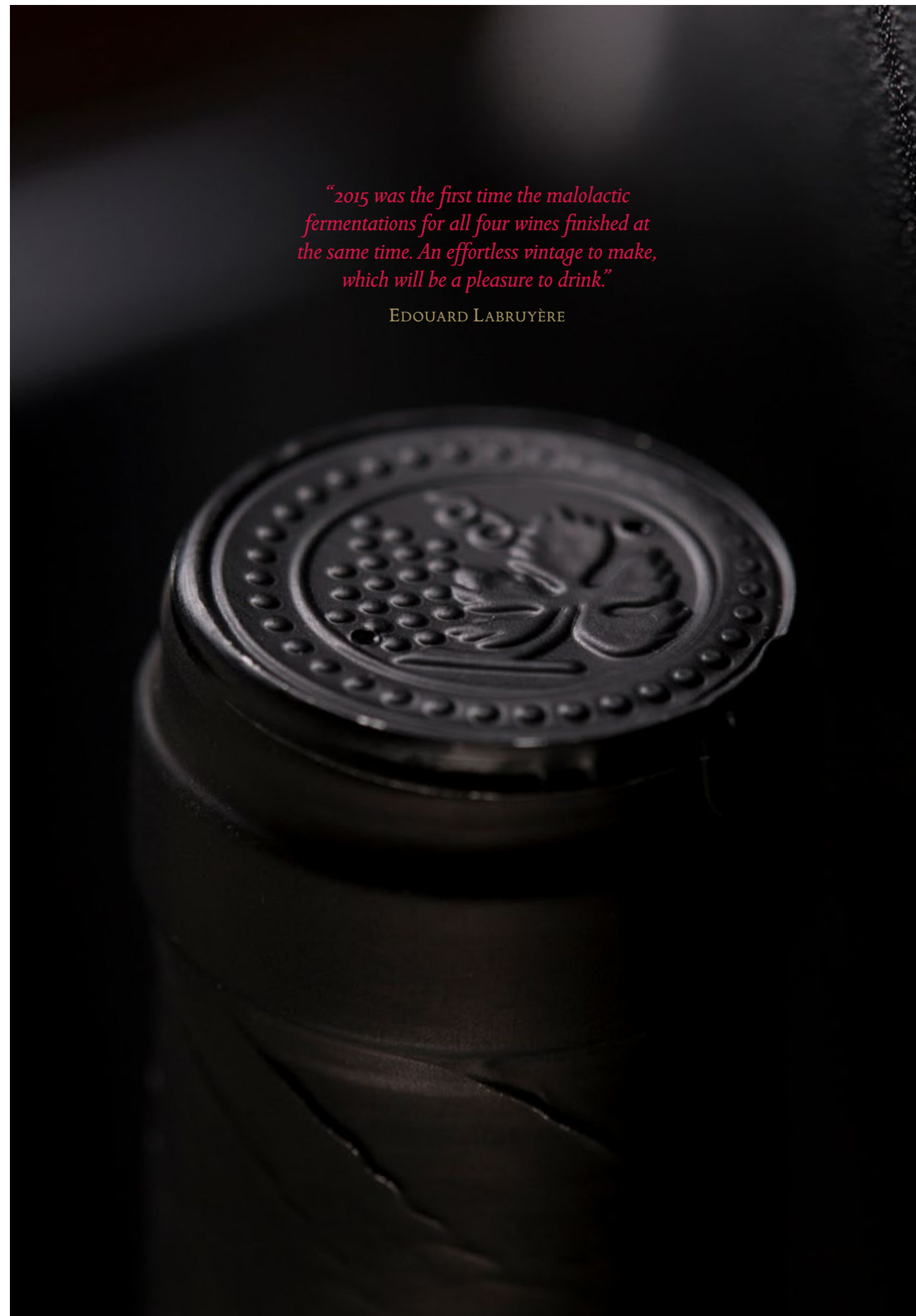
Corney & Barrow has represented Domaine Labruyère as exclusive UK agent since the 2013 vintage. Three years and counting, and we continue to feel rather pleased with ourselves. Clearly, the credit for the wines goes to the domaine – Edouard, Nadine, Michel and the team. But to blow our own trumpet, just for a moment... this is one of our most unexpectedly brilliant finds of recent years.



GUY SEDDON
January 2017

“2015 was the first time the malolactic fermentations for all four wines finished at the same time. An effortless vintage to make, which will be a pleasure to drink.”

EDOUARD LABRUYÈRE





THE DOMAINE

HISTORY

In 1850, Jean-Marie Labruyère bought ten hectares of vines around Les Thorins, a hamlet in the Romanèche-Thorins commune of the Saône-et-Loire department. 150 years later, the family acquired Le Clos du Moulin-à-Vent. It is the sole *monopole* in the region and lies beside the iconic windmill. This addition brought a fourth wine to the domaine's line-up.

Edouard Labruyère, who grew up at the estate, is the seventh generation to run it. Edouard took over in 2008 and together with winemaker Nadine Gublin and viticulturalist Michel Rovere, has continued to shepherd a domaine which is both a Moulin-à-Vent superstar and a shining example of just what the Gamay grape is capable of.

THE TEAM

Edouard Labruyère was born in 1976 at the domaine. Following a short period as a diplomat in Africa, he returned to the world of wine in 2003, working as a courtier in Bordeaux from 2003 until 2008. Edouard took over the family's wine interests in 2008, and in addition to Domaine Labruyère is now responsible for Domaine Jacques Prieur (Meursault), Château Rouget (Pomerol) and the nascent Champagne Labruyère.

Nadine Gublin has been head winemaker at Domaine Labruyère since 1988. She is a recipient of the Winemaker of the Year award from the *Revue de Vin de France*, the only French woman to have been so recognised. Nadine is also in charge of winemaking at the other Labruyère family properties and is a driving force behind the new Champagne Labruyère.

Michel Rovere is *Chef de Culture* and *Chef de Cave* at Domaine Labruyère. Born in Mâcon, Michel has lived all his life in Romanèche Thorins in the heart of Moulin-à-Vent. He joined Domaine Labruyère in 1984 at the age of 18 and has stayed with the family ever since.

THE VINEYARDS

	Hectares	Average age of vines
Coeur de Terroirs	10 ha	50 years
Champ de Cour	1.42 ha	50 years
Le Carquelin	1.75 ha	50 years
Le Clos du Moulin-à-Vent	0.92 ha	70 years

All vineyard work is done manually, with horses used for ploughing. Vines are spur-pruned and trained in the traditional *gobelet* style, which means cutting them back almost to the vine-head during the winter (making the vine look a little like a goblet). The vines are short, restricting yields. This also means the grapes are low to the ground, the reflected heat affording some protection from frost but the humidity bringing a risk of fungal disease.

There is no rush to harvest here, Michel Rovere being content to wait as long as it takes for sugar and phenolic maturity. Whilst the appellation permits 52 hectolitres per hectare (hl/ha), Domaine Labruyère’s yields fall between 22 and 35 hl/ha.

Edouard is very clear that he runs the domaine with future generations in mind. Viticulture is ‘sustainable,’ avoiding chemical treatments wherever possible, but without being certified organic. Edouard notes that under this regime, both bunches and berries have become smaller, giving a greater ratio of grape skins to juice, and therefore more tannic structure. Added to the limited yields, the result is wines of heightened texture and concentration.

THE CELLAR

Hand-picked Gamay grapes arrive in the cellar for a double sorting, to ensure optimum quality. The grapes were historically 100% destemmed, but Edouard and Nadine have lately added whole bunch fermentation to their repertoire, with Champ de Cour having been 100% whole bunch vinified since 2014. Le Clos has a deft 10% of whole bunches in 2015.

I suspect this past aversion to stems comes from a desire to distance the domaine from the method of carbonic maceration for which Beaujolais became infamous at the peak of the Beaujolais Nouveau fad. Whilst whole bunches are used in carbonic maceration, this is where the similarity ends. Nadine goes to pains to point out that the domaine has never used and will never use this winemaking style which is synonymous with light bodied, bubblegummy, early drinking wines. Indeed, Domaine Labruyère is the polar opposite of these things – the wines are deeply coloured with richly sculpted

palates and a decade and more of ageing potential. Rolls Royce rather than Rover. You get the idea.

Fermentation is temperature-controlled and the wines are matured in oak, with small amounts of new oak barrels – less than 5% for Coeur de Terroirs, a maximum of 10% for Champ de Cour and Le Carquelin. Le Clos is the only exclusively barrel-aged wine; its proportion of new oak varies with the vintage. The domaine has a growing number of 600 litre *demi-muids* (large oak vessels), with the second hand 228 litre *pièces* coming from Domaine Jacques Prieur in Burgundy. Winemaking is fairly reductive, with very limited racking employed. The wines are transferred to concrete vats pre-bottling.

Vineyards at Moulin-à-Vent



2015 VINTAGE NOTES

Whilst it was cool and rainy in the Côte d'Or on the last weekend of August, it was 45° C in Moulin-à-Vent!

“2015 is a vintage of power and richness.”

NADINE GUBLIN

Winter 2014-15 was mild and moist. Temperatures dropped in January, but frost was scarce. March was cool and dry. April was warmer, but with cool, damp interludes. The first green leaves appeared mid-month, following which the vines developed at a steady rate. May was warm, prompting fast vegetative growth.

Flowering was early, starting in the first days of June. Most sites saw flowers opening quickly, within a few days. Some rain aided development. June was extremely warm, causing poor fruit set in some plots. Grape ripening started in mid-July, with *véraison* (colour change) in Beaujolais experiencing similar complications to the Côte d'Or, caused by temperatures over 35°C for much of the month. Late July rain gave some relief, but drought pressure nonetheless remained, the once-plentiful soil water reserves all but spent.

A notable difference between the Côte d'Or and Beaujolais was that whilst it was cool and rainy in the Côte on the last weekend of August 2015 (29th – 30th), it was 45° C in Moulin-à-Vent, a hot southerly wind blowing from the south of France, which gave rise to, in Nadine's words, “an enormous rise in ripeness over the space of three days”. Incredibly, the drying effect of this weather system meant that 15-25% of the grape juice was lost during these last three days of the season.

Harvest started on 1st September, carried out by the domaine's habitual 30 pickers. With the exception of Champ de Cour, which as noted has a very distinctive soil and is whole bunch fermented, almost everything was destemmed. Aided by low levels of malic acid (but good tartaric acid), malolactic fermentation was completed by the end August, the first time all four wines finished at the same time.





THE WINES

Rather than getting straight into soil composition and planting density, it might be useful to ask a more basic question: *what are the differences between the four wines?* You might be thinking of buying all four, in which case we applaud you, but more likely you are trying to decide which of these wines is for you. Below, therefore, is a brief introduction to each wine, a little further (optional!) detail, and a tasting note.



COEUR DE TERROIRS, MOULIN-À-VENT

The basics: Coeur de Terroirs sits alone stylistically, as it is a blend of five parcels. Think of this as an expression of Moulin-à-Vent and the Gamay grape, rather than a product of a specific vineyard. It is the earliest drinking of the four wines.

The detail: These are granite soils, rich in manganese and quartz, with vines of 50 years, planted at a density of 10,000 vines per hectare. The grapes are 100% destemmed. Half the wine is matured in concrete vats, the other half in old oak 600 litre *demi-muids*.

Tasting note: A saturated ruby colour, followed by a beautiful pure red berry nose, dense and inviting. The palate is veritably singing, so ripe and supple, with resounding raspberry fruit – spherical! Darts of dark ferrous minerality and a seam of brininess from the mid-palate through to the finish. For the entry-level offering of the domaine, this is some wine.

Corney & Barrow Score 17.5 to 18
Recommended drinking window from 2019 - 2025+

£89.00/case of 6 bottles, in bond UK
£99.00/case of 3 magnums, in bond UK

CHAMP DE COUR, MOULIN-À-VENT

The basics: Champ de Cour is the only wine for which whole bunches are used. This entails fermenting entire grape clusters. The resulting wine has an attractively herbaceous, lifted style, sometimes described as ‘sappy’. The grape stems can also impart an exotic spice character. The reason whole bunch fermentation has been used here since 2014 is that these are deep, clay soils, which could result in an overly tannic wine without the softening influence of this technique.

The detail: This south-east facing 1.5 hectare site is split between five different owners, the domaine’s holding being at the southern extreme. The vines are 50 years old, planted at 10,000 vines per hectare on granitic soils, with pebbles under thick, dense clay. The wine is aged in large old oak, 600 litre *demi-muids*, for 15 months.

Tasting note: Assertive red berries on the nose, with an impressive intensity and yet a perfumed, tea leaf playfulness. Supple and malleable on the attack, with a tannic drive making itself felt on the mid-palate. The tannins are rigorous but wholly integrated, even at this early stage. Nadine admitted that the combination of high ripeness and natural yeast made whole bunch fermentation a challenge in 2015. However, she says the domaine’s yeast are noticeably stronger now than before and is very happy with the result. As are we!

Corney & Barrow Score 18
Recommended drinking window from 2020 - 2030+

£105.00/case of 6 bottles, in bond UK
£115.00/case of 3 magnums, in bond UK

LE CARQUELIN, MOULIN-À-VENT

The basics: Le Carquelin is one of the most cherished parcels in Moulin-à-Vent and sits together with Champ de Cour in the Labruyère hierarchy. For me, this is the one which looks most like Pinot Noir – when I mentioned this to Nicolas Mielly, of the domaine’s team, he agreed, saying he thought it was particularly similar to Vosne-Romanée. Elegance and finesse, certainly (and without the Vosne prices...) It has muscular tannins in youth however and so needs some time in the cellar.

The detail: There are only two producers of Le Carquelin, a 3.5 hectare site, half of which is owned by Domaine Labruyère. This is a south-facing slope, with 50 year old vines planted on friable granite (i.e. it looks like a mixture of granite and sand). When the appellation was created in 1936, this was considered a *premier cru*. Only 75 hectolitres were made in 2015, half of which was matured in barrel and half in 600 litre *demi-muid*. Around 6% new oak (only two new barrels having been used – Edouard would like to use none eventually). 100% destemmed.

Tasting note: Pronounced perfume on the nose, with some pepper and dark spices. On the palate, there is an immense and immediate sense of red fruit density, power and spice, before the ebullience rolls back to reveal a fine tannic texture. Beautifully lithe, ripe red berries persist on the finish. Nadine says, “I think in a blind tasting, Carquelin is more Châteauneuf-du-Pape than Moulin-à-Vent!” (I am not sure how that fits with my Pinot Noir comment above, other than to note that Gamay, Pinot and Grenache *do* share attributes, and geographically their homes are roughly equidistant...)

Corney & Barrow Score 17.5+
Recommended drinking window from 2020 - 2030+

£125.00/case of 6 bottles, in bond UK
£135.00/case of 3 magnums, in bond UK

LE CLOS DU MOULIN-À-VENT, MONOPOLE

The basics: Le Clos is the only *monopole* (vineyard in sole ownership) in Moulin-à-Vent. Look at any image of the iconic windmill and you will most likely also be looking at this plot. This is the pinnacle of the domaine’s wines: the most ageworthy, the most concentrated, made from the oldest vines. If Le Carquelin is somewhere between Pinot Noir and Grenache, Le Clos offers more than a nod to Syrah – Côte-Rôtie (or perhaps Cornas?) It is spicy and substantial, with strident tannins. This is the only wine to be aged entirely in barrels.

The detail: Le Clos is a south-facing walled vineyard, just under a hectare in size. Its vines are an average of 70 years old, some of them planted pre-phylloxera, *en foule* (untrellised), at a density of 13,000 vines per hectare. This is a unique, arid terroir of hard granite and sand, very rocky and with no topsoil at all. The wine is aged entirely in barrels, the proportion of new oak varying with the vintage conditions, with the remainder being one to two year old barrels from Domaine Jacques Prieur. Le Clos averaged 28-32 hl/ha in 2015. Around 10% whole bunches were used this year, taking advantage of the ripeness of the stems.

Tasting note: Purple-ruby in colour, dense and saturated. The nose is both spicy and velvety, with violets. The palate greets you with silky lush red berries, before swashbuckling grippy phenolic tannins assert themselves, in turn receding and allowing a suppleness of fruit to re-emerge. 2015 saw very small berries from this site – you can feel the influence of the grape skins in the boldness of the tannins. This has a relatively high proportion of three new oak barrels of the total eight (38%, to save you reaching for the calculator).

Corney & Barrow Score 18.5
Recommended drinking window from 2021 - 2033+

£175.00/case of 6 bottles, in bond UK
£190.00/case of 3 magnums, in bond UK

TO ORDER

Please call
020 7265 2430 (London)

or

01875 321 921 (Edinburgh)

Please email
sales@corneyandbarrow.com

Please Note: These wines are released *en primeur*.
Delivery dates to be confirmed. All prices are quoted 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.

Wines are scored out of 20. Customers seem to like it and it has the benefit of simplicity.

We will often use a range of scores (e.g. 16.5 to 17) to indicate the potential to achieve a higher mark. When a ‘+’ is shown it adds further to that potential. Wines

from lesser vintages will, inevitably, show a lower overall score.

Wines are judged, in a very broad sense, against their peers. Why? Well, you cannot easily compare a Ford with an Aston Martin, other than they are both cars and have wheels. It is not that different with wine.

A score is a summary only. The devil is in the detail, so please focus on the tasting notes and, as always, speak to our sales team.



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