



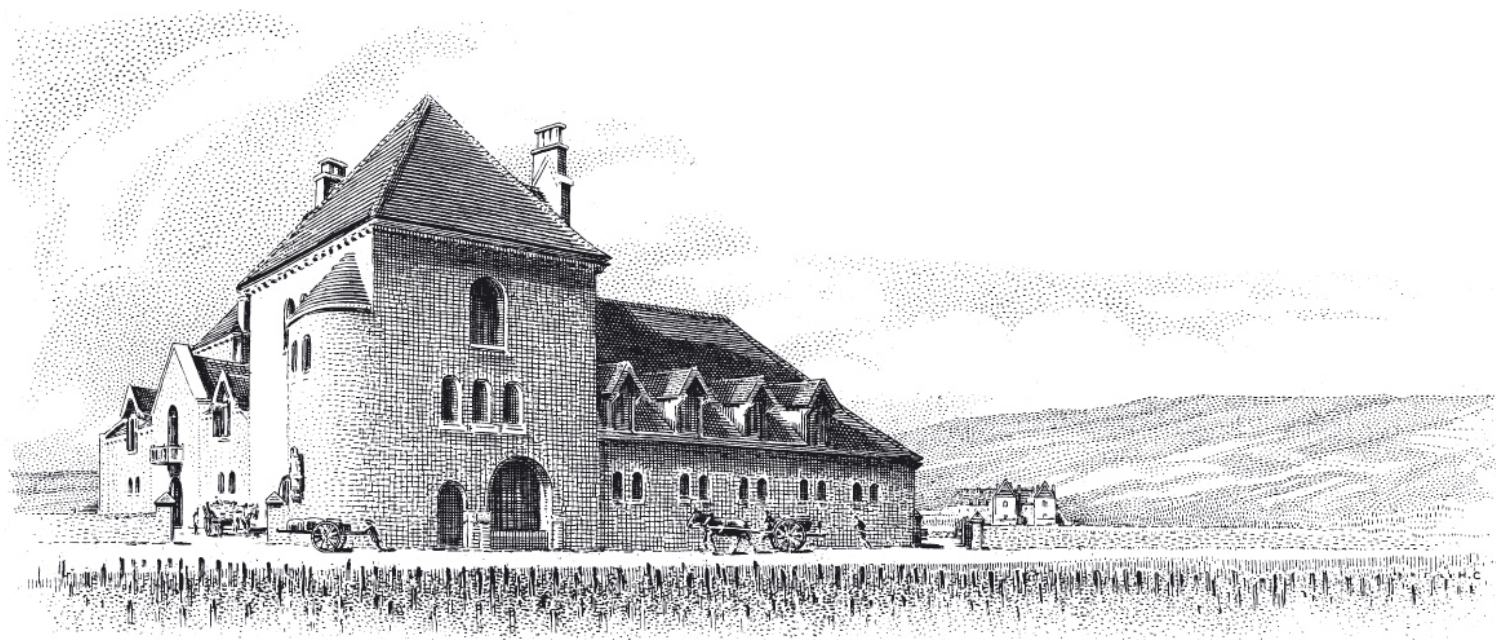
BY APPOINTMENT TO  
HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN  
WINE MERCHANTS  
CORNEY & BARROW LIMITED  
LONDON



BY APPOINTMENT TO  
HER MAJESTY THE PRINCE OF WALES  
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**CORNEY &  
BARROW**

INDEPENDENT WINE MERCHANTS-1780



# FRANÇOIS LABET'S

## CHÂTEAU DE LA TOUR & DOMAINE PIERRE LABET

2015 VINTAGE EN PRIMEUR

EXCLUSIVE TO CORNEY & BARROW IN THE UK AND SINGAPORE



J. LABET  
PROPRIÉTAIRE



VIEILLES VIGNES DE PLUS DE 100 ANS

# CHATEAU DE CLOS-VOUGREY

GRAND CRU

APPELLATION CLOS-VOUGREY  
RED BURGUNDY WINE - PRODUCT OF FRANCE

13.5 % BY VOL.

MAINE  
MISE DU  
DO  
RARA AVIS  
*Meursault*  
*Appellation Meursault Contrôlée*  
LES TILLET'S  
PIERRE LABET, PROPRIÉTAIRE À BEAUNE  
WHITE BURGUNDY WINE  
1.5L

*“I pray for a 2015 every year.”*

FRANÇOIS LABET



# FRANÇOIS LABET'S CHÂTEAU DE LA TOUR & DOMAINE PIERRE LABET

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Corney & Barrow's relationship with François Labet is now well into its second decade, making this first standalone release of his wines somewhat overdue...

We were first introduced to François by Jean-Charles le Bault de la Morinière of Bonneau du Martray. Since then, the standing of these twin domaines in the Burgundy firmament has surged, with journalists and wine drinkers alike now placing them in the upper echelons.

As well as being the driving force behind the two domaines in this offer, François has been president of the *Union des Grands Crus de Bourgogne* since 2015. He wears his distinguished position lightly however, chatting and charming his way around the tables at Corney & Barrow dinners and tastings. A magic touch with both vines and people has served him well.

François is assisted by the engaging (and equally charming) Claire Naigeon, who has an uncanny ability to turn visitors to the domaine into lifelong collectors. Theirs is one of the addresses we can send our customers to, safe in the knowledge that the combination of rather good wines and a stunning roof terrace overlooking the Clos de Vougeot is a winning formula.

In addition to Château de la Tour, which was passed down via his mother's family, François owns holdings in Beaune, Meursault and Gevrey-Chambertin. These wines are produced organically and bottled under the name of his father, Pierre Labet. Corney & Barrow is exclusive agent for both Château de la Tour and Domaine Pierre Labet in the United Kingdom and Singapore.





## 2015 VINTAGE NOTES

2015 was a year in which the fruit threatened to overwhelm the *terroir*, but ultimately the all-important sense of place shone through. These are beautifully sweet-fruited wines, with both depth and texture.

A mild winter followed a wet autumn 2014. Temperatures dropped in January, with very few days of frost in February. March was cool and dry. April's warmth was broken up by cool, damp periods. Green leaves appeared from mid-month, following which the vines developed steadily. The moisture brought mildew pressure however, requiring vineyard treatments and impacting yields.

The second week of May saw rapid vegetative growth, aided by spring warmth. Flowering was early, beginning in the final days of May and the first days of June. Flowers opened quickly, within a few days. Rapid development was brought on by some rain from the 10<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> June. The month of June ended as the warmest since 2003, causing some poor fruit set and further reducing volumes.

Grape ripening started in mid-July, with *véraison* (colour change) starting but then being halted by extreme heat, with much of the month over 35°C. Month-end saw very welcome rain, which partially assuaged the drought pressure. August was significantly cooler, literally a breath of fresh air, which allowed ripening to advance apace. *Véraison* was almost completed by mid-month.

Château de la Tour harvested from 11<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup>

September. Domaine Pierre Labet picked its whites from 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> September, with reds from the 10<sup>th</sup> onwards, the gap of a week between whites and reds indicating the care taken to preserve acidity in the whites.

All plots were picked under mercifully fine conditions, contributing to the admirable overall health of the grapes and meaning minimal sorting was required. Phenolic maturity was excellent, the thick grape skins, well-ventilated clusters and beautifully ripe stems being a godsend for François' trademark whole bunch vinification.

Due to high tannin levels, cautious extraction was the order of the day. Although tartaric acidity was good, the malic acidity was low, mostly due to the July heat, meaning malolactic fermentation was swift and uncomplicated. For the first time I can recall, all wines were ready to taste in September.



GUY SEDDON  
February 2017





*François tastes the 2015 Vieilles Vignes,  
puts his glass down, pauses for thought  
and volunteers, “That is also not bad.”*

GUY SEDDON



# CHÂTEAU DE LA TOUR

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Château de la Tour, established in 1890, is the largest proprietor of the Clos-Vougeot, owning some five and a half hectares of the total 50 designated *grand cru*. This family-owned domaine therefore accounts for around 11% of the appellation.

The vines are predominantly from two parcels close to the château building. There is another smaller holding (recently replanted so currently out of action) higher on the slope, bordering Les Echézeaux and two thin strips of vines running towards the road.

The Château de la Tour itself is one of only three buildings in the Clos-Vougeot. The domaine is owned by Jacqueline Labet and Nicole Déchelette, mother and aunt respectively of François Labet.

The vines have an average age of 67 years, with a one hectare plot planted in 1910 at their heart. The domaine has been organic since 1992. Yields are controlled by rubbing out every second bud, which gives a well aerated canopy, and which François and Cyril Beutot (*chef de culture*) – prefer to green harvesting.

Grape sorting with secateurs takes place once the grapes arrive from the vineyards, with whole bunches loaded into the fermentation vats and then cooled to around 6°C for a week. Fermentation starts spontaneously, following which a maximum temperature of 29°C is maintained.

Once fermentation ends, the wine is racked off immediately into barrel to avoid any astringency in these most robust of Pinot Noirs. Around 50% new oak is used for the Cuvée Classique and 100% for the Vieilles Vignes and Hommage.



CHÂTEAU DE LA TOUR



# THE WINES

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## CLOS-VOUGEOT, GRAND CRU CUVÉE CLASSIQUE

Opaque ruby in colour, this has intense red berries on the nose, with a little creamy density underscored by darker crushed rock and spiced notes. On the palate, it shows beautifully supple fruit on the attack, before rigorous, firm tannins come charging in, taking control of the mid-palate. This is the most red-fruited vintage I have tasted of the Cuvée Classique. It has a quite disarming immediacy and were it not for those tannins, it would be tempting to drink it right now!

Corney & Barrow Score 18+  
Recommended drinking from 2022 - 2032+

£1,195.00/case of 12 bottles, in bond UK  
£597.50/case of 6 bottles, in bond UK

## CLOS-VOUGEOT, GRAND CRU VIEILLES VIGNES

The beginning of a new phase this year, the 2015 'VV' is, in François' words, a "Vieilles Vignes of the Clos", rather than a selection from the 1910 plot alone. The domaine considers 70 years old to be the threshold for 'old vines', a definition which I can't see many taking issue with. The best fruit is now sourced by making a pass through the entirety of the two main parcels, picking a bunch here and another there.

Tighter and tauter than the Cuvée Classique. Again, this is more red-fruited than in some years, but there is a dense core of dark berries: a wine with a coiled spring at its core, biding its time before releasing its true potential. In an impeccable display of timing and understatement during our tasting, François put down his glass, paused for thought and volunteered: "That is also not bad."

Corney & Barrow Score 18.5  
Recommended drinking from 2024 - 2034+

£1,890.00/case of 12 bottles, in bond UK  
£945.00/case of 6 bottles, in bond UK



## CLOS-VOUGEOT, GRAND CRU VIEILLES VIGNES, HOMMAGE A JEAN MORIN

Making an appearance for only the fourth time since the inaugural 2010 vintage, this cuvee is made exclusively from the first bunches on the cane, the privileged recipients of the best of the vine's sap. So one bunch per vine, from the few vines deemed worthy. Or as François explains it, "a crazy idea I had in 2010". The tannins here resemble those of the Vieilles Vignes in their rather majestic density and poise, but have a delectable completeness and a supreme cohesion with the rich, layered Pinot fruit. Freshness permeates the palate, lifting and sustaining the concentrated flavours through to the long, lingering finish.

Corney & Barrow Score 19  
Recommended drinking from 2025 - 2035+

£2,295.00/case of 6 bottles, 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. You 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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# DOMAINE PIERRE LABET

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François Labet inherited this domaine from his father. Given his dual responsibility for Domaine Pierre Labet and the maternal Clos-Vougeot holdings, it made sense to vinify all wines in Château de la Tour's historic and expansive cellars.

The two domaines have very different requirements however, an important challenge of Domaine Pierre Labet being the geographical distance between its holdings. For this reason, François has had an operational base in Beaune since 2014. Another useful recent addition to the domaine's tool box is a lorry for transporting tractors. The seven-person vineyard team travels together as one unit. In addition there are two permanent cellar hands, with another two in busy periods.

100% whole bunches are used here, giving a lifted, sappy quality to the wines. No sulphur dioxide is used at harvest, François choosing to protect the grapes using carbon dioxide (dry ice) at the top of the vats. There is no racking after malolactic fermentation. The wines are left to settle in vat after pressing.

The white wines are given a brief period of lees contact following fermentation, but with no *bâtonnage* (lees stirring). Whites are given a light fining, whereas there is none for the reds. None of the wines are filtered.





# THE WINES

## BOURGOGNE ROUGE

First and foremost a delicious expression of Pinot Noir. François likes to stress that this wine is about the grape rather than the *terroir*. Wonderfully generous, supple, bright red berries. This comes from three different plots in Chorey-lès-Beaune, which has more clay than on the Côte, being located at the beginning of the plain. The best showing of this I can remember – a crowd pleaser.

Corney & Barrow Score 16.5  
Recommended drinking from 2018 - 2023

£225.00/case of 12 bottles, in bond UK

## BEAUNE CLOS DU DESSUS DES MARCONNETS

Dark fruits on the nose, with a certain brininess and salinity. Then a supple palate of bright red berries. The salinity returns on the finish, with a dark twist. François’ Beaune wines continue to offer outstanding value. The appellation may not be sexy... but that is exactly why this is a gem.

Corney & Barrow Score 17+  
Recommended drinking from 2019 - 2025

£350.00/case of 12 bottles, in bond UK

## BEAUNE 1ER CRU COUCHERIAS

My above comments on Beaune apply equally here, but we are stepping up a division to *premier cru*. There is more complexity here, with a fine minerality and a more rigorous tannic chassis. Lots of *matière* (substance, or maybe ‘presence’), balanced by a beautifully enveloping acidity. Higher toned too, with a touch of brine, balanced by rather lush fruit sweetness on the finish.

Corney & Barrow Score 17.5  
Recommended drinking from 2019 - 2025

£450.00/case of 12 bottles, in bond UK

## GEVREY-CHAMBERTIN VIEILLES VIGNES

Having agreed on the excellent value of the Beaune reds, François contradicted himself with a twinkle in the eye, acknowledging my praise of this Gevrey with “well, it’s a Côte de Nuits!” Hauntingly pretty perfume, leading into a supple and juicy body, with a lifted sappiness (the trademark Labet whole bunches...). There is half the amount in 2015 than in 2014, so do yourselves a favour and buy this now!

Corney & Barrow Score 17.5+  
Recommended drinking from 2020 - 2025+

£475.00/case of 12 bottles, in bond UK

## BOURGOGNE CHARDONNAY VIEILLES VIGNES

“It’s easy to make whites, you just focus on the acids”, according to Monsieur Labet. Well it seems to work. Stone fruit, with a hint of tropical, a dash of grapefruit and that all-important acidic backbone. A more flamboyant incarnation than in some vintages perhaps, but I think we can allow ourselves a little decadence.

Corney & Barrow Score 16  
Recommended drinking from 2017 - 2020

£225.00/case of 12 bottles, in bond UK

## BEAUNE BLANC CLOS DU DESSUS DES MARCONNETS

As the name suggests, this lies above Les Marconnets, on the border with Savigny and at the beginning of the wooded Montagne de Beaune. There is something excitingly candied here, a touch of sherbet. A whiff of freshly baked pastry and a breadly density from a little extended lees contact. Verve, energy and body are the hallmarks of this wine. This will hit the ground running.

Corney & Barrow Score 16.5  
Recommended drinking from 2017 - 2021+

£350.00/case of 12 bottles, in bond UK

## SAVIGNY-VERGELESSES 1ER CRU

‘Energy’ seems to be a theme in my notes on the Labet white wines. Energy and minerality could be the strapline of this wine. Chalkiness and an overriding sense of *terroir* complement the cool citrus and white peach flavours. Nothing was rushed here: having been picked in early September 2015, this was still fermenting in July 2016, bubbling contentedly away a full ten months later!

Corney & Barrow Score 17.5  
Recommended drinking from 2018 - 2023

£450.00/case of 12 bottles, in bond UK

## MEURSAULT LES TILLET

A rich wine, unashamedly Meursault. There is no over-ripeness however – this is simply a well-endowed wine, if you will. In François’ words it is “like eating a very good fruit candy”. I think I know what he means – extrovert and *gourmand*, as they say round here. The 2012 and 2013 vintages of this wine are beginning to drink really well now. I would expect the 2015 to develop on a similar timeline, although there is more density here than in either of those vintages.

Corney & Barrow Score 17.5+  
Recommended drinking from 2018 - 2023

£475.00/case of 12 bottles, in bond UK

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## A DINNER WITH FRANÇOIS LABET ON TUESDAY 28<sup>TH</sup> MARCH

We are extremely excited to welcome François Labet to London to host a dinner at which we will taste a range of wines from both estates.

Time: 6:30pm (sit down for 7:15pm)  
Venue: The Stafford Hotel, 16-18 St James’s Place, London, SW1A 1NJ  
Tickets: £195

To book spaces email [sales@corneyandbarrow.com](mailto:sales@corneyandbarrow.com)





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