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LONDON



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HIS MAJESTY THE PRINCE OF WALES
WINE MERCHANTS
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INDEPENDENT WINE MERCHANTS-1780

Clos de Tart

CLOS DE TART

2015 VINTAGE EN PRIMEUR

EXCLUSIVE TO CORNEY & BARROW IN THE UK



“2015 is an exceptional vintage: though rich and intense, the 2015 Clos de Tart charms your palate with its freshness and silky tannins.”

JACQUES DEVAUGES

Régisseur, April 2017



INTRODUCTION

Jules Lavalley's 1855 *Plan Topographique* of the Côte d'Or became a cornerstone of the 1936 classification. It singled out one *Tête de Cuvée* vineyard in Morey-Saint-Denis: Clos de Tart.

Walk through the heavy wooden doors from the street and you will find yourself in a reassuringly solid cobbled courtyard. Above the finely pointed masonry, rows of vines stand like sentinels. You then realise that all of these vines belong to Clos de Tart, a novel experience in a region where domaine buildings and vines are often separated by many kilometres. To your left is Bonnes-Mares, to your right Clos des Lambrays, but sloping upwards centre-stage are the 7.53 hectares of the Clos, imposing and majestic.

The walled vineyard of Clos de Tart is one of five *grands crus* within Morey-Saint-Denis and, the entirety being in

sole ownership, the village's only *grand cru monopole*. Indeed, there are only seven *grands crus monopole* in France, five of which are in Burgundy. (The others are Romanée-Conti, La Tâche, La Romanée and La Grande Rue.)

Clos de Tart is owned by the Mommessin family and, between the 1996 and 2014 vintages, was corralled towards its current magnificence by *ex-régisseur* Sylvain Pitiot. Sylvain retired in September 2015, handing over the reins to our friend Jacques Devaiges, previously of Domaine de l'Arlet and before that Domaine de la Vougeraie. 2015 is Jacques' first solo vintage. What a year to begin!



HISTORY

Clos de Tart has seen only two changes of ownership since the 12th century.

The French revolution brought about the first and the second took place against the backdrop of the depression of the 1930s. Originally called La Forge, the vineyard we now know as Clos de Tart was acquired in 1141 by the nuns of Nôtre Dame de Tart. The perimeter wall was likely built in the 15th century.

6 After six centuries of church ownership, the aftermath of the revolution of 1789 saw the vineyard acquired uncontested in 1791, in what must be one of the most significant auctions in the history of wine. The purchaser was local wine merchant Nicolas-Joseph Marey, who at the same time bought the whole of Romanée-Saint-Vivant. The entire Chambertin vineyard was also sold at the same auction.

Fast forward 150 years and the Marey-Monge family, as it was called by that time, sold Clos de Tart to today's owners, the Mommessin family. The sale price, at auction in 1932, was 400,000 francs. The Mommessins had established a successful *négociant* house in Mâcon (which was eventually sold to Boisset in the 1990s).

Following the establishment of the appellation *contrôlée* system in 1936, Clos de Tart received the region's top classification in the *grand cru* decree of 1939, at which point the brick wall was extended to include some adjoining vines. In 1965-6, an additional 0.278 hectares was added to the domaine from Bonnes-Mares which, despite lying in the neighbouring appellation, fell within the walls of the Clos.



“...the wines are some of the very best expressions of red Burgundy, up there with DRC and Leroy.”

JAMIE GOODE
on Clos de Tart, wineanorak.com

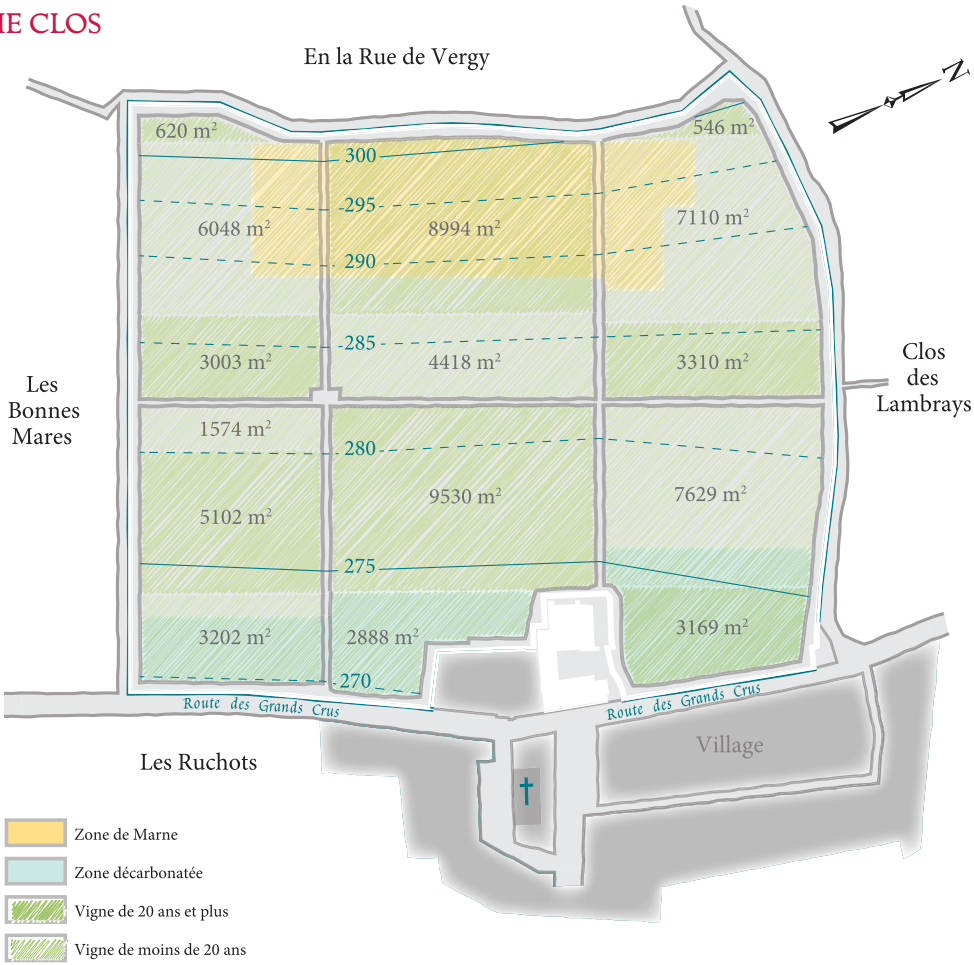
THE VINEYARD

As Andrew Jefford put it, Clos de Tart lies “at the centre of the greatest strip of land for Pinot Noir on the planet.”

Although this is one contiguous vineyard, the soil composition is sufficiently intricate to warrant vinifying eight separate cuvées, from no fewer than 15 different plots. These are blended around a month before bottling. Whilst the short version is that the soils of Clos de Tart are clay-limestone – indeed you could say this about most of the Côte d’Or – the longer version is that there are three distinct geological ages present at the Clos.

The first soil type is *calcaires à entroques*, a loose limestone composition which contains fossilised marine animals. Second is white marl (lime-rich mud to you and me), a deep layer of which runs through the mid-slope section of Clos de Tart. Finally, there is a layer of very hard, compacted Premeaux limestone. Based on these soil types and the varying aspects and vine ages, the following cuvées are vinified.

A MAP OF THE CLOS



Cuvée 1: This comprises two parcels, planted with vines of 60 years and older. One parcel lies at the bottom of the slope, next to Clos des Lambrays; the other is in the centre of the vineyard. This tends to give complex, concentrated wines, with particularly fine tannins.

Cuvée 2: This is made from two plots, the larger of which is in the south-eastern corner of the Clos, adjacent to Bonnes-Mares. This gives dark fruited wines, with rigorous, swashbuckling tannins.

Cuvée 3: The north-western corner of the Clos, which is currently fallow. There is no cuvée 3 at present.

Cuvée 4: This is a large area in the south-western corner of the vineyard – the top-left extreme, if you imagine looking up at the slope from the domaine. This plot contains all three geological ages of Clos de Tart (see above).

Cuvée 5: Three parcels, high on the slope, go into this cuvée. The soil here is white marl only, with no limestone, giving wines of crisp acidity and beautiful immediacy which nonetheless perhaps lack the refinement found in the lower parcels.

Cuvée 6: Geographically, this is the heart of the vineyard, two long strips of vines running almost the length of the Clos. This is the start of the white marl, at mid-slope. These plots contain 30 year old vines. Jacques declared this “the most powerful of the parcels.”

Cuvée 7: This comprises two small plots, one mid-slope and one on the upper slope, which house the domaine’s young vines. These were planted in 2005, 2007 and 2011, and provide the fruit for Forge de Tart in the years when it is made, such as in 2014. In 2015, these vines produced such high-quality fruit, it was chosen to include cuvée 7 in Clos de Tart itself.

Cuvée 8: These are the vines lying immediately above the domaine’s courtyard. There is no active limestone at this lower-slope level (active limestone being limestone which can be absorbed by vine roots). Planted with 60 year-old vines, this has a pretty, perfumed red fruit character.

The detailed soil mapping project Jacques undertook at Domaine de l’Arlot has clearly served him well for Clos de Tart’s patchwork of *terroirs*.

Unusually, the vines are planted in a north-south direction, perpendicular to the slope rather than up and down. Other than altering the sun exposure (which was key in 2015), the principal benefit is that this protects against erosion. The average vine age is 60 years, with some plots containing vines of up to 100 years. The domaine has a nursery which provides new vines when replanting is necessary.

Planting density is high: 11,000 plants per hectare on average, with the younger vines being planted at 12,500. The ensuing competition for nutrients results in a natural brake on vigour, encouraging the roots to delve deeper. The Clos practises *lutte intégrée* viticulture, meaning it is essentially organic, but without having sought certification. Only the five best bunches per vine are retained during green harvesting in August.

Production tends to be 23 to 30 hectolitres per hectare (hl/ha), although 2015 has breached the lower limit by coming in at 22 hl/ha. During his time at the Clos, Sylvain Pitiot favoured later harvesting. “Clos de Tart is Clos de *tard*” became something of a motto for him. Interestingly, Jacques Devaiges started to harvest on 5th September 2015, making Clos de Tart the first domaine to pick in Morey-Saint-Denis. This was due to the warmth of the 2015 season rather than a stylistic change however. In any case, Clos de Tart was not Clos de *tard* in 2015.

* ...not counting Forge de Tart, the second wine, which has not been made in 2015.

THE CELLAR

Compared to the domaine's intricately analytical approach to viticulture, the winemaking process is rather simple. Natural yeasts are relied upon. Some whole bunches are used, with the proportion varying in accordance with the vintage conditions. A relatively high 40% of whole bunches was used in the ripe 2015.

Jacques gave the berries one week of pre-fermentation maceration ("but not cold, as this marks the wines..."), with fermentation taking another week, and a further week of post-fermentation maceration. Extraction is very gentle: Jacques uses the word 'infusion' to highlight the delicacy

of this process. The 2015 Clos de Tart received only three *pigeages* (punch-downs) during these three weeks and a little careful *remontage* (pumping over) to aerate the grape must.

The individual cuvées are aged separately for 19 months in 228 litre French oak barrels, 80% of which were new in 2015, with the remaining 20% being one year old. Blending takes place one month before bottling, which this year is scheduled for the 18th-21st April 2017. These dates were chosen as being particularly favourable in the lunar calendar (as well as falling post-Easter break!) Bottling is still done by hand.

THE 2015 VINTAGE

"Drink wine. This is life eternal. Be happy for this moment. This moment is your life."

OMAR KHAYYÁM, Persian poet and mathematician, 1048-1122

2015 will perhaps prove to be Clos de Tart's greatest vintage of the past decade. It also showed that Clos de Tart is not always Clos de *tard*. Other than the scorching 2003 and more surprisingly, 2007, this was the earliest vintage of the past two decades. Crucially however, in the words of Jacques Devaues, "the vines did not suffer from drought". The reasons for this are set out below.

January and February were cold, but saw very little frost. A cool, dry March was followed by a warmer April, contributing to an early budburst. Budburst in the Clos normally happens around 13th April, but in 2015 it started on the 8th.

The second week of May saw rapid vegetative growth, aided by spring warmth and high luminosity. Flowering was early, taking place here between 3rd and 5th June.

The month of June was the warmest since 2003. Taken together, June, July and August saw temperatures 1.8 °C above average, with rainfall 35% below average. Episodes of night-time temperatures over 20 °C meant this period qualified as a *canicule* (heatwave).

However, as noted, Clos de Tart averted water stress. Jacques points to two main reasons for this:

1. The Clos' vines run north-south, perpendicular to the slope. As noted in the 'Vineyard' section above, this is unusual in Burgundy. The consequent shady protection from the sun meant that '*échaudage*' (burning) was avoided.

2. Clos de Tart (among others) had 75 millimetres of

water in August, which staved off the hydric stress that impacted the 2005 vintage here. Jacques candidly called this rain "a miracle".

Taken together, Jacques believes that these two factors "probably explain why the tannins are so charming and voluptuously silky".

A forceful north wind in September made the temperatures drop, but it remained sunny. Perfect picking conditions (described by Jacques as "serene and joyful"). Clos de Tart harvested from 5th to 8th September, the first domaine in Morey-Saint-Denis to pick. By the time of the heavy rains of 16th to 17th September, the Clos' berries were safely in their vats.

The bunches were very healthy and glistened with "that beautiful dark blue hue of fully-ripened Pinot". The grapes were small and the skins thick. The yield was a paltry 22 hectolitres per hectare: one of the smallest crops of the last decade.

These last 15 years, the perception of Clos de Tart has perhaps lagged behind the reality. With the 2015 vintage, finally, it must be clear that this is one of the greatest red wine estates in Burgundy.

GUY SEDDON
April 2017



TASTING NOTE

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CLOS DE TART, GRAND CRU MONOPOLE 2015

After tasting the constituent cuvées, it is rather magical how much more complete the assembled blend is. Soaring perfume on the nose – crushed rose petals – detailed by a ferrous, saline aspect. On the palate, a core of dense, dark berries is offset by sweeter red fruit, with ripe red cherry around the edges. As Jacques remarked, “One doesn’t notice, but there is an enormous concentration – on *reste sur les fruits croquantes*.” This crunchiness of fruit is key to this wine – it *dances*, disguising its weight and power behind a façade of delicacy. Could you drink this young? Certainly, but you would be missing several fascinating layers of nuance which need time to reveal themselves.

Corney & Barrow Score 18.5+
Recommended drinking from 2022 - 2040

£1,750/case of 6 bottles, in bond UK
£1,760/case of 3 magnums, in bond UK
£1,350/case of 1 jeroboam, in bond UK



ALLOCATION PROCESS

To order, please use the form provided or call 020 7265 2430 (London) or 01875 321 921 (Edinburgh). Please bear in mind that:

1. Clos de Tart’s and Corney & Barrow’s focus is on the private customer as a consumer, rather than as a speculator.
2. Clos de Tart is bought on the clear understanding that it will be stored and delivered in the UK only.
3. Should you wish to sell the wine in the future, do please offer Corney & Barrow first refusal.
4. Priority will be given to Clos de Tart’s and Corney & Barrow’s best, most loyal and most regular customers.

May we please have your order by Friday 21st April 2017. Confirmation of your order will be through receipt of invoice and the wines will be put into your reserves on payment. All orders are conditional upon UK storage only. Do please speak to our sales team, who will be delighted to help you further.

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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 (eg 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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