

Selections



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Beautiful 2006 Burgundies from Domaine Dublère

One of Arthur's Cellar Wine Club members recommended an outstanding winery he had discovered during a recent visit to Burgundy. Knowing he had a nose (palate?) for excellent wine and after doing a bit of research (glowing reviews from Robert Parker and many others), we got in touch with Blair Pethel, the owner of the winery in question – Domaine Dublère. After a few conversations it became clear that there was an excellent fit and thus we are very pleased to introduce you to the beautiful Burgundies from Domaine Dublère.

First, a bit about Blair ... he is not your ordinary old world vintner; in fact, he's not your ordinary anything. Blair was raised in Greensboro, North Carolina where his father was a minister and played the church organ and his mother was a social worker. He gave college a shot but decided that acting was more his thing. He was in the road production of 'Equus' and then spent some time in California doing bit parts. He returned to Greensboro where he worked as a carpenter and then in a fast food restaurant. Then he somehow landed a job as a copy boy for the sports section of the Greensboro News-Record. After a year, Blair returned to college and earned a journalism degree. While there, the Chairman of the music department overheard him playing the piano and offered him a scholarship. His musical studies took him to the Peabody Institute of Music at John Hopkins where he earned a doctorate. He also worked for Polo Player Magazine in Baltimore and became an avid player of the game. Then it was back to the News-Record for a year and somehow he found time to win 'Jeopardy' not once, but twice. Next it was off to London where he worked for a horseracing magazine and then the Knight-Ridder news service. Whew!



So, how did he get into wine? Well, in 1987 he visited Burgundy and befriended Patrice Rion whose family had been crafting fine Burgundies since 1955. After many return visits he took a three month sabbatical to help with the 1999 harvest. During this time he met his wife Fran (Francesca) who bought into his dream of moving to Burgundy and becoming vintners. By 2002 they had saved enough to buy a 400 year old house in Beaune and, after intense French lessons moved into it with their two sons, Kit and Harry. Blair spent the next year doing hard labour with another vintner, Jean-Marc Pillot.



Harry, Kit, Fran and Blair

Domaine Dublère

In 2004 Blair bought his first vineyard, a small plot of Corton-Charlemagne and in 2005 a slightly larger plot in Chassagne Montrachet, a Premier Cru. The next year he acquired a winery in Savigny-Les-Beaune and converted it into one of the most modern facilities in France. He also contracted for vineyards owned by friends and tended to them as a source of additional grapes for his new winery.



work is done with an ultra-light tractor to avoid compacting the soil, allowing it to breathe and develop naturally.

All of Blair's grapes are picked by hand and are placed in small, aerated cases to avoid crushing. Once in the winery, the grapes are hand sorted by at least six people, sometimes up to fifteen. The grapes for the red wines are sorted grape by grape – twice! Everything is done by gravity; nothing is pumped. Only native yeasts are used for fermentation and the wines see eighteen months in oak barrels, about a third of which are new each year. This is very, very serious winemaking, the aim of which is to produce great wines that truly reflect their terroir. Please visit www.domaine-dublere.com for the complete story of the winery, the wines and the good folks who make them.



The superb 2006 Burgundies from Domaine Dublère

2006 was certainly not an ideal year for grape growing in Burgundy, particularly for reds from the Côte de Beaune area. General consensus is that the whites are very good, but the reds depend on the skill, patience and attention to detail of the producer – like Blair Pethel and Alex Gambal. Painstaking work in the vineyards coupled with vigorous sorting in the winery resulted in some very, very fine, classic Burgundies. We are very pleased to bring you one white, the Grand Cru Corton-Charlemagne and five reds – Pommard 1er Cru Les Poutures; Beaune 1er Cru Les Bressandes; Volnay 1er Cru Les Pitures; Gevrey-Chambertin 1er Cru Les Champeaux, and; Charmes-Chambertin Grand Cru. We are also offering **Blair Pethel's 2006 Burgundy Cru Sampler** – one bottle each of these 1er Cru and Grand Cru wines. Atypically, I have not tried these wines. The tasting notes come from Blair and noted wine journalists. However, based on my research and our wine club member who recently visited Blair, I believe these to be truly outstanding wines that respect and reflect their terroir. Each comes in **six-bottle cases** and where noted are available in **cork and screwcap** and in **magnums**. Please let me know if you want screwcaps or magnums – otherwise we assume you want 750 ml. bottles with cork stoppers (exception – the regular bottles of the Savigny Village come with screw tops). Each wine contains **13.5% alcohol by volume**. All of them require some time in the cellar. We plan to take your orders to the LCBO on **Thursday, February 26**.

2006 Pommard 1er Cru Les Poutures

\$59/btl.; \$354 for six

The production process for Blair's reds follow a pattern similar to that of the Savigny-les Beaune Village Les Planchots with variation in the barrel aging – in this case small oak barrels (a quarter new) for 18-20 months. The Pommard 1er Cru Les Poutures' color is a deep, dark red with mauve highlights. Its aromas are redolent of blackberry, gooseberry, cherry pit and ripe plum. Often, wild and feline notes develop with age. At full maturity, it tends towards leather, chocolate and pepper. It needs to be given time to open up to its fullest extent and to display its mouth-filling texture, its firm but delicate structure, its fruit-filled mouth, and its chewy tannins, which by then will be properly smoothed down. A "rich" wine? Certainly.



This illustrious representative of the Côte de Beaune with its dense and massive tannins revels in furred or feathered game, braised or roasted, which will find in Pommard (and especially in the Premiers Crus) an invaluable collaborator. Thick cut beefsteak, lamb, or stewed poultry will respond to its firm-textured tannins and concentrated aromas. It is a natural partner for cheeses with well-developed flavors: Époisses, Langres and Soumaintrain, but also Comté. Maturity: 10 to 20 years. Available with cork or screwcap; no Magnums. Order now.

2006 Beaune 1er Cru Les Bressandes

\$66/btl.; \$396 for six

This wine, aged in small oak barrels (a quarter new) for 18-20 months, has a striking and vivid luminous scarlet color. It has aromas of black fruits (blackcurrant, blackberry) and red (cherry, gooseberry) as well as humus and underbrush. When older, it will be redolent of truffle, leather, and spices. In youth, it charms the palate with the taste of crunchy fresh grape. Firm, upright and full of juice, it evolves with time, revealing a solid and absolutely convincing structure.

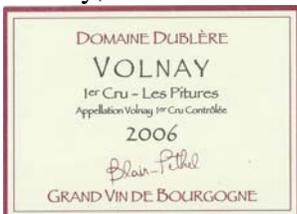


Fleshy and generous, this wine reveals great aromatic power and solid texture which partners well with musky and very firm meats such as feathered game, roasted or braised. Cheeses: choose Époisses, Soumaintrain, Munster, Maroilles. Maturity: 10 to 20 years. Available with cork or screw top; no Magnums. Order now.

2006 Volnay 1^{er} Cru Les Pitures

\$66/btl.; \$396 for six

Volnay, admired for its delicacy and bouquet, has always been thought of as the most feminine of burgundies. This one, aged in small oak barrels (a quarter new) for 18-20 months, is bright ruby with aromas of violets, gooseberry and cherry. With age it will develop scents of spices, game and cooked prune. It has an immediate appeal which, added to a slight natural precocity, means it is fully open while still relatively young. The attack is fresh, the finish is warm.



Drinking this wine, one seems to bite into a fresh fruit and breathe in its heady aroma. Its velvety femininity is matched by its great aromatic intensity. This makes it a predestined partner for sophisticated poultry dishes, patiently roasted and glazed, which can bathe in the fruit and spice aromas of the wine. Better still is feathered game, stewed or slowly braised, or simply roasted. For the more adventurous, it might accompany a couscous or a tajine with meat or poultry. The intensity of Volnay allows it to blend with distinctly flavored cheeses. Maturity – 8 to 20 years. Cork only; no Magnums. Order now.

2006 Gevrey-Chambertin 1er Cru Les Champeaux

\$76/btl.; \$456 for six

In its first flush of youth, this wine is a bright ruby which will turn to deep carmine or dark cerise with age. It too was aged in small oak barrels (a quarter new) for 18-20 months. Strawberry, mulberry, violets, mignonette and rose all help to make up its spontaneous bouquet. More maturity will bring out liquorice, leather and fur, with gamey notes and hints of underbrush. On the palate it impresses with its firm structure, velvety tannins and delicate texture. This is everything a great burgundy should be: full-bodied, powerful, rich, and meaty. Pleasant to drink young, “on the fruit,” it is nevertheless first and foremost a wine for aging. Massive, yet velvet-smooth, the tannins of this Gevrey-Chambertin confer power and solidity to the build and will contribute to its great longevity.



This is a wine for meat-eaters; its gamey notes giving it a particular affinity for game, especially when the wine is more fully evolved. It also goes superbly with rib steak, lamb (braised or in brown sauce) and all musky, solidly fibrous meats that need time in the mouth to extract all their savor. Some gourmets will even serve it with a fillet of pikeperch or tuna in red-wine sauce. It is at ease with all strong cow milk cheeses, in particular Époisses, Ami du Chambertin (a local specialty) or Cîteaux (a near neighbor). Maturity: 10 to 20 years. Cork only; Magnums available. Order some now.

2006 Charmes-Chambertin Grand Cru

\$163/btl.; \$978 for six

This big wine has a vivid deep ruby color and was aged in small barrels (half new) for 18 to 20 months. The aromas suggest strawberry, blackcurrant and gooseberry as well as fruit pits, liquorice, and spices. Violet, moss and underbrush can also be detected. On the palate its power, opulence and elegance unite to make a full and complex body with an unctuous and voluptuous texture.

The Grand Crus of Gevrey-Chambertin are iconic Pinot Noir wines: powerful, virile, complex and intense. They demand equally complex, high-toned dishes to keep the pairing in balance. Feathered game (grilled or, better still, in wine sauce) will, of course, be a worthy companion. The power of the wine's tannins will withstand the shock of contrasting textures while its aromatic complexity and above all its opulence will bring out the differences. Roast lamb in gravy, chicken in red wine sauce, glazed poultry, and rib steak will also benefit from the match, not forgetting soft-centered cheeses which will get strong support from the wine's power and aromatic persistence. Maturity: 10 to decades! Cork, regular bottles only. Order some now.



2006 Corton-Charlemagne Grand Cru

\$163/btl.; \$978 for six

Here is what **Robert Parker** says about this grand Chardonnay, “Pethel’s four barrels of 2006 Corton-Charlemagne (half of them new) represent the original acreage of his still tiny domaine. Lime fruit, chalk dust, iris, marine-like savor and salinity, and nutty richness delight the nose and envelop the palate in this long-finishing wine that combines elegance and polish with formidable underlying concentration. I suspect it will hold well for at least a dozen years. After many years spent visiting Burgundy, North



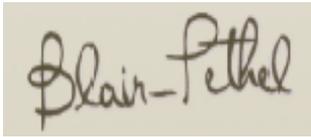
Carolina-born Blair Pethel became convinced of his calling as a vintner while working the harvest there in 1999 on a sabbatical from his career as a political journalist in Washington, DC. Five years later, he purchased his first vineyards and began Domaine Dublère. If his story sounds impossibly starry-eyed, a taste of what is in Pethel's barrels will correct that impression. Working

with small but prestigious holdings and selected suppliers of fruit from old vines, he is already achieving wines of startling finesse and clarity of flavor, in both white and red. Pethel harvested a week before the official ban de vendange and even then, he remarks, "I had to sort like a maniac. We had sixteen people on two sorting trays in 2006," thanks to having friends who are self-proclaimed wine freaks inspired or crazy enough to volunteer. "My business plan is based on grand- and premier cru," says Pethel without any tone of arrogance "so I have to build slowly." Rating: **93-94/100.**" Cork, regular bottles only. Order some now.

Blair Pethel's 2006 Burgundy Cru Sampler

\$99/btl; \$594 for six

Four 2006 Premier Cru and two Grand Cru Burgundies in a handy six pack! You will receive one bottle each the 2006 Pommard 1er Cru – Les Poutures, 2006 Beaune 1er Cru – Les Bressandes, 2006 Volnay 1er Cru – Les Pitures, 2006 Gevrey-Chambertin 1er Cru – Les Champeaux, 2006 Charmes-Chambertin Grand Cru and 2006 Corton-Charlemagne Grand Cru.



Order your very special sampler now.

All of the above prices include a \$1.00 per bottle handling fee.



Would you like to visit the source of many of Arthur's Cellar wines? Does a relaxing week living on a luxurious Provençal country estate appeal? Do markets in quaint villages, visits to our vineyards, lunches in restaurants perched on hillsides or cantilevered over streams, gourmet dinners with a local flair and so much more sound tempting? You can with Hélène's tours of Provence



For fall 2009, there are still a couple of choice bedrooms available for the week of September 5 to 12; the week of September 12 to 19 is sold out, and; there is now an ensuite bedroom available for the week of September 19 to 26. See www.ofrance.ca for all the delicious details and be sure to click on "Our brochure" at the bottom of the homepage. Please contact Hélène at hbuisson@cogeco.ca.

Soon to Emerge from Arthur's Cellar

Next will come the ever popular Côtes du Luberon from Château de l'Isolette, the value-priced wines from Château Beauferan along with some new wineries - the terrific, value-priced Côtes-du-Rhône from Château Bosc la Croix and the excellent Coteaux du Languedoc from Domaine L'Aiguelière.

Member Feedback

Your feedback is greatly appreciated. It helps us improve our club and better respond to your requirements. Many of your suggestions have been implemented and we are working on several others. Thank you and please keep the comments coming (jaswalker@arthursellers.com).

For the wine club to be successful, we need as many wine buying members as possible – please forward this newsletter to likely prospects and keep those referrals coming.

Many thanks and cheers,

Hélène and Jim

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