

Domaine Roger/Joseph Belland (Santenay)

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| 2007 | Bourgogne | white | 85 |
| 2007 | Chassagne-Montrachet "Clos Pitois" 1er | white | 90 |
| 2007 | Criots-Bâtard-Montrachet Grand Cru | white | 93 |
| 2007 | ➔ Meursault "Santenots" 1er | white | 91 |
| 2007 | Puligny-Montrachet "Champs Gain" 1er | white | 90 |
| 2007 | Santenay "Comme Dessus" | white | 88 |
| 2007 | ➔ Santenay "Beauregard" 1er | white | 89 |

Roger Belland succinctly noted that 2007 "gave us a growing season that was the exact opposite of 2006. It's like the temperature spikes were reversed. 2006 was cold and delayed at first, 2007 was hot and early. 2006 was blazing hot in the middle, 2007 was cool, gloomy and wet. 2006 harvested late, 2007 harvested early. The quality of the fruit was perfect and I believe that 2007 is genuinely a great vintage in white as it produced wines that will live for a long time." Belland told me that he has reduced the percentage of new wood in 2007, which I believe is a good thing because while his whites were never overtly oaky, it was never invisible either. In this case, he noted that he reduced the new wood for the Criots from 100% to 67% and the 1ers to around 35%. In another change reported last year, Belland has now gone 100% to Diam corks, which are a composite so there are no more TCA-affected wines. He told me that after one year, he likes the results so far and has decided to continue using them. How the wines will age is another question but Belland explains that he has done tests and is satisfied that his wines will age as well as before. Lastly, Belland noted that he aims for between 30 and 35 ppm of free SO₂, which is becoming the norm in Burgundy today. As to this group of '07s, they rank among the best whites that I have seen since I have been visiting professionally. They are definitely worth a look, especially given the attractive prices for which they sell.

2007 Bourgogne: A fresh, fruity and agreeable if not especially complex nose merges into punchy middle weight flavors that evidence a touch of backend minerality along with a dry lemon-zest infused finish. Perfectly good at this level crafted in a ready-to-drink package. 85/now+

2007 Santenay "Comme Dessus": This is also quite fresh with a notably more complex nose that offers up hints of straw, earth and crushed herb that complements the vibrant, delicious, precise and refreshing flavors that really makes one feel like drinking it. A Santenay *villages* blanc with personality and enough potential to reward a year or two in the cellar. 88/2010+

2007 Santenay "Beauregard": While this is not particularly elegant, indeed it would be fair to describe it as moderately rustic yet attractively complex with a straw, resin, citrus and earth suffused nose that is in keeping with a lemony and precise flavor profile that is finer than that of the Comme Dessus and delivers excellent length. There is a bit more structure here but not so much that this couldn't be enjoyed now and this would make an excellent candidate for a house white. Recommended. 89/2011+

2007 Chassagne-Montrachet "Clos Pitois": As it usually is despite its close proximity to the prior two wines, the nose is tighter and less expressive with a cool, fresh and airy menthol, citrus and crushed herb nose that gives way to rich and full yet precise and minerally flavors that display fine finishing precision, depth and balance. I quite like this as it manages to be very Chassagne in character without descending into rusticity. 90/2012+

2007 Puligny-Montrachet "Champs Gain": The barest touch of SO₂ detracts ever-so-mildly from the nose though even after 5 minutes in the glass it noticeably dissipated so be sure to decant it first. Otherwise, a cool and airy green fruit and floral nose is followed by detailed, energetic and intense mineral suffused flavors that possess good mid-palate fat that is a touch more forward than the Clos Pitois. Lovely and very Puligny in character. 90/2011+

2007 Meursault "Santenots": (from a .25 ha parcel of 50+ year old vines). A delicate *souppçon* of wood that is almost invisible frames fresh, expressive and dense aromas of hazelnut, peach and lemon that are picked up by the rich, full-bodied and crisp flavors that culminate in a linear, beautifully delineated and racy finish. Lovely juice. 91/2011+

2007 Criots-Bâtard-Montrachet: (from a .62 ha parcel of 25 to 40 year old vines). Here the SO₂ is sufficiently noticeable as to no longer be subtle if you're tempted to dry a bottle young, be sure to give it 20 to 30 minutes in a decanter first. A very floral and distinctly ripe nose displays notes of white peach, apricot and *pain grillé* that can also be found on the concentrated, sappy and mouth coating flavors where there is a real sense of volume and plenty of acid-buffering dry extract. An impressive example that should reward medium-term cellaring. 93/2013+

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|------|--|-----|----|
| 2007 | Chassagne-Montrachet "Clos Pitois" 1er | red | 88 |
| 2007 | Les Maranges "La Fussière" 1er | red | 87 |
| 2007 | Pommard "Les Cras" | red | 85 |
| 2007 | Santenay "Les Charmes" | red | 86 |
| 2007 | Santenay "La Comme" 1er | red | 87 |
| 2007 | Santenay "Les Gravières" 1er | red | 88 |
| 2007 | Santenay "Beauregard" 1er | red | 88 |
| 2007 | ➔ Volnay "Santenots" 1er | red | 91 |

Roger Belland succinctly noted that 2007 "gave us a growing season that was the exact opposite of 2006. It's like the temperature spikes were reversed. 2006 was cold and delayed at first, 2007 was hot and early. 2006 was blazing hot in the middle, 2007 was cool, gloomy and wet. 2006 harvested late, 2007 harvested early. We began picking the reds on the 5th of September and there was no problem with rot at all and the only sorting necessary was for under ripe berries. I used between 25 and 30% whole cluster for most of the reds and I really like what the vintage gave us. I know that I will be in the minority but here at least, I believe that our 2007s are every bit as good as our 1999s." As I have noted before but it bears repeating, Belland has an interesting approach to vinifying his reds as he ferments very slowly, indeed up to 6 weeks at very low temperatures and then lets them spike at the end for one to four days. He's careful to note that these spikes are never higher than 40° C. I say the approach is interesting as it gives the wines two distinctly different aspects. Oddly, the long *cuvaison* does not (typically) impart the very firm structure of a long vinification nor does it give the slightly cooked fruit of those domaines that heat to even higher levels. It does confer a certain individualistic mouth feel to the wines and one either likes that or one doesn't. It's not classic but it's not "gummy" or excessively suave and round either. In another change reported last year, Belland has now gone 100% to Diam corks, which are a composite so there are no more TCA-affected wines. He told me that after one year, he likes the results so far and has decided to continue using them. How the wines will age is another question but Belland explains that he has done tests and is satisfied that his wines will age as well as before. Time will tell. The reds were bottled between November and January. I repeat here what I have said for the last several vintages, which is that Belland's wines represent very good quality/price values, provided of course that you like the style as it won't be for everyone. I wish to stress that the style is not extreme but neither is it traditional. Lastly, while I don't personally see the same quality in these 2007s as Belland's 1999s, I would highlight for readers that the '07 Santenots is quite a lovely wine and worth a look, especially for the price – it was made with 100% whole cluster.

2007 Les Maranges "La Fussière": This is an unusually ripe '07 and borders on being *surmature* with an earthy yet still acceptably fresh nose offering plum and cassis notes that merge into textured and supple flavors that display almost no rusticity though the depth is limited on the otherwise delicious finish. To drink young. 87/2010+

2007 Santenay "Les Charmes": This is also rather ripe yet slightly fresher with an aromatic profile of red berries, plus, warm earth and a hint of *animale* that leads to medium-bodied flavors that possess good energy and punch, all wrapped in a finish that is soft and forward. As with the prior wine, the depth is limited but this is easy to like and will drink well young. 86/2010+

2007 Santenay "La Comme": Here the nose is more in keeping with the general style of the vintage with a ripe, pure and more complex set of aromas that revolve primarily around plum, cassis, spice and a hint of cranberry that is picked up by the precise and lightly mineral infused flavors that possess limited depth and a hint of finishing dryness that my score assumes will round out with a year in bottle. 87/2011+

2007 Santenay "Beauregard": The nose closely resembles that of the La Comme though here the earthiness is a bit more pronounced and continues onto the detailed, precise and slightly more complex middle weight flavors that culminate in a solidly long finish. This offers good if not exceptional quality for what it is. 88/2011+

2007 Santenay "Les Gravières": A slightly grapey but fresh nose of red berries and cassis that merges into ripe, textured and precise flavors that possess an attractive texture on the supple, round and delicious finish where the only nit is a slight edginess where again the score assumes that this will round out after a year in bottle. 88/2011+

2007 Chassagne-Montrachet "Clos Pitois": (a huge 3 ha *monopole* of the Domaine, planted 50% to each color and which sits at the south end of the commune on the Santenay border; the pinot vines are approximately 60 years of age). An expressive and relatively pretty nose of red raspberry, cranberry and a touch of plum slides gracefully into round and nicely detailed flavors that deliver good volume with a subtle hint of minerality. Like the Gravières, there is a hint of backend acidity which doesn't really intrude yet it prevents this from ascending to the next level though I do like the length. 88/2011+

2007 Pommard "Les Cras": There is a slightly roasted, even cooked character to the nose that seriously limits the appeal though the rich and full flavors possess a better sense of freshness on the textured, round and solidly long finish. However, the nose is difficult to like unless you appreciate very ripe fruit. 85/2010+

2007 Volnay "Santenots": (fashioned with 100% whole cluster in 2007). An intensely floral nose of red and blue pinot fruit that is easily the most elegant among this group introduces rich, round, detailed and solidly concentrated middle weight flavors that carry both depth and excellent length. While it's not unexpected given the class of the Santenots vineyard, this really is head and shoulders above everything else here. Recommended. 91/2012+