

DOMAINE ROGER BELLAND, SANTENAY

The reds and the whites tasted were fined the week before the tasting – the reds just three days before the tasting, on the previous Friday. Roger Belland explained that his daughter Julie works alongside him and is increasingly taking control of the viticulture and vinification.

Roger comments that the 2006 vintage was notable because the bad weather in August was saved by hugely improved conditions in September, before harvest started. Although he also pointed out that their use of grasses between the rows helped reduce the impact of the August rainfall. As a result, the health of the grapes remained good, which helped to reduce the amount of sorting required at harvest. During triage all unripe fruit and, for the reds, any rotten berries were rejected (the whites suffered very little botrytis at this domaine).

Belland compares the whites in the 2006 vintage with 2002, seeing similarities between the ripeness of the fruit and acidity, as well as the stylish minerality. For the reds he looks towards the 2000 vintage, noting that in 2006 the fruit is more precise and ripe.

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Santenay, Commes-Dessus

This wine is located near Chassagne-Montrachet and is on stony soil. Bright, white peach fruit is layered with a glossy texture on the palate. There is a delicacy to the structure that is supported by a freshening acidity. Good length on the finish. Attractive. From late 2008 to 2009.

Santenay Beauregard

There is a scented quality here with orchard fruits, citrus notes and chalky minerals. A core of intense fruit is balanced by a zesty, lively acidity that gives the wine definition and backbone. Particularly good. From 2009.

Chassagne-Montrachet, Morgeot Clos Pitois

About 35-40% new oak is used, but here Vosges plays a more significant role because of its drier, tauter style. This monopole in Morgeot is situated on a hill between Santenay and Chassagne. It has stony soil and is often windy. The vines are approximately 55-60 years old, planted by Roger Belland's father after the war.

Purity of aromas and clear stony minerals contribute to the tightly-bound structure of the wine. It is nicely compact and elegant with oak completely interwoven into the fruit. Stone fruit lingers on the finish. Particularly good. From 2009/2010.

Puligny-Montrachet, Champs-Gains

35-40% new oak is used on this cuvée with a little more Alliers. Roger Belland believes this rounds out the minerality.

Lively, energetic aromas with pink grapefruit and lime zest. Lovely clarity on the palate, which is taut and quite racy on the attack. Minerals layer with juicy acidity leading to a focused finish. Particularly good++. From 2009/2010.

Meusault, Les Santenots

The level of new oak is 35-40% with a mix of barrels used for Santenots.

Crystallised lemon peel aromas create an intense perfume on the nose which continues on the energetic palate. It is full of breadth and ripe fruit underscored with hints of smoke and minerals. Freshness draws out the finish. Particularly good+. From 2009.

Criots-Bâtard-Montrachet

100% new Tronçais oak.

The oak is barely perceptible on the nose. It is fully absorbed and contributes hints of nuttiness and honey, which sit well with a floral top note. The attack is poised and the mid-palate is smoothly textured. Ripeness is balanced by glossy minerals. The concentration is good throughout and the finish is persistent. Fine. From 2011.

Red wines**Santenay, Charmes**

This is situated near to the premier cru site of Grand Clos Rousseau. 100% of the bunches are destemmed prior to cold maceration and the start of alcoholic fermentation.

Cherry and red berry fruit is balanced with a mineral salt character on the palate. The tannins have grip, but are finely textured. The fruit reasserts itself on the finish. Attractive. From 2009.

***Santenay, Commes**

100% destemming prior to cold maceration and the start of alcoholic fermentation. More restrained aromatically than the Charmes, but hints of fruits start to emerge with air. Tight tannins and fresh acidity is aligned with pure Pinot fruit that asserts itself on the mid-palate and the finish. Linear and pretty. Particularly good. From 2010.

Santenay, Beauregard

25% whole bunches are included in the fermentation of this cru.

The nose and palate are characterised by liquorice notes, together with berry fruit. It feels a touch darker than the Comme. Austere undertones sit beneath juicy, rounded fruit. The ripeness of the fruit comes through on the finish, but the control remains. Particularly good+. From 2010.

***Santenay, Gravières**

Shale and darker berry fruit come through on the nose. It has a focused and direct mouthfeel; density is evident across the palate. The tannins are fine-grained and layered with fresh acidity and mineral salt notes. Tight, defined and long on the finish. Possibly fine. From 2010/2011.

Chassagne-Montrachet, Morgeot Clos Pitois

The vine age and vineyard character are the same as for the white. The planting is about 50/50 between Pinot and Chardonnay.

Bilberry and forest fruits with a touch of spice are evident on the aroma, through the palate and on to the finish. There is a distinct purity to the fruit character. The tannins are swathed in the fresh, ripe and elegant fruit. Violet notes are evident on the finish. Particularly good to fine. From 2010.