

GUILLEMETTE & XAVIER

# BESSON

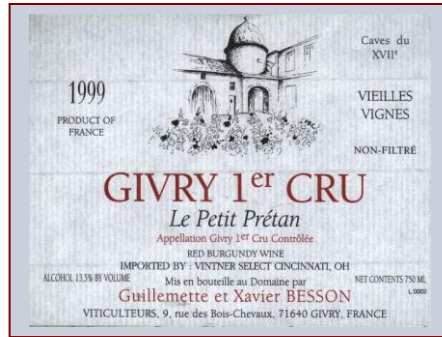
Givry

I long ago began to believe that the Cote Chalonnaise, that loose collection of vineyards interspersed with forest and farmland which stretches between the Cote d'Or and Macon, was home to many good, but few if any *exciting* wines. Yes, prices were in theory lower than in the Cote d'Or. But I found I'd always prefer drinking a Bourgogne or wine of a minor village from one of the top Cote d'Or vignerons than an equivalently-priced Chalonnaise.

In principle, Givry is the pre-eminent red wine village of the region. And continued exposure to the concentrated wines and impassioned terroirist advocacy of Givry-ite Jean-Marc Joblot nurtured what little hope I retained of getting really excited in the Cote Chalonnaise.

Enter this young couple named Besson, blessed with obviously fine vineyards (not just Givry, but Beaune 1er Crus from her side of the family as well) and a determination to prove their quality. The Bessons have allowed us to make some superb selections and are bottling these unfiltered. It helps considerably, of course, that nearly all of their vines are old. In the difficult 1998 vintage, they elected to sell-off their Beaune 1er Cru wine and much of their Givry. To get the quality I wanted, I narrowed Vintner Select's range of options to a scant eight barrels (200 cases) of truly outstanding Givry "Petit Préтан". That was eight barrels for the entire *world*, mind you, of which Bessons permitted us to purchase two.

Today's (thankfully more plentiful) results are, I believe, a revelation, not just of the potential of Givry, but of the sheer quality of Pinot Noir (and Chardonnay) you can still buy somewhere on this green earth for under \$20. If you agree with me that Pinot's most distinctive and alluring traits involve perfume, vivid fruit and



mouthfeel, and that the majority of Pinots from anywhere come up short in these critical departments, then you'll celebrate the emergence of Besson.

Burgundy

**Givry 1er Cru Petit Préтан**  
**Givry "Le Haut Colombier" \***

**Givry 1er Cru Grands Préたns**  
**Beaune**

**1er Cru Champs Pimont**  
**1er Cru Les Epenottes**

Variety: *Pinot Noir, Chardonnay*

Total acreage: *Only 11 acres.*

Average production: *3-6,000 cases, depending on the amount sold in bulk to negotiants in any given year.*

Highlights: *Manual pigeage. The proportion of new barrels nowadays approaches 100% but these wines, you'll find, betray no splinters!*

\* *"Le Haut Colombier" is the designation used beginning with the 2003 vintage for that portion of the Petit Préたん that is not 1er-cru rated. The authorities decided to no longer permit the same vineyard designation to be utilized for both a 1er Cru and a village lieu dit wine.*