

CHÂTEAU DE CARY POTET

Montagny

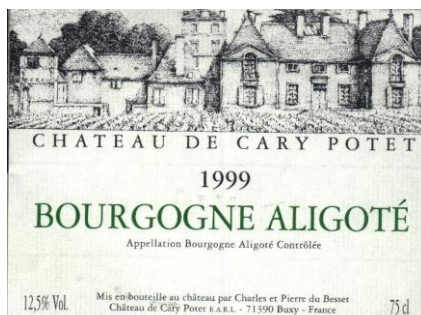
In recent years, I have learned new respect for the Côte Chalonnaise, that loose collection of vineyards interspersed with forests and grain that stretches from the Côte d'Or to the Mâcon. We now boast growers in Givry (Besson) and Mercurey (Raquillet) whose Pinots and Chardonnays can compete in the exalted leagues, all the while demanding little more from the consumer than a twenty dollar bill and an open mind.

In principle, Montagny is the pre-eminent white wine village of the region. Indeed, the long-standing high quality and distinctive fruit of the Montagny bottled by Louis Latour long nurtured what little hope I retained of getting really excited by Chardonnay in the Cote Chalonnaise. And clearly, Latour controls much of Montagny's best fruit.

At the picturesque, slightly disheveled Chateau de Cary Potet of the du Besset brothers, I at last found estate-bottled Montagny worthy of consideration. But if it was Montagny that brought me here, the fruit of the du Bessets' old Aligoté vines, on a flat parcel just outside the winery, is what held me.

Many of you are already aware that the Côte Chalonnaise town of Bouzeron - thanks largely to the efforts of its most famous grower, Aubert de Villaine - now has its own appellation to celebrate the synergy of Chalonaise geology and Aligoté. Even in Bouzeron though, you are unlikely to run into any growers who are *planting* Aligoté: there are plenty of old vines to spare.

As good fortune would have it, some of the oldest vines and most delicious wine issues from Cary Potet. In fact, I don't hesitate to pronounce this as rich and complex a Bourgogne Aligoté as I have ever tasted. Before you reply "So what?!", please bear in mind that this is a wine to sell for around ten dollars ... and one which you might want to *taste* before launching any derogatory comments in its direction!



Montagny 1er cru Bourgogne Aligoté

Variety: *Chardonnay, Aligoté,
Pinot Noir*

Total acreage: *24 acres ... but
only one tiny plot of
Aligoté (yielding around
200 cases a year)*

Vinification: *Aligoté is vinified
in tank.*