

François RAQUILLET

Mercrey

I had long ago come to believe that this part of Burgundy, a loose collection of vineyards interspersed with forest and farmland which stretches between the Cote d'Or and Macon, was home to many good wines, 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 to an equivalently-priced Chalonaise. Gradually though, my impression has been changed!

The village of Mercrey has the largest vine acreage of any Burgundy community, so depending on one's viewpoint, I suppose one might think oneself either more or less likely to find some potential for quality. Enter Francois Raquillet, and further confirmation that pinots from the Côte Chalonnaise *can indeed excite*. Tasting the young 2000 wines in Raquillet's cellar, I felt like the kid in the proverbial candy shop. There was scarcely any of his many lots that wasn't excellent.

I decided in vintage 2001 to concentrate on a bottling from old vines although not within one of the Mercrey vineyards rated "1er Cru". Like nearly all of our other Burgundy selections, this was bottled by hand, unpumped and unfiltered, and turned out vividly full of fruit and meaty depth.

With 2002, Raquillet opined, I would witness what he could do with nature's full cooperation as opposed to wet and meddlesome intervention – and so I did! What a bounty awaits us here. I have introduced a superb *blanc* (as deliciously distinctive for Besson's



Givry blanc as can be) and offer the rouge "Vieilles Vignes plus 1er Crus Les Vasées and Les Naugues.

Burgundy

Mercrey

Mercrey blanc

Mercrey 1^{er} Cru Les Veleys

Mercrey 1^{er} Cru Les Naugues

Mercrey 1^{er} Cru Les Vasées

Mercrey 1^{er} Cru Les Puillets

Mercrey 1^{er} Cru Clos l'Évêque

Varieties: *Pinot Noir, Chardonnay*

Total acreage: 22 acres

Average production: 2,500 cs.

Vinification: *classic pigeage and élevage in barrels of mixed ages*

"Nothing but bulls eyes ... This praise won't surprise those who have followed the evolution of this domaine. In only a few years [Raquillet] has climbed to the very top of the appellation ... [his] vinification strives for flavor extraction, but not excess extraction."

Bourgogne Aujourd'hui 8/03