

The Ultimate Burgundy Reference

Issue 60

October 15, 2015

Samuel Billaud Chablis 1^{er} Cru "Montée de Tonnerre" 2014 **Burgundy, France**

Score: 91

As I reported last year, life was about to materially change in a good way for Samuel Billaud thanks to the partial sale of Domaine Billaud-Simon (see herein) to Domaine Faiveley. Now I can report that the sale has in fact occurred and the specific divisions have been apportioned. For his part Samuel Billaud received just about 4 ha that are composed by pieces of Les Clos, Vaudésir, Montée de Tonnerre, Mont de Milieu and Séchet and then parcels of villages level vineyards that include Les Pargues, Chapelot and Petit Chablis "Sur Les Clos". Moreover he received these in time for the 2014 harvest even though as he stresses he didn't receive them in time to cultivate the vines the way he will in the future. As to the 2014 vintage, Billaud describes it as "a very good year that was exceptionally clean so I could take my time picking, in fact I picked from the 15th of September to the 1st of October. Remember I now run a very small domaine so the ideal harvest conditions allowed me to pick each parcel at its optimum ripeness level so that's always a big plus. It wasn't necessarily a big vintage but given that we had virtually no sorting losses so gross yields turned out to be extremely close to the net yields. In any event we realized better volumes than we did in 2013. In terms of style, 2014 is a cool rather than solar vintage and it would be reasonable to draw parallels with years like 2000, 2002, 2008, 2010 or 2012."

Tasting note: A hint of wood easily allows the pretty aromas of white flowers, pear and algae to shine. There is fine concentration to the succulent middle weight flavors that possess fine depth on the lingering finish. This is an opulent but actually quite fine and balanced effort that should also be approachable young if desired. Worth considering.