



AURIC PACIFIC

“selling wine with passion!”

Auric Pacific Fine Wines

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Written by Andy Tan



Dear All,

Today, I bring to you one sad news. My most admired burgundy winemaker at all time, Henri Mayer has passed away in early this week after a long battling with prostate cancer. Mayer is a great technician and has previously credit for his work in resurrected the Vosne-Romanée Clos-Parentoux vineyard. Mayer is also a great mentor to such newly emerging star producers such as , **Jean-Nicolas MÉO**, **Jean-Marie FOURRIER** and his nephew, **Emmanuel ROUGET**. His influence to the new generation burgundian winemaker is immense. His winemaking méthode; 100% destemmed, a week long maceration à froid (cold soak), 100% new oak (only from trançois), no filtration and bottle by hand are till today continue to inspired many young generation burgundian winemaker to try to emulate his approach.

I have never tasted a better, more thrilling Echézeaux than those from Mayer. Regardless is Georges Mayer or his own bottling (both from different lieu-dit of Echézeaux, with George's parcel called "Les Treux" and Henri Mayer parcel

"Cruaux"), all are among the most special burgundy I have the privilege to experience in my life. Mayer's Echézeaux are among the most massive (apart from Mayer, Echézeaux rarely associated with the world "massive") and intense I have encountered. The hallmark of Mayer dense color, which derive from the cold maceration in addition to the early new oak (100% new oak for aging) toastiness are some of the distinctive featured from Mayer's wine. However, despite the 100% new oak treatment, Mayer's wines, which is sourced from fruits of extreme low-yield and old vine vineyards are capable of withstanding the amount of new oak. In fact, once you get over those "vanillasation", the purity of the fruit emerged, along with the well-spined, energized palate. I simply can't think of many guys in Burgundy who is capable of pulling out such amazing "juice". He is simply a man of his own craft.

I've recently been blinded a bottle of straight Nuits-Saint-Georges 1996. The youthfulness (in both color and palate), combined the high level of new oak was unmistakably from the great master. What's special about Mayer's wine is, beside those velvety, concentration. There is this pristine, flawless sense, which Mayer pride himself and often emphasized the significant of cellar sanitation. "You never get prematurely brown color from my wine," said Mayer. "There are too many sloppy élevage around. Those cause of prematurely oxidation were either due to the fruit was not completely ripe or there has been bad hygiene in the cellar".

The departure of Henri Mayer will be long missed. We can only continue to admired his work when the next opportunity his wine is uncorked. However, for whatever is left from the market. His prized wine like Echézeaux, Cros-Parentoux, Les Brûlees, Richebourg are far too expensive to reach for an average income person (like myself). Hopefully, the following offerings from his protégé will give you a gleam of this great master.

Domaine Emmanuel Rouget (Flagey-Echézeaux)

21	2003 Emmanuel Rouget Vosne-Romanée "Les Beaux Monts" 1er	ST 89-92	300	315.00
11	2003 Emmanuel Rouget Vosne-Romanee "Cros Parantoux" 1er	ST 90-94	468	491.40
36	2003 Emmanuel Rouget Echézeaux, Grand Cru	ST 90-92	340	357.00

Maison/Domaine Méo-Camuzet (Vosne-Romanée)

30	2002 Haut Côte de Nuits "Clos St.-Philibert"		55	57.75
7	2002 Marsannay		63	66.15
23	2002 Fixin (négociant)	BH 86-89	74	77.70
6	2003 Nuits St.-Georges 1er Cru "Argillas" (négociant)	RP 92	148	155.40
6	2003 Nuits St.-Georges 1er Cru "Perrières" (négociant)	BH 89-91	148	155.40
6	2003 Nuits St.-Georges 1er Cru "Aux Murgers"	WS 94	178	186.90
6	2003 Chambolle-Musigny 1er Cru "Les Cras" (négociant)	BH 86-89	148	155.40
30	2003 Chambolle-Musigny 1er Cru "Feusselottes" (négociant)	WS 91	148	155.40
6	2003 Vosne-Romanée 1er Cru Les Chaumes	WS 93	178	186.90
2	2003 Vosne-Romanée 1er Cru Aux Brûlées	BH 90-93	338	354.90
3	1998 Vosne-Romanée 1er Cru Aux Brûlées	ST 93	340	343.40
28	2003 Clos Vougeot, Grand Cru	WS 96	243	255.15
18	2003 Corton-Clos Rignets, Grand Cru	ST 89-93	253	265.65

Domaine Fourrier (Gevrey-Chambertin)

18	2004 Morey-St.-Denis "Clos Solon"	BH 88-90	68	71.40
30	2004 Gevrey-Chambertin Vieilles Vignes	BH 87-89	65	68.25
4	2002 Gevrey-Chambertin "Aux Echezeaux"	ST 89-90	78	81.90
10	2004 Vougeot 1er Cru "Les Petits Vougeots"	BH 86-89	90	94.50
17	2004 Chambolle-Musigny 1er Cru "Les Gruenchers"	BH 88-91	95	99.75
15	2004 Gevrey-Chambertin 1er Cru "Les Goulots"	BH 89-91	100	105.00
5	2002 Gevrey-Chambertin 1er Cru "Les Goulots"	ST 90-93	115	120.75
4	2002 Gevrey-Chambertin 1er Cru "Les Cherbaudes"	ST 90-92	100	105.00
12	2002 Gevrey-Chambertin 1er Cru "Combe Aux Moines"	ST 91+	118	123.90
12	2004 Gevrey-Chambertin 1er Cru "Combe Aux Moines"	ST 90-93	105	110.25



photo by www.burgundy-report.com

The recent turbulence in Parker's **Wine Advocate** with two of his key staff critics, Pierre Antoine Rovani and Daniel Thomases (responsible for reviewing Italian wine) leaving the joint shows that we are entering into a new phase of wine critic world. Previously the one-man show that led by Robert Parker, along with Stephen Tanzer is slowly losing their dominant role, giving way to those newly surfaced web-based newsletter like Jancis Robinson www.jancisrobinson.com, Allen Meadows' www.burghound.com and Antonio Galloni's www.piedmontreport.com. As the market evolved, consumer has turned more sophisticated, the

previous mono-voice can no longer ease the hunger of the current demand. Moreover, having just one man to cover all the review of the entirely wine world is highly questionable. The ability aside, each wine region has their own distinct style and culture, without the in depth understanding of those aspects. How could one determine the true greatness?

Previously, Parker has already been questioned with his single-minded pursuit in all wines and one of the most noticeable event that he was simply refused by the burgundian to reviews their wines. The recent raise of such specialist like Allen Meadow's www.burghound.com, Antonio Galloni's

www.piedmontreport.com has clearly indicated that the market seek for diversity and only specialist, the true value can than delivered.

In May 2005, Stephen Tanzer introduced his full time assistant, **Josh Reynolds** to deal with his overloaded situation. Despite Parker was among the earliest to hire an assistance. However, unlike Parker (who rely solely on **Pierre-Antoine Rovani**) Tanzers' International Wine Cellar has in the past invited various guest contributors like Daniel Thomases (Italy), Dr. David Schildknecht (Germany), Jeremy Oliver (Australia) and today, those areas continue to be reviewed by new commers such as Joel B Payne (Germany), Peter Moser (Austria), Ian D'Agata (Italy) and Tanzer's right hand man, Josph Reynolds, whom is responsible the tasting report on Australia, Champagne, Chile, Oregon, dry wine from Portugal and Rhône.

In comparision to the diversity provided by Tanzer's International Wine Cellar, Parker with his clone-like palate of Rovani not only did not help to resolve the awkward situation. Like the faith of Parker, he too has constantly been criticized in his reviews on burgundy by the burgundian themselves.

Siding on his boss, Parker's philosophise that, all great wine should be harvested from physiologically ripe grape that the ripeness should not rely on potential sugar level but rather the ripeness from the skin. The so-call extra "hang-time", or prolong-harvest is preferable, which often resulting wine with *confiture, sur-maturité* element. When one of his most celebrated winemaker, **Madame Leroy** was among the very first to harvest her precious, tiny production of 2002. Rovani was criticized for having contradicted on his early belief for late-harvest-Burgundy concept.

In 2003 vintage, Rovani being the first to jump on the bandwagon, declaring the 2003 white burgundy for an average to good vintage was disagreed by many burgundian. His reason given, beside this is an acid-deficient year, many *vignerons* in fear of making overripe, fat, tropical style of Chardonnay, which is more in common with Californian Chardonnay rather than classic white Burgundy. *Vignerons* have opt to either picked the fruit too early or have been judiciously added tartaric acid into their must in order to retain their "authentic" elegance and finesse. According to Rovanni, it was through such fear of making atypical white burgundy. Burgundian has fail to captitalize the potentially attractive, immense delicious vintage. He also added: those who abandon the use of *bâtonnage* (lees stirring), which he claimed to be a traditional practice of burgundy, has exchanged fleshiness for freshness. He critized many 2003 white lack depth, flesh and ripeness. He also pointed out numerous of 2003 reds being too tannic due primarily from hydric stress fruit (alcohol outraced the phenolic ripeness) and overly acidified. To support his statement, he drawn quote from legendary, late **Henri Jayer** remarked:"If it tastes too tannic then it is too tannic." Also, **Michel Lafarge** previous stated, "acidity is a false problem in burgundy and with pinot noir in general. People seem obsessed with it, but they are wrong. Our wines do not age on acid and never have...we have faith in the terroir and therefore we do not acidify."

First of all, I do not agree that white burgundy has anything in common with Californian Chardonnay (besides, both are made from Chardonnay grape). That not being say that I disregard Californian Chardonnay or underminde their quality. In fact, I enjoy the juicy, immensely ripe, attractively textured, layers, mouth-coating richness of Californian Chard. Producers such as Arcadian, Au Bon Climat, Aubert, DuMol (Chloe or Isobel), Kongsgaard, David Ramey (with his Hyde Vineyard) in some cool vintages such as 2002. You can even get a trace of white burgundy minerality and elegance. There is no question that 2003 white burgundy achieved an unusual ripeness and alcohol that seemingly recall those of Californian Chard. However, underneath those sweetness and sex-appeal textured. Any experienced burgundy drinker could still spot the underlying material (liveliness, clarity, balance...) and the richness without weight palate that are unmatched by any chardonnay made outside the golden slopes.

Coming back to acidity and *bâtonnage*.I agree, acidity is not the sole contribution for wine aging and neither is alcohol, glycerol (which obsessed by Parker's team), sugar was the answers to the wine best kept secret. To me, the answer lie on the balance of each component.When mother nature failed to deliver those balance. Intervention like acidification is necessary. Like in the case of 2003 burgundy, where the grape lack natural acidity. Those 2003 high achievers under Rovani reviewed carry out partial acidification

are Jean-Pierre de Smet of L'Arlet, Pascal Lachaux of Robert Arnoux, Claire Forestier of Bertagna, Bernard Dugat of Dugat-py, Vincent Girardin, David Croix of Camille Giroud, Robert Groffier, Anne Gros, Jean-Nicolas Méo of Méo-Camuzet, Christophe Roumier of Georges Roumier, François Millet of Comte de Vogüé. According to Hubert Lignier and Bernard Gros of Gros Frère et Soeur that acidification was necessary as the pHs were simply too low to ensure a clean fermentation environment. For most part, it was more a vinification correction rather than trying to alter the wine character (u can refer to Allen Meadows' burghound issue 17 for the details report). I would also like to point out that, despite the truth that **Henri Mayer** dislike hard tannin, which explains why he practiced macération préfermentaire (prefermentation maceration) and believed in 100% destalk. However, in his interviewed with **Bernard Burtschy** of www.wine-in-france.com he also stated that, his preference on riper fruit style has nothing to do with *sur-maturité*, over-ripe wine. He criticized those wines to be overly concentrated that lacked definition and *terroir*. Interestingly, Mayer also happen to think that the biggest bullshit in the viticultural world is biodynamic farming, and **Lalou Bize-Leroy** of Domaine Leroy happen to be among the few burgundian that adopted such practiced.

bâtonnage, a widely practiced technique aimed to enrich the flavor and texture of the wine (or must) during barrel aging by stirring the lees. Before the arrival of **random oxidation** that plagued many classical white burgundy vintages like 1992, 1996, with prematurely oxidized of both the color and the fruit of the wine. Many burgundian were routinely carrying out such practice in lighter vintages, especially when the lees was in good health. However, today, such practice was viewed as the root for the caused of random oxidation due to the early introduction of oxygen to their must (fermented grape juice). Lees stirred also liftoff CO₂, which has the natural protecting effect on oxygen. More and more white burgundy producers have opted out of such practice which has nothing to do with what was suggested by Rovani. The new Wine Advocate empire will be consisting of **David Schildknecht** (previously handle Tanzer's IWC Austria wine reviews) who replace Rovani as Parker new fulltime assistant. The author of Piedmont report, **Antonio Galloni** has taken-over Thomases role on Italian wine. In addition to those two guys, **Dr. J Miller**, Parker's longtime friend and tasting partner, will be in-charge of wine region such as Australia, Spain and Portugal, Washington State/Oregon and South Africa; **Mark Squires**, Parker's web's forum chairperson will be responsible for dry wines from Oporto. Parker also disclosed that he will be appointed a foreign "critic-at-large" to provide an alternate point of view outside his American team in order to give his reader a better diversity and expertise coverage. Many speculate that, the person he referred for the job is his fellow French-buddy, **Michel Bettane** of France?

Dr. David Schildknecht, which will be taking on the responsibility of what left by Rovani on future burgundy review. Interestingly, Dr. Schildknecht has already have his debut voice on Burgundy in Jancis' forum http://www.jancisrobinson.com/articles/yourturn050913_2, where he go on and provide his version of *terroir* concept. When the discussion entering into whether the *terroir* or human that dictate the wine style. A famous burgundy grand cru was brought into debate. **Bonnes-Mares**, an unique grand cru that lies on the both communes of Chambolle-Musigny and Morey St.-Denis. His opponent, **Jason Palma** suggested to separate the grand cru into the Chambolle-sector and Morey-sector since both communes have their own distinctiveness. Dr. Schildknecht however question that, the differences from Chambolle or Morey's Bonnes-Mares have more to do with the producers rather than the piece of earth. In addition, by answering to his challenge, he gave his opponent a brief background on the Bonnes-Mares, which was predominantly occupied in the village of Chambolle-Musigny. The 3.74-acre portion of Bonnes-Mares that sits on the Morey-St.-Denis side was said to be owned by Mommessin of Clos de Tart and Louis Jadot. Since Mommessin did not make any Bonnes-Mares, but instead included his Bonnes-Mares' fruit to their Clos de Tart and Louis Jadot also added his Morey portion of Bonnes-Mares to his Chambolle side. There are no actual Morey's Bonnes-Mares to put on test to compare their differences within the two communes.

My research however show the following. The Bonnes-Mares in Morey side was owned majorly by Bernard Clair, with 0.7 acres owned by Mommessin (bought by Joanny Mommessin in 1932), which has in the past, part of their *monopole* Clos de Tart vineyard. In theory, Mommessin is allow to declare this parcel as Bonnes-Mares, but, they have since drawn an agreement with INAO to permit the Bonnes-Mares parcel to be included in their Clos de Tart blend without having to declassify the entire lot. Bernard Clair of Marsannay, also father of Bruno Clair has previously sold 0.8 acres to Louis Jadot and Jadot

also purchased the parcel of Bonnes-Mares that was previously owned by Madame Veuve Joseph Clair. Bruno Clair has been leasing his remaining holding of Bonnes-Mares to his neighbor, **Domaine Fougeray de Beauclair**, which today, they produced the only Bonnes-Mares that came entirely from the Morey side.

P.S. To Jason Palma, you will be pleased to know that, there are actually a Bonnes-Mares made entirely from Morey's side. And to Hugo Rose MW, for me, to touch on the subject on *terroir*, human influence is inevitable and the case in burgundy, those man-made influence are guided with culture and history in mind. Not self expression or personal ego. **AT**

Our Offering from Domaine Fougeray de Beauclair

(prices are per bottle value and are subjected to 5% GST charges)

- 5 2002 Fougeray de Beauclair Fixin "Clos Marion" (rated 84-86 points by Burghound) at 68.00
- 3 2000 Fougeray de Beauclair Gevrey-Chambertin "Serpentines" at 98.00
- 6 2001 Fougeray de Beauclair Bonnes-Mares, Grand Cru (rated 89 points by Burghound) at 148.00
- 6 2002 Fougeray de Beauclair Bonnes-Mares, Grand Cru (rated 91 points by Burghound) at 160.00
- 6 2003 Fougeray de Beauclair Bonnes-Mares, Grand Cru (rated 89-92 points by Burghound) at 160.00

All prices quoted for per bottle in Singapore dollar. Prices indicated "in red" are inclusive of 5% GST.

Free delivery for purchases of S\$350 and above, otherwise S\$15 per delivery will apply.

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