



## A Bullseye for Bichot

By Michael Apstein

Jun 1, 2022

The house of Albert Bichot made an outstanding line-up of both red and white Burgundies in **2020**, no mean feat since the growing conditions made success with both colors difficult because of the heat. Many critics, myself included, have raved about the overall success of the 2020 vintage for white Burgundies. I was equally enthusiastic about the reds initially, but now, having tasted a greater range of them, I realize that there is enormous variability among them. Some are spectacular and others, reflecting the heat of the growing season, are overblown, heavy, and alcoholic. However, my enthusiasm for the whites, from the Chablis in the north to the Mâconnais in the south, remains strong.

I tasted only two wines from Bichot during my three visits to Burgundy in the fall of 2021 and March 2022, a stellar **Corton-Charlemagne**, and an equally superb **Corton Grand Cru Clos des Maréchaudes**, so I was especially pleased when they sent me a dozen samples nicely packaged in glass-stopper-sealed 200-ml bottles. Among the samples was **Corton Grand Cru Clos des Maréchaudes**, which showed just as beautifully from the 200-ml tasting sample as it did from the normal 750-ml bottle from which it was poured in March. It reinforced my opinion of the stature of the wine. It also assured me that the samples overall were in good condition and accurately reflected the wines.

Founded in 1831, Albert Bichot, still a family-run business, is one of Burgundy's venerable négociants. Like other top houses such as Maison Louis Jadot, Maison Louis Latour, and Maison Robert Drouhin, they both own vineyards throughout Burgundy and buy grapes or must from growers. The wines Bichot makes from their own vineyards are bottled under the names of six different domaines, which are, moving, from north to south, the 165-acre Domaine Long-Depaquit in Chablis, the 18.5-acre Domaine du Clos Frantin and almost 9-acre Château Gris in Nuits-St.-Georges, (both in Côte du Nuits), the 38-acre Domaine du Pavillon in Pommard (Côte de Beaune), and the almost 20-acre Domaine Adélie in Mercurey (Côte Chalonnaise) and the 13-acre Domaine du Rochegrès in Moulin-à-Vent (Beaujolais).

Not only was Bichot successful with both colors, they succeeded with both their négociant bottlings and their domaine wines.

Bichot's charming **Fleurie La Madone** had just the right amount of spice and energy to balance its fruitiness (**90 pts**). It's delicious now.

With a seamless combination of red fruit and earthy notes, their floral **Beaune Clos de l'Ermitage** showed just how enticing a village red wine can be in 2020 (**93 pts**). Enjoyable even now, a few years in the cellars with amplify its charms.

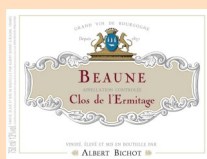
Bénigne Joliet, owner of the famed **1er Cru Clos de la Perrière** monopole in **Fixin** sells a bit of his harvest to Bichot. In 2020 Bichot made an elegant wine showing the darker-fruited and alluring character of the Côte de Nuits (**93 pts**). This one will benefit from up to a decade in the cellar.

From the Domaine Adélie comes a delightful **Mercurey En Pierre Milley** delivering bright, cherry-like fruit offset by a hint of stoniness that makes it ideal for current consumption (**90 pts**).

In contrast, the Domaine du Pavillon's velvety **Volnay 1er Cru Les Santenots**, needs time. It's poised, possessing lovely structure and concentration without a trace of heaviness (**94 pts**).



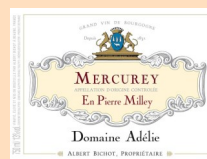
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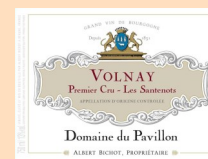
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The Clos de Maréchaudes vineyard on the east-facing side of the hill of Corton is emblematic of the complexities of Burgundy: a portion is classified as Grand Cru, whereas another portion was only awarded Premier Cru status. Bichot's youthful **Corton Grand Cru Clos des Maréchaudes** (1.3-acre monopole of the Domaine du Pavillon) displays an appealing iron-tinged character. Layered and luxurious, it is truly worthy of its Grand Cru status. It's explosive, yet not heavy, with invigorating acidity that keeps it fresh (**96 pts**). You will be rewarded for a decade of cellaring.

Turning to the whites, we come to Bichot's lip-smacking **Bourgogne Aligoté Champ Renard** from Domaine Adélie. Though ripe for Aligoté—here, again, the vintage speaking—it nonetheless has the great verve you'd expect from that grape. It's a refreshing white that's sure to cut through this or next summer's heat and humidity (**91 pts**).

Bichot's white, **Bourgogne Hautes-Côtes de Nuits**, may lack the breeding of the best Côte de Beaune whites, but it has good density, is amiable and refreshing, and will be more affordable than its Côte de Beaune cousins (**90 pts**).

If you needed more evidence that village wines should be embraced, look no further than **Domaine du Pavillon's Meursault**. Rich, creamy and energetic, it towers above many lesser producers' Premier Crus (**93 pts**). With its 165 acres, the Domaine Long-Depaquit is a long-time leader in Chablis.



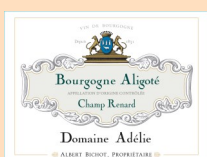
Their monopole, **Moutonne**, a nearly 6-acre plot, 95 percent of which lies in Vaudésir and the remainder in Les Preuses, is unique, spanning two Grand Cru vineyards in the heart of the appellation, but carrying the name of neither. Though I didn't taste it this round, it's always one of their top Chablis.

Domaine Long-Depaquit's youthful and penetrating **Chablis Les Vaudésirs** is ripe yet stone-y and tight as a coiled spring (**94 pts**). Chablis-lovers should put this in their cellars for a decade. In the meantime, look for their floral and mineral **Chablis 1er Cru Les Vaucopins**, which is seemingly delicate, but amazes with its presence and length (**93 pts**).

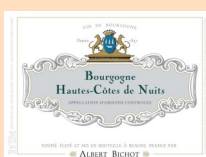
In short, judging from these samples, you can close your eyes and point when buying Bichot's 2020 and be very happy. These wines are pure, reflective of their origins, balanced and—most important—energetic. Not a single one is hot, disjointed or overdone.



96 pts



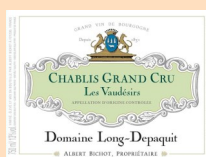
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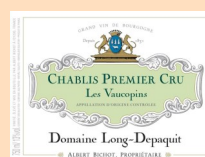
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