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A tasting of Romanée St-Vivant with Jasper Morris, Master of Wine

Tuesday, 23rd September 2025

hosted by Klaus Umek

Browns Hotel,
33 Albemarle St, London W1S 4BP





EXPLORING ROMANÉE ST-VIVANT

One of Burgundy's most illustrious Grands Crus, Romanée St-Vivant can be explored through the prism of six great producers: Domaine de la Romanée-Conti, Domaine de l'Arlot, Sylvain Cathiard & Fils, Domaine Dujac, Domaine Hudelot-Noëllat and Domaine Arnoux-Lachaux whose wines will be compared across the contrasting vintages of 2009 and 2017.

Romanée St-Vivant

An evangelist from Samaria, St Viventius, came to the Vendée on the Atlantic coast in the fourth century to convert the natives. In due course a humble monastery was set up around his tomb, although the monks were forced to flee, carrying his relics with them, when menaced by the rapacious Normans in 868. They settled in Burgundy on the hill of Vergy, close to Nuits-St-Georges.

The first mention of the name Romanée de St-Vivant for the vineyard dates to 1765. After dispossession by the Revolutionaries it was sold to Nicolas-Joseph Marey in 1791. The whole of the vineyard then remained with the Marey-Monge family until the Clos des Quatre Journaux was sold to Louis Latour in 1898. Most of the remainder was ceded to Domaine de la Romanée Conti on a farming contract in 1966, until outright purchase in 1988.

The soil is relatively deep (90cm) and rich in both clay and active chalk. Given also that there is negligible slope, the vineyard does not drain particularly well so is difficult to work after rain. However there is no question as to the quality of the wines, which have the quintessential hallmark of Vosne- Romanée in the haunting quality of the fruit. Domaine de la Romanée-Conti's Aubert de Villaine has described Romanée St-Vivant as offering "a marvel of delicacy and finesse, a desire to seduce which one cannot resist".



ROMANÉE ST-VIVANT – Vineyards



Producer holdings

Domaine de la Romanee Conti	5.29ha	No 1 on the map
Domaine Leroy	0.99ha	No 2 on the map
Domaine Hudelot-Noellat	0.48ha	No 6 on the map
Domaine Arnoux-Lachaux	0.35 ha	No 7 on the map
Domaine de l'Arlot	0.35 ha	No 8 on the map
Domaine Cathiard	0.35 ha	No 9 on the map
Domaine Dujac	0.35 ha	No 10 on the map



ROMANÉE ST-VIVANT – Producers

Domaine de l'Arlot

The domaine was created in 1987 by AXA Millésimes and Jean-Pierre de Smet, via the purchase of Domaine Jules Belin and renamed it Domaine de l'Arlot after their Monopole vineyard in Nuits-St-Georges. In 1991 they were able to buy a small slice of Romanée St-Vivant and the following year some Vosne-Romanée Les Suchots, bringing the domaine up to 14 hectares in all. Jean-Pierre de Smet made the wines from 1987 to 2006, then Olivier Leriche (2006-2011), Jacques Devauges (2011-2013) and since 2013 Geraldine Godot.

The vineyards have been farmed biodynamically in part since 2000 and entirely from 2003. Right from the start there was a clear wine-making influence from Domaine Dujac – Jean-Pierre being a long-time friend and protégé of Jacques Seysses. Stalks were retained as much as possible, though much less so since 2011.

2017 Tasting Notes

2009 Tasting Notes



Domaine Sylvain Cathiard & Fils

Sylvain Cathiard, third generation of the family in Burgundy, made the wines here from 1995 to 2010 and really put this small domaine on the map thanks to the quality of his Vosne-Romanée Les Malconsorts 1er Cru and his Grand Cru Romanée St-Vivant. He had an unmatched way of marrying the perfume of fine ripe grapes with the class of well-chosen new oak to make hauntingly lovely wines which were gorgeous even in their youth. The recipe then was for 50 per cent new oak for the village wines and 100 per cent for premier and grand cru.

Sébastien Cathiard, who took over in 2011, has evolved the style of the wines. I find them less seductive in youth but likely to be more interesting in maturity. The vineyards are becoming closer to organic farming, and I suspect that yields have been reduced. The long cold soak before vinification continues, and the grapes are still destemmed, but there is less new oak: none on the generic wines, 50% at village level, and 50 to 65% for the crus. Most of the barrels come from Remond, three years air-dried with long but light toasting.

2017 Tasting Notes

2009 Tasting Notes



Domaine Dujac

In November 1967 the young Jacques Seysses bought a small domaine based in Morey-St- Denis, Domaine Graillet, and renamed it after himself – The Domaine of Jacques: Domaine Dujac. In 1973 Jacques married Rosalind Boswell, a Californian girl who came to work the 1971 vintage and stayed for life. The first two of their three children, Jeremy (born 1975), Alec (1977) are now involved in the business, as is Jeremy's wife Diana, also Californian and a trained oenologist. The domaine is now certified both organic and biodynamic.

The domaine has expanded over the years as additional parcels became available, culminating in the acquisition of some exceptional vineyards from Domaine Thomas- Moillard in 2005. Their small holdings of Chambertin and Romanée-St-Vivant are not usually released into the market at all. The Dujac wines are noted for whole bunch vinification.

2017 Tasting Notes

2009 Tasting Notes



Domaine Alain Hudelot-Noëllat

The domaine has extensive holdings based around the Noëllat heartland of Vosne-Romanée and covering all the villages from Nuits-St-Georges to Chambolle-Musigny. In particular, they make a stellar range of 1ers Crus from Vosne-Romanée, topped by the pairing of Grands Crus Romanée-St Vivant (from vines planted in the 1920s) and Richebourg.

Charles van Canneyt arrived at the domaine to take over from his grandfather Alain in 2008. In the last few years Charles has led this domaine to the forefront of quality producers in the Côte de Nuits, without deviating from his grandfather's aim of making fine, fragrant wines. He has joined neither the high trellising nor the biodynamic movements, and nor has he embraced whole bunch vinification, but he is nonetheless seen as a leader of his generation. With a few vintages under his belt Charles seems to have mastered the perfect balance – delivering enough body to the wines without compromising the nuanced and ethereal style of burgundy for which this domaine is reputed.

2017 Tasting Notes

2009 Tasting Notes



Domaine de la Romanée Conti

Domaine de la Romanée Conti is co-owned by the de Villaine and Leroy/Roch families. The former are successors to Jacques-Marie Duvault-Blochet, who bought the vineyard of La Romanée Conti in 1869; the latter acquired the shares of other descendants of Duvault-Blochet in 1942. The domaine is today run by Bertrand de Villaine and Perrine Fenal, daughter of Lalou Bize-Leroy, as co-directors. After the 70 year stewardship in the cellar of Andre Noblet and then his son Bernard, winemaking has passed to Alexandre Bernier starting with the 2018 vintage.

The **Romanée St-Vivant holding** formerly belonged to the Marey-Monge family, but was farmed and made by the domaine from 1966 and purchased in 1988. It is a beautifully refined, stylish wine, perhaps having more in common with La Romanée Conti itself than the more rugged Richebourg. This vineyard has made considerable progress as a result of careful attention, especially to the drainage. Part of the vineyard was replanted with higher quality pinot material in 2005, with another sector having been topgrafted the previous year, and the final plot of less than ideal plant material was pulled out in 2009 for replanting between 2012 and 2014.

2017 Tasting Notes

2009 Tasting Notes



Domaine Arnoux-Lachaux

This domaine situated on the main road in Vosne-Romanée was previously named Robert Arnoux. He retired in 1987 when his son-in-law Pascal Lachaux took over, and twenty years later the label was changed to reflect both family names, Arnoux-Lachaux. Charles Lachaux joined his father in 2011, getting involved in the winemaking the following year and converting the vineyards from 2014. Charles (born 1989) is a key member of an influential group of younger vignerons.

The grandest vineyard in the Arnoux-Lachaux stable is their small holding of Romanée St-Vivant, at the southern end of the cru, next to Cathiard. Robert Arnoux was able to buy it in 1984, though the domaine had been sharecropper of this plot since 1928, shortly after the vines were planted.

2017 Tasting Notes



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