

Burgundy Report

By Bill Nanson - Tasted with Aurélie Berthod in Pernand-Vergelesses, 18 March 2021.

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Roger Jaffelin. That's the name of the old domaine here in Pernand-Vergelesses. You've probably never heard of it but I'm sure you'll soon know of the new owner. Today it's under, seemingly, very dynamic management and producing some great wines.

Aurélie Berthod may have been born in Alsace, but it seemed that she was cut out for a different career – majoring on business studies – her parents had a supermarket franchise in Besançon and from an academic perspective it looked like that could be the path for Aurélie too. That was until she got the bug for wines – aided, of course, by meeting somebody with a family domaine in Bligny-lès-Beaune! For a time Aurélie commuted between the family home in Besançon and Beaune until her first child was born “*And then the commuting became too complicated – so I chose Burgundy!*”

Choosing Burgundy meant helping her in-laws with their domaine – managing and developing the administrative part of her in-laws' business. It was during this time that she took the chance to study a more wine-centric curriculum at the CFPPA in Beaune. That was until 2017 when Aurélie had the opportunity to acquire a complete domaine of her own – 5.5 hectares of vines spread across Pernand-Vergelesses, Chorey-lès-Beaune and Beaune. Domaine Jaffelin had, for a number of years, been selling their harvest in bulk until finally deciding to sell the domaine as a whole. There were rows of old concrete tanks here in a discrete cuverie when Aurélie arrived, so one of her first jobs was replacing those with new stainless-steel tanks – her current project is the addition of thermo-regulation as you can't do it all at once. She got plenty of help for her first vintage, learning how to work in the cellar and each year doing more on her own. 2020 was her first completely solo effort.

Because Aurélie wasn't known, she decided to present 5 of her 2017 wines to the Tastevinage blind tastings – and 4 were selected by the Tastevinage – and not just that, her 2017 Pernand-Vergelesses was selected as one of the [Tastevinage Majors](#) in 2018. To put that into context, one of the top 20 wines tasted from over 1,000 submitted.

Aurélie seems to take pragmatic approaches, explaining that, as an exception, she harvested all her 2020s by machine “*It was the covid year but the optical triage is also included in this single pass through the vines. My main principle is to harvest ripe grapes – if they are not you can add sugar and all those things but nothing works as well as when they start ripe. To start with, I cooled the fermentation tanks and made a few remontages – that's it! My elevage is typically for 12 months though I did a little less in 2017.*”

After my blind-tasting of 2018 Beaune in this month's report, I set about visiting some of the producers that were new to me who had made my list of one dozen great wines – Aurélie was the first on that list. Currently, Aurélie is selling her wines to individual clients, salons (at one time!) and by word of mouth. She already has some exports but that side of the business is only just starting.

The wines...

If Aurélie had bought a domaine with parcels of Vosne and maybe a grand cru, or two, she would have been sold-out for sure, but this is Pernand and things move slower. What has not been slow is the astonishing

level of quality that she's extracted from her vines almost from the very start. Some great wines and a name to follow closely!

Aurélié has hardly started selling her 2018s and her 2019s were only bottled in December – she proposes to start selling those in about 6 more months. We took a small tour of her cuvées. Note, all her wines are sealed with DIAM⁵:

2018 Pernand-Vergelesses Blanc

Two parcels deep into the valley towards Echevronne – quite close to the domaine.

That's quite a mineral nose – PV-reductive in style so very classic. Roundness but freshness too – an agrume fruit and a good blend of energy and width. Very long – nicely typical. That's a very good wine...

2018 Pernand-Vergelesses 1er Creux de la Net Blanc

Classic, vibrant, slightly reductive PV nose. More silky, depth of flavour, really mouth-watering and with good intensity – that's a super finish too.

2018 Pernand-Vergelesses Rouge

One parcel in Sous les Cloux

Dark-red fruit on the nose but with plenty of freshness. Modestly mouth-filling, but nicely pure and with a fine mouth-watering side. A good attack to this wine, modest bitters in the finish – a wine that opens out well and finishes well – keep this for a little while in your cellar but this is very tasty.

2018 Beaune 1er Belissand

Tons of colour. The nose is textured and wide – darkly fruited. There is energy, depth and concentration here – plenty of tannic grain but very fine – a wine of intensity and freshness – very long. Simply excellent.

2018 Pernand-Vergelesses 1er Les Fichots Rouge

Lots of colour again. A little freshness and clarity of dark fruit – super-attractive. Hmm – I like that even more than the Beaune – fresh, energetic, incisive, darkly fruited – really persistent. That's a great wine!

2019 Hautes Côtes de Beaune, Grand Corvée de Bully

Hautes Côtes but on the other side of the valley, directly facing the other wines of the domaine.

Much less colour. Really perfumed red fruit – cassis and violets! Sweet, perfumed flavour, a little grain of tannin some nice depth to the texture. A much easier wine and with plenty of richness but a rewarding flavour – decant or wait 6 months but a relatively early drinker here and it's delicious too.

2019 Chorey-lès-Beaune

Grand Champs Long and Petits Champs Long, combined

Lots of colour here. Darkly fruited – a little licorice-stick impression to this nose too. More concentrated, supple – lots of flavour here, a fine grain of tannin at the base and maybe a suggestion of smoky oak. That's a very tasty wine, too easy to drink – a cordial clarity to the fruit. Long too – that's excellent Chorey.

2019 Pernand-Vergelesses 1er Creux de la Net Rouge

Oh, that's a very dark nose – licorice and graphite and a blackcurrant-style fruit. Fresh, wide – that's a beauty – concentrated yet with sweeping fresh lines – no fat here – the finish slowly lingering – dark but great!

2019 Pernand-Vergelesses 1er Les Fichots

A width of aroma – spiced with a little barrel – the first. There's width here but also a direct style to the wine – framed with a little sweetness of oak but the flavour still grows wider and wider from here. This is finely mouth-watering. Less incisive than the previous but that could be the oak. Give this a couple of years in the cellar, you won't be disappointed...