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Domaine Latour-Giraud

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The growth cycle was over by the end of September in 2013, said Jean-Pierre Latour, and there wasn't much to gain by waiting any longer to harvest. He picked between September 27 and October 3, describing himself as "among the first one-third to harvest in Meursault." He brought in fruit with 12.2% alcohol "at most," then chaptalized by about a half-degree. The post-malo wines have good acidity, in the 4.3 grams-per-liter range for the village wines. Yields were very low, as the old vines in particular suffered during the flowering. Interestingly, Latour compared his 2013s to his 2010s: "They're classic but without quite the same early *eclat* to their fruit. They're not the most joyous wines today. But we had cleaner grapes in 2013 than in 2012, and the '13s are not fragile wines."

Happily, they were also a lot easier to taste than the '12s were a year ago, as the earlier set of wines had barely begun their malolactic fermentations--in fact, several of them did not finish until November of '13. Latour expressed the opinion that the 2012s did not have enough energy to go through their malos early. On the other hand, they retained good acidity (around 4.5 grams per liter) and have powerful, pure fruit. "The small volume of wine permitted high quality," he summarized, "and the late malos served to preserve the fruit, but some people pressed too much to get a bit more wine." Both 2012 and 2013 appear to be very successful here, with the top 2013s particularly impressive in the context of their vintage. I'm not sure if Latour has yet been properly recognized as one of the most thoughtful and intelligent producers in the village.

2012 Meursault Cuvee Charles Maxime(\$70) Bright, pale yellow. Aromatic nose combines lemon, lime, fresh apricot and a floral note, along with a tropical fruit element. Lush, soft and round, showing good stuffing but modest early personality. Finishes with good acid grip but a touch of sourness. This is 13.5% natural alcohol in 2012, and the average yield here was just 22 hectoliters per hectare, according to Latour. 88

2012 Meursault Les Narvaux(\$80) Pale, bright yellow. Pure aromas of white peach, lemon and hazelnut. Silky and juicy in the mouth, with lovely intensity and framing acidity (4.9 grams per liter, according to Latour) to its lemon, lime and mineral flavors. Really spreads out on the tactile, lemony back end. An excellent vintage for this *cuvee*. 91

2012 Meursault Le PoruzotPale bright yellow. Aromas of peach oil, hazelnut and honey. Distinctly oilier in texture than the Narvaux, and larger-scaled. Nicely concentrated, rich and ripe but without quite the cut or grip of the Narvaux. Slightly more aggressive and less harmonious today, this rather massive wine will need a couple years in bottle to absorb some of its alcohol and baby fat. There was just a single one-year-old barrel of this juice in 2012, vs. two in 2011 and three in 2009. 90

2012 Meursault Les Charmes(\$110) Bright medium yellow. Discreet, pure aromas of citrus peel, hazelnut and acacia flower. Combines good volume and lemony depth, with bright acidity giving shape and precision to the middle palate. Fresh, distinguished wine with considerable elegance and a long, subtle finish. Lovely flavor intensity here. 92

2012 Meursault Les Genevrieres(\$115) Bright, light yellow. Aromas of yellow peach, orange peel, acacia blossom and spices convey an impression of punch. Then dense and creamy but firm in the mouth, with ripe acidity and dusty extract leavening the wine's ripeness and extending the ripe, sweet, refined finish. Very fresh and complete Genevrieres, and more complex than the Charmes. 93

2012 Meursault Les Perrieres(\$125) Bright, light yellow with green highlights. Distinctly cooler aromas of lime and crushed stone, with a topnote of lavender. Stony, classically dry and rich, with a bit of citric bitterness leavened by an impression of chewy extract. The tightest of these 2012s to this point, conveying a drier, more mineral impression. Perhaps most impressive today on the gripping, bright finish, which leaves the mouth perfumed. This will need a good four or five years in the cellar. 92(+?)

2012 Puligny-Montrachet Champs-Canet(\$125) Pale lemon-yellow. Shy aromas of white peach and

hazelnut. Juicy, dry and penetrating, boasting excellent cut to the peach and salty mineral flavors. A strong element of lemony extract contributes to the impression of firm structure. Real Puligny spine here, even a bit austere for 2012. The long finish features lovely floral lift. Classic Puligny, and quite distinct in character from Latour's Meursault premier crus in 2012. 92+

2012 Meursault Les Genevrières Cuvee Des Pierres(\$140) (14% natural alcohol!): Bright, pale yellow. Wonderfully pure, vibrant nose combines lemon zest, hazelnut and sexy musky oak. Fat, silky and sweet, with an impressively fine-grained texture and terrific energy. A Meursault of outstanding plenitude, with a touch of residual sugar (2.2 grams per liter) to buffer its alcoholic richness. Slowly mounting minerality ensures plenty of inner-mouth tension. This beauty can be enjoyed now for its sheer richness but should age gracefully over the next 12 to 15 years. 94

2013 Meursault Cuvee Charles Maxime(malo done and racked ten days before my visit): Pale, bright yellow. Citrus peel, ginger and white pepper on the piquant nose. Fresh apricot fruit is lifted by lime and minerals. Offers good volume for 2013 and finishes with tactile saline minerality. Excellent potential here. 87-90

2013 Meursault Les Narvaux(malo finished and sulfited): Bright medium yellow. Musky aromas and flavors of orange zest, lemon, quinine, ginger and minerals. At once dense and juicy, with a touch of spicy sweetness contributing lift in the mouth. Finishes dusty, thick and persistent, with a distinctly saline minerality. This wine is the highest in acidity of these 2013s, with 4.8 grams per liter, but it's nicely integrated. 90-92

2013 Meursault Les Bouchères(malo done and sulfited; from fruit picked on the first day): Pale, green-tinged yellow. Musky, very ripe aromas of mango, green melon and smoky, nutty oak. Fat and silky in the mouth, showing a bit less cut and more warmth than the Narvaux. But holds its shape nicely owing to the vintage's healthy acidity. (Incidentally, Latour did not offer a Bouchères in 2012. He had just one barrel and thought it had a dry taste and not enough fruit so he put it into the Charles Maxime.) 89-91

2013 Meursault Le Poruzot(at the end of its malolactic fermentation and not yet sulfited; just one of six barrels is new, the rest one and two years old): Hazy light yellow. Lemon drop on the nose, plus a hint of caramel apple. Nicely concentrated and clean, with cutting acidity energizing the apricot and saline mineral flavors. Finishes with serious oily length and a gripping citric quality. But obviously in a rather disjointed stage today. 90-92

2013 Meursault Les Charmes(two-thirds of the way through its secondary fermentation): Hazy pale yellow. Lemon drop and a malic apple note on the nose. Glyceric and dense but bracing, with lovely lemony cut and serious underlying minerality. Very concentrated, intense Charmes with brisk acidity and terrific grip. The crop level here was just 27 hectoliters per hectare, according to Jean-Pierre Latour, due mainly to the poor flowering but also partly to hail losses. 91-93

2013 Meursault Les Genevrières(malo done and sulfited): Bright, pale yellow. Very pure but shy aromas of orange zest, pineapple, lemon, acacia flower and stone. Boasts outstanding volume and breadth to its unctuous fruit but penetrating limey acidity (4.6 grams per liter, according to Latour) gives definition to the middle palate and cuts through the wine's *sucrosité*. Wonderfully classy, full Genevrières with a gripping, tactile, very long finish that leaves the mouth perfumed. This may yet surpass the terrific 2012. 92-94

2013 Meursault Les Perrières(malo done and sulfited): Bright pale yellow. Aromas of pineapple, grapefruit and crushed stone are accented by a hint of white pepper; more about soil than primary fruit. Dense, rich and powerful, with lovely sweetness and lift to the flavors of pineapple and lime blossom. Ultimately less voluptuous than the Genevrières and more solidly structured and backward on the aftertaste. This will need some time in bottle for its full complement of flavors to blossom. 92-94

2013 Puligny-Montrachet Champs-Canet(malo done and sulfited; 13.5% alcohol without chaptalization; picked at the beginning in 2012, along with the Meursault Bouchères): Bright yellow. Fleshy ripe peach on the classic sexy Puligny nose, complicated by acacia flower and gingery spices. A fat, sweet peach bomb on the palate; plush and fine-grained, offering terrific breadth without undue weight. Tactile, dusty and very concentrated, finishing peachy and long, with a youthful firm edge. 92-94

2013 Meursault Les Genevrieres Cuvee Des Pierres(one new barrel and two two-year-old barrels; I tasted a representative blend; malo done and sulfited; 13.8% natural alcohol): Healthy bright, green-tinged yellow. Quite withdrawn on the nose, hinting at peach, pineapple and gingery oak. Densely packed, sappy and sweet, conveying a powerful impression of extract. The wine's great volume and *sucrosite* are leavened by chewy minerality. Finishes tactile, gripping and extremely long, with outstanding dusty lift. Stunning potential here, one of my early candidates for premier cru of the vintage. 93-95

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