

Burgundy BEAUS

Inevitably, my ardent love affair with French wine started in Burgundy. For a young wine novice in her early 20s, a whole new world began to unfold after a memorable journey that started in the Chablis and Grand Auxerrois regions and ended in the Mâconnais. During the course of one delicious week, I drove some 230 kilometres, tasting my way through the regional appellations (there are currently 84), sniffing and swirling with winegrowers who made me blush with their charm and broadening my palate like never before. I often say it was in Burgundy that I truly learned to appreciate wine, but if I were to be more specific, I would say it was in the Côte-d'Or. Located in the heart of the viticultural region and often referred to as the 'golden slope', the east-facing escarpment produces some of the world's most prestigious wines. And it is here where we find two stunning examples of the great finesse these vineyards bring forth: the Secret de Famille Chardonnay and Secret de Famille Pinot Noir. Highlighting Burgundy's main varietals and carefully crafted by Maison Albert Bichot, both are classics that will introduce you to what the region has to offer – no wine journey required. But first a few words about the renowned house, which took root in Monthélie (about 10 kilometres to the southwest of Beaune) when it was founded by Bernard Bichot in 1831. The family, however, has a history that dates to 1214. Named after Bernard's son and permanently settling in Beaune in 1912, Maison Albert Bichot has remained in the hands of the same family to this day – a common thread with many of the estates in Burgundy, which are passed down from generation to generation. Today, the house owns six estates stretching from the north to the south of the entire Burgundy wine region and covering well over 100 hectares of vineyards. Maison Albert Bichot has been voted as one of the world's best winemakers. And rightly so.



The 2020 Secret de Famille Chardonnay (made with grapes harvested from plots in Meursault, Puligny-Montrachet and Saint-Aubin) opens with zesty citrus aromas and delicate floral notes that give way to hints of ripe pear and a whisper of butterscotch. On the palate, this medium-bodied wine exhibits a supple roundness highlighted by subtle oaky nuances, yet it manages to retain a refreshing minerality. As though I'm biting into a freshly baked *tartelette au citron*. Seafood or poultry dishes that marry a bit of tang with a touch of succulence will work well with this wine. For example, linguine with king crab in a lemon-cream sauce or roasted cornish game hens with lemon polenta. A brilliant meat-free pairing would be cauliflower risotto crowned with lemony pangrattato. The 2018 Pinot Noir vintage is an elegant gastronomic wine with lush aromas of jammy forest fruits, cherry, earth and a refined spice finish. The palate is bright and well-structured with a pleasant acidity. The perfect pairing? Charolais steaks, a mushroom-potato gratin – or both.

Available at vinvinwines.nl

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