

## Mâconnais 2022/2023: Don't Pass Me By, by Neal Martin



Pouilly-Vinzelles and Pouilly-Loché are hot on the heels of Pouilly-Fuissé, which has recently obtained 22 Premier Cru's status. This pair is further down the line, unlike several other appellations, so the inaugural Premier Crus are anticipated with the 2024 vintage. I suspect their promotion will attract fewer headlines. While these two appellations are smaller, spanning 52 and 32 hectares, respectively, compared to the 758 of Pouilly-Fuissé. Moreover, they are less well-known. Nonetheless, promotion should reinforce the idea that Mâconnais possesses terroir that merits recognition beyond Pouilly-Fuissé. In other words, it is not a one-trick pony.

According to Jean-Philippe Bret of Domaine de la Soufrandière/Bret Bros, the specific areas up for upgrade within Pouilly-Vinzelles include around 13 hectares of Les Quarts, almost the entirety, plus around 7 hectares of Les Longeays and 3 hectares of Les Pétaux. Apropos Pouilly-Loché, 7 hectares in Les Mûres, is being considered for promotion. "Like the Pouilly-Fuissé Premiers Crus, herbicides will be forbidden," Bret tells me. "That is very good for everybody: producers, consumers and the planet! The INAO considers Premiers Crus amongst the best and, like most of the best wines in the world, so they must be hand-picked. I would say that more than 50-60% of the surface of the Pouilly-Vinzelles or Pouilly-Loché (Les Quarts, Les Longeays, Les Pétaux) produced in 2023 are already being picked by hand. To allow anybody to convert to manual harvesting, the INAO will grant derogations to permit machine harvesting for four more years."

It is always important to have co-operatives on the side. They often have different tenets to artisan producers with an eye on maintaining entry-level price points that preclude expensive practices. However, Bret tells me that within Pouilly-Vinzelles and Loché, they represent around 20% of the surface area up for promotion. Of course, it allows the co-operatives to charge more than current prices and gain kudos.

I asked Bret if he sees stylistic differences between Pouilly-Vinzelles and Pouilly-Loché. "I would say that Pouilly-Vinzelles is maybe more elegant than the Pouilly-Fuissé from Chaintré, more citrus style, especially in Les Quarts."

I also wanted to know if he had seen any changes in perception after their own Pouilly-Fuissé Au Vignerai was granted Premier Cru status in 2020.

"Yes, this is really like a spotlight for our appellations. It will probably take time to communicate about them [to consumers]. Even if few contest it nowadays, these Premiers Crus confirm Mâconnais' status in Burgundy. Everyone benefits from that. The real deal is to make amazing wines with honest and affordable prices. To me, wine is made to be shared and appreciated. Mâconnais and the Pouilly-Vinzelles are some fantastic alternatives to more expensive Burgundian [i.e., Côte d'Or] wines and must continue this way."

Certainly, tasting the Pouilly-Vinzelles from Bret's Domaine de la Soufrandière and Domaine de la Croix Senaillet, the wines are already worthy of promotion and have been for several years.

vinous

? pts

**Bret Brothers 2022 Pouilly-Fuissé Climat En Carementrant Cuvée Zen**

Pouilly Fuissé, Mâconnais, Burgundy

White wine from France

**Drinking window:**

The Domaine's own team entirely picks the 2022 Pouilly-Fuissé Climat En Carementrant Cuvée Zen from organically cultivated bunches and sees no SO<sub>2</sub>. This is spicy on the nose, with hints of dried honey and stem ginger mixed with rhubarb. The palate lives up to its name, Zen-like and leaner than their other cuvées, but maybe I would like more substance towards the finish. It just tapers away a little, and I suspect there might be some TCA here.

Neal Martin. Tasting date: June 2024

© 2025 Vinous Media

vinous

90 pts

**Domaine La Soufrandière 2012 X-Taste**

Mâconnais, Burgundy

White wine from France

**Drinking window: 2024 - 2038**

The 2012 X-Taste comes from partially botrytized Chardonnay that fully fermented and aged in a single barrel without topping up (actually, they forgot to do it!) for ten years. With walnut, smoke and a touch of pear drop on the nose, this is nicely defined, and the oxidation is not overwhelming. The palate has a slightly viscous texture but with an oxidative style, not a million miles away from Vin Jaune, and a persistent, harmonious finish. This works well.

Neal Martin. Tasting date: June 2024

© 2025 Vinous Media

From Mâconnais 2022/2023: Don't Pass Me By (Aug 2024)

**Bret Brothers**

Jean-Philippe Bret welcomed me to their Domaine in Pouilly-Vinzelles on a gorgeous Tuesday morning once I had steered my rental car through the work site of the Brets cellar extension. We undertook a tasting through their complete portfolio of 2022s, which takes in around 25 cuvées, including their négociant "Bret Brothers" label. "There was no filtration," Jean-Philippe Bret tells me. "The wines spent 12 months in barrels, then racked and transferred for six months in a stainless steel tank. We take a lot of lees when the barrels are racked in August, and these settle [the wines] during the autumn." I have enjoyed these wines for many years; they are explorations in terroirs and biodynamics. High points include stupendous showing from Pouilly-Vinzelles Les Longeays and Les Quarts, hopefully promoted to Premier Cru status in the future. There's always a sense of adventure with their range, this year including a "Bret Nat" (get it?), a partially botrytized/oxidized Chardonnay, and a less successful richer cuvée with 62g/L residual sugar. Readers should also seek out their 2022 Saint-Véran Climat La Bonnode, which represents fantastic value.

**Grape/Blend**

Chardonnay

**Release price**

Not Available