

Paul Pernot & Fils

Interview

This interview with Michel Pernot took place in Puligny-Montrachet in July, 2012.

Introduce us to domaine *Paul Pernot*.

The estate is spread over 23 hectares, split between three children and my parents. My brother and I are the 5th or 6th generation to work this land, and my brother Paul's son, Philippe, has been working with us for a while as well. My great-great grandfather was a négociant here in Puligny, and eventually purchased some vines. Other parcels were inherited through family, all of which culminated in *Domaine Paul Pernot*.

How has it evolved since you and your brother took over?

Paul and I have been purchasing vines over the last 30 years. We made some great acquisitions 25 years ago; prices were a lot cheaper back then! We've been lucky enough to purchase Grand-Cru sites 3 times in our careers, and have acquired parcels of Pucelles, Folatières, Santenay, Beaune, Volnay, Pommard, as well as a good amount of Puligny-Village over the years. We've also planted some regional appellations, including Bourgogne Chardonnay and Bourgogne Pinot Noir. It's crazy; 20 years ago, we could only sell (generic) Bourgogne wines to brokers, and we'd see almost no financial return. Nowadays, we don't have a single bottle left at the end of the season.

How old are the vines?

It varies a lot, but everything that is 1er-Cru and Grand-Cru are very old. These are vines that my father planted back in 57, 58, 59, 60 and 61. They are in good shape, and we won't be ripping them out. In 20 years, I'm sure these vines will still be there: they aren't sick, they aren't degenerating. And back then clones didn't exist, so everything is of course in selection massale. The regional appellations are a bit more recent, and are about 30-35 years old. The youngest are 20. Overall, the vines are aging, and aging well!

What's the work in the vines like?

We're letting more and more grass grow free, except in certain parcels where we cut and burn the grass rather than using herbicides. The vines are worked by a great team of guys, most who have been here 20-25 years.

What about in the cellar?

24 hours after performing a pneumatic press, we do a débourage, then rack the juice into barrels, where it ferments. After alcoholic and malolactic fermentation, we rack the wines again, fine the wines, then filter them lightly right before bottling.

The reds are more or less the same process. We de-stem the grapes, then do a short maceration of only 10 days in concrete tanks. We almost never filter them. Everything is bottled early in the summer, because we don't have a temperature controlled cellar and feel the wines would suffer if we

let them hang around in there in those hotter months.