

# Burgundy-Report

## Profile: Domaine Chandon de Briailles (Savigny-lès-Beaune)

Home for Domaine Chandon de Briailles is a beautiful house, set in equally beautiful gardens close to the centre of Savigny-lès-Beaune village. The house and its gardens were built between 1690 and 1705, and have long been admired; they are not just in the style of Versailles, they were actually designed by the same architect and 'landscape architect' who were responsible for the 'Château de Versailles'.

The current owners are the Count and Countess Aymard-Claude de Nicolay who inherited the domaine from their grandmother, the Countess Chandon de Briailles who, with her husband Pierre Guillemot purchased the house in 1834. The family of the Countess Chandon de Briailles is the same as connected to the Champagne house of Moët et Chandon. It is now two of their four children of the current owners - François de Nicolay and his sister Claude - who are responsible for the running of the domaine.



### The wines

The domaine owns approximately 13 hectares of vines, split between the villages of Savigny, Pernand and Aloxe. They are the largest landholder of Illes-des-Vergelesses, and the only domaine to grow both chardonnay and pinot noir there. Since 2005 the entire domaine has been managed on biodynamic principles, but the regime has been organic, already since 1995. They work hard in the vineyard, debudding and green harvesting, both of which contribute to yields that average no more than 35 hectoliters per hectare.

The winemaking often includes a large percentage of whole clusters in the fermentation of reds - especially for the Corton Clos du Roi there is often 100% whole clusters used, of-course it depends on the vintage, but the other wines may average between 50 and 70% whole clusters. There is extended lees contact for the whites, and about 20% of the domaine's production is white wine.

Practically no new oak is used - just a few new barrels each year - no more than 10 - but produced from from a selection of trees that they buy themselves and dry the wood at the domaine, eventually assembled by Francois Freres. Many barrels in use are as old as 15 years. I asked François how he likes to drink his wines: *"I like the wines after 10 years here - of course Corton can age, but now I like to drink the 1998, 1991 and 1990"*



Tasting on 29 Jan. 2010, the 2008s were sulfured and in the process of being bottled so here we concentrated mainly on 2007, but for the record François considers his 2008s to be fresh and intense, precise and crystalline, the whites showing very well.

**2007 Chandon de Briailles, Savigny-lès-Beaune 1er Les Lavières**

From chalky-soil, south facing 40 year-old vines. A soft and quite beautiful red fruit compote – gorgeous. Penetrating flavours, hints of mineral/wood, red fruit – this is quite linear but very approachable – very lovely.

**2007 Chandon de Briailles, Pernand-Vergelesses 1er Ille de Vergelesses**

Half-clay half chalk builds more body than in the Savigny Lavières, but often with a more floral dimension. Aromatically a little tighter than the Savigny, but again it's perfectly formed. More mid-palate width and a very nice level of freshness. Just a little more tannin and a long stone-fruit impression in the finish. Again lovely.

**2007 Chandon de Briailles, Corton Les Maréchaudes**

Under Bressandes from the northern part of Corton – more feminine and elegant than many. Medium colour. Tighter red fruits with a mineral dimension. Fuller in the mouth and the intensity is up a notch with impressively wide flavours, though the tannin seems on relatively background level. Slowly lingers on a savoury note.

**2007 Chandon de Briailles, Corton Bressandes**

More typically Corton – indeed from the heart of Corton. The nose has a deeper, sweeter red note that slowly adds a floral dimension. Fresh and with a more apparent structure – long flavours that hold strongly. Sweet and red, but not artificially so – very nice.

**2007 Chandon de Briailles, Corton Clos du Roi**

From the top part of the Clos, the ground is very poor, it can be quite mineral. The 'young' vines are about 25 years old but the average is close to 50. Slow to open, you need to work the glass to bring out a red-fruited mineral impression – it hardly hints to the 100% stems that lie behind. Again there's more structure, silky texture with an almost chewy backbone. Again a long, straight and powerful finish. Very, very good.

**2001 Chandon de Briailles, Corton Les Bressandes**

Wide, fresh red fruit that's coupled to hints of leaves with deeper, baked red fruits. Very smooth across the tongue, there's still plenty of tannin but it's oh-so silky. Still rather linear, but the flavour holds very well into the finish – still, it's very approachable.

**1997 Chandon de Briailles, Corton Clos du Roi**

Beautiful colour – it still looks young – François thinks this intensification of colour is down to the stems. Immediately wide and warm aromas that slowly develop higher tones and fresher fruit to match – there's plenty of mineral dimension to match. In the mouth this is sweet and well-textured – surprisingly fine and delicate acidity for the vintage. The flavours are starting to be augmented by a little chocolate. A really super 1997, bravo!

**2007 Chandon de Briailles, Pernand-Vergelesses 1er Ille de Vergelesses Blanc**

Deep aromas; a little pineapple and even tarte-tartin. Straight, linear, good concentration – it's very well balanced though the flavours are as tight as a drum – the texture is fine but the wine refuses to give up any flavour! Just a little burst of interest to get you into the finish, but no more today. I'm sure this will be excellent, but don't return for 2 or 3 years.

**2007 Chandon de Briailles, Corton Blanc**

From the higher part of Bressandes – not Charlemagne territory – which brings more roundness says François. The nose replays the tarte-tartin theme, but perhaps this time with a creme anglaise accompaniment! Concentrated and balanced – nothing ponderous about this Corton blanc as the acidity is just right. A wine to value in it's own right rather than an as an 'oddy'.

**2004 Chandon de Briailles, Corton Blanc**

Deeper aromas – more mineral and rocky in aspect. Fresh with a very good texture, the flavour insinuates itself into your gums – penetrating so as to linger. Again this is really good.

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