

Bourgogne Blanc, Vieilles Vignes 2003 Domaine Jean- Philippe Fichet

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Have currently substituted a 2003 burgundy stream for a bloodstream and they are absolutely fascinating – and deeply frustrating. Wine is a living thing and all that and we have all experienced bottles of the same wine that seem different. But samples of 2003 burgundies seem particularly capricious, even bearing in mind that burgundies are generally the most capricious wines in the world.

I plan to publish my overview of the vintage in the *FT* and wine news a week on Saturday on 29 jan (a week earlier than planned as I sense there is great interest in this vintage) backed up by hundreds of tasting notes, scores and likely ageing potential in the purple pages section of the site.

There's no doubt that there are far more successful red 2003s than whites. Nevertheless, I've chosen this white burgundy as one of the standout bargains of all that I have so far tasted as my wine of the week this week. Jean- Philippe Fichet of Meursault is a real rising star. I wrote a profile of him some years back when he had just started to rent a little bit of cellar space to add to the vines he had steadily acquired from scratch. Since then he has ploughed every cent back into the domaine to establish a really smart cellar in the village of Meursault and is constantly tinkering with it to improve the wines it produces – the most recent development being knocking through a high wall to allow cool, winter air in to help the wines fall bright naturally.

There are many flabby, boring white 2003s, some of which could easily be taken for New World Chardonnays, but Fichet's stand out for their clarity and depth of flavour – and could not possibly be anything other than good white burgundy – indeed they broadcast their Meursault origins loud and clear, even in this bottling from a vineyard that doesn't qualify for the Meursault appellation. I think he picked relatively early and did a bit more batonnage than many other producers. Even this relatively modest bottling is rich, spicy and concentrated but true to Burgundy with real energy and savour.

The wine is offered by Goedhuis & Co at £89 a dozen in bond and by Genesis Wines at £92 in bond. Berry Bros & Rudd also have a range of Fichet Meursaults well worth looking at. Be aware that there is a slightly less concentrated non Vieilles Vignes cuvée.

Real Meursault it so unlike the buttery cliché that I and my contemporaries were brought up to expect...