

Burgundy 2011 overview by Jeannie Cho Lee MW

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(Thursday 31 January 2013) I appreciate the forward accessibility and balanced elegance of the 2011 wines from Burgundy. I especially enjoy the vintage's purity of expression and its slim figure. While my tastings in Burgundy in November 2012 focused on the top domaines, in London during the week of January 7th, I spent most my time tasting the range of wines from less prestigious properties. I noticed a few differences in the 700 notes that I wrote up from my London tasting versus an equal amount tasted during my visit to Burgundy: In general, the wines in London were less fresh and vibrant and there was greater quality variability.

The lack of freshness in some of the samples may partly be attributed to the numerous importers who received the samples as early as November and the greater variability in the London tasting is inevitable given the sheer number of producers showing their wines. In comparison, the visits to the Burgundy domaines targeted a pre-selected, elite group of top producers who do not show all, or any, of their wines in London.

The big surprise was the sheer number of delicious, appealing, village level wines that were balanced, elegant and worth recommending to friends. For whites, regardless of the price and reputation of the domaine, there is plenty to appreciate for near-term consumption. Few were dilute, acidic or unbalanced.

The red 2011 Burgundies have greater variability – the best possess juicy berry appeal, medium body and firm, ripe tannins while the disappointing reds, can be weedy, thin and short. There were many wonderful surprises like the reds from Alain Hudelot-Noellat, Frederic Esmonin and Duroche. Consumers have a wealth of choice in this vintage with a modest size crop, but it is generous compared to what is ahead – the small quantities for 2012s will likely raise demand and prices for the 2011s and the 2010s.

Stay tuned for **Jeannie Cho Lee's 2011 White Burgundy vintage report** which will be published on **decanter.com** on **Monday 4th February**.