

## Great Tastes

For the Montilles, wine is a family matter. Besides Etienne being responsible for the Domaine de Montille labels, his sister, Alix (also a *Mondovino* star), produces wines under the Deux Montilles label.

Of all our experiences at the wineries we visited, the rarest was at Domaine Leroy. The cellar there is a place of reverence, and the proprietor, Lalou Bize-Leroy, is arguably one of the world's best winemakers and unquestionably one of the most controversial. The descriptor that recurs in any conversation about her is "perfectionist." At eighty, she has earned a right she has always demanded: quite simply, the right to be demanding. Some of her wines sell for between \$400 and \$500 retail, a fact that somehow came to mind when I looked at the spit bucket.

There is no glitz about her cellar, but there is striking attention to detail. In the whitewashed fermentation room, the oak vats are matte black. The paint used doesn't affect nose or palate but does hide the inevitable juice stains. To absorb excess humidity, thick, cream-colored woolen mats swaddle the floor. It was heaven above an ecru cloud.

Back in the car after each tasting, we were silent at first, then burst into conversation, smart, expansive and confident. For Johanne, tasting with the winemakers brought a new understanding of the individuality of each vineyard. For Eli, the trip was another chapter in a major life passion that will soon directly benefit patrons of Taste, his restaurant on Manhattan's

**Christophe Roumier carries on the family tradition at their winery in Chambolle-Musigny.**



Upper East Side. For Simon, it was a chance to refine his collection. For Jes, the trip was accompanied by news of acceptance to the prestigious Master of Wine program (administered by the Institute of Masters of Wine, of England).

And for me, it was great to pretend to be a busman and to enjoy the ride. ✕

### BURGUNDY BASICS

Telephone and fax numbers listed below, when dialed from the United States, should be preceded by 011-33, unless otherwise noted.

#### Where to Stay

Beaune is a convenient location for a visit to Burgundy. L'Hôtel de Beaune is one of its best hotels, along with Le Cep, which is older and more established.

#### Le Cep

Double rooms from \$193.  
27 Rue Maufoix, Beaune; 3-80-22-35-48; fax: 3-80-22-76-80; hotel-cep-beaune.com.

#### L'Hôtel de Beaune

Double rooms from \$310.  
5 Rue Samuel Legay, Beaune; 3-80-25-94-14; fax: 3-80-25-94-13; hoteldebeaune.com.

#### Where to Eat

Two restaurants in Beaune have a Michelin star: Le Bénaton and Le Jardin des Remparts.

#### Le Bénaton

25 Faubourg Bretonnière, Beaune; 3-80-22-00-26.

#### Le Jardin des Remparts

10 Rue de L'Hôtel-Dieu, Beaune; 3-80-24-79-41.

#### Tours

Through Oenotropie, Jean-Emmanuel Simond designs customized wine tours for small groups. Rates start at \$1,670 a person for three days.  
6-18-44-47-32; oenotropie.com.

**French Wine Explorers, a small American company run by two sommeliers, offers tours that enjoy a good reputation. 877-261-1500; wine-tours-france.com.**

#### Wineries

The finest Burgundy cellars are a very tough ticket, and money alone won't necessarily gain you entrée. Our tour would not have been possible without Jes, who has achieved insider status by cultivating his contacts over many years. The top *négociant* [merchant] houses, like Bouchard Père & Fils and Louis Jadot, are more accessible, and they make excellent wines.

**Bouchard Père & Fils**  
Château de Beaune, Beaune; 3-80-248-024; bouchard-pereetfils.com.

**Domaine des Comtes Lafon**  
Clos de La Barre, Meursault; 3-80-21-22-17; comtes-lafon.fr.

**Domaine Dujac**  
7 Rue de la Bussière, Morey Saint Denis; 3-80-34-01-00; dujac.com.

**Domaine Georges Roumier**

Rue de Vergy, Chambolle-Musigny; 3-80-62-86-37.

**Domaine Hubert de Montille**  
Rue Pied de la Vallée, Volnay; 3-80-21-62-67.

**Domaine Jacques-Frédéric Mugnier**

Château de Chambolle-Musigny, Chambolle-Musigny; 3-80-62-85-39; mugnier.fr.

**Domaine Leflaive**  
Place des Marronniers, Puligny-Mantrachet; 3-80-21-30-13; leflaive.fr.

**Domaine Leroy**  
Rue du Pont Boillot, Meursault; 3-80-21-21-10; domaineleeroy.com.

**Domaine Michel Lafarge**  
Rue de La Combe, Volnay; 3-80-21-61-61.

**Maison Louis Jadot**  
21 Rue Eugène Spuller, Beaune; 3-80-22-10-57; louisjadot.com. -W.W.