

Domaine Lucien Muzard et Fils, Santenay



In his day, Lucien Muzard put together a remarkable string of vineyard holdings in Santenay (with tiny lots in Chassagne rouge territory and in Pommard). He began at a young age with three-quarters of an acre of vines, replanted 12 acres, then went on to buy additional parcels as they came up over the years.

In 1995 he handed over the reins to his sons Claude and Hervé, who immediately began domaine bottling their wine rather than selling it in bulk to *négociants*. Subsequently, in 2003 they purchased small bins for harvesting to keep crushing to a minimum. That same year they acquired a new temperature-controlled fermentation facility and stocked it with wooden fermentation vats, a new press, sorting table, and conveyor belt to carry grapes to vat without pumping—all enabling great care to be taken during fermentation and ageing. In 2005 they went organic in their vineyards and gained certification for biodynamic farming with the 2008 vintage.

The brothers trace their lineage back to 1645 in Santenay, and they see themselves as part of a long tradition of farmers. Their decision to work biodynamically was taken to sustain and improve the health of their land, while the decision to ferment with native yeast and to bottle without fining or filtration was taken so each wine could most transparently express its origins. And Santenay has a plentitude of origins. It is here that the Côte d'Or ends and turns corner in a fractured series of geographical faults, making for profound differences in soil makeup and expositions. Contrary to popular opinion, Santenay's terroir is not a simple thing.

Today, the brothers work 13.15 hectares (32.5 acres) of their own vines, and bottle these wines with *mise en bouteilles à la propriété* written on the labels. They farm another 3 hectares (7.5 acres) of rented vines, whose wines can be identified by *mise en bouteilles dans nos caves* on the labels.

The Wines

- *Bourgogne Rouge*: This comes from 0.86 hectares (just over two acres) of vines averaging 50 years old. Production is limited to around 420 cases each year.
- *Santenay Vieilles Vignes*: This comes from several parcels, the biggest being Clos des Hâtes. Total surface is 1.40 hectares (1.74 acres) and production averages 750 cases per year.
- *Santenay Champs Claude Vieilles Vignes*: Champs Claude borders the Chassagne-Montrachet appellation with some serious pedigree, coming up under the greater Morgeot vineyards to abut the 1er cru Clos Chareau. The vines date from the 1920s and average a venerable 75 years of age. The domaine owns 2.69 hectares (6.64 acres) and makes roughly 1,400 cases in a normal year.
- *Santenay 1er Cru Clos des Mouches*: At 1.58 hectares, or 3.9 acres, Clos des Mouches is a tiny premier cru. The domaine sources from a parcel of just under two acres farmed with loving care by a retired *vigneron* who works his garden of vines daily. This jewel is located on the north side of the village in the tenderloin of Santenay premier crus. It's in this tenderloin that Pinot's body, complexity, and length are accentuated.

- *Santenay 1er Cru Les Gravières*: The largest premier cru in the tenderloin, named after its gravel content. Like Clos des Mouches and Tavannes, Gravières' wine typically has broad fruit underpinned by length. The domaine's holding is 1.34 hectares (3.31 acres) and the vines average 50 years of age. Production averages 580 cases yearly.
- *Santenay 1er Cru Clos des Tavannes*: The Muzard brothers farm just under one hectare (2.5 acres) and make some 350 cases each year. As with Clos des Mouches, this wine sees about 25% new oak during *élevage* (which is less than previously—while the other Muzard premier crus see still less than that beginning with the 2008 vintage—because the boys, like me, are getting older, and these days nuanced fruit holds more interest than power and oak).
- *Santenay 1er Cru Clos Faubard* : This vineyard grows above Clos des Mouches where the slope climbs up to scrubland. The soil here is a kind of limestone found in the Côte des Nuits (and not elsewhere in the Côte de Beaune). Faubard's wine is marked by intense spice and grip. The domaine has 1.47 hectares (3.63 acres) here and makes roughly 750 cases each year.
- *Santenay 1er Cru La Maladière* : Maladière takes its name from malady, referring to sickness. Maladière's hill rises steeply up behind the lower village and gets bathed in sunshine. Thus long ago in the distant dark ages this hillside was considered a healthy place to house the leper colony (now what marketer would ever tell you that?). Maladière has some of the same Côte de Nuits limestone as Faubard, giving the iron minerality underpinning in the wine. Maladière is a cooler site than the vineyard sites on the north side of the village and is known to produce the most feminine wines, with perfume and elegance. The brothers have 4.82 hectares (11.91 acres) here, a significant holding, and produce as much as 2,500 cases in a good year.
- *Chassagne-Montrachet Vieilles Vignes* : This comes from 0.14 hectare (0.34 acre) of 85-year-old vines growing next to Champs Claude in the *lieu dit* of Les Grandes Terres. There are three *lieux dits* in this short stretch of village land, and they all actually belong to the commune of Rémigny, whose seat is across the *route nationale*. Rémigny isn't known for wine, and no doubt for that reason the two vineyards to the north are legally classed as Chassagne-Montrachet, while the one to the south nearer to Santenay is classed as Santenay. Production of the Muzard Chassagne averages four to five barrels per year (figure 25 cases to a barrel). The old vines give this wine exceptional fruit and structure.