

# Premier cru Chablis 2010

If you enjoy minerality in your Chablis, this vintage is one to snap up, says Rosemary George MW, who says a reliable producer, more than cru, is still the key factor

EVEN THOUGH CHABLIS can overcome most climatic vagaries, and frost damage is less of a problem than it was, vintage variation here can be significant. Many is the year that has been saved by a fine September. The key factor in 2010, though, was the cool weather during flowering in June which reduced the size of the crop. Spring and early summer were dry, but not especially hot; August was cooler and wetter than usual; and then things looked up in September, and the harvest began later in the month. The wines are classic Chablis. If you enjoy firm minerality, this is your vintage. From Petit Chablis to grand cru, the wines have a firm backbone of acidity and minerality, which is wonderfully refreshing after the richer 2009s. They should reward further ageing in bottle.

Premier cru Chablis forms the perfect bridge between simple village wines and the more concentrated, complex grands crus. Good premier cru Chablis should have some depth with a firm minerality, without the weight of the richer grands crus. They are less likely to be aged in oak than a grand cru, but that will depend on the grower.

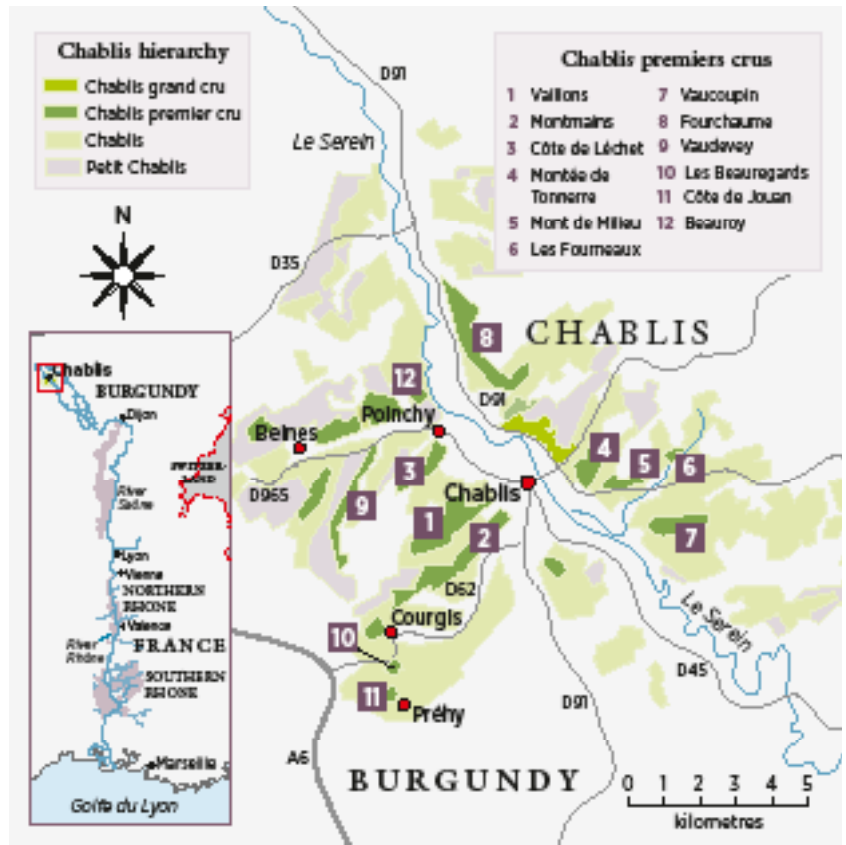
And what about the different crus? Until recently there were 79 names that could feature on a label. Happily those have now been reduced to a more manageable 40 (despite the surface area given to premiers crus remaining the same), and there are several you rarely see. The better known names act as an umbrella for several smaller vineyards. The example of Fourchaume is pertinent. With 132ha, it is larger than the entire slope of grands crus and is divided into Vaupulent, Côte de Fontenay, l'Homme Mort and Vaulorent. The wine grower decides which to use.

## Producer is key

In broad terms the premier crus can be distinguished as to whether they are on the right bank of the Serein and adjacent to the slope of grand cru, or on the left bank facing the grands crus across the valley. Those on the right bank, namely Montée de Tonnerre, Mont de Milieu Vaucoupin and Fourchaume, are generally considered to be richer and more structured, enjoying a similar aspect to the grands crus. The wines of the left bank include Vaillons, Montmains and Côte de Léchet, which may seem more elegant, but again much depends on grower preference.

When the vineyards of Chablis were extended during the 1970s and 1980s, more premiers crus were established on vineyard sites where there had once been vines before phylloxera, and which were said to produce similar quality to the sites closer to the town of Chablis. Vaudevey outside the village of Beignes was the most significant of these, but Beauregards near Courgis and Côte de Jouan near Prény also appeared in the list of premiers crus. These wines tend to be lighter. Beauroy outside the village of Poinchy is generally one of the least steely crus.

The vineyards on either side of the river enjoy a similar climate and the vines are grown in similar soil, so that the differences in the crus stems from their aspect – a sunnier or a less sunny site – and ultimately depend on winemaking differences. I find it easier to taste the differences in winemaking than the nuances between different crus. Hence to my mind buying decisions should be determined by the producer's name on the label, rather than the cru.



## The facts

**Area under vine**  
 Petit Chablis 843,32ha  
 Chablis 3 318,34ha  
 Premier cru 778,19ha  
 Grand cru 104,08ha

### Key premiers crus

**Beauroy** (Côte de Savant, Troesmes); **Côte de Jouan**; **Côte de Léchet**; **Fourchaume** (Côte de Fontenay, L'Homme Mort, Vaulorent, Vaupulent); **Beauregards** (Côte de Cuisy); **Les Fourmeaux** (Côte des Prés-Girots, Morein); **Mont de Milieu**; **Montée de Tonnerre**; (Chapelot, Côte de Bréchain, Pied d'Aloup); **Montmains** (Butteaux, Forêts); **Vaillons** (Beugnons, Chatains, Les Epinottes, Les Lys, Mélinots); **Vaudevey** (Vaux Ragnons); **Vaucoupin**

## Premier cru Chablis: know your vintages

**2011** A riper year and a bigger vintage

**2010** Yields lower than average. Classic Chablis with good minerality

**2009** A warm summer, so wines can lack that benchmark acidity and minerality. Drink before 2008

**2008** Saved by a warm September after a cool summer. A late harvest gave very classic

Chablis, with firm minerality and elegance

**2007** An early spring and early flowering, followed by a hot summer. Ripe wines, but with good acidity

**2006** Wines tend to be quite soft, and lacking the Chablis grip. For earlier drinking.

**2005** Hail in early May. A very good summer making for nicely balanced wines.

*Rosemary George MW is an awarded wine writer and judge and author of The Wines of Chablis (Sgrave Foulkes, 2007)*

## The results

Our judges had high expectations that were mostly met – the main criticism being real variability in quality and typicity. But for approachable, good-value Burgundy, these are hard to beat. Amy Payne reports

### How was the overall quality of the vintage?

Steven Spurrier put a very positive spin on the vintage, saying: 'I don't think any other region could have come up with 182 wines that are so well made.' Matt Smith agreed: 'On the whole, this is a delicious vintage. They are wines you can rely on if you choose a decent producer.' Philip Tuck MW rated the vintage four stars out of five and Stephen Brook noted that there were very few faulty wines over the two days of tasting. 'There were also perhaps a lack of truly thrilling wines, so most of my scores sat in that middle ground between 16 and 17 points,' he said. Many of the judges agreed that the defining factor for the 2010 premiers crus was the linear acidity of the wines.

### How was the typicity of the vintage?

'Given that it is very easy to make extremely disappointing, nondescript Chablis, this tasting did at least illustrate that there are plenty of producers trying very hard to make concentrated, elegant wines that reflect their origins – which is, after all, what good Chablis is all about,' said Tuck. Brook disagreed, saying that the vintage lacked typicity, and if he hadn't known these were all Chablis, he would have guessed that some wines came from '30 miles further south'. Gearoid Devaney MS also disagreed with Tuck: 'Some of the flavour profiles were wrong.' Jason Haynes countered: 'People are trying to make more typical Chablis than they were 10 years ago. There is a movement in the past few years to try to make much more mineral-based wines which is what they should be all about.'

### How would you compare 2010 with recent vintages?

'It's quite an exciting vintage coming off the back of quite a fat one,' said Smith. 'It's nice to see some of that acidity and intensity back again.' Haynes and Devaney agreed that 2009 was forward and easy, with the latter adding that '2010 will be compared to 2008 in terms of structure, acidity and pH levels'. Haynes predicted there would be discussions as to whether 2010 trumped 2008.

### What vineyard sites showed best, and which ones left you wanting more?

'With the extra complexity that the region brings, it is quite important for the winemaking to sit in the background. And I think that my highest scoring wines were along the

## The scores

182 wines tasted

7



Decanter Award

58



Highly recommended

97



Recommended

16



Fair

4



Poor

0

Faulty

33

Good value (£18 and under)

more mineral and tense styles,' said Smith, who scored some of the cooler appellations, such as Montée de Tonnerre, the highest. Beverley Blanning MW preferred Fourchaume, while Devaney conversely felt both Fourchaume and Montée de Tonnerre were not showing well; he thought Vaillons and Côte de Léchet were much stronger performers. Haynes agreed with Devaney and additionally found Montmains to be disappointing. Brook preferred Vaillons and thought Mont de Milieu was the most mineral-driven cru.

### Any criticisms?

Blanning noticed a lot of sulphur on the wines. She said this 'possibly has the upside of enhancing minerality' because she found the wines extremely mineral. She added: 'The only other thing that I would possibly criticise is the malolactic fermentation. To me I found a lot of these wines to be acid-driven in a linear way. But it seems like some of the winemakers tried to compensate for this high acidity with malolactic fermentation. Some of the wines I tasted were quite creamy in a way that I didn't appreciate.'

Haynes was disappointed by inconsistent quality: 'It really varied. The best examples were certainly very good premiers crus. The lesser wines I actually wouldn't have even liked if they had been grands crus – they just weren't particularly appealing in any sense. At the end of the day, if the quality isn't there it doesn't make a difference whether these wines are village, premier or grand cru. That lack of consistency I found really disappointing.' Lance Foyster MW agreed with Blanning and Haynes: 'I did notice quite a few wines with overtly creamy, yeasty flavours. I assume that these were the ones that have seen a little bit too much oak on them, and it wasn't a coincidence that I gave these wines my lowest marks.'

### Is this an ageworthy vintage?

'I have a perverse view in that the less fruit there is in a wine, the more I like it,' said Brook. 'I want some austerity in premier cru Chablis because I want a wine that is going to age in an interesting way.' Haynes thought the wines would best be enjoyed between two to five years post-vintage and suggested the latest drinking window for most between 2015 and 2018. 'Maybe the wines were a little bit more advanced than I'd have thought,' he added.

## The tasters

**Matt Smith** is a buyer at UK supermarket Waitrose, focusing on a number of areas including Burgundy

**Stephen Brook** is a *Decanter* contributing editor and won the 2006 Trophée des Grands Jours de Bourgogne

**Philip Tuck MW** is wine director at UK wine agent Hatch Mansfield, which he set up in 1993

**Gearoid Devaney MS** was UK Sommelier of the Year 2008. Today he works for Burgundy specialist Flint Wines

**Jason Haynes** set up Flint Wines, a Burgundy specialist, in 2006



**Lance Foyster MW** set up UK wine agent Clark Foyster in 2002, where he looks after buying and selling

**Beverley Blanning MW** is a *Decanter* contributor, author and competition judge

**Steven Spurrier** is *Decanter's* consultant editor, an author and a consultant for, among others, Singapore Airlines

**Michael Schuster** is the *Decanter* World Wine Awards Regional Chair for Burgundy

**Also tasted:** Rosemary George MW and Sebastian Thomas

### And are these good value wines?

Our judges agreed unanimously that Chablis premiers crus have a very good price-to-value ratio. 'For me they represent much better value for money than the grands crus,' said Tuck. 'To the average consumer, they would taste very similar but there is frequently a significant price differential.' Devaney added: 'Village and premier cru wines still offer good value on a restaurant list and these 2010s will be no different.' Spurrier and Brook said their value was extraordinary, with the latter adding: 'There are some premier cru white Burgundies that are now pushing £85 a bottle. Some are maybe great wines, but who could afford them? With premier cru Chablis, you are talking about far more modestly priced wines that will give much more pleasure. Vive Chablis!'

Entry criteria: producers and UK agents were invited to submit any of their 2010 premier cru Chablis (finished bottles and tank samples)

**5 star wines** **Decanter Award** 18.5–20pts



**Simonnet-Febvre, Montée de Tonnerre 18.75**

£23 Slurp

Classic Chablis aromas of herb, apples, citrus and wet stony minerals. Good freshness and lifted minerality on the mouthwatering palate – it is enticingly complex. Pristine in its youth, it is beautifully balanced: nothing is overdone. **Drink:** 2013–2023. **Alcohol:** 13%



**Domaine des Malandes, Fourchaume 18.67**

£21 Charles Hawkins

A touch of oak on the nose. Rich, ripe and juicy Chablis which is generous and fresh with an abundance of flavour and fine length across the palate. Clear premier cru quality. Very fine. **Drink:** 2013–2018. **Alc:** 13%



**Domaine Charly Nicolle, Mont de Millieu 18.63**

N/A UK [www.chablis-charlynicolle.com](http://www.chablis-charlynicolle.com)

Swirling aromas of lemon, mineral, butter, chalk, lime and wet stone. Classic Chablis, displaying fine balance and high acidity with strong minerality and good concentration. Textured, savoury and long. Very good. **Drink:** 2012–2022. **Alc:** 13%



**Domaine William Fèvre, Fourchaume 18.56**

£24–£29 Fine & Rare, Lay & Wheeler

Enticing, complex nose of green apple. Fabulous concentration of everything Chablis should be: buckets of minerals, super elegance, power and restraint. There is real character and complexity here. Long and very drinkable. **Drink:** 2012–2023. **Alc:** 12.5%



*“I don't think any other region could have 182 wines that are so well made”*

Steven Spurrier



*“It wasn't a coincidence that I gave my lowest marks to wines with a little bit too much oak”*

Lance Foyster MW



*“Premier cru wines still offer good value on a restaurant list and these 2010s will be no different”*

Gearoid Devaney MS

**5 star wines** **Decanter Award (continued)** 18.5–20pts



**Albert Bichot, Domaine Long Depaquit, Vaucoupin** 18.5  
 £18 Fine & Rare €  
 Fine aromas of salt, honey and oak. The palate shows appealing minerality with an underlying richness. Quite a textured wine which is mouthfilling and youthful with clear premier cru tenacity of flavour and class. Excellent. **Drink:** 2013–2020. **Alc:** 13%



**Domaine Barat, Les Fourneaux** 18.5  
 £14 Fine & Rare €  
 Smoke, earth, truffle, citrus, minerals and flint on the nose. Certainly complex with definite class, it is very vinous and characterful. It has good intensity and minerality with savoury notes too. Textured and dense wine with a long mineral finish. **Drink:** 2012–2022. **Alc:** 13.5%



**Samuel Billaud, Mont de Milieu** 18.5  
 £14–£15 Whittalls Wine Merchant, Lay & Wheeler €  
 Citrus, stone fruit and oak on the nose. It has lovely texture and mouthfeel, with ripe stone fruit and floral flavours melding with Chablis acidity and minerality on the finish. Subtle and complex, the oak helps to give the palate a lift. Impressive. **Drink:** 2013–2016. **Alc:** 13%

“There are plenty of producers trying very hard to make concentrated, elegant wines that reflect their origins” Philip Tuck MW

**4 star wines** **Highly recommended** 16.5–18.49pts



**Domaine Chanson, Montée de Tonnerre (tank sample)** 18  
 £22 Mentzendorff  
 Restrained nose of flowers, honey, green and stony fruit. Plenty of oak shows through but it is well done so adds lovely complexity. It is almost chewy with pure, zippy citrus fruit flavour and a good mineral finish. Lots of potential. Classic and delicious. **Drink:** 2013–2018. **Alc:** 12.5%



**Louis Michel & Fils, Vieilles Vignes, Butteaux (tank sample)** 18  
 POA Enotria  
 Lovely white flower, granny smith and apricot bouquet. It is lean and textured with a mineral, sea shell note. Really good weight and precision of flavour – a beautifully made wine. Has good power and potential. **Drink:** 2012–2018. **Alc:** 13%



**Domaine Jean-Paul & Benoît Droin, Montmains** 17.67  
 £29 Richards Walford  
 Fresh yellow fruit, smoky apricot, lemon and zingy sherbet bouquet. Good zippy attack and broad, concentrated fruit flavours with lively but not excessive acidity and a long mineral finish. It is taut, persistent and has real typicity. **Drink:** 2012–2015. **Alc:** 13%



**Domaine Pinson, Mont de Milieu** 17.58  
 £22 Christopher Piper, Vine Trail  
 Delicate nose of oak, spice and smoke. Nicely balanced, ripe fruited yet vital wine. It has concentration, vigour and length. Rounded, textured and layered with good acidity. Fine and youthful. **Drink:** 2013–2020. **Alc:** 13%



**Domaine des Malandes, Montmains** 17.5  
 £20 Charles Hawkins  
 Aromas of citrus, white flower, pear and green fruit. Rich, vibrant and juicy with good concentration and acidity. It is taut, tangy and really well balanced. Firm, steely mineral finish. **Drink:** 2012–2018. **Alc:** 13%



**Domaine William Fèvre, Mont de Milieu** 17.5  
 £29 Lay & Wheeler  
 Intense and complex bouquet of citrus, nuts, flowers, apple and yellow fruit – classic. Dense, powerful, tight and opulent wine with an earthy mineral tang creeping up on the aftertaste. It displays classic Chablis minerality and acidity on the finish. **Drink:** 2013–2018. **Alc:** 13%

**4 star wines** **Highly recommended (continued)** 16.5–18.49pts



**Corinne & Jean-Pierre Grossot, C Perchaud, Fourchaume** 17.33  
 POA Liberty  
 Complex and lean nose displaying wet stone, lees, flint and minerals. Everything just so in the mouth: mineral fruit, very high acidity and a long, lean but not overly austere finish. Excellent and very classic. **Drink:** 2012–2022. **Alc:** 13%



**Albert Bichot, Domaine Long Depaquit, Vaillons** 17.25  
 £13 Whittalls Wine Merchant €  
 Aromas of citrus, pear, apricot, light toast and floral perfume. Broad, compact and powerful palate with attractive florality, minerality and tang. It is textured, layered and concentrated. Very classic structure and excellent potential. **Drink:** 2012–2016. **Alc:** 13%



**Samuel Billaud, Les Fourneaux** 17.17  
 £13 Lay & Wheeler €  
 Classic Chablis aromas of tangy lime, white flowers and honey. Good clarity, crispness and precision on the delicate fruit which is light on its feet. Bracing, lively, mineral, tangy palate in a very lean style. **Drink:** 2013–2017. **Alc:** 13%



**Domaine de la Motte, Beauroy** 17.13  
 £16 Boutinot €  
 Very fresh nose of appealing tangerine and lemon fruit. More on the palate displaying a firm structure, acidity and a hint of oak. Vibrant and very brisk with lovely freshness, intensity and good terroir. Plenty to come. Very classic. **Drink:** 2014–2023. **Alc:** 12.5%



**Louis Michel & Fils, Butteaux** 17.13  
 £24.50 Enotria  
 A solid nose with a touch of oak. Nice fresh ripeness, some gentle minerality, vital acidity and length across the mouthfilling palate. Needs some bottle age but will be a classic and classy premier cru Chablis. **Drink:** 2014–2020. **Alc:** 13%



**Domaine Christian Moreau Père et Fils, Cuvée Guy Moreau, Vaillons** 17  
 £18 Haynes Hanson & Clark €  
 Creamy oak and yellow fruit bouquet. Very good attack of bracing bitter lemon and mineral fruit. Textured and long; oaky style with very good depth. Not that complex now but in time will open up. **Drink:** 2012–2017. **Alc:** 12.5%



**Domaine Dampt, Les Fourneaux** 17  
 £18 Laithwaites €  
 Quite firm, classic stony and mineral aromas – fairly inexpressive now. Fresh and fruity, solid palate which has nice bite on the finish. Good scope for the future but is not yet very expressive. **Drink:** 2013–2020. **Alc:** 13%



**Domaine du Chardonnay, Mont de Milieu** 17  
 £17 Champagne & Chateaux €  
 Restrained nose of flowers, pear and lime. Rich, concentrated wine with ample grip and extract. It has typicity and good expression of white fruit, floral notes and mineral characters. **Drink:** 2013–2016. **Alc:** 13%



**Domaine Gautheron, Les Fourneaux** 17  
 POA Ellis of Richmond  
 Pretty, classic nose showing a hint of honey and oak. Nice concentration of ripe, mineral fruit, good balance and lively acidity. Very juicy for Chablis. There's plenty more to come from this. **Drink:** 2013–2020. **Alc:** 13%



**Domaine Jean-Paul & Benoît Droin, Mont de Milieu** 17  
 £16–£25 Armit, Howard Ripley, Berry Bros & Rudd, Lay & Wheeler €  
 Benchmark bouquet of minerals, butter, stones, apple and flint. Lovely balance of restraint and fullness of flavour. Ripe and concentrated fruit, zippy acidity and a long seamless finish. Has real terroir. Benchmark. **Drink:** 2012–2023. **Alc:** 13%



**Domaine Testut, Montée de Tonnerre** 17  
 N/A UK www.domaine-testut.fr  
 Pure bouquet of citrus and apricot. Good attack of very ripe fruit with striking acidity and concentration. It is assertive and mineral with more typicity than the nose suggests. Excellently balanced in the classic Chablis style. **Drink:** 2013–2016. **Alc:** 13%



**Jean-Marc Brocard, Montmains** 17  
 £17 The Wine Society €  
 Muted nose of spice, yellow fruit, citrus and green bean. Good acidity frames this powerful, robust wine which has plenty of grip and extract. It packs a punch. Has complexity and a nice, chalky fossil edge. Young now but will improve. **Drink:** 2013–2018. **Alc:** 12.5%



**Highly recommended (continued)** 16.5–18.49pts



**La Chablisienne, Côte de Léchet** 16.94

£13–£18.90 Astrum Wine Cellars, Whitebridge Wines

Leesy, honeyed character on the nose. A clear, solid premier cru, showing finesse, subtlety and length across the palate and on the finish. Very good, classic example. Lots to come. **Drink:** 2014–2020. **Alc:** 13%



**Domaine Nathalie & Gilles Fevre, Mont de Milieu** 16.92

£23 Ellis of Richmond, Thorman Hunt, Winehound Firm, tight-knit nose. Fresh, elegant, minerally and wet stone character with zesty acidity. Subtle style with class and tenacity of flavour. Fine. **Drink:** 2014–2020. **Alc:** 13%



**Daniel Dampt, Côte de Léchet** 16.88

£14–£17 Coe Vintners, Vine Trail, Haynes Hanson & Clark

Attractive florality and good sappy fruit with saline and oyster shell aromas. Textured, intense and stony with good acidity. Not very expressive now but will be serious and rewarding with time. Classic. **Drink:** 2012–2015. **Alc:** 13%



**Domain Jean Collet & Fils, Vaillons** 16.88

N/A UK [www.domaine.collet.fr](http://www.domaine.collet.fr)

Gentle honeysuckle notes with white and yellow fruit and an apple nose. A taut, racy style with intensity and vigour and delicious fruit. Very good purity, clarity, finesse, balance and length. **Drink:** 2012–2017. **Alc:** 12.5%



**Isabelle & Denis Pommier, Beauroy** 16.88

£17 Goedhuis

New oak, citrus and peach bouquet. It has a Chablis bite of tight acidity, an almost spritz attack and a fresh, vibrant finish. More oak on the palate is noticeable but it is quite elegant and still youthful. **Drink:** 2014–2020. **Alc:** 12.5%



**Caves Gendraud-Patrice, Beauregards** 16.83

N/A UK +33 3 86 52 17 42

Pure nose of butter, lemon, minerals and oyster shell. Creamy, smooth classically proportioned wine with a deep mineral core. Bright acidity adds freshness. Ripe and wholly savoury style. Very good. **Drink:** 2012–2018. **Alc:** 12.5%



**Daniel Dampt, Les Lys** 16.83

£14 Haynes Hanson & Clark

Lovely salty, minerally aroma on the nose. It has ripe fruit, brisk acidity and some textured fruit on the palate which develops in the glass. Quite rich and full bodied with good energy. Vivid premier cru. **Drink:** 2012–2017. **Alc:** 13%



**Domaine Jean-Paul & Benoît Droin, Fourchaume** 16.83

£25 Howard Ripley Wines, Laytons

Firm, tight nose. Quite nervy acidity with nice weight and bite, this is rich, lively and vital. A fine Chablis with ripe fruit and minerality across the palate and on the finish. Really fine and very attractive. **Drink:** 2014–2022. **Alc:** 13%



**Domaine Nathalie & Gilles Fèvre, Vaulorent** 16.83

£23 Ellis of Richmond

Oak, honey, yellow fruit and apple compote on the nose. Reined in and compact style with taut, minerally, steely and citrusy fruit. It has lots of grip, depth and well integrated oak. Almost of grand cru quality. **Drink:** 2013–2018. **Alc:** 13%



**La Chablisienne, Montmains** 16.83

£18 (2009) Addison Wines

Bright citrus and smoke on the nose. A silky textured palate with good weight and minerality and spice on the finish. Quite unusual but has lovely depth of fruit, complexity, excellent length and balance. **Drink:** 2012–2018. **Alc:** 13%



**Simonnet-Febvre, Fourchaume** 16.83

£24 Slurp

Honey, floral notes and apple on the nose. Quite rich and juicy – a broad style with a nice texture, good concentration and minerality on the finish. Still a little shut in now but will be good in time. Impressive. **Drink:** 2013–2017. **Alc:** 13%



**Domaine Fourrey, Vaillons** 16.75

£17.50 Revelstoke Wines

Smoke, flint, floral notes and yellow and white fruit aromas. Very good expression and precision of fruit, displaying lots of minerality. Rich, juicy and full bodied – quite powerful for Chablis. It has fine lift and a good future ahead. **Drink:** 2012–2017. **Alc:** 13.5%



**Highly recommended (continued)** 16.5–18.49pts



**Jean-Marc Brocard, Vaillons** 16.75

POA Julian Baker

Good intensity of firm, flinty, oaky and honeyed hints on the nose. Rich, fresh and leesy with nice vital acidity, balance and power. It has a textured palate with layers of flavour showing both depth and youth. **Drink:** 2014–2020. **Alc:** 12.5%



**La Chablisienne, Beauroy** 16.75

£18 (2008) Cambridge Wine Merchants

Delicate, precise nose of citrus, smoke and floral white fruit. Richer and weightier on the palate with lifted yet broad fruit, lovely minerality and good extract. A serious Chablis. Textured, stylish and long. **Drink:** 2012–2017. **Alc:** 13%



**Louis Michel & Fils, Sechets (tank sample)** 16.75

£23 Enotria

Citrus and apricot nose. Rich palate with broad flavours which are almost the weight and complexity of grand cru. Attractive and zesty with a delicate attack. Lean and precise with good acidity. Will be a very good wine. **Drink:** 2012–2017. **Alc:** 13%



**Lupé Cholet, Château de Viviers, Vaillons** 16.69

POA Chalié Richards

Delicate apricot, oyster shell, mineral, citrus and apple bouquet. Precise and long with tangy citrus notes and florality on the palate. Textured style and very well made – classic Vaillons. **Drink:** 2012–2017. **Alc:** 13%

“There is a movement to make much more mineral-based wines which is what Chablis should be all about” Jason Haynes



**Corinne & Jean-Pierre Grossot, Les Fourneaux** 16.67

N/A UK +33 3 86 42 44 64

Flowers, honey, smoke, toast and tropical fruit bouquet. Broad, creamy and sumptuous with generous tangy fruit, yet it still manages to be lean and shows lots of minerality. An impressive, elegant wine. **Drink:** 2013–2017. **Alc:** 13%



**Domain Jean Collet & Fils, Mont de Millieu** 16.67

N/A UK [www.domaine-collet.fr](http://www.domaine-collet.fr)

Rich, ripe aromas of banana, honey, white fruit and mango. The palate shows elegance, clarity, depth and complexity – it is sweet and generous with atypical ripe characters but manages its weight very well. **Drink:** 2013–2017. **Alc:** 12.5%



**Domaine Louis Moreau, Vaulignot** 16.67

N/A UK [www.louismoreau.com](http://www.louismoreau.com)

Firm, closed nose showing a touch of oak. Quite backward yet substantial palate with easy, juicy, freshly ripe fruit, moderate complexity and a little oak. This needs time to develop, as the fruit is quite shy now. **Drink:** 2012–2019. **Alc:** 12.5%



**Domaine Pinson, Les Fôrets** 16.67

£24 (2009) Berry Bros & Rudd

Rich, powerful aromas of minerals. A very crisp and super minerally palate with plenty of fruitiness. Open knit and quite full, freshened by good acidity which gives it a clean, long finish. **Drink:** 2012–2022. **Alc:** 13%



**Jean Durup Père & Fils, Vaudevey** 16.67

N/A UK [www.durup-chablis.com](http://www.durup-chablis.com)

Delicate nose of ripe fruit. It has good grip and is ripe and supple (in the Chablis context) with modest scope and length for a premier cru. Quite lightweight but nicely balanced. **Drink:** 2013–2020. **Alc:** 12.5%



**Louis Michel & Fils, Les Fôrets** 16.67

£23 Enotria

Lovely creamy apricot, citrus and honey bouquet. Lavish fruit – more Chassagne than Chablis – with good acidity to balance the weight of fruit. It has a touch of chalky minerality on the finish. Seems oaky. **Drink:** 2012–2016. **Alc:** 13%



**Domaine des Malandes, Côte de Léchet** 16.63

£15 Aversys

Fragrant citrus peel, white flower and apricot bouquet. Rich, rounded, accessible and juicy with good citric acidity. Very typical Chablis – it is still firm yet the florality and fruit will come out in time. **Drink:** 2013–2017. **Alc:** 13%

**4** star wines **Highly recommended (continued)** 16.5–18.49pts



**Domaine des Malandes, Vaudevey** 16.63  
 £18 Charles Hawkins **£**  
 Bright mineral fruit and hints of oak on the nose. Fine minerally fruit balance, lively, defining acidity and clear premier cru complexity. It has a rich oaky feel to the palate and a mineral kick on the sweet finish. Well made and attractive.  
**Drink:** 2014–2020. **Alc:** 13%



**Domaine Drouhin Vaudon, Vaillons** 16.63  
 £25 Taurus Wines  
 Pear, lime and white florality on the nose. Very precise, lifted, nutty, bracing and clear wine with nice texture, extract and welcome austerity. It is a classic style that some might find too austere.  
**Drink:** 2013–2016. **Alc:** 12.5%



**Domaine Jean-Paul & Benoît Droin, Vaillons** 16.63  
 £18–£21 Armit, Howard Ripley **£**  
 Firm, closed, stony mineral nose. The palate is tight knit and compact with firm, structured citrus fruit and minerality mixed with oak. Finely crafted and framed by very good acidity. Lots of potential. **Drink:** 2013–2020. **Alc:** 13%



**Domaine William Fèvre, Vaillons** 16.63  
 £22–£25 Armit, Fine & Rare  
 Very fresh bouquet of citrus. Needs time to evolve but it is a good example of that chalky, lean style of Chardonnay, unique to Chablis. It has good intensity and minerality and a long, spicy length. **Drink:** 2012–2018. **Alc:** 12.5%

“2010 is an exciting vintage coming off the back of a fat one. It’s nice to see that acidity and intensesness back again” **Matt Smith**



**Sainsbury's, Taste the Difference** 16.63  
 £14 Sainsbury's **£**  
 Tight, discreet bouquet of minerals, succulent lime, yellow fruit and floral perfume. Broad cream, citrus and minerally fruit palate, bracing acidity and good length. Fine future: racy, zesty and refreshing. **Drink:** 2012–2016. **Alc:** 12.5%



**Domaine du Chardonnay, Montmains** 16.58  
 £17 Champagnes & Chateaux **£**  
 Subtle aroma but it's ripe, fine, fresh and fragrant. Quite a firm and austere style which is gently minerally. A racy Chablis – fruit is still to develop as it isn't yet expressive. Give it time.  
**Drink:** 2012–2020. **Alc:** 13%



**Damien & Romain Bouchard, Montée de Tonnerre** 16.5  
 £22.50–£28.50 Enotria, Swig  
 A rounded, fresh, clean and salty nose. Ripe, lively, rounded, solid palate freshened with good acidity. Nice balance, depth and concentration. Plenty to come. **Drink:** 2013–2020. **Alc:** 12.5%



**Domaine Faiveley, Fourchaume** 16.5  
 £30 Maisons Marques et Domaines  
 Honey, yellow fruit, oak and ripe apple bouquet. It has lots of oaky spice but this is nicely in balance. It shows fine acidity, sweet fruit and good length. Still a bit foursquare but has weight and depth to mature. **Drink:** 2012–2017. **Alc:** 12%



**Domaine Gautheron, Vaucoupin** 16.5  
 £21 Ellis of Richmond  
 Lovely nose of lively floral, apple and lime fruit. It has fresh acidity framing a fine mineral palate. It has excellent balance between weight and concentration, steely Chablis character and ripe, sweet fruit. Very nice. Persistent and long.  
**Drink:** 2012–2022. **Alc:** 13%



**Domaine Pascal Bouchard, Beauroy** 16.5  
 £23 (2008) Heritage Wine  
 Nice intensity of fresh citrus, pear and yellow fruit on the nose. Broad palate in which the chalk and iron soil comes through. It has good weight and fine premier cru definition. Tangy, crisp and vigorous with a zippy attack. **Drink:** 2012–2016. **Alc:** 12.5%



**Domaine William Fèvre, Montée de Tonnerre** 16.5  
 £25–£32 Armit, Lay & Wheeler  
 Fresh minerally nose. Very elegant, ripe, lively, juicy and fresh mouthful with a minerally acidity and lovely balance. Quite understated and should develop. **Drink:** 2012–2020. **Alc:** 12.5%

**4** star wines **Highly recommended (continued)** 16.5–18.49pts



**Domaine William Fèvre, Vaulorent** 16.5  
 £33–£36 Armit, Justerini & Brooks, Lay & Wheeler  
 Aromas of wet stone, earth and yeasty notes. It is very minerally and tight in the mouth with good ripeness and taut acidity. Should improve. Very long and elegant in the classic Chablis mould. Good. **Drink:** 2014–2017. **Alc:** 13%



**Isabelle & Denis Pommier, Côte de Léchet** 16.5  
 £20.50 Private Cellar  
 Complex and powerful nose of oak and yellow and white fruit. Good depth, weight and typicity. Lots of concentration and juicy bright acidity balanced by a creamy texture and a whiff of oak spice. Long. **Drink:** 2013–2018. **Alc:** 12.5%



**Jean-Marc Brocard, Butteaux** 16.5  
 POA Julian Baker  
 Smoke, flint, citrus, honey, chalk, salt and apple on the nose. Textured and long, this is a solid rather than zesty style with good complex minerality on the finish. It has a certain heaviness due to the oak. A good wine.  
**Drink:** 2012–2016. **Alc:** 12.5%



**Louis Michel & Fils, Vaillons** 16.5  
 £22.50 Enotria  
 Ripe minerals, smoke, flowers and zesty lime on the nose. It has good crisp fruit and precision on the palate with a chalky minerality. Good potential length and will evolve well.  
**Drink:** 2012–2017. **Alc:** 13%



**Samuel Billaud, Montée de Tonnerre** 16.5  
 £22–£23 (2009) Bancroft, Berry Bros & Rudd, Charles Taylor, Goedhuis  
 Ripe aromas of stone fruit, flowers, honey, banana and apple. In its style it is really quite good. Quite austere with good concentration, crisp acidity and minerality, it is all in balance. Good, typical Chablis. **Drink:** 2013–2017. **Alc:** 13%



**Simonnet-Febvre, Vaillons** 16.5  
 £21 Bretby Wine Co, Campbell Moore, Hailsham Cellars, Handford Wines, Mounts Bay Wine, Partridges, Shenfield Wine Co, Slurp, Whole Foods Market  
 Elegant nose of brisk lime, white and yellow fruit and floral notes. Very good length and purity of flavour, all in balance. Pure with bright acidity. Shows total precision and still has all the Chablis fruit. **Drink:** 2012–2017. **Alc:** 13.5%

**3-STAR WINES Recommended** 14.5–16.49pts

WINE	SCORE	TASTING NOTE	ALC	DRINK	PRICE	STOCKISTS
Domaine William Fèvre, Beauroy	16.44	Bright pithy orange peel and stony minerally bouquet. Attractively juicy fruit, vitality and fine minerality with good acidity and length.	12.5%	2013–2020	£24	Lay & Wheeler
Jean-Marc Brocard, Beauregard	16.42	Delicate fresh nose of green fruit. Elegant yet ripe palate of flowers and minerals which is fresh, vivid and has a light length. Good without singing. Elegant.	12.5%	2014–2020	£12	Milton Sandford Wines
Damien & Romain Bouchard, Vaillons	16.38	Very discreet nose of apple, honey and yellow fruit. Broad yet still precise with natural ripeness. It has good intensity of fruit and lots of minerality.	12.5%	2012–2018	£20–£28	Domaine Direct, Richard Walfords, Swig
Domaine J-Paul & Benoît Droin, Côte de Léchet	16.38	Good richness and intensity on the nose of honey and leaf. Tight and restrained palate with firm acidity and moderate complexity. It has a mineral-driven finish.	13%	2014–2020	£22	Richards Walford
Domaine Long Depaquit, Les Lys	16.38	Fine florality, white fruit and lime nose. Rich and juicy fruit and a mineral grip. Elegant and very Chablis. Lovely fruit expression, precision and length.	13%	2012–2017	£16 (2009)	Fine & Rare
La Chablisienne, La Singulière	16.38	Brisk lemon, apple, citrus and white fruit aromas. It has nice purity, high acidity and tangy citrus flavours. Good weight and balance with a long tangy finish.	13%	2012–2015	N/A UK	www.chablisienne.com
Domaine Barat, Vaillons	16.33	Good, stony, minerally nose. Decent quality with firm, elegant minerally fruit and a medium minerally finish. Very good balance. Still needs time to develop.	13.5%	2012–2018	N/A UK	www.domaine-barat.fr
Domaine Chanson, Montmains	16.33	Fine mineral etched nose. Quite substantial in the mouth with lovely balance of ripe fruit to lively acidity. It has both length and finesse.	13.5%	2012–2020	£22.50	Mentzendorff
Domaine Chanson, Fourchaume	16.33	Toasty oak on the nose and palate. Elegant, crisp, round fruit and textured palate. It has a lovely mineral finish. Long and concentrated with a steely minerality.	13.5%	2012–2022	POA	Mentzendorff
Domaine Charly Nicolle, Les Fourneaux	16.33	Fresh citrus, white flowers and apricot bouquet. Nicely textured with fresh, lean, precise and ripe, juicy citrus fruit and minerality. On the green side; quite austere.	13%	2012–2017	N/A UK	www.chablis-charlynicolle.com
Domaine de Oliveira Lecestre, Fourchaume	16.33	Smoky nose of fresh citrus and apricot. Attractive and fresh with a lightly mineral tone and a tangy, bright length. Has acidity and depth for the future.	13.5%	2012–2017	N/A UK	www.societe-vin-deoliveira.fr
Domaine Nathalie & Gilles Fevre, Fourchaume	16.33	Pure lemon and sappy aromas. Nice concentration of crisp and ripe fruit, good acidity and crystal purity. Will be impressive and complex but a bit phenolic.	13%	2012–2017	£23–£25	Ellis of Richmond, Thorman Hunt
Domaine Servin, Les Fôrets	16.33	Delicate nose of flowers. Elegant palate with ripe, rounded, minerally fruit and fresh acidity. Good length. Attractive and good rather than special.	12.5%	2012–2019	N/A UK	www.domaine-servin.net
Hervé Azu, Vaudevey	16.33	Flint, minerals, floral yellow fruit, spicy apple and apricot aroma. Broad citrus flavours with pronounced acidity and good attack. Needs time to knit. Long.	12.5%	2012–2017	N/A UK	+33 3 86 42 43 56
Lamblin & Fils, Fourchaume	16.33	Open, appealing nose of wet stone, dry herbs, apples and minerals. Fresh, citrus palate with lemon fruit and pointed acidity on the finish. Textured and good.	13%	2012–2020	POA	PLB



# Premier cru Chablis 2010

## 3-STAR WINES Recommended (continued)

WINE	SCORE	TASTING NOTE	ALC	DRINK	PRICE	STOCKISTS
Jean-Marc Brocard, Vaucoupin	14.83	Lightweight on the nose. Ripe, fresh, pleasing and juicy white Burgundy with light fruit and no real depth. Good wine but is it 1er Cru Chablis?	12.5%	2012-2015	N/A UK	www.brocard.fr
Jean-Marc Brocard, Fourchaume	14.83	Good mineral backbone with a whiff of creamy oak, alongside rich, creamy yellow stone fruit. Already smooth and rich but lacks typicity.	12.5%	2012-2016	POA	Berkman Wine Cellars
La Chablisienne, L'Homme Mort	14.83	Attractive aromas of apples, oak and flowers. Full-bodied and full-flavoured wine which is bright and zesty. Quite oaky and not very Chablis-esque. Pleasant.	13%	2012-2016	N/A UK	www.chablisienne.com
Billaud-Simon, Montée de Tonnerre	14.67	Flint, citrus and sulphur aromas. Youthful, lean and dry, slightly confectioned palate with subtle attractive fruit in the middle. Slightly simple, lacking bite and length.	13%	2012-2016	£23	Averys, Domaine Direct
Domaine Fourrey, Mont de Milieu	14.67	Lifted, overt nose with an obvious core of greengage and bruised apple. A light, and quite dilute palate which is definitely Chablis in flavour and profile.	12.5%	2012-2014	£19	Revelstoke Wines
J Moreau et Fils, Montmains	14.67	Exotic fruit and tart green apple aromas. Lean, austere, mineral palate which is less fresh than most. Could be better for its level. Lacks a bit of character.	12.5%	2012-2015	N/A UK	www.jmoreau-fils.com
Jean-Marc Brocard, Mont de Milieu	14.67	Odd nose of stewed apple, smoke and greengage. Ripe, round and creamy with a sweet 'n sour element. Good freshness but lacks purity of flavour. A bit muddled.	12.5%	2012-2015	£16.99	Sainsbury's
Domaine Vrignaud, Fourchaume	14.5	Lean, toasty, mineral nose with fine florality and purity. Precise flavours, ripe fruit and steely length. Benchmark style - austere but has fine potential.	13%	2013-2016	£14	Ann et Vin, Panzer Delicatessen, Pig on Wheels, Wine Therapy
Dominique Gruhier Vigneron, Montée de Tonnerre	14.5	A typical Chablis with very ripe, forward fruit and pleasing acidity. Very individual style, but there's something not quite right - a bit oxidised and maderised.	12.5%	2012	POA	Domaine Direct
Frédéric Gueguen au Domaine des Chenevières, Fourchaume	14.5	Leesy, wishy-washy nose - slightly oxidised. Rich and flat in the mouth displaying oak, big broad flavours and an odd balance. Lacks a bit of definition and grip.	12.5%	2012	N/A UK	www.fredericgueguen.fr

### 2-STAR WINES Fair 12.5-14.49

■ Daniel Dampé, Beauroy (14.38) ■ Domaine Gérard Tremblay, Côte de Léchet (14.38) ■ Domaine Mosnier, Beauroy (14.38) ■ Domaine du Guette-Soleil, Vaulorent (14.33) ■ Domaine Louis Moreau, Les Fourneaux (14.33) ■ Moreau-Naudet, Montmains (tank sample) (14.33) ■ Domaine Bernard Defaix, Les Lys (14.13) ■ Isabelle & Denis Pommier, Fourchaume (14.08) ■ Jean Durup Père & Fils, Fourchaume (14) ■ La Chablisienne, Montée de Tonnerre (14) ■ Daniel Dampé, Fourchaume (13.83) ■ Jean Durup Père & Fils, L'Homme Mort (13.83)

■ Billaud-Simon, Mont de Milieu (13.67) ■ Domaine Alain Geoffroy, Beauroy (13.5) ■ Domaine Pascal Bouchard, Les Vieilles Vignes, Montmains (13.5) ■ Domaine Drouhin Vaudon, Fourchaume (13.33)

### 1-STAR WINES Poor 10.5-12.49pts

■ Domaine Laroche-Pierre, L'Homme Mort (12.33) ■ J Moreau et Fils, Fourchaume (12) ■ Frédéric Gueguen au Domaine des Chenevières, L'Homme Mort (11.67) ■ Château de Beru, Vaucoupin (10.5)

Next month's panel tastings  
Brunello 2007 and Rias Baixas  
Albariño (latest release)

For full UK stockist details, see p91

## Expert summary: Michael Schuster

Very variable quality and styles from a difficult year, but the best wines will impress those wanting pure-fruited mineral wines where acidity prevails over oak



Michael Schuster is the Decanter World Wine Awards Regional Chair for Burgundy

AT ITS BEST, 2010 is a first-rate Chablis vintage, from yields about 20% down on average, and from a difficult year rescued by a (mostly) fine September. But it is also Burgundy and, while the overall quality of winemaking is much cleaner than it would have been 10 years ago, the quality was very variable across the 182 wines tasted. If the alcohol and acidity levels are similar to 2008, the best wines are certainly richer to taste. They have more flesh and generosity than the fine, firm 2008s and the tautly leaner 2007s. 1990 comes to mind. The variation in quality is mirrored by great variations in style.

At the top end were wines of vitality, concentration and premier cru raciness and class, while at the other extreme were wines that were just dilute and mean. There were also a surprising number that tasted ripe, supple and juicy - pleasant enough, but simply not Chablis - and which, when tasted blind, you would likely stick in the Mâconnais. Domaines that picked late, perhaps?

Among the Awards were a couple each of Fourchaume and Mont de Milieu and one from Montée de Tonnerre, the premiers crus vineyards which flank the grand crus and which are generally regarded as nipping at their heels, so no great surprises there. Nor among the standout names: William Fèvre, Malandes, Long Dépacquit and Samuel Billaud each had a couple of wines in the top 20. Samuel Billaud's new négociant operation is clearly a name to look

out for. His absence from Billaud Simon, where he used to be winemaker, may explain Billaud Simon's lacklustre showing at this tasting. That was a surprise. Another Decanter Award-winning name completely new to me (and in neither Rosemary George MW's book on Chablis, nor Jasper Morris's on Burgundy) was Domaine Charly Nicolle - a fine effort there.

Chablis lovers have been spoiled recently: 2007, 2008 and 2010 have all produced wines to gratify the palates of those who seek purity, mineral sensations, no intrusive new wood aromas, and a mouthwatering bite of acidity. True Chablis that is. 2009? There was good quality, but mostly too supple and sunny for what I want from Chablis. The fine 2010 premiers crus are rich, vigorous wines which, at mostly between £15 and £25, are excellent value in the Burgundy context, which you can buy with confidence to savour over the next four to seven years or, with the top wines, keep for 10 to 15 years.

“The fine 2010 premiers crus are rich, vigorous wines which, at between £15 and £25, are excellent value”