

Burgundy Under the Radar

BY NEAL MARTIN | JULY 17, 2018

...Burgundy remains a vast ocean of growers beyond the most famous names. Nothing gives me more pleasure than foraging for winemakers unknown to myself, or those that I have never visited. There are innumerable “under-the-radar” growers in Burgundy, and I use that term knowing that some oenophile’s radars are better than others. There is always one more grower that you have to visit around the corner. When it comes to Burgundy there is no full stop.

...I leave it up to you to sift through the information and attendant notes and expand your Burgundy horizons. Who knows, maybe save yourself a bit of money with better-value alternative and start acquainting yourself with a future star early in their career.

Domaine de la Folie (Rully)

Domaine de la Folie is a reborn estate. Whenever I mentioned my visit to this address just outside the town of Chagny, the reply was something along the lines of “*They used to produce wonderful Rully...but they went downhill in the 1990s...what happened?*” That cannot be denied. Nor can the fact that Clémence and Baptiste Dubrelle have taken it upon themselves to give Domaine de la Folie a new lease of life. The Domaine’s reputation stems from Clémence’s grandfather, who oversaw the wines up until the 1970s. Unfortunately quality slumped in the 1980s and a lack of investment saw this, once glorious winery, fall by the wayside with



wines that could not hold a torch to past glories. Both Clémence and Baptiste pursued successful careers in public relations and engineering respectively, before making a life-changing decision and jacking that all in and face what must have been the challenging task of rejuvenating the Domaine. Alas, when I visited, Baptiste had recently fallen from a ladder in the winery and landed on the ball of his feet, an injury far more serious than this innocuous cause, necessitating several weeks in plaster that rendered him unable to descend down the steep steps for the barrel cellar for a frustrating period of time. Now on crutches, he had just started to be able to tend his barrels – a relief for both family and himself. The barrel cellar actually lies below the three-story maison that offers a panorama northwards all the way up to Nuits Saint-Georges. Funnily enough, Clémence's 101-year old grandmother lives on the top floor, Clémence's parents on the first floor and Clémence's own family on the bottom.

The Domaine includes 13 hectares of vine of which around two-thirds are planted with Chardonnay. "We are in the northern part of the appellation, so we are different," Clémence explained. "Our wines are fresh and more mineral-driven, a little different from the main part of the Rully appellation. All the vineyards surround the house so that the grapes lie just 30 minutes from being cut to entering the reception. This is important because of the way we manage the sulphites. Since 2015 we have not added any SO₂ before the end of the malolactic. For the reds we just do one *pigeage* and undertake some *délestage* instead. All our wines are now bottled under DIAM 5."

I ask about their portfolio. "We have six different wines including two from Clos La Folie, which contains some Aligoté and faces north-northeast. Clos du Chaigne is a 3.28-hectare Premier Cru and Clos-Saint-Jacques is a 1.69-hectare Premier Cru, the latter tending to produce more delicate and elegant wines. There are two parcels of Clos de Bellecroix and the Cuvée Marey [the former aged in stainless steel and the later seeing around 20% new oak]. The wines must express four different things: the soil, the plant, the vintage and the winemaker. The winemaker must not cover the three first points. We have to express the vintage and the *typicité* of the wine, underline the elegance of the Rully AC."

Keep an eye on Domaine de la Folie. Tasting the 2014, 2015 and 2016 I could see a progression, even through those three recent vintages, in particular some very promising 2016s. There is wonderful purity of fruit beginning to develop and genuine *terroir* expression both in white and red, my picks being the Clos de Bellecroix, which I just prefer to the oak aged Cuvée Marey version and the 2016 Rully Clos Saint-Jacques, the best white I tasted from the estate. There is clearly a lot of love being lavished on Domaine de la Folie and, whilst they might have limited means, as far as I can see Clémence and Baptiste and doing everything right, showing that Rully can make top quality wines. And of course, next time a wine know-it-all asks you to name the five growers of Clos Saint-Jacques, you can reply "How about the sixth?"