

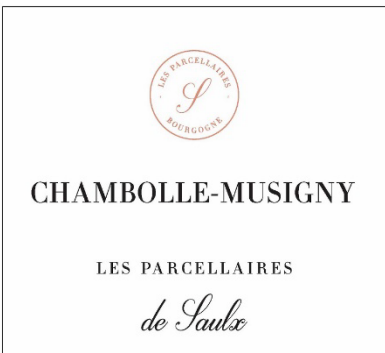
# Les Parcelles de Saulx

## Meursault



*Certainly I was impressed by the Parcelles wines, which seemed agreeably distinct and generally true to their origins with freshness and personality.*

—Jancis Robinson, January 2021



Les Parcelles de Saulx is a small, venerable *maison de vins* firm occupying a handsome manor house at the upper end of Meursault. Its cellar stretches on for some 5,000 square feet, and in its depths the house has been *élevaging* wine since 1908 (the oldest written record.)

The firm was purchased in 2017 by an American couple, Denise Dupré and Mark Nunnely, with their French partner Jean-Luc Vitoux. Dupré has practical and academic experience in hospitality, being the founder and director of Champagne Hospitality and having taught at Cornell, Boston University and Harvard. Nunnely is a former managing partner at Bain Capital. The two are leading philanthropists in Boston, as well

as major Francophiles.

They first teamed up with Vitoux, a lawyer specializing in viticultural transactions, in 2012 to buy and resurrect the Champagne house Leclerc Briant (an early pioneer of biodynamics that had fallen on hard times). In 2014 they purchased the Royal Champagne Hotel, dramatically reopening it in 2018. In 2017 they bought Domaine de Belleville in Rully, along with the *maison de vins* business in Meursault, and ended the year by securing a long-term occupancy agreement with Pommard's Château de la Commaraine and its monopole clos vineyard (noted by Lavalley in his Burgundian classification of 1855).

Each is a distinct operation. Belleville came with 54 acres of vines, mostly in the Côte Chalonnaise but also with holdings in the Côte de Nuits, all of which were quickly transitioned into biodynamic farming. The 12-century Château de la Commaraine is being renovated into a 5-star hotel, while its cellar is being revamped and its vines are transitioning to organic farming. The business in Meursault has been christened Les Parcelles, with a strict focus on bottling single vineyard wines from single producers, rather than the usual *négociant* practice of blending for volume. The de Saulx appendage is a reference to the family that owned the Château de la Commaraine in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, done to make the new connection among the properties and to underscore a sense of tradition.

The sign above the door may have changed, but not the person in charge of the wines at Les Parcelles—Isabelle Laurand, the cellar master since the turn of the century, has been retained. She's a native Burgundian who back in the day went to school at Beaune's well known *Lycée Viticole* (where Jean-Pierre Charlot from Domaine Voillot taught), and she has deep-seated relationships among a who's who list of growers along the Côte.

Laurand limits her selection to one wine from one grower per *climat*, working with organic or biodynamic growers whenever possible. Perforce, the quantities are small, sometimes only a barrel or two, and these are predominately older barrels—the rotation of new barrels is carefully managed and minimized to let a given site’s fruit and soil notes shine. Every wine in the stable—simple Bourgogne included—is raised in barrel.

For vintage 2020, she bought 40 different lots from around 15 different growers. For whites, it's must; for reds, it's finished wine, purchased right after fermentation, and she does the aging. Ferments for both colors are spontaneous without yeast additions, and all the reds are de-stemmed (it's her preference).

Currently, as indicated, she’s working with 40 wines ranging from Bourgogne to Grand Cru, with a swath of Premier Crus. Roughly 25,000 bottles are produced, with the ultimate goal of reaching 60,000 bottles, or a modest 5,000 cases. The aim is to turn Les Parcellaires into one of Burgundy’s leading *micro-négoces*.