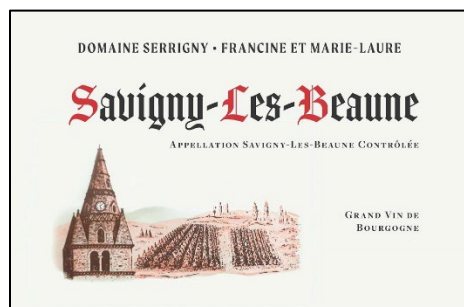


Domaine Serrigny

Savigny-lès-Beaune



She is clearly one of the top producers in her commune.
-John Gilman, View from the Cellar, December 2022



Serrigny is a family operation deep in the hollow of Savigny-lès-Beaune. The household is on the hill behind the local château, and when you pull out of their road you can look down and see the seigneur's crazy collection of mothballed fighter jets. He's got them lined up on the chateau's lawn, an eclectic display of man's bird of prey.

Domaine Serrigny dates to 1840, when Eugène Serrigny started the domaine in Savigny-lès-Beaune. Serrigny is the main village in the neighboring commune of Ladoix-Serrigny, and the speculation has long been that Serrigny was the name of a Roman settler during the Roman occupation of Gaul...so it's within the realm of possibility that Eugène was a descendant. Be that as it may, today the domaine is made up of over seven hectares of vines (17+ acres) and is run by Marie-Laure Serrigny, the fourth generation after Eugène. At age 18, she joined her father on the domaine. Her younger sister Francine joined in 1995, after, like Marie-Laure, undergoing studies at the Beaune winemaking school. That same year, their father died unexpectedly, leaving the two daughters in charge. At the time, they were 23 and 25, and as a team they went on in the years to come to tend the vines, make the wine, and do all of the myriad of things involved in running a domaine until late in 2016 when Francine succumbed to a battle with cancer.

Gilles Mathieu, a former member of Jean-Pierre's team over at Domaine Joseph Voillot, grew up in Savigny and had known the Serrignys all his life. He pretty much insisted that I visit, which I did early in February of 2016 without high expectations. The appellation is dominated by a handful of players and there was no press to speak of on the Serrigny wines.

Francine met me in her little courtyard on a wet afternoon. She wore boots, jeans, an old fleece over a sweater, and she had a tired air of *savoir faire* without any pretense whatsoever. The office Francine took me to had the look of a room that had been well used a generation ago. A fax machine still sat in the corner, plugged in. She opened a 2014 Bourgogne Blanc, and from the first scent of orchard fruits and minerals and honey I was carried away. Gilles arrived as the second wine got opened, his bald pate gleaming from the rain and his magnificent, sweptback moustache flaring like wings from his cheeks. As night fell, Jean-Luc Rousseau came in from the vines (at the time, he was Serrigny's cellar master). A reputed soccer goalie in his youth, he was an enormous man with a great spread of arms, and he came into that dark room cold, wet, tired, and grateful for a glass. We sat around an old oak table in that modest office tasting what was an eye-opening range of old-vine wines from two vintages as the three friends caught up and warmly exchanged opinions on the wines. Among French growers, this was a common occurrence. For an American, it was a privilege. And not everything in Burgundy had been discovered, that was clear that evening. It was still possible to stumble upon two hardworking sisters who maintained a fax machine, did *pigeage* by foot, and made killer wines.

The domaine farms small parcels in Auxey-Duresses, Côte de Nuits-Villages, Corton Charlemagne, Meursault, Monthelie, and Pernand Vergelesses, but the historic heart of the holdings is in Savigny. The farming culture is *lutte raisonnée*, i.e., sustainable, and the approach in the cellar is quite traditional. The parcel and the maturity dictate de-stemming entirely or partially or not at all (old man Serrigny never de-stemmed); ferments are spontaneous and the reds undergo alcoholic fermentation in wooden uprights; the cap is still, remarkably, broken up by foot; and all of the *élevages* take place in older barrels for fourteen months (sometimes less for the whites, sometimes more for the reds) before racking to steel where the wine rests for several more months. No fining for the reds and bottling with only a light filtration.

Another salient fact is that Marie Laure works with some very old vines. These perform give low yields, and it's an exceptional vintage here that gives as much as 40 hectoliters per hectare. She's not afraid to wait for good ripeness either. The result is a range of Pinots deliciously rich with earth, fruit and spice, and frequently, depending on how limey the limestone soil is in a given plot, quite mineral. They also have excellent acidities and tannic structures. The Chardonnays here are plump, toothsome renditions underpinned with driving acidity. These are wines made with a modest yet sure hand, which in all things wine is the most honest of hands. Marie Laure has her feet firmly on the ground; it's substance over style for her every time, and that is ever reassuring. Production averages 2,500 cases.

The hail of 2013 damaged 80% of the Serrigny vines. The frost of May 2016 wiped out roughly 70% of the domaine's crop. Any plans that Marie Laure might have had to buy an automated system of *pigeage* went out the window. Tradition, chez Serrigny endures. As does the reign of women, for cellar master Jean-Luc moved on after the 2017 harvest and Marie-Laure hired a woman in his stead.

<http://www.domaine-serrigny.fr/>