

DOMAINE
MICHEL MALLARD *et Fils*

Vinous - Neal Martin

I have been visiting Michel Mallard's winery in Ladoix for a number of years now. Of course, we became acquainted when I first met him at Domaine d'Eugénie in Vosne-Romanée where he continues to work [see the relevant Producer Profile coming in Part 2 of this report], but I am equally interested in his family's wines that congregate on the northern extreme of the Côte de Beaune. Mallard himself is a tall, athletic and garrulous man who divides his time overseeing wines for one of the wealthiest proprietors in the world with his own humbler wines that deserve more attention. "We started picking on 9 September and over the next nine days, one hectare per day with sorting in the vineyard," Mallard told me in his living room, log fire roaring away behind me after I moaned about his cellar being too Arctic one year. "There were low yields for the whites due to low temperatures shocking the vines during flowering, then afterwards, the dry conditions. We did not have the water of 2018. Normally, I should make 5,000 bottles of the Ladoix Blanc but this year it is 1,200. We did more maceration this year than working the cap and the highest alcohol is with my Ladoix Village Blanc at 13.9°. For all the Village reds there is one 500-litre barrel for every six barrels. I used 40% whole bunches for the Village Crus and up to 70% for the Grand Crus."

I really enjoyed Mallard's 2019s. The Corton Rognets and Les Renardes battle it out for best in show, the latter likely to need more time in the cellar. But what I really admire about Mallard is that he is a flag-waver for Ladoix, arguably the most "untrendy" appellation. Just taste his Ladoix Le Clos Royer to see what can be achieved – and it isn't even a Premier Cru!

Chorey-lès-Beaune « *Les Beaumonts* » 2019 : 90-92/100

The 2019 Chorey-lès-Beaune Les Beaumonts has a well-defined bouquet of ebullient raspberry and blackberry fruit laced with black truffle and wet limestone. The palate is medium-bodied with crisp tannins, tight and focused yet delivering a surfeit of freshness and tension on the finish. Good potential. (2022 – 2032)

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Ladoix « Clos Royer » Rouge 2019 : 90-92/100

The 2019 Ladoix Clos Royer Rouge has a fragrant blackberry and raspberry bouquet, well defined and focused, touches of crushed stone permeating the fruit. The palate is medium-bodied with a slightly chalky texture, a fine bead of acidity and a slightly briny finish. Classy, but quite serious. (2023 – 2038)

Ladoix « Les Buis » Rouge 2019 : 87-89/100

The 2019 Ladoix Les Buis Rouge, which Mallard avers should be a Premier Cru, is matured with 40% whole clusters. It has a punchy bouquet, a mixture of black and blueberry fruit and a touch of vanilla pod (though originating from the vineyard, not from the barrel). The palate is medium-bodied with crunchy black fruit, crisp acidity and a tensile finish that just needs a little more weight and girth. Maybe that will develop during the remainder of elevage. (2022 – 2030)

Côte de Nuits-Villages 2019 : 90-92/100

The 2019 Côte de Nuits-Villages has a gentle bouquet of red and black fruit that gently unfolds in the glass. The palate is medium-bodied with grainy tannins, plenty of freshness and salinity and a focused, linear finish. Saline notes linger on the aftertaste. A seriously fine Côte de Nuits-Villages. (2023 – 2035)

Aloxe-Corton Village 2019 : 88-90/100

The 2019 Aloxe-Corton Village does not quite have the same amplitude as the Côte de Nuits Village on the nose, coming across more sedate and straightforward. The palate is medium-bodied with supple tannins and a fine bead of acidity. This shares the salinity of Mallard's other cuvees. Brisk and lightly spiced on the finish. Very fine. (2023 – 2030)

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Savigny-lès-Beaune 1^{er} Cru « Les Serpentières » 2019 : 90-92/100

The 2019 Savigny-lès-Beaune Les Serpentières 1er Cru has an elegant bouquet of pure red cherry and crushed strawberry fruit laced with vanilla pod. The palate is well balanced with a fine bead of acidity, tight on the entry, offering more blackberry and bilberry fruit than red fruit, and saline in the mouth. The strict, linear finish is lent pepperiness by the whole-bunch addition. Give this 3-5 years in bottle, as it is quite structured. (2024 – 2040)

Ladoix 1^{er} Cru « Les Joyeuses » 2019 : 90-92/100

The 2019 Ladoix Les Joyeuses 1er Cru has immense purity on the nose, featuring attractive black cherries, raspberry and light rose petal scents, plus just a hint of pitted black olives. The palate is medium-bodied with a silky-smooth texture, quite sensual and extremely pure. Orange sorbet interlaces the red and blue fruit toward the finish. This should drink after a couple of years in bottle, and it will be very tempting (2022 – 2032)

Ladoix 1^{er} Cru « La Corvée » 2019 : 91-93/100

The 2019 Ladoix La Corvée 1er Cru, which comes from south-facing vines, is tightly wound on the nose, offering intense blackberry, briary and light sea spray scents, plus perhaps just a touch of shucked oyster shell. The palate is medium-bodied with supple tannins and a fine bead of acidity. It tapers in a little toward the finish, where there is some oak to be assimilated, but it has the substance for long-term aging if desired. (2023 – 2040)

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Aloxe-Corton 1^{er} Cru « Les Valozières » 2019 : 89-91/100

The 2019 Aloxe-Corton Les Valozières 1er Cru has a slight *confit*-like bouquet featuring raspberry and cranberry fruit, then later touches of brown spice. The palate is medium-bodied with crunchy red fruit laced with white pepper and clove, and chalky in texture toward the structured finish. Quite a strict, linear Aloxe-Corton, it will need 3-4 years in bottle. (2023 – 2035)

Aloxe-Corton 1^{er} Cru « La Toppe au Vert » 2019 : 90-92/100

The 2019 Aloxe-Corton La Toppe Au Vert 1er Cru is more outgoing and expressive on the nose compared to the Les Valozières at the moment. Joyful blueberry and cassis fruit laced with orange sorbet bursts from the glass. The palate is medium-bodied with supple tannins. The acidity is very fine here, lending the finish a citrusy freshness. Lots of energy is packed into this Aloxe-Corton, which might drink a little earlier than the Valozières. Excellent. (2023 – 2035)

Aloxe-Corton 1^{er} Cru « Les Maréchaudes » 2019 : 90-92/100

The 2019 Aloxe-Corton Les Marechaude 1er Cru is a declassification from Mallard's vines in Corton Maréchaudes and contains 70% whole bunch. That stem addition defines the nose at the moment. The palate is medium-bodied with plenty of juicy red fruit. Mallard told me that this cuvée had not fully settled at the time of tasting, and my score reflects how I estimate it will be once knitted together. Just one barrel produced. (2023 – 2035)

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Corton Grand Cru « *Les Maréchaudes* » 2019 : 91-93/100

The 2019 Corton Les Maréchaudes Grand Cru needed some coaxing on the nose, reluctantly offering blackberry, briary and light cranberry scents all interlaced with crushed stone. The palate is well balanced with supple tannins and a fine bead of acidity. This was due to be racked, and taking this into account, it has plenty of energy and persistence. A subtle pepperiness from the whole-bunch addition appears on the finish. Three barrels produced. (2024 – 2040)

Corton Grand Cru « *Le Rognet* » 2019 : 93-95/100

The 2019 Corton Le Rognet Grand Cru has slightly more intensity and *fruité* on the nose, touches of black olive filtering through with aeration. The oak is nicely integrated and the bouquet becomes increasingly floral with each swirl of the glass. The palate is medium-bodied with a very saline entry and good focus. A linear, fresh, marine-influenced Corton, this, fanning out toward the persistent finish and leaving touches of brine on the aftertaste. A superb Corton Le Rognet from Mallard. (2024 – 2045)

Corton Grand Cru « *Les Renardes* » 2019 : 93-95/100

The 2019 Corton Les Renardes Grand Cru comes across a little spicier and more tertiary than Mallard's two other Corton Grand Cru, hints of Seville orange marmalade and quince emerging with aeration. The palate is medium-bodied with supple tannins and fine acidity, perhaps more primal than the Le Rognet and Maréchaudes. A little gaminess on the finish will enhance complexity once in bottle. Patience is required, more so than with the Rognets. (2025 – 2050)

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Ladoix Blanc Village 2019 : 88-90/100

The 2019 Ladoix Blanc Village is a blend of two *climats* and comes from mainly younger, 10-year-old vines. It has an attractive bouquet of orange blossom and citrus peel scents. The palate is well balanced with a slightly waxy texture, touches of orange peel and a crisp, saline finish. Delicious. (2022 – 2027)

Ladoix « Le Clos Royer » Blanc 2019 : 89-91/100

The 2019 Ladoix Le Clos Royer Blanc is always the first to be picked. It has a lilting bouquet of apple blossom and light nectarine scents that unfold gently. The palate is well balanced with fine tension on the entry, and quite saline in the mouth. An edgy, citric finish enlivens the senses. Crisp and focused, this should age with style. (2022 – 2030)

Ladoix 1^{er} Cru « Les Gréchons » 2019 : 88-90/100

The 2019 Ladoix Les Gréchons Blanc 1er Cru was quite backward and sultry on the nose, displaying light grapefruit and citrus aromas. The palate is more expressive, with orange zest and light peachy notes, and saline in the mouth. A tang of pink grapefruit appears on the finish. (2022 – 2030)

Corton Charlemagne Grand Cru 2019 : 92-94/100

The 2019 Corton-Charlemagne Grand Cru is matured in one new 350-liter barrel and one used half-barrel. It has a tightly wound bouquet that unfolds to reveal touches of white peach and almond, plus a little hazelnut in the background. The palate is medium-bodied with good acidity, a very subtle reduction and superb tension toward the finish. A sophisticated Corton Charlie. (2023 – 2038)

Burghound.com - Allen Meadows

Ladoix « *Les Buis* » 2019 : 87-89/2024+

Ripe high-toned aromas feature notes of strawberry, raspberry and a suggestion of earth. The nicely rich, round and caressing flavors possess a bracing bitter cherry pit-inflected finish. This attractive and delicious if mildly rustic effort should drink well after only a few years of bottle aging.

Côte de Nuits-Villages 2019 : 88/2025+

(from Les Chaillots in Corgoloin). This is presently displaying some post-bottling reduction though by the time it is released, it shouldn't be a problem. Otherwise there is more volume and fine punch to the delicious, balanced and moderately rustic finale that it slightly more structured.

Chorey-lès-Beaune « *Les Beaumonts* » 2019 : 87-89/2024+

This is aromatically similar to the Les Buis though the earth component is a bit more prominent. The round, delicious and appealingly vibrant flavors that also flash a touch of rusticity. This fleshy effort is also just structured enough to repay a few years of keeping.

Ladoix « *Le Clos Royer* » 2019 : 88-91/2025+

Distinctly earthy aromas include those of forest floor and spice on the blend of red currant and plum where a hint of herbal tea lurks in the background. There is fine vibrancy to the attractively delineated medium weight flavors that terminate in a lingering finale where touch of both rusticity and youthful austerity slowly emerge. This isn't especially elegant but there's more depth of material and complexity.

Burghound.com - Allen Meadows

Savigny-Lès-Beaune 1^{er} Cru « Les Serpentières » 2019 : 89-92/2026+

A cool, pure and pretty nose is comprised by the essence of red pinot fruit, spice and a whiff of violet. The well-detail and vibrant middle weight flavors are not especially dense, but they do offer a more refined mouthfeel as well as fine length on the bitter pit fruit-inflected finish. Lovely and understated in style.

Aloxe-Corton 2019 : 87-89/2025+

This sports a curious form of reduction that the Burgundians call bourgeon de cassis, or cassis blossom and it extends to the palate as well of the otherwise racy and intensity medium weight flavors that conclude in a rustic if lingering finish. This should clean up and my projected range offers the benefit of the doubt.

Ladoix 1^{er} Cru « Les Joyeuses » 2019 : 89-91/2025+

Here too there is a touch of bourgeon de cassis that is trimmed in just enough wood to notice. By contrast, here it does not extend to the palate of the medium-bodied flavors that possess a seductive texture, all wrapped in a youthfully austere and beautifully long finish. This too is fashioned in an understated style.

Ladoix 1^{er} Cru « La Corvée » 2019 : 90-92/2027+

A super-fresh nose freely offers up notes of essence of red currant, raspberry, earth and a hint of fennel. I very much like the texture to the acceptably concentrated flavors that also deliver excellent length on the more obviously structured finale. Solid quality here.

Aloxe-Corton 1^{er} Cru « Les Valozières » 2019 : 90-92/2029+

A more sauvage and forest floor-inflected nose speaks of equally fresh aromas of primarily various red berries and a hint of humus. There is first-rate punch with excellent delineation on the moderately austere, muscular and rustic finale. This is clearly built-to-age and Valozières always needs at least a decade to round off the grippy tannins.

Burghound.com - Allen Meadows

Aloxe-Corton 1^{er} Cru « La Toppe au Vert » 2019 : 90-93/2029+

Slightly riper aromas present notes of poached plum, earth, kirsch and a similar forest floor nuance. The racy, intense and beautifully detailed medium-bodied flavors possess fine volume as well as a subtle minerality that adds a sense of lift to the youthfully austere finish that exhibits just a bit better depth and persistence. This is one to check out provided you intend to cellar it for at least a few years.

Aloxe-Corton 1^{er} Cru « Les Maréchaudes » 2019 : 91-93/2031+

(only 1 barrel made). An overtly floral, fresh and pretty nose willingly offers up its combination of essence of red currant, cherry and violet. The relatively elegant middle weight flavors possess both good verve and a perfumed and spicy inner mouth character that is quite seductive before concluding in a dense, powerful and serious finish that is also going to require at least a few years of bottle aging. This is a fine effort and recommended.

Corton Grand Cru « Les Maréchaudes » 2019 : 91-94/2031+

This is similar to the 1er version but with better layering. There is also more volume to the delicious medium-bodied flavors that are both sappy and caressing while displaying focused power on the impressively persistent and well-balanced finale. This will also need at least some forbearance before it will be good to go.

Corton Grand Cru « Le Rognet » 2019 : 92-95/2036+

The whole cluster vinification is in evidence on the spicy and very floral nose that flashes hints of rose petal and herbal tea on the mostly red berry fruit suffused aromas. There is outstanding concentration to the powerful and tautly muscular flavors that possess impressive size and weight as well as terrific depth and persistence. This fine Corton is very firm and also clearly built-to-age.

Burghound.com - Allen Meadows

Corton Grand Cru « *Les Renardes* » 2019 : 92-94/2034+

(from a .75 ha parcel). This is also exceptionally floral in character with plenty of sauvage character present on the more deeply pitched aromas of black cherry and cassis. The velvety yet powerful larger-scaled flavors coat the palate with sappy dry extract while displaying excellent length on the balanced and built-to-age finale. Excellent.

Ladoix Blanc Village 2019 : 88-91/2024+

Slightly riper aromas are composed by notes of straw, petrol, white orchard fruit compote and freshly sliced fennel. The racy, intense and utterly delicious flavors possess fine volume on the citrusy, clean and refreshingly dry finale. This is sufficiently structured to reward a few years of cellaring.

Ladoix « *Le Clos Royer* » 2019 : 89-91/2024+

This is riper still though still fresh with its aromas of lychee, white peach, citrus confit and dried herbs. There is again fine volume to the plump and rounded medium-bodied flavors that conclude in a firm, complex and inviting finish. This too is worth considering.

Ladoix 1^{er} Cru « *Les Gréchons* » 2019 : 89-91/2024+

Discreet but perceptible wood influence sets off mildly exotic aromas of pineapple, white peach and dried apricot. The succulent and seductively textured flavors coat the palate with dry extract before culminating in a bitter lemon inflected finish. This could use better depth but it's already interesting in its fashion.

Burghound.com - Allen Meadows

Corton Charlemagne Grand Cru 2019 : 91-93/2027+

(from Le Charlemagne). Layered, fresh and ripe aromas include those of green apple, white flowers and plenty of citrus elements. There is very good density to the overtly stony, palate coating and muscular flavors that retain fine delineation on the citrusy and very dry but not really austere finale.