

# Wine, dine and fun in Burgundy



**Lim Hwee Peng**, our well-travelled wine writer, highlights the various ways of enjoying the wines, food and places in the beloved land of Pinot and Chardonnay.



It has been said that exploring the great Burgundy wine region is as complex as solving a maze.

Burgundy is known as one of the most fragmented appellations in French wine regions, no thanks to the archaic Napoleon law that dictates an absolute equal division of properties among the owner's offspring.

This late summer, my trip to the holy land opened my eyes and mind to things I took for granted in my wine journey. Nevertheless, I have managed to be enlightened by the nuances and notes that distinguish Burgundy's vin blanc and rouge from the new world Chardonnay and Pinot Noir.

After spending almost 10 days traversing north and south of the wine land, I have come to realise that regardless of the quality of an Aussie, a California or a Central Otago Pinot Noir or Chardonnay, they are unequal to a Burgundy wine.

In my opinion, Burgundy wines are simply divine products blessed by nature, driven and shaped by passionate and unyielding vine farmers, who are traditionalists and fiercely proud of their heritage and achievements handed down through many generations. Paying homage to the region seems to be the only way to understand the mystic and complexity of Burgundy wines; yet it is also equally important to map out a comprehensive route and preparation prior to visit the region. Based on my recent encounter, I would like to offer some possible ways to make the most of such a visit.

## *Fly and Ride*

First things first, my advice is to fly Air France, which has a regular flight to and from Paris, an excellent base to explore not just Burgundy, but also other French wine regions. One of the reasons for using Paris as a base is the availability of TGV. The renowned French high-speed train is a popular form of transport among locals and visitors. Resting on seats designed by Christian Lacroix, one can comfortably replenish the tiring soul prior to an intense exploration of wines and vineyards.

■ To check flights operating from Singapore to Paris, log on to [www.airfrance.sg](http://www.airfrance.sg) or contact the local Air France office.

■ To book TGV ticket, log on to [www.raileurope.fr](http://www.raileurope.fr) or contact GTA and Collyer's Travel in Singapore for details. Booking of tickets and reservation is compulsory for traveling on TGV.



Gare de Lyon interior

Photos Courtesy of Lim Hwee Peng

## Stay

In all my past experiences visiting wine regions, one of the most important preparations is to seek out reliable lodging. Here in Beaune and Dijon, choices are aplenty, ranging from the luxurious to the cosy. My recommendations include Le Richebourg, Maison Olivier Leflaive and Le Cedre, for convenience in moving around the different parts of Burgundy, as well as comfortable room facilities and friendly service.



Hotel le Richbourg



Maison Olivier Leflaive - One of the top lodging destination

## Eat

Burgundy is one of the rare wine regions where I can confidently proclaim having enjoyed almost all the dishes from the various restaurants that I have visited; whether it was the hearty local fare such as *eggs en meurette*, *beef bourguignon*, or *haute cuisine* at Michelin-rated establishments.



Top restaurant aplenty in Burgundy



details are looked into even in presentation of breads & chinaware

## Drink

**What is the choice of tipples when visiting Burgundy?** *Bourgogne vin blanc* and *rouge* of course! Although Burgundy has been in existence for centuries, generations of skill and know-how in cultivating the land have not been lost, as new generations of winemakers have been groomed to take over their elders. Seek out three of my favourite young guns who are emerging as the next generations of these Burgundy legends: Thibault Ligier (Domaine Thibault Ligier Belair), Alex Dujac (Domaine Dujac), and Erwan Faiveley (Domaine Faiveley).



Alex Dujac uncorking a sample for tasting



Faiveley Wines



Domaine Thibault Ligier Belair



## Visit

If time is a constraint and there are only a handful of wineries to visit during your stay in Burgundy, these are the 'must-visit' estates for you to gain an insight and in-depth understanding of Burgundy wines; Domaine Taupenot, Domaine Michel Gros, Domaine Louis Jadot, Bonneau du Martray, and Domaine Drouhin. More importantly, do make an appointment prior to your visit, because unlike other wine regions, the requirement of 'by appointment only' is strictly adhered to at Burgundy wineries.



Domaine Taupenot



Jean-Charles of Bonneau du Martray



Louis Jadot's winery

## Fun

All wines and no fun make a visit to Burgundy a dull affair. Aside from the vineyard tours and serious wine tasting sessions with winemakers, there are other recreational activities that one can indulge in to add spice to your experience. Join a bike tour to have a closer look and feel of the many great Burgundy vineyards. Learn a thing or two about the local signature fare from Michelin-rated chefs, and enhance learning by attending wine classes conducted by the local wine school.



Attend a wine session to understand Burgundy wines



Indulge in cooking classes to pick up tricks from top chefs



Take a ride along the Grand Cru route

## Stroll

After indulging in fine food and wines, take a stroll and bask in the bustling mood of Beaune marketplace, hop into the nearby historical Hospice de Beaune for some history lessons, or simply take a slow walk through the many medieval churches.



Beaune Market



HospicedeBeaune



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