



DOMAINE MATROT
MEURSAULT



By David Schildknecht

Thierry Matrot defied not just convention, but also my attempts to make sense of the 2007 vintage – forcing me, ultimately, to simply treat him as an exception – since he proudly confessed to a Chardonnay harvest that began in the last days of August, yet the results are simply superb, not to mention far more distinctively delicious than those he obtained in 2006 (when – again in contrarian fashion – he picked late). And he rendered his outstanding 2007s – he claims – without chaptalization, the wines finishing in the upper 12s of percent alcohol. "2005 and 2006 were more honeyed and rich, but 2007 corresponds more to my style of cuisine," says Matrot, adding that while he harvested 2004 late, those wines were not as ripe as these 2007s, which he is more inclined to compare with 2002. Matrot bottles early – usually immediately after racking and assembling (although very late malos in 2008 threatened to wreck havoc with that habit) – and, incidentally, has been so pleased with his experimental use of screw cap closures (including for all of his half bottles since vintage 2004) that he has now expanded their use to incorporate his village wine in 750.

Meursault Perrières 1er Cru 2007: 94

Normandy cider, apple blossom, narcissus, and orange blossom scent Matrot's 2007 Meursault Perrieres, which comes to the palate satiny in texture, featuring pure white peach underlain by toasted nuts and chalk, but without relinquishing its aura of enticing floral perfume. A vibratory, intense mineral, fruit, and floral exchange builds here to a finish of palate-etching citricity and minerality. This great example of 2007 energy, intensity, and elegance should merit 10 or a dozen years of attention. This bottling – representing nine barrels – is sold under the Pierre Matrot label and imported exclusively by Chateau and Estate Wines.

Meursault 2007: 90

Pineapple, apricot, grapefruit, and lime accented with cherry pit and apricot kernel render Matrot's 2007 Meursault vintage typical in its extroverted, succulent, and refreshing fruit. This wine from myriad parcels split roughly 60:40 between the Volnay and Puligny sides of town conveys a vivid sense of extract to accompany its handsomely lean and bright personality, with tart, pungent citrus oils and red berry, salt and chalk making for an invigorating as well as tenacious finish that beautifully illustrates the energy, transparency, and buoyancy of which its vintage is capable. It certainly utterly eclipses the 2006 rendition of this cuvee. Matrot could not find even a bottle of his small separate bottling of Meursault Chevalieres to show me, and I subsequently neglected to track one down stateside.

Puligny-Montrachet Les Chalumeaux 1er Cru 2007: 93

From another of those family vineyards around Blagny that until the 1950s were still being pressed on location by Thierry Matrot's grandfather, the 2007 Puligny-Montrachet Les Chalumeaux is seductively scented with lily, heliotrope, and high-toned, distilled pistachio, almond, and pit fruit essences; concentrates these fruits and flowers on a polished yet firmly-textured and invigoratingly citric palate; and finishes with saline savor of shrimp shell reduction and exhilarating lift. While Matrot is keen to bottle his wines in a reductive state, it strikes me that the volatility presupposed by this wine's kaleidoscopic, high-toned aromatic display implies a certain level of positive oxidation. But I am no chemists. All I can confidently report is that this represents an extraordinary expression of its vintage and high-altitude terroir, and one that I fully expect will remain fascinating for a decade.



Meursault Blagny 1er Cru 2007: 92

The Matrot 2007 Meursault-Blagny – reflecting a site with which this family has for the past three generations been closely connected – smells of honeysuckle, high toned red fruits (including maraschino) and citrus oil, all of these elements that run through a silken-textured palate featuring also succulent white peach, and into a finish of shimmering interplay with saline and chalky mineral threads. This exhibits the freshness, verve, and transparency to mineral and floral nuance that characterize the best of its vintage. I would anticipate it being worth following for at least 6-8 years. Happily, it represents Matrot's single largest bottling.

Meursault Charmes 1er Cru 2007: 92

The Matrot 2007 Meursault Charmes displays high-toned cherry, almond, and pistachio in the nose, joined by toasted hazelnut and a hint of honey on a silken-textured palate; and finishes with a suffusion of chalky, alkaline mineral notes. This long-lined, penetrating Meursault lacks quite the energetic interplay of flavors exhibited in the corresponding Meursault Blagny, but nonetheless preserves wonderful lift and refreshment, and ultimately even greater sheer persistence. I would anticipate this being worth attending to for 8-10 years.

Puligny-Montrachet Quintessence 1er Cru 2007 : 90

Matrot's new-wooded blend of fruit from Chalumeaux and a tiny parcel of La Garenne, the 2007 Puligny-Montrachet La Quintessence is – as in previous renditions – rather obviously oaky in the nose. He utilizes low-toast barrels in an effort to – as he puts it – "respect the minerality of La Garenne," but while there are certainly saline elements detectable here, I do not perceive them as well woven-in. More impressive are the persistent, high-toned citrus and nut oil as well as floral perfume that I detect as being an unquenchable legacy of the Chalumeaux. (There is essentially no difference between the roughly 40% Chalumeaux contribution to this blend and the wine that is bottled under than vineyard name.) All in all, this cuvee is certainly impressively concentrated, and may with time harmonize, but I can see no reason for it in the context of Matrot's portfolio. It originated in a vintage when the crop of La Garenne was so tiny that Matrot didn't want to bottle it on its own, but even if it were vinified in tank and topped-off with Chalumeaux, my intuition is that the resultant wine would be better-balanced and possessed of a more eloquent voice.

Puligny-Montrachet Les Combettes 1er Cru 2007 : 93

The 2007 Puligny-Montrachet Les Combettes – representing a mere four barrels (i.e.100 cases) even in this relatively generous vintage – smells alluringly of pear distillate, nutmeg, almond extract, heliotrope, and honeysuckle. It comes onto the palate with pear nectar and luscious, bright grapefruit and lemon, persistently wreathed in floral perfume and underlain with saline, chalky suggestions of things mineral. This is even richer and more refined than the corresponding Chalumeaux, if slightly less intriguing, and I would anticipate its being worth following for the better part of a decade.