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THE ULTIMATE BURGUNDY REFERENCE

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Statement of Principles

It is important that readers understand how I collect and evaluate the information that is reported in the pages of **Burghound.com** (the tasting notes and information are the sole responsibility of the author).

- I am personally responsible for all of my business expenses without exception. This includes airfare, hotels and effectively all of my meals. The purpose is as clear as it is simple: No conflicts of interest. *I do not accept nor do I seek any subsidy, in any form, from anybody.*
- Sample bottles are accepted for evaluation and commentary, much as book reviewers accept advance copies of new releases. I insist, however, that these sample bottles represent the final wines to be sold under that particular label.
- Finished, bottled wines are assigned scores as these wines are market-ready. Wines tasted from barrel, however, are scored within a range. This reflects the reality that a wine tasted from barrel is not a finished product.
- Wines are evaluated within the context of their *appellations*. Simply put, that means I expect a *grand cru* Burgundy to reflect its exalted status.

While the concept of *terroir* remains a controversial issue in the opinion of many people, it is not controversial to the Burgundian mindset—or to me, either. I attempt to convey, where appropriate, how certain wines are particularly good, or particularly bad, at expressing their underlying *terroir*. This is admittedly a difficult thing, rightly open to discussion among the Burgundians themselves, never mind an outside observer such as myself. Nevertheless, it is fundamental to great Burgundy. Mere "hedonism" is just that: empty pleasure seeking. Burgundy can deliver so much more—if it is asked.

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A Brief Word About Scores:

Numerical scores are endlessly debated among wine lovers. Inevitably, critics tend to emphasize certain characteristics at the expense of others. What follows is an explication of scores at **Burghound.com** and the underlying taste values they reflect.

Simply put, Burgundies that emphasize purity, elegance, overall balance and a clear expression of the underlying *terroir* are rated more highly than Burgundies that don't deliver these qualities. Other important characteristics include typicity, richness, balanced extraction, length and harmony. For example, a Volnay should taste like a Volnay and a *grand cru* should deliver a *grand cru* drinking experience.

The score is a summation of the taster's thoughts about a wine. It does not actually express those thoughts. Clearly, a mere number cannot fully represent the nuanced, detailed impression conveyed by a tasting note.

Please note: Wines are scored based on their expected quality at peak drinkability. Many *grands crus* that will, I believe, "be" a 92 may not necessarily taste like a 92-point wine when young, thanks to the prominent tannins or general inaccessibility.

Wines rated 90 points or above are worth a special effort to find and cellar. Wines rated 85 or above are recommended, **especially among regional and villages level wines**. There will be relatively few 90+ point wines, simply because there are relatively few outstanding and superlative wines. Finished, bottled wines are assigned specific scores as these wines are market-ready. Wines tasted from barrel are scored within a range. This reflects the reality that a wine tasted from barrel is not a finished, market-ready product.

95 – 100:	Truly incomparable and emotionally thrilling. A wine so rated is as good as Burgundy or Pinot Noir gets. By definition, it is reference standard for its <i>appellation</i> .
90 – 94:	Outstanding. Worth a special effort to purchase and cellar and will provide memorable drinking experiences.
85 – 89:	Good to High quality. Burgundies that offer solid quality in every respect and generally very good typicity. "Good Value" wines will often fall into this category. Worth your attention.
80 – 84:	Average to Good quality. The wine is "correct", displays no noticeable flaws and will provide pleasing, if straightforward, drinking.
76 – 79:	Barely Acceptable quality. The wine is not worth your attention nor is it a good value.
75 and Below:	Don't Bother. A wine with noticeable, irremediable flaws.

Estimated Maturities:

Estimating a window of when any pinot based wine will be at its peak is an extremely difficult thing to do with precision. The time frames that you see after the score is my best estimate as to when any given wine will likely be at its best. This is of course simply an educated guess about how the wine will evolve and assumes that the wine will have been responsibly shipped and stored, which as long-time collectors know is not always the case. Just as importantly, the time suggested windows are based on how I personally prefer my Burgundies and pinots. This effectively means that for reds, there is still obvious freshness and vibrancy remaining to both the fruit and the flavors and while the tannic structure will be largely resolved, it by no means suggests that a completely smooth palate will exist devoid of any firmness. Especially tannic and or concentrated wines will necessarily have wider windows for obvious reasons. For whites, the windows are designed to indicate that point at which youthful fruit has passed into secondary nuances with more fully developed complexity as well as when the textures have rounded out and the sometimes pointed acidity has mellowed. Important note: what the estimated maturities do NOT suggest is how long a wine will remain structurally sound and still capable of providing some enjoyment as many Burgundies, in particular, are capable of remarkably long periods of graceful decline; however, beyond a certain point they will have passed their peaks and should be drunk, no matter how intellectually interesting they may be. As with anything this subjective, there is no substitute for your own experience and I offer these estimated maturities as a general guideline, not gospel and as the saying goes, your mileage may vary.

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Oregon Pinot Noir:

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Bergstrom Wines
Big Table Farm
Blooming Hill Vineyard and Winery, A
Brick House Vineyards
Chehalem Winery
Dion Vineyard
iOTA Cellars
Kramer Vineyards
Ponzi Vineyards
Raptor Ridge Winery
St. Innocent Winery
Stoller Vineyards
Tye Wine Cellars
Vista Hills Vineyard
Walter Scott Wines
WillaKenzie Estate
Willamette Valley Vineyards
Winter's Hill Vineyard

Progress Report:

2010 Clos de Vougeot
Horizontal

A Word about the Tasting Notes:

99% of the following Burgundy notes are based on tastings conducted January and February 2013 in Burgundy; the other 1% were tasted from bottle in the last several months in the home office. Note: finished, bottled wines are assigned scores, as these wines are market-ready. Wines tasted from barrel are scored within a range, which simply reflects the reality that they are not finished, market-ready wines. The wines in the presentation boxes are listed alphabetically while the tasting notes are presented in the order that the winemaker chose to present the wines; this often is an indication as to the esteem in which the winemaker regards each wine.

Our policy on reviewing wines is simple: During domaine or winery visits, if a domaine or winery presents a wine for consideration, and it is to the best of our knowledge representative and has finished both its primary and secondary fermentations, then it is reviewed – no exceptions. So if, for example, you are looking at a range of 2009’s from a specific Burgundian producer and you do not see a particular wine in the database, it means that it was not presented for review and does NOT mean that it received an exceptionally poor score. If it is not in the database, it has not been reviewed. If you do not see any wines for a particular producer in a given year in the database, then it means the wines were not reviewed – it does NOT mean they were reviewed but found them to be uninspiring.

Note: Wines receiving a ►► symbol are particularly outstanding for their respective *appellations* and especially merit your attention; readers should note that *grands crus* stand on their own.

iOTA Cellars (Amity, OR)

2011	Pinot Noir – Pelos Sandberg Vineyard	red	88
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The Estate vineyard was planted in 2000 by partners Lynne and Perry Pelos and Don and Johanna Sandberg while the winery was not established until 2006. There are 11.5 acres of pinot planted in 6 blocks that are farmed using sustainable agricultural practices. The Pelos Sandberg Vineyard was certified LIVE in 2010. IOTA intermittently sells grapes to EIEIO, Big Table Farm, Bergstrom Winery and Beaux Frères but now retains the bulk of the production from 9.5 of the 11 acres for their own use. They plan to planting 3.5 more acres in 2014. For more information call 503.507.8063 or visit: www.iotacellars.com

2011 Pinot Noir – Pelos Sandberg Vineyard: (Eola-Amity Hills, unfinned and unfiltered, 767 cases, SRP \$38, 12.9%). A beautifully perfumed nose offers up notes of plum, dark cherry, raspberry, sandalwood and spice nuances. There is a lovely sense of energy to the medium-bodied flavors that possess a suave but not lush mouth feel as there is good delineation, particularly on the dusty and ever-so-mildly austere finish that leans out somewhat. I like the depth and the delivery though some may find this to be a bit too lean and austere. 88/2017+