Domaine Badoz

It's relatively rare to find CVs of winemakers in the Jura that include experience at so many internationally known estates, but Benoît Badoz' features Louis Carillon in Puligny-Montrachet, Pétrus in Pomerol, Dominus in the Napa Valley and Hardy's Tintara in South Australia. He is the tenth generation of a family that claims the longest known history as vignerons in Poligny, with records going back to 1659. Early in the 20th century grandfather Pierre developed the Roussots vineyard slope, but it was from the 1970s, when Bernard Badoz, Benoît's indomitable father, took over, that the estate became devoted to wine production with a small négociant business alongside.

Equally rare is to find a relatively small producer in the Jura with 10ha of vineyards in one block. The Roussots and Grands Roussots vineyards lie just north of the town with a view of the Côte d'Or. Sweeping around the hill underneath the limestone cliffs below the Premier Plateau, there are several expositions and a variety of soils, rocky at the top on the Bajocian limestone, more clay below, with marl from both the Liassic and Triassic periods, including the grey marl preferred for Savagnin. When he was expanding the vineyards Bernard Badoz was a great believer in the potential of both Vin Jaune as a style that was unique in the world (he was the founder of the Percée festival, after all – see 'History', p. 126), so it's no surprise that plantings include more than 50% of Savagnin.

The vineyards are not organic yet, but the Badoz family has not used chemical fertilizers or weed-killer for many years. They use only sulphur and copper sprays for mildew prevention, but do use one low dose of chemical anti-botrytis spray. Benoît says that the most important thing he seeks is balance in the vines and at the time of writing he is hesitating about whether to convert completely to organic viticulture.

When Benoît returned to the estate in the late 1990s (fully taking over the reins in 2003) he brought with him international experience of vinification methods and a desire to make different wines. The age-old method of making Vin Jaune and Vin de Paille has been little touched of course, and the family owns six splendid Vin Jaune cellars in the middle of town storing upwards of 450 barrels. However, a new vinification and ageing cellar was built and equipped in 2004. Picking for reds is by hand and the grapes go through a gentle destemmer with a sorting table attached. Some Savagnin is picked by machine, which Benoît maintains works particularly well for Savagnin *ouillé*, as the berries stay whole and undamaged.

The traditional Vin Jaune and Vin de Paille from the estate are exemplary, and other traditional styles have been joined by some simple fresh styles, including especially enjoyable Trousseau. A more expensive range uses newer oak barrels and includes the much admired Arrogance Chardonnay, which is technically excellent if too oaky for my taste; similarly the Pinot Noir Dédicace à Pierre (a homage to Benoît's grandfather) is also oaky, though with time this may tone down. Experiments with Savagnin *ouillé* include the very well-made, oaky Cuvée Victoria named after his daughter, and Benoît's latest trial with the 2011 vintage is a cuvée fermented and aged in barrels made from Jura oak from the Forêt de Chaux. He thinks of it as 200% Jura wine, but it will be named Cuvée Edouard after the latest addition to the family – a first taste of it from barrel promised well.

Benoît says that his father put everything in place to make the handover of the estate easy for him; in his early 70s, Bernard is still working and hugely supportive of his son's work. Bernard always points out with a mixture of pride and amazement that his son has modernized things and introduced these new-fangled wine styles, but he is adamant that things need to change with the generations. Benoît, with support from his wife Virginie, who is often found in their main tasting room, is driving this estate forward at a careful pace and, with exports now up to 12%, he has already garnered admirers from Canada, the UK, Denmark and Hong Kong, with many points between.

Benoît Badoz checks his Savagnin ouillé *fermented and aged in a Jura oak barrel.*

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Established: 1692 (or 1970, when Bernard Badoz revitalized the estate)

Vineyards: 10ha (5.5ha Savagnin, 1.5ha Chardonnay, 1.2ha Trousseau, 1ha Poulsard, 0.8ha Pinot Noir)

Visits: Tasting room and shop, also at Bernard Badoz' tasting room at 15 Rue Collège