

France, Burgundy: Jean-Marie Guffens

The Definitive Retrospective

WILLIAM KELLEY 29th May 2020 | The Wine Advocate | End of May 2020

Le talent c'est l'envie. Le talent, ça n'existe pas. La talent c'est d'avoir envie de faire quelque chose.
— Jacques Brel

True originality is rare in France's vinous landscape, and above all in Burgundy, where the parameters of the possible are more than anywhere predetermined by heritage and hierarchy. In a region where appellation is destiny and successful estates are almost invariably multigenerational enterprises, the idea that a first-generation Belgian winemaker, working not in the Côte d'Or but in the Mâconnais, might produce some of France's greatest wines was not so much subversive as simply implausible. But that is exactly what Jean-Marie Guffens has achieved, as this retrospective tasting of over 50 wines—spanning fully three decades—demonstrated.

After abandoning ambitions of an acting career, Guffens and his wife, Maine, moved to France in 1976, establishing a small winery in Vergisson shortly thereafter. Following two disastrous vintages in 1980 and 1981, their first commercial release came with the abundant 1982 harvest. Relishing the challenge—and the opportunity—offered by working with vineyards that nobody wanted and from places no one had heard of, that first vintage took the wine world by storm. “No one had heard of Mâcon-Pierreclos,” reflects Guffens, “and the slopes were too steep for easy cultivation. But it's much more liberating to make wines from vineyards no one wants.”

Instant acclaim in the press—and particularly in the pages of this publication—followed. By 1990, Guffens was ready to launch a négociant business, Maison Verget, buying fruit from the Côte de Beaune and Chablis. Soon, Verget was producing a roster of famous grands crus and premiers crus; yet as supplies of good quality grapes in these regions dried up in the early 2000s, Verget's focus increasingly returned to its roots the Mâconnais.

That story is by now familiar. Less well-understood are the methods by which Guffens produces his textural but strikingly incisive wines; and it is in the attention and intelligence he has brought to bear on an ensemble of innumerable small details that the secret to their quality lies. Beginning in the vineyards, Guffens practices what he calls “non-cultivation,” working the soils shallowly only once a year and instead controlling grass and weeds by mowing. Retaining grass throughout the year, he argues, reduces soil compaction and limits the nitrogen available to the vine, whereas regular ploughing increases available nitrogen, encouraging vegetative growth and resulting in fruit with lower acidity. Similarly, the vines are neither hedged nor deleafed, since hedging also stimulates sap flow and vegetative growth, resulting in fatter berries and, again, in lower acidities. His objective, as he puts it, is to guide but not to restrain the vine. “The vine is a plant; don't cut it to make it look pretty,” he explains.

What are the results of this innovative approach to viticulture? Small clusters with small grapes, typically weighing no more than 60 grams, perhaps with as many as 12-14 clusters per vine, but with a higher solids-to-juice ratio and thus more dry extract and tartaric acid. At a plantation density of 10,000 vines per hectare, with missing vines regularly replaced, the ten-year-average yield at Domaine Guffens-Heynen is around 37-38 hectoliters per hectare. These grapes are picked ripe, and in years when flowering is drawn out, making for unsynchronized ripening, harvest occurs in multiple passages through the vineyards, sometimes separated by as many as four weeks—another decidedly unusual practice in Burgundy. Yet wine grapes, Guffens observes, are the most expensive cultivated fruit in the world, “and we certainly pick strawberries when they are ripe.”

Back at the winery, the domaine's grapes see light crushing before they're pressed in a modified Coquard press—a common contraption in Champagne but rare in Burgundy. Pressing is firm, but with minimal breaking of the cake. Guffens reserves the free-run and first-press juice; and it's this juice, with its lower pH and higher acidity, that is the key to the vibrancy his best wines invariably display. Heavier press fractions go into a more immediate, approachable and modestly priced cuvée for each appellation—typically the Mâcon-Pierreclos En Crazy, the Saint-Véran and the Pouilly-Fuissé C C—while this racier must is reserved for the top bottlings.

The high-quality juice Guffens's Coquard press liberates requires only minimal settling before it's transferred to barrels of various formats—and occasionally small cement tanks—for fermentation. The choice of which vessels a given cuvée will ferment in is made intuitively, varying from year to year, and wines that evolve too fast or combine their free sulfur too rapidly may be transferred to the more reductive environment of a cement tank rather than being left in barrel for the duration of *élevage*. Beginning with the 2011 vintage, all the resulting wines have been bottled under Diam, the variations in oxygen transmission rate between corks having become too flagrant for Guffens to tolerate.

This approach produces wines of striking amplitude and dimension that are invariably tensile and incisive, and this, rather than any oak-derived patina or distinctive redox chemistry, is Guffens's stylistic signature. They are, as he puts it, wines that began with an idea. The accompanying notes were amassed during a day-long tasting in London of bottles direct from the domaine's cellars, and they tell the story of Guffens's innumerable cuvées and various vintages in greater detail.

A note on the tasting: This extensive retrospective was hosted by Farr Vintners, Guffens's UK distributor, at their London offices, with wines direct from the cellars of Domaine Guffens-Heynen and Maison Verget. So, my sincere thanks are due to Stephen Browett for organizing this fitting tribute to Guffens's extraordinary career to date.

2013 Domaine Guffens-Heynen • Mâcon-Pierreclos Tri de Chavigne

Rating: 93

Drink Date: 2020 - 2035

Reviewed by: William Kelley - Issue Date: 29th May 2020

Source: End of May 2020, The Wine Advocate

The 2013 Mâcon-Pierreclos Tri de Chavigne offers up a complex bouquet of smoky citrus oil, honeycomb, pear, hints of petrol and wheat toast. On the palate, it's medium to full-bodied, satiny and supple, with an envelopingly textural attack and a racy spine of acidity, concluding with a long and delicately honeyed finish. Guffens recalls that this was picked in three or four tries and that he harvested four weeks after his neighbors, around 18-20 October, with botrytis.

Producer: Domaine Guffens-Heynen

From: France, Burgundy, Maconnais, Macon, Pierreclos

Color: White

Sweetness: Dry Variety: Chardonnay

2012 Domaine Guffens-Heynen • Mâcon-Pierreclos Tri de Chavigne

Rating: 93+

Drink Date: 2022 - 2040

Reviewed by: William Kelley - Issue Date: 29th May 2020

Source : End of May 2020, The Wine Advocate

Opening in the glass with scents of crisp but delicately honeyed orchard fruit, lemon oil and fresh pastry that are deftly framed by a touch of oak, the 2012 Mâcon-Pierreclos Tri de Chavigne is medium to full-bodied, deep and textural, with a denser, more concentrated profile than the 2013 that preceded it in this tasting, though it's underpinned by similarly tangy acids. Guffens describes the 2012 as a vintage that tended toward "over concentration," with the lowest yields they ever produced, due to frost, oidium, mildew and poor flowering, resulting in 12 hectoliters per hectare.

Producer: Domaine Guffens-Heynen

From: France, Burgundy, Maconnais, Macon, Pierreclos

Color: White

Sweetness: Dry- Variety: Chardonnay

2011 Domaine Guffens-Heynen • Mâcon-Pierreclos Tri de Chavigne

Rating: 91

Drink Date: 2018 - 2028

Reviewed by: William Kelley - Issue Date: 29th May 2020

Source: End of May 2020, The Wine Advocate

The 2011 Mâcon-Pierreclos Tri de Chavigne is already open and expressive, wafting from the glass with scents of pear, fresh pastry, green apple and a deft touch of oak vanillin. On the palate, it's medium to full-bodied, supple and open-knit, with succulent acids, a charming core of fruit, and a nicely defined finish. Guffens describes 2011 as a vintage with a little bit too much crop, a little bit too hot and then a bit too rainy. "We missed a great vintage, but it's a good all-rounder."

Producer: Domaine Guffens-Heynen

From: France, Burgundy, Maconnais, Macon, Pierreclos
Color: White
Sweetness: Dry - Variety: Chardonnay

2010 Domaine Guffens-Heynen • Mâcon-Pierreclos Tri de Chavigne

Rating: 94

Drink Date: 2018 - 2035

Reviewed by: William Kelley - Issue Date: 29th May 2020

The 2010 Mâcon-Pierreclos Tri de Chavigne is a youthful but brilliant rendition of this cuvée, unwinding in the glass with scents of citrus oil, green pear, white flowers and pastry cream. On the palate, it's medium to full-bodied, elegantly satiny and immensely incisive, with a racy spine of acidity, terrific depth at the core and a long, chalky finish. At one point, I drank over a case of this wine, and this bottle was just as great as I remember it.

Producer: Domaine Guffens-Heynen

From: France, Burgundy, Maconnais, Macon, Pierreclos

Color: White

Sweetness: Dry Variety: Chardonnay

2009 Domaine Guffens-Heynen • Saint-Véran Clos de Poncetys

Rating: 89

Drink Date: 2015 - 2025

Reviewed by: William Kelley - Issue Date: 29th May 2020

Source: End of May 2020, The Wine Advocate

Aromas of buttered yellow apples and pears, waxy citrus fruit and toasted nuts introduce the 2009 Saint-Véran Clos de Poncetys, a medium to full-bodied, lively, succulent wine that's fleshy and open-knit. It's a charming, generous wine, though it can't match the depth and structure displayed by many of the other wines in this tasting.

Producer: Domaine Guffens-Heynen

From: France, Burgundy, Maconnais, Saint-Veran

Color: White

Sweetness: Dry Variety: Chardonnay

2008 Domaine Guffens-Heynen • Mâcon-Pierreclos Tri de Chavigne

Rating: 92

Drink Date: 2018 - 2035

Reviewed by: William Kelley - Issue Date: 29th May 2020

Source: End of May 2020, The Wine Advocate

Aromas of honeyed mandarins, beeswax, musky peach, drawn butter and crisp yellow orchard fruit preface the 2008 Mâcon-Pierreclos Tri de Chavigne, a medium to full-bodied, textural but racy wine with the creamy but incisive profile that characterizes this vintage chez Guffens, concluding with a long, elegantly exotic finish. This was Guffens's least favorite wine in the flight, as he finds the high levels of lactic acid that followed malolactic fermentation aromatically distracting.

Producer: Domaine Guffens-Heynen

From: France, Burgundy, Maconnais, Macon, Pierreclos

Color: White

Sweetness: Dry Variety: Chardonnay

2008 Domaine Guffens-Heynen • Pouilly-Fuissé La Roche

Rating: 94

Drink Date: 2018 - 2035

Reviewed by: William Kelley - Issue Date: 29th May 2020

Source: End of May 2020, The Wine Advocate

The 2008 Pouilly-Fuissé La Roche is showing beautifully, soaring from the glass with aromas of almond paste, white flowers, Anjou pear, crisp green apple and drawn butter. Medium to full-bodied, tensile and incisive, it's penetrating and precise, with a racy spine of acidity and a long, mineral finish. This is beginning to drink superbly well.

Producer: Domaine Guffens-Heynen

From: France, Burgundy, Maconnais, Pouilly-Fuisse

Color: White

Sweetness: Dry Variety: Chardonnay

2007 Verget • Corton-Charlemagne Grand Cru

Rating: 92

Drink Date: 2017 - 2027

Reviewed by: William Kelley - Issue Date: 29th May 2020

Source: End of May 2020, The Wine Advocate

The 2007 Corton-Charlemagne Grand Cru is showing well, mingling aromas of citrus oil and toasted nuts with hints of smoke and iodine. Medium to full-bodied, tensile and racy, it's precise and incisive, concluding with a long, chalky finish. A fine effort on its own terms, it was simply a little overwhelmed by the more dramatic and more mature wines served during this extensive tasting.

Producer: Verget

From: France, Burgundy, Cote de Beaune, Aloxe Corton

Color: White

Sweetness: Dry Variety: Chardonnay

2006 Domaine Guffens-Heynen • Mâcon-Pierreclos 1er Jus de Chavigne

Rating: 94

Drink Date: 2016 - 2030

Reviewed by: William Kelley - Issue Date: 29th May 2020

Source: End of May 2020, The Wine Advocate

Offering up aromas of clear honey, pear, apple skin and drawn butter, the 2006 Mâcon-Pierreclos 1er Jus de Chavigne is medium to full-bodied, deep and muscular, with considerable concentration and chalky dry extract, underpinned by lively acids and concluding with a young and youthfully vigorous finish. The 2006 vintage is a ripe, sun-kissed year in the Mâconnais, so Guffens selected the free run and first press juice, with its higher acidity and lower pH, to produce this cuvée, a wine that's outside the ordinary.

Producer: Domaine Guffens-Heynen

From: France, Burgundy, Maconnais, Macon, Pierreclos

Color: White

Sweetness: Dry Variety: Chardonnay

2006 Verget • Chablis Grand Cru Les Clos

Rating: 93

Drink Date: 2016 - 2026

Reviewed by: William Kelley - Issue Date: 29th May 2020

Source: End of May 2020, The Wine Advocate

Aromas of buttered citrus fruit, iodine, crisp yellow apples and dried white flowers introduce the 2006 Chablis Grand Cru Les Clos, a full-bodied, deep and multidimensional wine with ripe but lively acids, chalky structuring extract and a concentrated core of fruit. This can be quite a ripe, exotic vintage in Chablis, but Guffens has produced a serious, muscular wine.

Producer: Verget

From: France, Burgundy, Northern Burgundy, Chablis Grand Cru, les Clos

Color: White

Sweetness: Dry Variety: Chardonnay

2006 Verget • Corton-Charlemagne Grand Cru

Rating: 91

Drink Date: 2016 - 2026

Reviewed by: William Kelley - Issue Date: 29th May 2020

Source: End of May 2020, The Wine Advocate

Offering up aromas of buttered citrus, yellow orchard fruit, fresh pastry and a deft application of oak, the 2006 Corton-Charlemagne Grand Cru is full-bodied, deep and textural, with a ripe and unctuous core of fruit, lively acids and a long finish. Less tensile and more overtly defined by its élevage than the 2007 tasted alongside, this is similarly drinking very well today.

Producer: Verget

From: France, Burgundy, Cote de Beaune, Aloxe Corton

Color: White

Sweetness: Dry Variety: Chardonnay

2006 Verget • Mâcon-Vergisson La Roche

Rating: 90

Drink Date: 2008 - 2026

Reviewed by: William Kelley - Issue Date: 29th May 2020

Source: End of May 2020, The Wine Advocate

The 2006 Mâcon-Vergisson La Roche is drinking beautifully today, wafting from the glass with inviting aromas of buttered citrus, fresh pastry, almond paste and mandarin. Medium to full-bodied, supple and enveloping, with lively acids and a harmonious, seamless profile, it's immensely charming.

Producer: Verget

From: France, Burgundy, Maconnais, Macon, Vergisson

Color: White

Sweetness: Dry Variety: Chardonnay

2005 Domaine Guffens-Heynen • Pouilly-Fuissé Clos des Petits-Croux

Rating: 96+

Drink Date: 2025 - 2045

Reviewed by: William Kelley - Issue Date: 29th May 2020

Source: End of May 2020, The Wine Advocate

A monument in the making, Guffens's 2005 Pouilly-Fuissé Clos des Petits-Croux opens in the glass with a complex nose of buttered orchard fruit, almond paste, peach, confit citrus and orange oil. Full-bodied, deep and muscular, it's multidimensional and immensely concentrated, with huge levels of extract and a tightly wound, introverted core, concluding with a searingly chalky finish. In terms of ultimate potential, this was one of the very finest wines of the tasting, but it is still the better part of a decade from true maturity.

Producer: Domaine Guffens-Heynen

From: France, Burgundy, Maconnais, Pouilly-Fuisse

Color: White

Sweetness: Dry Variety: Chardonnay

2005 Domaine Guffens-Heynen • Pouilly-Fuissé Tri des 25 ans

Rating: 95

Drink Date: 2020 - 2040

Reviewed by: William Kelley - Issue Date: 29th May 2020

Source: End of May 2020, The Wine Advocate

The 2005 Pouilly-Fuissé Tri des 25 ans is showing spectacularly, opening in the glass with notes of pear, wheat toast, Meyer lemon, fresh pastry and honeycomb. On the palate, it's full-bodied, deep and multidimensional, with immense concentration and structuring dry extract, underpinned by lively acids and concluding with a long, palate-staining finish.

Producer: Domaine Guffens-Heynen

From: France, Burgundy, Maconnais, Pouilly-Fuisse

Color: White

Sweetness: Dry Variety: Chardonnay

2004 Domaine Guffens-Heynen • Mâcon-Pierreclos Tri de Chavigne

Rating: 93

Drink Date: 2014 - 2034

Reviewed by: William Kelley - Issue Date: 29th May 2020

Source: End of May 2020, The Wine Advocate

Aromas of wheat toast, iodine, mandarin and confit lemon introduce the 2004 Mâcon-Pierreclos Tri de Chavigne, a full-bodied, incisive and muscular wine, its textural attack segueing into a racy, tensile palate underpinned by chalky extract and concluding with a penetrating and delicately honeyed finish. Tasted from magnum, this is a serious, concentrated wine that's in its prime today.

Producer: Domaine Guffens-Heynen

From: France, Burgundy, Maconnais, Macon, Pierreclos

Color: White

Sweetness: Dry Variety: Chardonnay

2004 Verget • Chablis 1er Cru Vaillons

Rating: 93

Drink Date: 2014 - 2026

Reviewed by: William Kelley - Issue Date: 29th May 2020

Source: End of May 2020, The Wine Advocate

The 2004 Chablis 1er Cru Vaillons was showing particularly well, wafting from the glass with notions of warm bread, lemon, orange oil, iodine and dried white flowers. Medium to full-bodied, supple and satiny, with racy acids, good depth at the core and a long, saline finish, it's in its prime today.

Producer: Verget

From: France, Burgundy, Northern Burgundy, Chablis 1er Cru, Vaillons

Color: White

Sweetness: Dry Variety: Chardonnay

2004 Verget • Corton-Charlemagne Grand Cru

Rating: 92+

Drink Date: 2020 - 2035

Reviewed by: William Kelley - Issue Date: 29th May 2020

Source: End of May 2020, The Wine Advocate

The 2004 Corton-Charlemagne Grand Cru exhibits notes of citrus and orchard fruit, deftly framed by a touch of toasty oak. Full-bodied, deep and tightly wound, it's powerful and broad-shouldered, with fine depth at the core, but it remains quite primary and unevolved, even 15 years after the vintage.

Producer: Verget

From: France, Burgundy, Cote de Beaune, Aloxe Corton

Color: White

Sweetness: Dry - Variety: Chardonnay

2004 Verget • Pouilly-Fuissé Terroir de Pouilly Les Combes Vieilles Vignes

Rating: 92

Drink Date: 2014 - 2027

Reviewed by: William Kelley - Issue Date: 29th May 2020

Source: End of May 2020, The Wine Advocate

Aromas of orchard fruit, green pear, beeswax, smoke and toasted nuts introduce the 2004 Pouilly-Fuissé Terroir de Pouilly Les Combes Vieilles Vignes, a full-bodied, ample and multidimensional wine that's muscular and lively, with fine depth at the core, chalky extract and a long, precise finish.

Producer: Verget

From: France, Burgundy, Maconnais, Pouilly-Fuisse

Color: White

Sweetness: Dry Variety: Chardonnay

2003 Domaine Guffens-Heynen • Mâcon-Pierreclos Premier Jus de Chavigne

Rating: 90

Drink Date: 2013 - 2030

Reviewed by: William Kelley - Issue Date: 29th May 2020

Source: End of May 2020, The Wine Advocate

The 2003 Mâcon-Pierreclos Premier Jus de Chavigne wafts from the glass with a pretty bouquet of buttered orchard fruit, orange oil, fresh pastry and wheat toast. On the palate, the wine is medium to full-bodied, deep and three-dimensional, with huge concentration and dry extract that are reminiscent of the 2005 rendition, albeit with less acidity. It's a very successful effort in the context of the vintage.

Producer: Domaine Guffens-Heynen

From: France, Burgundy, Maconnais, Macon, Pierreclos

Color: White

Sweetness: Dry Variety: Chardonnay

2003 Domaine Guffens-Heynen • Pouilly-Fuissé Premier Jus des Hautes Vignes

Rating: 96+

Drink Date: 2023 - 2043

Reviewed by: William Kelley - Issue Date: 29th May 2020

Source: End of May 2020, The Wine Advocate

"We made better wines in the Mâconnais than the vigneron in the Côte d'Or, because we're too poor to go on vacation," jokes Jean-Marie Guffens, as he recalls that the grapes that produced the 2003 Pouilly-Fuissé Premier Jus des Hautes Vignes were picked on August 18 with more than 14% potential alcohol. The resulting wine is a monument in the making, unfurling in the glass with youthful aromas of wheat toast, smoke, crisp orchard fruit and citrus oil. Full-bodied, deep and immensely concentrated, it married huge levels of dry extract with remarkably racy, incisive acids. Structured and muscular, this will prove extraordinarily long-lived.

Producer: Domaine Guffens-Heynen

From: France, Burgundy, Maconnais, Pouilly-Fuisse

Color: White

Sweetness: Dry Variety: Chardonnay

2003 Verget • Chassagne-Montrachet 1er Cru Les Chenevottes

Rating: 91

Drink Date: 2013 - 2028

Reviewed by: William Kelley - Issue Date: 29th May 2020

Source: End of May 2020, The Wine Advocate

The 2003 Chassagne-Montrachet 1er Cru Les Chenevottes offers up inviting aromas of smoky citrus fruit, buttered yellow apples, mandarin and smoke. Full-bodied, deep and textural, it's massively concentrated and multidimensional, with ripe but lively acids and chalky structuring extract. This has turned out admirably and is aging with grace.

Producer: Verget

From: France, Burgundy, Cote de Beaune, Chassagne-Montrachet

Color: White

Sweetness: Dry Variety: Chardonnay

2003 Verget • Puligny-Montrachet Les Enseignères

Rating: 90

Drink Date: 2013 - 2026

Reviewed by: William Kelley - Issue Date: 29th May 2020

Source: End of May 2020, The Wine Advocate

The 2003 Puligny-Montrachet Les Enseignères is showing very well, mingling buttered orchard fruits, honeycomb, wheat toast and fresh peach in an inviting bouquet. Medium to full-bodied, with good cut and concentration, it concludes with chalky grip. Guffens sourced this cuvée from the Bavard family, whose holdings in Enseignères and Bâtrd-Montrachet were recently sold to Domaine d'Auvenay.

Producer: Verget

From: France, Burgundy, Cote de Beaune, Puligny-Montrachet 1er Cru

Color: White

Sweetness: Dry Variety: Chardonnay

2003 Verget • Viré-Clessé V V de Roally

Rating: 86

Drink Date: 2005 - 2020

Reviewed by: William Kelley - Issue Date: 29th May 2020

Source: End of May 2020, The Wine Advocate

One of the few comparatively senescent cuvées in the tasting was the 2003 Viré-Clessé V V de Roally, a medium to full-bodied, open-knit and fully mature wine evocative of buttered orchard fruits, honey and peach.

Producer: Verget

From: France, Burgundy, Maconnais, Viré-Clessé

Color: White

Sweetness: Dry Variety: Chardonnay

2002 Domaine Guffens-Heynen • Mâcon-Pierreclos Tri de Chavigne

Rating: 94

Drink Date: 2012 - 2028

Reviewed by: William Kelley - Issue Date: 29th May 2020

Source: End of May 2020, The Wine Advocate

The 2002 Mâcon-Pierreclos Tri de Chavigne is showing as well as ever, bursting with notes of honeyed citrus oil, mandarins, yellow orchard fruit and hints of iodine. On the palate, it's medium to full-bodied, satiny and incisive, with an elegantly textural attack, tangy acids and a nicely defined, penetrating finish. This is the first vintage of "Tri de Chavigne" that Guffens produced.

Producer: Domaine Guffens-Heynen

From: France, Burgundy, Maconnais, Macon, Pierreclos

Color: White

Sweetness: Dry Variety: Chardonnay

2002 Domaine Guffens-Heynen • Pouilly-Fuissé Clos des Petits Croux

Rating: 98

Drink Date: 2019 - 2040

Reviewed by: William Kelley - Issue Date: 29th May 2020

Source: End of May 2020, The Wine Advocate

The 2002 Pouilly-Fuissé Clos des Petits Croux is a magical wine, wafting from the glass with aromas of iodine, citrus oil and confit citrus, pear, fresh pastry, mandarin orange and honeycomb. Full-bodied, deep and multidimensional, it's immensely concentrated. More open at this stage than the 2005, as well as a touch more incisive, it's built around searing dry extract, concluding with a long and penetrating finish. This small vineyard amounts to a mere 10 ares, producing one barrel of wine or at most two.

Producer: Domaine Guffens-Heynen

From: France, Burgundy, Maconnais, Pouilly-Fuisse

Color: White

Sweetness: Dry Variety: Chardonnay

2002 Domaine Guffens-Heynen • Pouilly-Fuissé La Roche

Rating: 95

Drink Date: 2019 - 2035

Reviewed by: William Kelley - Issue Date: 29th May 2020

Source: End of May 2020, The Wine Advocate

Still youthful and indeed tight-knit is Guffens's 2002 Pouilly-Fuissé La Roche, an exquisite wine from this stony vineyard. Offering up a complex nose of buttered citrus, mandarin oil, iodine, crisp orchard fruit and freshly baked bread, it's medium to full-bodied, racy and incisive, with striking depth at the core and a bright spine of acidity, concluding with a long and saline finish.

Producer: Domaine Guffens-Heynen

From: France, Burgundy, Maconnais, Pouilly-Fuisse

Color: White

Sweetness: Dry - Variety: Chardonnay

2002 Verget • Chablis Mont de Milieu

Rating: 90

Drink Date: 2012 - 2026

Reviewed by: William Kelley - Issue Date: 29th May 2020

Source: End of May 2020, The Wine Advocate

Offering up aromas of buttered orchard fruit, iodine, mandarin and clear honey, the 2002 Chablis Mont de Milieu is medium to full-bodied, satiny and incisive, with racy acids, an elegantly fleshy core of fruit and a saline finish. This is in its prime today.

Producer: Verget

From: France, Burgundy, Northern Burgundy, Chablis 1er Cru, Mont de Milieu

Color: White

Sweetness: Dry Variety: Chardonnay

2002 Verget • Mâcon La Roche-Vineuse V V de Somméré

Rating: 90

Drink Date: 2006 - 2026

Reviewed by: William Kelley - Issue Date: 29th May 2020

Source: End of May 2020, The Wine Advocate

Guffens produced the lovely 2002 Mâcon La Roche-Vineuse V V de Somméré from a parcel of very old vines located in a small hamlet outside La Roche-Vineuse. Bursting with notes of barley sugar, honeycomb, peach and mandarin, it's medium to full-bodied, supple and satiny, with an open core of vibrant fruit, racy acids and a seamless, beautifully balanced profile.

Producer: Verget

From: France, Burgundy, Maconnais, Macon, la Roche Vineuse

Color: White

Sweetness: Dry Variety: Chardonnay

2002 Verget • Puligny-Montrachet 1er Cru Sous Le Puits

Rating: 88

Drink Date: 2012 - 2026

Reviewed by: William Kelley - Issue Date: 29th May 2020

Source: End of May 2020, The Wine Advocate

The 2002 Puligny-Montrachet 1er Cru Sous Le Puits exhibits scents of citrus oil, iodine, petrol and wheat toast, followed by a medium to full-bodied, racy and incisive palate that's delicate and mineral. I suspect that this is another wine that was simply lost amidst the embarrassment of riches of this extensive tasting.

Producer: Verget

From: France, Burgundy, Cote de Beaune, Puligny-Montrachet

Color: White

Sweetness: Dry - Variety: Chardonnay

2002 Verget • Saint-Véran Terres Noirs Atom Heart Mother

Rating: 94

Drink Date: 2012 - 2028

Reviewed by: William Kelley - Issue Date: 29th May 2020

Source: End of May 2020, The Wine Advocate

The 2002 Saint-Véran Terres Noirs Atom Heart Mother is another special cuvée that Guffens vinified in a 300-liter barrel entirely without sulfur. Mingling aromas of yellow orchard fruit, mandarin, honeycomb and musky peach, it's full-bodied, deep and three-dimensional, with huge levels of dry extract, lively acids and a long, precise finish. It's a magical wine.

Producer: Verget

From: France, Burgundy, Maconnais, Saint-Veran

Color: White

Sweetness: Dry Variety: Chardonnay

2001 Domaine Guffens-Heynen • Mâcon-Pierreclos Le Chavigne

Rating: 91

Drink Date: 2008 - 2026

Reviewed by: William Kelley - Issue Date: 29th May 2020

Source: End of May 2020, The Wine Advocate

Bursting with expressive aromas of smoky citrus oil, honeycomb and wheat toast, the 2001 Mâcon-Pierreclos Le Chavigne is medium to full-bodied, satiny textured and open-knit, with racy but ripe acids and a charming, expressive profile, concluding with a delicately honeyed, botrytis-inflected finish. Guffens picked very late in 2001, and his harvest lasted fully 30 days.

Producer: Domaine Guffens-Heynen

From: France, Burgundy, Maconnais, Macon, Pierreclos

Color: White

Sweetness: Dry Variety: Chardonnay

2001 Domaine Guffens-Heynen • Pouilly-Fuissé Clos des Petits Croux

Rating: 95

Drink Date: 2019 - 2035

Reviewed by: William Kelley - Issue Date: 29th May 2020

Source: End of May 2020, The Wine Advocate

The extraordinary 2001 Pouilly-Fuissé Clos des Petits Croux offers up an exotic bouquet of barley sugar, candied peel, mandarin, musky spices, cloves and honeycomb, possessing a distinctive vendange tardive character despite the wine being totally dry. On the palate, it's full-bodied, deep and searingly concentrated, with immense reserves of dry extract that lend this Pouilly-Fuissé more structure than many red wines. Underpinned by racy acids, it's sapid and incisive, with a long, chalky finish.

Producer: Domaine Guffens-Heynen

From: France, Burgundy, Maconnais, Pouilly-Fuisse

Color: White

Sweetness: Dry Variety: Chardonnay

2000 Domaine Guffens-Heynen • Mâcon-Pierreclos Le Chavigne

Rating: 89

Drink Date: 2005 - 2025

Reviewed by: William Kelley - Issue Date: 29th May 2020

Source: End of May 2020, The Wine Advocate

From a year that Guffens characterizes as a good but not a great vintage, the 2000 Mâcon-Pierreclos Le Chavigne is fully mature, wafting from the glass with an inviting bouquet of drawn butter, pears, white flowers and beeswax. Medium to full-bodied, supple and open-knit, it's charming and easygoing, with ripe acids and an expansive finish.

Producer: Domaine Guffens-Heynen

From: France, Burgundy, Maconnais, Macon, Pierreclos

Color: White

Sweetness: Dry Variety: Chardonnay

2000 Domaine Guffens-Heynen • Pouilly-Fuissé Les Hauts de Vignes

Rating: 95

Drink Date: 2020 - 2035

Reviewed by: William Kelley - Issue Date: 29th May 2020

Source: End of May 2020, The Wine Advocate

A blend derived from lieux-dits Les Crays, La Roche and the Clos des Petits Croux, the 2000 Pouilly-Fuissé Les Hauts de Vignes is still decidedly youthful, opening in the glass with a lovely bouquet of waxy lemon rind, smoke, confit citrus and warm bread. Full-bodied, deep and muscular, it's built around chalky structuring extract and an incisive spine of acidity. This must be the least evolved of all Guffens's wines in the 2000 vintage.

Producer: Domaine Guffens-Heynen

From: France, Burgundy, Maconnais, Pouilly-Fuisse

Color: White

Sweetness: Dry Variety: Chardonnay

2000 Verget • Bâtard-Montrachet Grand Cru

Rating: ?

Drink Date: 2010 - 2026

Reviewed by: William Kelley - Issue Date: 29th May 2020

Source: End of May 2020, The Wine Advocate

Guffens wasn't entirely happy with how the 2000 Bâtard-Montrachet Grand Cru was showing, so I'll refrain from offering a score, but it offered up generous aromas fresh pastry, marzipan and yellow orchard fruit, followed by a full-bodied, deep and concentrated palate that's buttery and succulent, with the fleshy, muscular profile typical of the site.

Producer: Verget

From: France, Burgundy, Cote de Beaune, Chassagne-Montrachet

Color: White

Sweetness: Dry - Variety: Chardonnay

1998 Domaine Guffens-Heynen • Pouilly-Fuissé 1er Jus

Rating: 96

Drink Date: 2013 - 2028

Reviewed by: William Kelley - Issue Date: 29th May 2020

Source: End of May 2020, The Wine Advocate

A blend of free-run and first press juice from lieux-dits Les Crays, La Roche and the Clos des Petits Croux, Guffens's 1998 Pouilly-Fuissé 1er Jus wafts from the glass with a deep and complex bouquet of mandarin, lemon oil, iodine, peach, honeycomb and smoke. Full-bodied, deep and incisive, it's ample and fleshy but buttressed around a searing spine of acidity, concluding with a long, penetrating and elegantly honeyed finish.

Producer: Domaine Guffens-Heynen

From: France, Burgundy, Maconnais, Pouilly-Fuisse

Color: White

Sweetness: Dry Variety: Chardonnay

1997 Domaine Guffens-Heynen • Mâcon-Pierreclos Le Chavigne

Rating: 90

Drink Date: 2005 - 2025

Reviewed by: William Kelley - Issue Date: 29th May 2020

Source: End of May 2020, The Wine Advocate

The most mature cuvée of this tasting was the 1997 Mâcon-Pierreclos Le Chavigne, an expressive wine offering up aromas of buttered citrus fruit, pear, fresh pastry and honeycomb. Medium to full-bodied, supple and open-knit, it concludes with a chalky, honeyed finish.

Producer: Domaine Guffens-Heynen

From: France, Burgundy, Maconnais, Macon, Pierreclos

Color: White

Sweetness: Dry Variety: Chardonnay

1997 Domaine Guffens-Heynen • Pouilly-Fuissé Clos des Petits Croux

Rating: 97

Drink Date: 2017 - 2027

Reviewed by: William Kelley - Issue Date: 29th May 2020

Source: End of May 2020, The Wine Advocate

The 1997 Pouilly-Fuissé Clos des Petits Croux is drinking beautifully today, bursting with aromas of hazelnuts, citrus oil, dried white flowers, drawn butter, peach and a subtle patina of new oak. Full-bodied, deep and multidimensional, it's long and searingly concentrated, with huge mid-palate amplitude and a long, sumptuous finish.

Producer: Domaine Guffens-Heynen

From: France, Burgundy, Maconnais, Pouilly-Fuisse

Color: White

Sweetness: Dry Variety: Chardonnay

1997 Domaine Guffens-Heynen • Pouilly-Fuissé La Roche

Rating: 96

Drink Date: 2017 - 2027

Reviewed by: William Kelley - Issue Date: 29th May 2020

Source: End of May 2020, The Wine Advocate

The 1997 Pouilly-Fuissé La Roche is in its prime today, bursting from the glass with a compelling bouquet of pear, iodine, yellow orchard fruit, fresh pastry, apricot and anise. Full-bodied, deep and incisive, its sumptuously textural attack segues into a mid-palate defined by immense concentration and racy acids, concluding with a long and precise finish. This is a terrific example of what was a very fine Mâconnais vintage.

Producer: Domaine Guffens-Heynen

From: France, Burgundy, Maconnais, Pouilly-Fuisse

Color: White

Sweetness: Dry Variety: Chardonnay

1997 Verget • Meursault 1er Cru Porusots

Rating: 94

Drink Date: 2007 - 2027

Reviewed by: William Kelley - Issue Date: 29th May 2020

Source: End of May 2020, The Wine Advocate

Produced from the Tessier family's holdings, Guffens's 1997 Meursault 1er Cru Porusots is showing spectacularly, bursting with aromas of buttered citrus, clear honey, wheat toast, hazelnuts and dried white flowers. Full-bodied, satiny and incisive, it's deep and super-concentrated, with racy acids and a long, chalky finish.

Producer: Verget

From: France, Burgundy, Cote de Beaune, Meursault 1er Cru, Poruzots

Color: White

Sweetness: Dry Variety: Chardonnay

1996 Verget • Bâtard-Montrachet Grand Cru

Rating: 94

Drink Date: 2006 - 2026

Reviewed by: William Kelley - Issue Date: 29th May 2020

Source: End of May 2020, The Wine Advocate

From a year that Guffens describes as "the worst great vintage I ever made," the 1996 Bâtard-Montrachet Grand Cru wafts from the glass with aromas of buttered toast, confit citrus, pear, almond paste and iodine. Full-bodied, deep and concentrated, it's immensely incisive, with considerable mid-palate volume built around a searing spine of acidity, concluding with a long and honeyed finish.

Producer: Verget

From: France, Burgundy, Cote de Beaune, Chassagne-Montrachet

Color: White

Sweetness: Dry Variety: Chardonnay

1995 Verget • Chablis Grand Cru Valmur

Rating: 96

Drink Date: 2005 - 2025

Reviewed by: William Kelley - Issue Date: 29th May 2020

Source: End of May 2020, The Wine Advocate

Jean-Marie Guffens produced a special cuvée this year—labelled as Valmur Sud—that numbers among the very greatest Chablis that I've ever tasted, and the regular 1995 Chablis Grand Cru Valmur isn't far from that elevated level. Unfurling in the glass with aromas of warm butter, iodine, citrus oil, peach, smoke and oyster shell, it's full-bodied, satiny and incisive, with striking depth and concentration, a racy spine of acidity and a long, penetrating and mineral finish.

Producer: Verget

From: France, Burgundy, Northern Burgundy, Chablis Grand Cru, Valmur

Color: White

Sweetness: Dry - Variety: Chardonnay

1994 Domaine Guffens-Heynen • Pouilly-Fuissé Clos des Petits-Croux

Rating: 94

Drink Date: 2014 - 2027

Reviewed by: William Kelley - Issue Date: 29th May 2020

Source: End of May 2020, The Wine Advocate

A terrific achievement in this challenging vintage, the 1994 Pouilly-Fuissé Clos des Petits-Croux reveals an open and expressive nose of citrus oil, crisp orchard fruit, fresh pastry, mandarin, iodine and wheat toast. Full-bodied, deep and three-dimensional, with the prodigious levels of dry extract that define wines from this site, racy acids and a long and precise finish; it is drinking beautifully today.

Producer: Domaine Guffens-Heynen

From: France, Burgundy, Maconnais, Pouilly-Fuisse

Color: White

Sweetness: Dry Variety: Chardonnay

1994 Domaine Guffens-Heynen • Pouilly-Fuissé La Roche

Rating: 91

Drink Date: 2004 - 2024

Reviewed by: William Kelley - Issue Date: 29th May 2020

Source: End of May 2020, The Wine Advocate

Though it, too, is a very fine wine, the 1994 Pouilly-Fuissé La Roche can't quite match the heights attained by the Clos des Petits Croux in the same year, and it's more marked by vintage-typical exotica, mingling aromas of smoke, buttered pears and dried orange rind with hints of honeycomb and musky peach. Full-bodied, satiny and precise, it's racy and mineral, with a delicately perfumed finish.

Producer: Domaine Guffens-Heynen

From: France, Burgundy, Maconnais, Pouilly-Fuisse

Color: White

Sweetness: Dry Variety: Chardonnay

1994 Verget • Chassagne-Montrachet 1er Cru En Remilly

Rating: 87

Drink Date: 2004 - 2024

Reviewed by: William Kelley - Issue Date: 29th May 2020

Source: End of May 2020, The Wine Advocate

One of the comparatively less compelling wines in the tasting was the 1994 Chassagne-Montrachet 1er Cru En Remilly, a cuvée that offers up aromas of golden orchard fruit that are still quite heavily marked by notions of toasted almond, mint and coconut from its time in oak. Medium to full-bodied, textural and succulent but excessively oak-inflected, I suspect Guffens was poorly served by his cooper for this cuvée.

Producer: Verget

From: France, Burgundy, Cote de Beaune, Chassagne-Montrachet

Color: White

Sweetness: Dry Variety: Chardonnay

1994 Verget • Chevalier-Montrachet Grand Cru

Rating: 92

Drink Date: 2004 - 2024

Reviewed by: William Kelley - Issue Date: 29th May 2020

Source: End of May 2020, The Wine Advocate

A fine effort in a challenging vintage, Guffens's 1994 Chevalier-Montrachet Grand Cru delivers aromas of candied peel, confit citrus, dried white flowers and almond paste, followed by a full-bodied, elegantly satiny and incisive palate that's saline and precise. Fully mature, it's drinking well today.

Producer: Verget

From: France, Burgundy, Cote de Beaune, Puligny-Montrachet

Color: White

Sweetness: Dry Variety: Chardonnay

1994 Verget • Montrachet Grand Cru

Rating: 94

Drink Date: 2004 - 2024

Reviewed by: William Kelley - Issue Date: 29th May 2020

Source: End of May 2020, The Wine Advocate

Bursting with scents of buttered toast, waxy citrus oil, clear honey, mirabelle plum and vanilla pod, Guffens's 1994 Montrachet Grand Cru is full-bodied, ample and satiny, with a rich and fleshy core, broad-shouldered and ripe but lively acids, concluding with a long and expansive finish. Even in a challenging vintage, it's a wine that lives up to the vineyard's lofty reputation.

Producer: Verget

From: France, Burgundy, Cote de Beaune, Le Montrachet Grand Cru

Color: White

Sweetness: Dry Variety: Chardonnay

1992 Domaine Guffens-Heynen • Pouilly-Fuissé La Roche

Rating: 93

Drink Date: 2012 - 2025

Reviewed by: William Kelley - Issue Date: 29th May 2020

Source: End of May 2020, The Wine Advocate

The 1992 Pouilly-Fuissé La Roche is fully mature, wafting from the glass with a complex bouquet of mandarin, smoke, buttered toast and dried citrus rind. Medium to full-bodied, ample and searingly racy, it's long and penetrating, with a concentrated core of fruit and an almost edgy, acid-driven profile. Guffens observes that in the Mâconnais, 1992 is not a sensual vintage and doesn't reach the heights the year attained in the Côte d'Or.

Producer: Domaine Guffens-Heynen

From: France, Burgundy, Maconnais, Pouilly-Fuisse

Color: White

Sweetness: Dry Variety: Chardonnay

1992 Verget • Bâtard-Montrachet Grand Cru

Rating: 95

Drink Date: 2002 - 2025

Reviewed by: William Kelley - Issue Date: 29th May 2020

Source: End of May 2020, The Wine Advocate

The finest of these bottlings from Maison Verget was the 1992 Bâtard-Montrachet Grand Cru, a striking wine that offers up aromas of honeycomb, mandarin, smoke, dried citrus peel and oatmeal. Full-bodied, satiny and sensual, it's enveloping but incisive, its textural attack giving way to a racy, concentrated mid-plate and a precise finish.

Producer: Verget

From: France, Burgundy, Cote de Beaune, Chassagne-Montrachet

Color: White

Sweetness: Dry Variety: Chardonnay

1992 Verget • Saint-Aubin 1er Cru Les Murgers des Dents de Chien

Rating: 96

Drink Date: 2002 - 2025

Reviewed by: William Kelley - Issue Date: 29th May 2020

Source: End of May 2020, The Wine Advocate

Guffens produced one barrel of the 1992 Saint-Aubin 1er Cru Les Murgers des Dents de Chien specially for Jean Rijckaert, exclusively using free run juice and vinified entirely without sulfur. Soaring from the glass with a deep bouquet of iodine, citrus oil, wet stones and fresh pastry, it's full-bodied, satiny and incisive, with a deep and multidimensional core, racy acids and a searingly chalky finish. This is a virtuosic Saint-Aubin.

Producer: Verget

From: France, Burgundy, Cote de Beaune, Saint-Aubin 1er Cru

Color: White

Sweetness: Dry Variety: Chardonnay

1990 Domaine Guffens-Heynen • Pouilly-Fuissé La Roche

Rating: 97

Drink Date: 2010 - 2030

Reviewed by: William Kelley - Issue Date: 29th May 2020

Source: End of May 2020, The Wine Advocate

From one of the greatest vintages of Guffens's career, the 1990 Pouilly-Fuissé La Roche is showing beautifully today, offering up a deep and complex bouquet of pear and confit citrus complemented by nuances of buttered toast, almond paste, smoke and iodine. Medium to full-bodied, deep and ample, it's satiny but incisive, with chalky structure and a racy spine of acidity. Penetrating and tensile, it's one of the whites wines of the vintage in Burgundy.

Producer: Domaine Guffens-Heynen

From: France, Burgundy, Maconnais, Pouilly-Fuisse

Color: White

Sweetness: Dry Variety: Chardonnay

1989 Domaine Guffens-Heynen • Mâcon-Pierreclos En Chavigne

Rating: 94

Drink Date: 2005 - 2027

Reviewed by: William Kelley - Issue Date: 29th May 2020

Source: End of May 2020, The Wine Advocate

Mingling aromas of buttered orchard fruits, smoke, drawn butter and mandarin oil in a complex mélange, Guffens's 1989 Mâcon-Pierreclos En Chavigne is full-bodied, deep and three dimensional, with prodigious levels of chalky dry extract, racy acids and a concentrated core, concluding with a long and penetrating finish.

Producer: Domaine Guffens-Heynen

From: France, Burgundy, Maconnais, Macon, Pierreclos

Color: White

Sweetness: Dry Variety: Chardonnay