

Domaine de
L' ABBAYE DE
MAIZIÈRES

Vines and wines



HISTORY OF ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT WINE ESTATES IN THE CÔTE DE BEAUNE

Birthplace of two of the most notorious monastic orders with Cluny and Cîteaux, the prime vineyard of Burgundy is a unique region with no equivalent in Europe nor in the rest of the world.



he monks, more specifically the Cistercians, had a determining role in the rise and the development of the vineyard in the Middle Ages. Cîteaux Abbey's influence in Europe and the international renown of its *Clos de Vougeot* must not obscure that each and every Cistercian abbey had a special relationship with wine and grapevines.

The founders of the Cistercian Order pushed for a return to a stricter application of the Rule of Saint Benedict: withdrawal from the world, prayers, poverty and labor. In order to survive, every abbey was required to own farms and wine estates to meet their own needs. In keeping with Benedictine hospitality, being able to provide food and accommodation to all visitors, prestigious or not, was an imperative.

As far as the vines and the wine were concerned, the Cistercian Order was guided by three principles. First of all, manual labor was an absolute obligation to truly become a monk. Therefore, working in the vineyard was a way of putting the Benedictine rule into action. Moreover, Chapter 40 of the very same rule authorized “*moderate use of wine, but not excessively*”. One person could have one émine per day, that is to say a quarter to half a liter, about two glasses for lunch and one glass for dinner.

The Cistercians also had the right to sell their wine surplus. Wine being a particularly luxurious good in both the Middle and the Modern Age, it was in the Cistercians' interest to develop the largest wine estate possible.

Yet, initially, the monks started from the ground and had to do with the few donations they received. To stabilize their land power, the Cistercians needed the support of powerful dignitaries. Every person in society was guided by the pious perspective of the salvation of their soul. What better guardian than a monastic community whose prayers would intercede on their behalf? Some of these donations included lands and vine plots.

Being wise administrators, the Cistercians had a coherent long-term vision for their properties. Through purchases and exchanges, their perseverance led them to constituting a homogeneous wine estate, essentially delimited in *clos* (enclosed plots). These *clos* were administered directly onsite from a cellar, generally referred to as a barn or a tenant farm.



Puligny view from the Montrachet Grand Cru plot

MAIZIÈRES ABBEY ESTATE, A CONSIDERABLE WINE HERITAGE FROM THE MIDDLE AGES TO THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

From its first years of existence in 1125, Maizières Abbey flourished and strongly contributed to the development of the entire viticultural hillside between Beaune and Chalon.



Throughout its history, Maizières Abbey accumulated a considerable number of properties including lands, woods, meadows, ponds, and of course grapevines, located in over a hundred different villages in the uplands and the lowlands of the Saône region. There were very few places between Vosne-Romanée and Givry where the monks didn't have a country house or at least an annuity.

The first important donations were made in the abbey's first ten years of existence. In 1148, Renaud de Grandchamp donated the land of Chenôve, north of Savigny-lès-Beaune. As early as 1150, the monks of Maizières built their first estate in Morgeot. Other donations made by Hugues de Santenay were subsequently made between 1211 and 1220. In 1154, Guy de Vergy gave the monks his lands in Bully, north of Pernand-Vergelesses, as well as his grazing land in Echevronne.

In 1184, Manassès, dean of the canons of Langres, gave his land in Blagny, north-west of Puligny-Montrachet. In 1200, a certain Constantin, priest in Bligny-lès-Beaune, gave a vine plot and a house he owned in Beaune, so the monks would have a place to stay whenever they were in the city. The monks quickly became the owners of the entire district known as Petit Maizières in Beaune. From 1170 to 1220, Maizières abbey received a number of lands and grapevines around

Givry and Dracy-le-Fort from several local lords. This helped them settle sustainably in the côte chalonnaise, close to the ducal estate of Germolles established by Duke Philippe le Hardi.

The monks quickly set up infrastructures on these new lands. Morgeot, Blagny, Le Buet, Chenôve, Bully, Aubigny in the town of Aluze, and the Petit Maizières in Beaune became the main cellars of the abbey and played an active role in the geographic breakdown of the côte de Beaune. Every facility—which had to be located within a day’s walking distance so that all monks could attend Sunday Mass—was equipped with remarkable and similar infrastructures: an enclosed plot delimited by stone walls, generally planted with grapevines, a press, a winery, a cellar, accommodation and a chapel. All these functional buildings were organized around one or several outer courts.

However, the monks couldn’t take care of so many different structures on their own. From the 12th to the 14th century, they were helped in their daily tasks by lay brothers. They were either clerics with a late calling or pious civilians who entered the monastery pronouncing their vows and essentially engaged in the community’s material tasks. As they generally came from families of winegrowers, they were the ones who first enlightened the monks with their technical knowledge when they got started.

Besides these barns, strategically scattered along the winegrowing area, the monks of Maizières abbey possessed many grapevines. Among the most prestigious ones were some plots located in **Beaune, Pommard, Volnay, Meursault, Puligny-Montrachet and Chassagne-Montrachet**. They even owned a few plots in the côte de Nuits, notably in Vosne-Romanée in 1390, as well as in the côte chalonnaise, south of **Givry**, and between **Moroges and Saint-Désert**.

Moreover, these grapevines were not planted solely on the hills but sometimes in the plains around the abbey. Indeed, in the Middle Ages and the Modern Age, there were grapevines everywhere, including in the plains. There were a great number of vines in Saint-Loup-Géanges. A transaction dated March 6, 1266, attests the abbey was surrounded by grapevines.

Four centuries later, in 1666, intendant Bouchu's goods and community survey stated these same grapevines yielded 114 liters for 4,28 ares (114 liters for about 4500 square feet).

As of the 15th century, Maizières Abbey's wine estate was so powerful that the monks progressively put their initial precepts on hold. There were not enough lay brothers to ensure good management of the plots and the clerics had to hire secular workers to take care of their most distant lands and barns. Sometimes even, the lands were directly rented to some farmers. In exchange for an income (in money or in kind), the abbey handed over the worries of day-to-day farming while keeping the possibility to revise the rent every ten years, as defined in the lease agreement.



A monk tasting wine in a cellar, illustration from Li Livres dou sante, by Aldobrandino da Siena, late 13th century, Sloane 2435, folio 44v. British Library, London

Maizières Abbey's wine estate essentially extended through the history of its cellars spread out between Pernand-Vergelesses and Givry. Set right in the city of Beaune, the most notorious one was without a doubt the Petit Maizières. Nowadays, it is immortalized in a street named after the abbey. Ideally situated, it was an interesting place to stay when in the wine capital.

If Maizières Abbey first established in Beaune at the very beginning of the 13th century, it is in the second half of the 14th century that the monks acquired real estate (the Maison du Boeuf and the belfry in 1362 and several other houses in 1364), gradually enabling them to own an entire district in the city. Beaune being one of the two main wine markets in the Duchy with Dijon, the monks were ideally located to sell their wine production. Moreover, in 1377, they managed to obtain a tax exemption for their wines entering the city of Beaune from Philippe le Hardi.

Indeed, back then, any wine entering a city is stamped with a tax which necessarily impacts its final selling price. Thanks to this fiscal privilege, Maizières Abbey's wines were cheaper and more profitable. However, the aldermen of Beaune—comparable to today's city councillors—quickly stood up against this ducal favor arguing that it could lead to '*disappointing foreign wines*' entering the city. In reality, their stand was purely economic because the tax exemption resulted in a shortfall for the city.

In 1395, Philippe le Hardi ruled in the favor of the monks: they could keep their tax exemption but had to sell part of their real estate to the city in return, notably the tower—future belfry of the city—and the adjoining houses. In 1699, King Louis XIV confirmed Maizières Estate's tax exemption privilege.

In the early Modern Age, Maizières abbey and religious orders in general faced a series of major crises. The local economy was jeopardized, one political and religious disorder after the other. In the 16th century, the abbey and its famous cellars were affected by the Religion Wars, like in Aubigny, Blagny, Bully and Morgeot. The massive destruction forced inhabitants to run away from these lands during long periods of time, leaving fallow vines and grounds behind. In Blagny, everything burned down except for the chapel and the press.

In Morgeot, the wines made by the abbey and villagers were taken away and to this day, nothing but the chapel and the oven remain. It says in their archives: "*these tenant farmhouses remained uninhabited and abandoned without the clerics making any profit out of it.*"

The properties of the abbey located in Beaune were not in much better condition. Several documents from 1595 indicate that in February 1595, during the siege of the castle of Beaune by the royal troops to push away the Leaguers, the doors of the Petit Maizières were broken down and everything was either stolen or destroyed.

The abbey was plundered too. 400 to 500 bichets of grain and 700 to 800 wine barrels were stolen from the current cellars of the abbey.

Strongly impacted by the thefts and destruction, Maizières attempted to refurbish its cellars. To get back on track, the monks sued the farmers who were not giving them the amount of wine they were supposed to give as a rent every year. As such, in 1591, the monks claimed 4 muids—one muid corresponding to 235 liters at the time—of wine from a farmer in Pommard, for each year from 1580 to 1585, regardless of whether or not he had been able to harvest his vines during this troubled period.

Being unable to repair both the abbey and the many tenant farms, the clerics tried to sell a few of their properties. From July to August 1587, the sale offer for the tenant farm of the Buet was read aloud in several parishes on three consecutive Sundays. It comprised a house with a pressroom, a courtyard and a cellar, 250 *ouvrées* (80 ha) of vines, mostly abandoned, plus about 2 ha of land, 3 ha of meadows and a few annuities in the villages of Dracy, Germolles and Givry. No one was interested in buying it though. In 1590, the abbey sold its barn in Morgeot—one of its most beautiful pieces of real estate—to Charles de La Boutière, lord of Chagny.

In the 17th century, the abbey still owned Aubigny, Chenôve, Bully, Blagny and Le Buet, as well as many grapevines in Savigny, Beaune, Pommard and Volnay (approximately 24 hectares), plus Puligny and Chassagne.

In 1604, Maizières abbey drew up a rather grim assessment of its properties and estates in Aubigny, Blagny, Bully, le Buet and Beaune. As they didn't have the means to refurbish them, the monks put them up for rent in haste, leaving that responsibility to the sharecroppers. The latter didn't always meet the clerics' expectations. A report of the farm inspection of Aubigny dated May 1614, brings out the many repairs that had been done—although there was still some work to do—and described the lands as rather well cared for.

Another report from 1656 shows the estate was regaining momentum: *“there is a large quantity of livestock, the lands are well cared for, so are the grapevines and the meadows, and there are good amounts of high trees”*. Archives from 1747 show many repairs had been done:

the old chapel that was falling apart was replaced by a brand new one, the barn was entirely redone, and a new building was built for the press. By the end of the 18th century, this farm comprised three plots of vines for a total of 25 *ouvrées* each, that is to say a bit more than 3 hectares. The documentation covering the farm of Blagny indicates the wine estate was particularly profitable.

All tenant farms were not equally rich and cared for. In 1655, the sharecropper in charge of the farm of Le Buet was given notice to repair the ruins of the estate and to refurbish the buildings, the chapel and the press, in accordance with the terms of the contract. As for the estate of Bully, an investigation carried out in 1666 shows nothing but ruins remained.

By the end of the 18th century, Maizières abbey still owned seven tenant farms including Aubigny, Chenôve and Le Buet. **The monks also possessed many grapevines in Beaune, Savigny, Pommard, Volnay, Blagny, Puligny and Meursault.** An inventory established between 1768 and 1782 attested Maizières still took care of 6 plots in Beaune, 17 in Pommard and over 60 in Puligny. They were divided between close to 200 tenant farmers.

The entire estate was seized and sold as a national asset during the French Revolution in 1791, notably the 128 *ouvrées* (6 hectares) of grapevines in Beaune as well as the estate of Aubigny. However, the grapevines still in the possession of the abbey at that date were not exclusively located in the vine growing hill-side. When the tenant farm of the Epervier was sold as a national asset, it comprised 18 *ouvrées* of vines, that is to say 0,8 hectares.

The bill of sales issued on May 17th, 1843, stated there were still some vines inside the big *clos* of Maizières which was replanted recently in 2020. The dwellings of the monks kept a viticultural purpose with presses and vats. They were also restored in 2020.



SIR ABBOT'S WINE

Looking back in history, the Cistercian monks appear to be the fathers of western viticulture. They introduced innovative practices, developed renowned knowledge and produced highly qualitative wines.



Unfortunately, without records for Maizières, for Cîteaux nor for the Order for that matter, the modalities of their viticulture remain relatively in the shadows. The monks didn't leave any treatise behind. To grasp their wine growing and winemaking practices, the best option is to make do with the agricultural leases that appeared in the 15th century.

To address the question of the typicality of the wine produced by the monks, and more broadly the typicity of medieval wines, one must forget everything they know about wine today. Medieval society was completely different from today's society. It is particularly true when it comes to wine and wine tasting. In the Middle Ages, wine was not the most common beverage, but it was particularly sought after, especially due to its euphoric effect, its nutritive and antiseptic virtues—tap water was likely to be polluted by human activities or animals. Average wine consumption was estimated at 1 to 2 liters per day and per person. Not all wines were of equal quality but figures like the abbot of Maizières ought to offer and sell high-standard wines.

As a consequence, the monks were very attentive to their vines. When they stopped farming them themselves, they didn't hesitate to include very strict terms in the farming contracts. It was particularly true when it came to planting or replanting a grapevine. Among the best examples, a deal made in the *clos* of the clerics—also called the *clos du Buet* near Germolles: “*twenty-four thousand good and suitable holes to plant vines, that is to say that each hole should be one-foot-and-a-half-long, one-foot-and-three-fingers-deep, and half-a-foot-large, and grapevines will*

be provided by said-venerable-monks, and for each hole two right-angled grapevines will be planted by experienced wine growers."

At that time, the grape variety wasn't essential. The oldest mention of pinot goes back to 1366. This one occurrence aside, Burgundy's flagship grape was rarely mentioned in the late 14th century: 1375, 1376, 1394... showing that, in the Middle Ages, people had little interest in the varietal. As for gamay, the oldest mention is no other than Philippe le Hardi's famous ordinance of 1395 demanding all these '*very disloyal*' vines to be pulled up.

As for the vines of Maizières abbey, the first references to grape varieties date from the 17th century. Most of the time, it was not any more specific than "*good plants of all grains*" (Puligny in 1663, 1673...). The rare precise occurrences described some "*good noirien grains, white and black*" in Meursault in 1683, some "*good noirien grains, two thirds in black and one third in white*" in Pernand in 1690 and some "*good noirien grains*" in Savigny-lès-Beaune in 1715. For sure these phrases referred to pinot noir but also to pinot blanc (chardonnay), meaning that **planting different grape varieties in the same plot was a common practice**. Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to think that only the best grape varieties in Burgundy were planted at the abbey. Many tenants failed to meet this expectation. Thus, in 1782, it was not surprising to find a vine in Puligny with the following mention: "*gamay red wine from Puligny aged in the highest possible quality of new barrels*".

When it comes to day-to-day viticultural work, Maizières abbey's archives are pretty succinct. In the following farming contract of 1683 for a vine in Meursault, the tenant was required to "*give back said barrel in good condition and said plot planted with many vines in good order*" at the end of the contract.

Generally speaking, the monks of Maizières farmed their vines in a rather common way for the time. Vine works would restart right after the harvest. The monks would cut and stack the wooden stakes that were used to attach vine branches later in the year. Indeed, until the end of the 19th century, vines were planted randomly—as opposed to neat rows today. Winter works consisted in burning vine branches.

The abbey's contracts—like the one concerning a vine in Puligny in 1683—generally stated cow excrements should be scattered over the vines. Depending on weather conditions, the vines were pruned at the end of February up until March. This essential work required special expertise. The soils were then ploughed with a pick three to four times to accelerate vine growth. As stipulated in the farming contract of a vine in Puligny in 1663, the vines were supposed to be “*properly ploughed, in a way that is favorable to vine growing*”.



Burgundy monks farming the vines, in the Middle Ages (sic), illustration from The Marvels of Industry by Louis Figuier, 1877, Fondo Antiguo de la Biblioteca de la Universidad de Sevilla, Spain

After a year of hard work came the most important time of the year: the harvest and the vinification. A few days before the beginning of the harvest, the presses and the cellars were cleaned thoroughly and the monks made sure all the necessary equipment was ready. According to the guide of good conduct of June, 1746, which was applied to Maizières' different possessions (including Blagny, Bully and Aubigny), it was forbidden to begin the harvest before the scheduled date. Gleaning less than 8 days after the end of the harvest was also prohibited. The respect of the official date of the harvest was strictly supervised because anticipating the harvest also meant having the opportunity to sell the wines before the others. The monks obtained this privilege a few times. They did so in 1321 for their vines in Volnay, Pommard and Beaune which were harvested a day before the official date.

As of the 17th century, most of their production is white. They often referred to ‘good, pure, loyal and commercial white wine’ (1663, 1673, 1674, etc), and to the “white wine of the 16 ouvrées of the village of Blagny” in Meursault (1683), and the “good quality white” of the village of Pernand in 1705.

There were several shades of red wines. Documentation often refers to “*vermeil wine*,” like in Puligny in 1663, 1673, 1674, 1690, 1711, etc. If in today’s color palette the word vermeil designates a light and lively red, it can’t be stated with certainty that the same definition would strictly apply to the wines that were made then. Pernand (1683) and Meursault (1705) also produced “*clairer wine*” (from Latin vinum claretum, light coloring), likely a light red rather than a rosé.

During the Middle Ages and the Modern Age, the notion of vintage didn’t exist in Maizières, nor did it exist elsewhere. Wines from the most recent harvest were referred to as “new wines,” and older wines were simply referred to as “old wines.”

It must be noted that the monks and the winegrowers of that time didn’t master the art of winemaking very well. Winemaking techniques appeared only in the 17th century. Medieval wines were sold—sometimes still in the middle of their alcoholic fermentation—right after the harvest and were meant to be drunk within the year. Wines were directly put inside the barrels and sold that way, non-clarified and without having been previously drawn out of the barrel to separate the lees. The wine was considered old when the next cuvée was on its way. Quality could vary from one year to the next. Wines didn’t keep well to the extent that it was common to find wine losses under “*wine waste or wine damage*” in expense accounts.

One thing certain, Maizières abbey’s wines were particularly appreciated in the Middle Ages and in the Modern Age. Therefore, it was not by chance that **in 1775, the general assembly of Burgundy chose the abbot’s wine as a gift to the Prince of Condé, a major figure of the kingdom of France.**

Grape varieties and wines previously owned by Maizières Abbey



1663, Puligny « Un bail sur 2 journaux de terre finage de Puligny l'un sur la Maladière et l'autre sur le pré à la Dame à la charge de les planter en vigne en **bon plant de vin tout grain** après les avoir tervillonné et crotés [...] chaque jour de feste saint martin d'hiver un **queue de vin vermeil** tout grain pur loyal et marchand envaisselés en tonneaux neufs [...] à la maison de Beaune[...] payer un poinçon et 5 cavillons de **vin blanc bon pur loyal** et marchand du cru dudit Puligny aussi envaisselé en tonneaux neufs pour la sacristie de l'église dudit maizières. »

1683, Meursault « Une pièce de terre appelée la pièce des Pointes finage de Meursault contenant environ 10 journaux [...] à la charge de planter ladite pièce de terre en vigne bien de **bon grains noirien blanc et noir** resserré seulement les endroits et qu'il y aura de la Boue en sorte qu'on n'y puisse planter vigne avec pouvoir au receveur de prendre de la terre dans le travers de la montagne [...] le présent bail moyennant [...] 3 poinçons et 4 feuilletes de vin du cru de ladite vigne savoir 4 feuilletes vin blanc, 3 poinçons de **vin claret** envaisselés en tonneaux neufs tenant jauge et poinçon de Beaune. »

1690, Pernand « le 4^e jour du mois de novembre 1690 après midi en sa personne Claude Pavelot veuve de feu François Pavelot vigneron a fait marché avec les vénérables prieurs et religieux de l'Abbaye de Maizières procureur cellier de ladite abbaye et convenant avec ladite Pavelot de botter, tervillonner et planter de **bon plant de noirien les deux tiers en noir et l'autre en blanc** une pièce de terre de la courvée de leur seigneurie de Bully jusqu'à la contenance de 6 ouvrées. »

1705, Pernand « Jean Label vigneron demeurant à Pernand au payement de 10 poinçons de **vin blanc ou claret** de bonne qualité. »

1711, Puligny « 1 pièce de vigne dépendant de la cure de Puligny au finage dudit lieu en Combe de la contenance d'environ 12 ouvrées [...] le présent bail à payer chacun an audits sieurs de Maizières en leur maison de Beaune un poinçon de vin de **tout grain vermeil** provenant dudit héritage bon, pur loyal et marchand envasselé en tonneaux tenant jauge et maison de Beaune [...]. »

1715, Savigny-lès-Beaune « Nous soussignés avons fait le marché qui suit savoir que nous [...] tous vignerons à Savigny nous sommes obligés de planter de **bons grains noirs** faire les fosses et toutes les autres façons que l'on a confirmé de faire aux plantes de les bien garnir et faisseler pour les rendre en bon estat après 4 années. »

1782, Puligny « bail à 15 ans de la terre et seigneurie de Blagny et de la dime en grain et en vins de Puligny pour Messieurs de Maizières qui seront livrés annuellement sans diminution de prix dudit bail dans l'endroit qu'il leur sera indiqué 6 poinçons de **vin rouge gamay** dudit puligny envasselés en tonneaux neufs et des meilleurs provenant de ladite dime [...] livreront 2 feuilletes de **vin de Blagny de la meilleure qualité l'une rouge l'autre blanc** dans les celliers et cuves de Blagny. »



THE ROLE OF THE MONKS OF MAIZIÈRES ABBEY IN THE GEO-HISTORICAL CONSTRUCTION OF THE BURGUNDY VINEYARD

The religious and political elites played a significant part in the construction of the Burgundy vineyard which was decisively introduced on the hills of Burgundy in the first centuries of the Middle Ages with the development of several wine estates.



he religious and political elites played a significant part in the construction of the Burgundy vineyard which was decisively introduced on the hills of Burgundy in the first centuries of the Middle Ages with the development of several wine estates.

At the beginning, the hillside benefited from two bishoprics, Autun for the côte de Beaune and a large part of the côte de Nuits, and Langres for Dijon and its surroundings. Meanwhile, the first abbeys which were established at the doorstep of the towns and the cities contributed to the development of the vineyard as the wines it produced were financially profitable.

The model of a monastic vineyard coming from growing seigneurial and secular donations mushroomed at a European scale with the foundation of Cluny in 909-910. In 1098, the birth of the Cistercian Order which advocated the return to a stricter interpretation of the Rule of Saint Benedict decisively marked the construction of the Burgundy vineyard. Organized around the model of a cellar and a cistercian *clos* including the leading *Clos de Vougeot*, this self-sufficient production took part in the creation of high-quality plots which would later be referred to as the famous Climats of the Burgundy vineyard.

Every Cistercian estate was organized in the same way: a walled vine plot, sometimes a stone quarry from which construction stones

were extracted, associated with a production unit including a press, a winery, an ageing cellar, accommodation for the monks and the lay brothers, and a chapel. Cîteaux and the other abbeys that were founded thereafter wisely disseminated their *c/los* along the hillside creating a true patchwork.

Cîteaux abbey had its cellars in Dijon, Fixin, Vougeot, Meursault... Maizières abbey spread its influence over the entire hillside of Beaune, Savigny, and Puligny, not to mention its enclaves in the *côte chalon-naise*. Lastly, however distant, the abbeys of Auberive, Morimond, Clairvaux and Fontenay set up wine estates near Dijon and Beaune.

The Cistercians left us impressive constructions and emblematic plots limited by walls often unchanged since their creation. Throughout their history, the monks tried to develop quality viticulture by carefully choosing the locations, rigorously managing the estates, and mastering winemaking techniques. They focused on making fine wines from Vougeot, Blagy, Morgeot, etc or “*sir abbot’s wine*” with no origin distinction whatsoever and generally composed of a blend of wines coming from several estates.



*Wine growing, psalter from Normandy,
circa 1180, La Haye Royal Library*

However, if the Cistercians did always strive to make quality wine, they didn't invent the Climats of the Burgundy vineyard. Whilst aware of the riches of their terroirs, the monks never went on about the relationship between the wine and the plot it originated from which is the very essence of the notion of Climat: a carefully delimited vine plot, named centuries ago, which benefits from particular geological and weather conditions.

Specific to the côte de Nuits and the côte de Beaune, and directly visible in the landscape, this notion of terroir stems from an older approach associating the soil with the grape variety and the producer's know-how, an approach which will be magnified by the nobles of Dijon as of the end of the 17th century and the beginning of the 18th century.

Nevertheless, the vineyard of Burgundy indisputably owes these monks a lot. For centuries, they constituted, developed and promoted vines, *clos* and estates that are now famous in the entire world. As major figures of the Burgundy vineyard throughout centuries, the clerics—notably the monks of Maizières— played an essential role in the geo-historical construction of these Climats.

Maizières abbey left its mark on the viticultural hillside, particularly on the côte de Beaune. **Among the 1 247 Climats inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List in 2015, many once belonged to Maizières abbey. Some are particularly famous around the world today and produce Premier Cru and Grand Cru wines, such as the Climat Montrachet, the Climat Blagny, and the Climat Morgeot.**



Montrachet

The Montrachet was among the first. A historical Climat, internationally recognized for the quality of its wines, straddling Puligny and Chassagne, and defined by a few lieux-dits—primarily “Vrai Montrachet”, “Bâtard-Montrachet” and “Chevalier-Montrachet”. Its name—pronounced “Mont-rachet”—comes from the “*rache*”, a hill with scrubby vegetation. The first mentions of the Mont Rachaz (1252), Mont rachat (1286) refer to this bald hilltop sheep and goats would graze on.

Maizières abbey’s archives contain the first reference to the “Montrachet territory”. The oldest text goes back to the year 1250 and concerns a donation of vines by the abbot to a certain Pierre, aka Boers, of Puligny. Two years later, the same Pierre and his brother Arnaud gave away their house and their properties located in Puligny, including their “*vines and lands situated in the Mont Rachas*”.

Medieval documents relating to the Montrachet can be summarized in the following mentions: in 1286, the monks exchanged with Guido Bererus of Chagny a vine of said village against another vine located in Montrachet; in 1309, a certain Melineta admitted she owed the monks an income for a fallow vine located in the same place; in 1451, abbot Girard transferred some properties around Puligny including two fallow vines of 6 and 16 *ouvrées* each (0,26 and 0,69 hectares) to Antoine Lenoble, a bourgeois from Chalon-sur-Saône. This last document is all the more interesting that it is the oldest mention of a “*white vine*” (ie. white colored grapes) in the Montrachet.

By the end of the Middle Ages, the vines that are farmed there were not a homogeneous unit. Many plots were abandoned and required some rehabilitation works. Between 1577 and 1596, Charles de Boutières, lord of Chagny and Chassagne, progressively acquired bits of the Montrachet and eventually became its one and only owner (100 *ouvrées*, slightly more than 4 hectares).

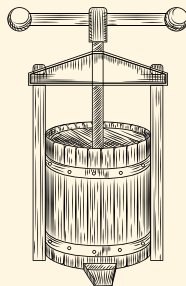
If the quality of Montrachet wines was recognized up to Flanders no later than in the end of the 15th century, it was in 1728 that the Climat really made its way out of anonymity thanks to a book published in London by abbot Arnoux in which he wrote that the Montrachet made “*the most curious and the most delicate wine in France [...] whose smoothness can’t be expressed in Latin nor in French.*” Ranked as a Grand Cru in 1937, the Montrachet now gives the most famous white wine in the world.

Blagny

Blagny was originally transferred to the monks of Maizières by the Chapter of Langres cathedral. Today, Blagny is a hamlet incorporated into the town of Puligny, even though its vines overstep the Meursault zone.

The etymology of the name (Blannius estate) gives us reason to think the place originated in the Gallo-Roman times. Moreover, Roman tile debris were found in the lieu-dit Les Ravelles, confirming the presence of a construction from that time. **If the deed of donation of 1184 confirms the existence of vines before the monks settled in the region, it was indeed the latter who highlighted this terroir, notably by establishing one of their most profitable estates there.** Part of the dwellings, the barn and 15th century chapel Saint-Denis are the only elements inherited from the Cistercians that still stand today. Sold as a national asset during the revolution, the estate was redeemed in 1811 by its current owners.

Blagny wines have had an excellent reputation since the Middle Ages. Today, one of the particularities of this Climat lies in the fact that the wines produced there must vindicate a different designation depending on the grape variety they originate from (pinot noir or chardonnay). In the 50's-60's, the INAO (National Institute for Designations of Origin) tried to impose Blagny as the one and only appellation for both white and red wines but it was ultimately decided that there should be different designations to distinguish them. Thus, a white wine can be named Meursault-Blagny, Meursault alone, Puligny-Montrachet-Blagny, or Puligny Montrachet alone depending on which town the grapes specifically come from. When it comes to a red wine, it must be named Blagny alone. Since 1963, most plots located in the Climat of Blagny have been ranked Premier Cru.



Morgeot

The quality of its wines and its destiny made Morgeot one of Maizières' most emblematic estates. Just like the meurgers, these stone mounds made of the stones that were taken out of the vines, Morgeot is a derivative of Gallic *morga* which means edge, limit, and gets its name from the fact that it borders on Chassagne and Santenay.

The lieu-dit was first mentioned in 864: In Belnensi pago, vine auna que Morga dicitur "*In the Beaune region, a vine named Morga*". **But it was really the monks of Maizières who, thanks to the land and vine and wood donations they received, began clearing the woods, planting new vines, and developed this terroir.** In the Middle Ages, Morgeot was one of the abbey's biggest estates. In the 13th century, it was 8 hectares, mostly enclosed plots: Les Petits Clos, Les Grands Clos, La Chapelle...

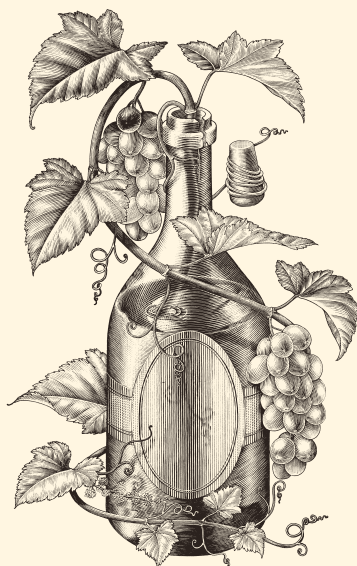
However, Morgeot deeply suffered from the conflicts that shook the 15th and 16th centuries. After the death of Duke Charles le Téméraire, the estate was ransacked by King Louis XI's troops who were there to fight off the inhabitants of Chassagne who supported the Duke's daughter, Duchess Marie de Bourgogne. It got even worse with the religion wars and, on the verge of going bankrupt, Maizières abbey was forced to sell its estate in Morgeot.

Charles de la Boutière, lord of Chassagne and Chagny purchased the entire estate in 1590. The bill of sale, signed in the episcopal house of bishop Pontus de Tyard, specifies that "*this barn included many vines, some of the best in the country*". Aware of the fact that they had just let go of an important part of their estate, the monks of Maizières attempted to buy it back in the beginning of the 18th century. In 1706, Morgeot estate included 180 *ouvrées* of grapevines (about 8 hectares), 9 hectares of woods, 12 hectares of meadows, and a mill. The beautiful map of Morgeot drawn in 1714 represents a 148-*ouvrée* clos, a bit more than 6 hectares.

Aware of the fact that they let a consistent part of their assets go, the monks of Maizières tried to buy the estate back in the early 18th century.

To reconquer the estate of Morgeot, the monks promised to pay the baron of Chagny thanks to a loan they contracted with two dignitaries from Beaune. But the financial arrangement quickly crumbled down. Years went by and the deal still wasn't closed. When the baron died in 1710, his son in law, Jean-François-Antoine de Clermont, marquis of Montoisson, inherited the estate. In 1731, the grand council compelled the marquis to give back the land and the lordship of Morgeot.

After the French Revolution, the estate was successively owned by different people, including Philippe de Mac Mahon, 4th Duke of Magenta who purchased it in 1967 and launched the first *Chassagne-Montrachet Premier Cru Abbaye de Morgeot, Clos de la Chapelle*.



THE VINES OF MAIZIÈRES TODAY

Domaine de l'Abbaye de Maizières replanted grapevines, undertook the rehabilitation of the winery and the cellars.



he different vine plots were planted with five local grape varieties. Chardonnay and Pinot Noir were obvious picks being the two most common and renowned varieties in the region. Gamay and two forgotten grape varieties—Melon de Bourgogne and Pinot Beurot—enrich the diversity of the estate while reconnecting with the history of the vineyard.

Melon de Bourgogne practically disappeared from the vineyard of Burgundy in the 15th century and was massively planted in the region of Nantes, North West of France. Although the vineyard of Burgundy turned away from it at the time, its organoleptic characteristics are of real interest. It produces light dry wines with a purity that resembles Aligoté.

Pinot Beurot, or Pinot Gris, also originating from Burgundy, was named after the gray pink to even brown color of the frieze (bure in French) worn by the Cistercian monks. We allocated a specific plot in the *Clos de l'Abbaye de Maizières* to Pinot Beurot where it can fully express its aromatic complexity: a beautiful roundness supported by a beautiful freshness.

To perpetuate the memory of the monks who cared for the abbey's grapevines, we have dedicated a few hectares of land to wine growing in the two historical locations: Gouttières “*Scoteria*” farm where the first monks first settled in 1125, and inside Maizières Abbey's *clos* within the grounds of the monastery.

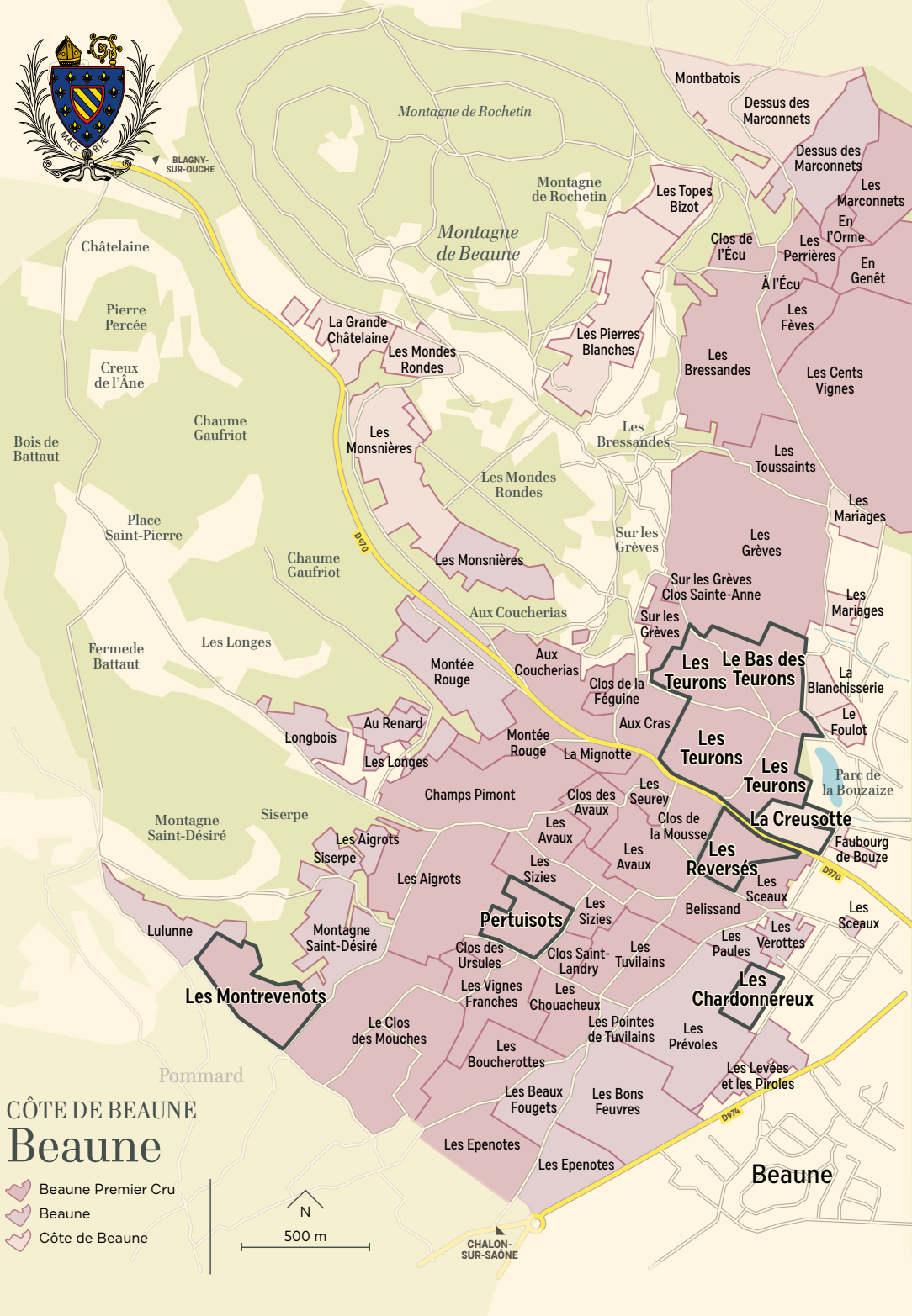
With high vines and wider spacing between each vine, we avoid overcrowding and maximize aeration which enables us to make fewer treatments. Our treatments are carried out in accordance with organic and biodynamic practices.

Most of the vine works are done manually, in respect with historical traditions. Our rows are covered with grass, hedges were planted on the property and our vines live together with animals, just like in the monks' days.

The fact that the different grape varieties are planted so close to each other favors a certain diversity within our plots. In this way we are reviving “*co-planting*”. Planting different grapes in one single plot was a common practice in the monastic time. It has fallen into disuse, but we believe in its benefits, in particular the created synergies.

Finally, our grapes are pressed and vinified inside **Maizières abbey's winery** and aged in the **historical cellars**. Growing a number of different grapes gives us the possibility to offer you a wide range of wines: a Chardonnay and a Pinot Noir in line with the tradition of great Burgundy wines and also unusual blends and non-blends of lesser-known grape varieties that will tickle your curiosity.





CÔTE DE BEAUNE
Beaune

- Beaune Premier Cru
- Beaune
- Côte de Beaune





Saint-Aubin

Blagny

Le Dos
d'Âne

Meursault

Sous le Puits

Hameau
de Blagny

Les Chalumaux

Champ
Canet

Le Trézin

La Truffière

Champ
Canet

Les
Combettes

La Garenne

La Truffière

Clos de
la Garenne

Les
Perrières

Les
Referts

Les
Charmes

Corvée
des Vignes

Champ Gain

Les Folatières

Garenne

Clos de
la Mouchère

Les
Nosroyes

Les
Petites
Nosroyes

Les
Levrans

Les
Reuchaux

Mont-Rachet

Clavillon

Les Grands
Champs

Les Petits
Grands Champs

Champ Croyon

Derrière
la Velle

Les Femelottes

En la
Richarde

Le
Cailleret

Les
Pucelles

La Rue aux Vaches

Voitte

Les
Boudrières

Meix
Pelletier

Gagère

BEAUNE

rue de But

Chevalier-
Montrachet

Montrachet

Bâtard
Montrachet

Bienvenues

Bâtard
Montrachet

Les
Enseignères

Noyer
Bret

Les
Aubues

Les
Tremblots

Les
Houlières

Le Village

rue du
Creux

Chassagne-Montrachet

CHAGNY

Corpeau

CÔTE DE BEAUNE Puligny-Montrachet



GRANDS CRUS

Chevalier-Montrachet
Montrachet
Bâtard Montrachet
Bienvenues
Bâtard Montrachet



PREMIERS CRUS

Puligny-Montrachet
Puligny-Montrachet blanc /
Blagny rouge
Meursault blanc /
Blagny rouge

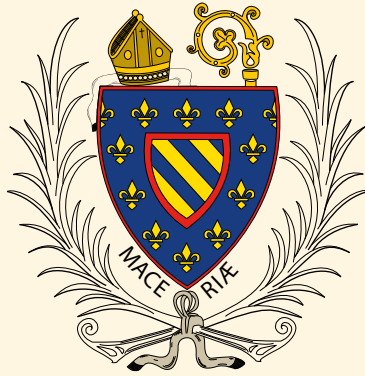


Puligny-Montrachet
Puligny-Montrachet blanc /
Blagny rouge

- ① Champ Canet
- ② Les Demoiselles
- ③ En Folatières



500 m



*May the future
generations remember
these grand convictions
and brave actions,
so they can re-enchant
the world and
its creation.*

