

# Our Tour to Burgundy 2015

## by Vincent Keaveny

*Unlike many livery companies the City Solicitors' Company does not have a tradition of a "Master's Weekend". Four years ago Past Master John White broke new ground with a very enjoyable visit to Champagne. The success of that trip encouraged me to venture further south for one of the highlights of my year as Master Solicitor: a visit to Burgundy.*

Our party of 24 left a gloomy London early on Thursday, 23rd April. As our coach made its way through the rush hour traffic our mood was lifted by the opening of the first of the many bottles of champagne that we would consume over the four days of our journey. As our journey continued, the champagne was supplemented by a selection of red and white burgundies with our tour leader, Julian White, taking the opportunity to arm us with some knowledge of the Burgundy region and its wines. After a speedy crossing through the Tunnel we picked up a packed lunch, which was much enjoyed as we rolled along in sunshine through the French countryside. Our progress came to a halt not far from Beaune in the early evening when we met a tailback of several kilometres caused by a serious accident on the autoroute. The delay put paid to our plans for a wash and brush-up in our hotel before dinner and, instead, the staff at Le Cheval Noir in Beaune welcomed a hungry but somewhat unkempt group of travellers directly from the coach for an excellent dinner. Julian, and his supporting team of Gerard O'Shea and Justin Rhodes, having excelled themselves with a flight of 2005 red burgundies on the coach produced another selection of fine wines over dinner with some pink champagne en magnum to accompany the dessert.

The first producer we visited the following morning was **Vincent Bachelet in Chassagne-Montrachet**. Vincent and his family made us very welcome as we tasted cask samples of the 2014 vintage before trying a selection of his reds, including good Santenay and Pommard, and whites - his Maranges 2013 proved particularly popular as did the Chassagne-Montrachet 2013.



The success of Vincent Bachelet's wine-making is evident from the steady, continuing expansion of his premises and cellars - his good quality, well priced wine enjoying the success that it deserves.

We travelled the short distance on to Pommard where we visited **Domaine Coate-Caumartin**. This Domaine is based in a 17th Century manor house with ancient cellars reached via a perilous staircase. The dangers were more than offset by the quality of the wine tasted - highlights including a



Vincent and Amanda Keaveny

fine, taut white St. Romain 2013, a vibrant Volnay 2011 and two excellent premier cru Pommards from the 2013 and 2008 vintages.



Lunch was enjoyed in the sunshine of the courtyard and, as the wine flowed, with the gates to the manor house closed, there was that sense of time standing still that is often a feature of a quiet afternoon in La France Profonde.

On our return to Beaune we enjoyed a couple of hours to explore the town - and to recover from the day's tastings - before another good dinner at Le Caveau des Arches.



We set off on Saturday morning to the Côte de Nuits. Unfortunately Friday's sunshine had given way to rain that continued unabated for most of the day. The only inconvenience, however, was that it made it difficult to spot some of the famous sites on the Route des Grand Crus as we made our way to Gevrey-Chambertin. Our first visit was to **Domaine Camus Père & Fils**, a resolutely traditionalist domaine with vines in five Grands Crus including Le Chambertin itself.



A particularly generous tasting led us through a wide selection of the wines and vintages produced by the Camus Père & Fils ranging from 1997 to 2010, with much discussion of preferences between the styles and vintages on display.



Lunch followed in the centre of Gevrey-Chambertin at Chez Guy. By now all of us were well into our stride and a three course lunch with cheese seemed perfectly normal, with Julian's excellent selection of wines an essential part of the enjoyment.



The afternoon brought us to Maison Bertrand Ambroise, a modern

"cave" but none the worse for that. A selection of premier cru Nuits St. Georges caught our attention here as did their excellent white Bourgogne Côte de Nuits (a fixture on the Garrick's wine list). Bertrand Ambrose generously shared some of his Clos Vougeot with us before giving us a real surprise - allowing us to try some barrel-aged Nuits St. Georges, which he has held back for a number of years without bottling it as an experiment and a treat. Delicious it was too!



Dinner that evening at "Ma Cuisine" in the centre of Beaune gave Julian the opportunity to produce another selection of red and white burgundies, with some prized magnums of 2005 being much enjoyed.

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A rather larger group of us than on the two previous nights managed to keep the barman busy back at the hotel later that evening.

We left Beaune after breakfast on Sunday. As was now customary, the first sound heard as our coach pulled out of the car park was the pop of a champagne cork and it was to Champagne that we were bound on our way home. We were greeted in *Rilly La Montagne* by *Philippe Brugnon*, who entertained us with a tasting of his champagnes and lunch before we left for the Channel. Our stop in Champagne gave Julian and Philippe the opportunity to conduct a number of sabrages, so that by the time we boarded the coach for the return home everyone of us had taken the top of a bottle of champagne off with a sabre, much to their astonishment in most cases. It was a tired but happy group of travellers that arrived back to the Bayswater coach park on Sunday night, having eaten and drunk well and gained much in our knowledge of Les Grands Vins de Bourgogne.



## The Bishop John de Grandisson Inn



The Bishop John de Grandisson Inn is a family run public house in the heart of the village of Bishopsteignton. Yvonne & Tom invite you to join them for a friendly drink in the bar, enjoy the delightful beer garden, or taste home cooking in the restaurant.  
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## JULIAN WHITE Agencies

### Fine Burgundy from

Domaines~Vincent Bachelet of Chassagne-Montrachet,  
 Roger Belland of Santenay, Coste-Caumartin of  
 Pommard, Camus Père & Fils of Gevrey-Chambertin;  
 Maisons Jean-Philippe Marchand and  
 Nicolas Potel and many other producers

### Beaujolais Crus of Jean-Paul Dubost

**Loire Wines:** Domaine Cherrier & Fils, Sancerre  
 And Domaine Cédric Bardin, Pouilly Fumé.

**Bordeaux:** Domaines Fabre, Cissac, Haut Médoc

**Armagnac** - Delord Frères

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## Around and About with the Maître-Sabreurs

*A compilation of sabrage and fun from Our Own Correspondents*

In addition to our Caveaux around the UK, we have a number of active Maître-Sabreurs attending weddings, sabraging the Bride & Groom, adding panache and joie de vivre to all sorts of events. We were particularly enthralled with a report from *Graham Bond, Maître Sabreur and Connétable d'Essex.*

### Bond meets his Waterloo

Graham was invited by the Master and Court of the Stationers' Company to be a guest at the Battle of Waterloo Bicentenary Ball at Stationers' Hall, on one condition that he sabraged a case or two of champagne. This onerous task was accepted willingly and he duly completed the assignment with savoir faire that only a Maître could exhibit.



The first picture shows his panache, but alas..

his next effort was 'sans panache'...

..and Mr Bond (to the delight of Ernst Stavro Blofeld, Auric Goldfinger, Hugo Drax et alia) failed the Art.

007 tells us that it was due to a poor quality bottle of Canard Duchêne exploding; no damage was done except for a very wet glove.



To misquote Wellington: *Nothing except a bottle empty can be half as melancholy as a bottle broken.*

2015 has repeated very much of the élan displayed 200 years ago but, thankfully, not on a battlefield. Otto Hinderer, representing Marshal Blucher in this campaign, and Our Man in Yorkshire, has continued to swell the ranks of the



*Otto at work for quality*

Confrérie in the north of England, sabraging Brides and Grooms, and instructing all and sundry in the Art.

*Meanwhile in Devon*, the PBI (Poor Bloody Infantry) demonstrated the use of quantity, as novices lined up to be inducted by Maître-Sabreur Tom Barnes, representing II Corps of General Rowland Hill. He decided that Wellington could wait a little while, allowing time for a small libation.



Then, on with the task, sabraging more essential infantrymen, as they fell into line.



Devonians enjoyed their evening and..

...Officer David Cook declares Victory

