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THE ULTIMATE BURGUNDY REFERENCE

Domaine Latour-Giraud (Meursault)

2016	Meursault "Caillerets" 1er	red	89
2016	Pommard "La Refène" 1er	red	90
2016	➔ Volnay "Clos des Chênes" 1er	red	91

Jean-Pierre Latour told me that 2016 gave us "the growing season from hell and you had to constantly be in your vineyards or you didn't have a crop to pick once the harvest arrived. The defining element of the 2016 growing season was of course the frost but the mildew that followed was hardly inconsequential and from July on there was almost no rain at all. As such, given the very low yields in many of the frost-affected vineyards, it was easy to have *surmaturité*. This of course meant that it was highly complicated to figure out the right moment to pick various vineyards as some had almost normal yields and some were so low that we didn't even make the wine. For example there will be no Bouchères or Poruzots in white and no Pommard Cuvée Carmine in red. We began the harvest on the 21st of September and at least the fruit was exceptionally clean though ripeness levels varied somewhat between those vineyards that had been frosted and those that weren't. I had no vineyards in pinot that escaped at least some damage. The good news in this is that the reds have excellent concentration and what I find curious is that the '16s have the same maturity of tannins as my '03s. One can point to the deep frost that both vintages had but after that, there are really no similarities so it's hard to explain. Another interesting point is that our La Refène is quite concentrated and it's not easy to obtain really concentrated wines from this vineyard so it's a bit atypical for us. Otherwise, I like the reds for their energy and freshness but I wouldn't necessarily describe them as classic." I found the quality of the Latour reds to be slightly better than what I found in general in the southern Côte. (Atherton Wine Imports, www.awiwine.com, CA, Chemin des Vins, www.chemindesvins.com, MA both USA; Bibendum Wine Ltd., www.bibendum-wine.co.uk, Thorman Hunt & Co., www.thormanhunt.co.uk, and Atlas Fine Wines, www.atlasfinewines.com, all UK).

2016 Meursault "Caillerets": A moderately toasty and somber nose expresses markedly earthy aromas of very ripe dark berries and cassis. The energetic and ultra-suave flavors possess a velvety texture before firming up on the mildly austere and nicely complex finale. This could easily be enjoyed young or held for 4 to 7 years first. 89/2021+

2016 Pommard "La Refène": Deep ruby hue. Here too there is enough wood to mention framing the equally ripe if more elegant aromas of spice, cassis, black cherry and a touch of earth. The sleeker and slightly more precise medium-bodied flavors possess solid intensity and a bit more complexity on the balanced and lingering finish that is mildly firmer as well. 90/2022+

2016 Volnay "Clos des Chênes": This too is quite deeply colored. Notes of both wood and menthol set off the liqueur-like aromas of black pinot fruit, spice, newly turned earth and a floral nuance. The concentrated, powerful and imposingly-scaled big-bodied flavors possess a supple mid-palate that contrasts considerably with the tight, mildly austere and impressively long finish where an interesting hint of anise appears. This will need at least a few years of bottle age first, though that is virtually always the case with a well-made Clos des Chênes. 91/2024+