



**CLOS DE LA ROCHE:**  
**THE CREATION OF A GRAND CRU**

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## **1. Introduction**

The vineyard of Clos de la Roche in the commune of Morey-Saint-Denis of the Côte d'Or in Burgundy was granted Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée (AOC) status by a decree dated 8<sup>th</sup> December 1936<sup>1</sup> under the 1935 Act for establishing AOC. As such, Clos de la Roche achieved legal recognition that it was at the top of a quality hierarchy that would eventually comprise four rungs – *grand cru*, *premier cru*, *communale* and *régionale*.<sup>2</sup> Yet, in the nineteenth century, leading authors on the wines of Burgundy, specifically Dr Jules Lavalley<sup>3</sup> and Dr Denis Morelot<sup>4</sup> did not place Clos de la Roche in their top tier classification. Lavalley ranked Clos de la Roche a *première cuvée* below the top rank of *tête de cuvée/hors ligne*. Morelot did not even list it in his top rank of *tête de cuvée*. Before the 1861 classification by the Comité d'Agriculture de Beaune (CAB), which ranked Clos de la Roche in its top tier of *première classe*<sup>5</sup>, the only author who placed Clos de la Roche in his top ranking together with long famous vineyards such as Chambertin and Clos Vougeot was André Jullien.<sup>6</sup>

Little has been written about Clos de la Roche and its attainment of AOC *grand cru* status. This paper examines the historical circumstances of the mixed perceptions of the quality of Clos de la Roche vis-à-vis other renowned Côte D'Or vineyards, the circumstances surrounding the decrees placing Clos de la Roche into the top rung of the modern quality hierarchy under the AOC laws, reviews the factors that may have persuaded the Comité National des Appellations d'Origine (CNAO, subsequently the

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<sup>1</sup> Décret 8 Décembre 1936 (J.O. 11 Décembre 1936)

<sup>2</sup> The *premier cru* vineyards were not recognized as a separate quality tier until 1943 (Décret 2639 14 Octobre 1943). See also *Inside Burgundy*, Jasper Morris (2010). The term “*grand cru*” was only legalized in 1988: pp4-7 below.

<sup>3</sup> *Histoire et Statistique de la Vigne et des Grands Vins de la Côte-d'Or*, Dr Jules Lavalley (1855)

<sup>4</sup> *Statistique de la Vigne dans le Département de la Côte-d'Or*, Dr Denis Morelot (1831)

<sup>5</sup> *Plan statistique des vignobles produisant les grands vins de Bourgogne*, Comité d'Agriculture de Beaune (1861)

<sup>6</sup> Whose work was not focused purely on Burgundy, covering the whole of France and some foreign wines - *Topographie de tous les vignobles connus*, André Jullien (1816)

Institut National des Appellations d'Origine - INAO<sup>7</sup>) to grant Clos de la Roche AOC status and considers Clos de la Roche as a *grand cru* today, taking into account critical and consumer assessment of the vineyard's relative quality in relation to other Côte d'Or *grands crus*.

This paper will show that the CNAO's decision to grant Clos de la Roche AOC status was justifiable in the light of current critical assessment and the intrinsic quality of the vineyard. It will further show that its historically subdued reputation was the result of a number of different political, commercial and cultural factors and suggests that its emergence as an AOC in 1936 was largely due to the credibility of the Morey-Saint-Denis syndicate of growers in persuading the CNAO to grant Clos de la Roche AOC status.

This paper will also show that the CNAO was not prescriptive in how it granted AOC *climat* status. It also suggests that the manner in which the CNAO established the AOC classification laid the foundation for the development of the relatively recent concepts of "*grand cru*" and "*terroir*".

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<sup>7</sup> Now the Institut National de l'Origine et de la Qualité

## 2. On terminology, “*grand cru*” and classifications

### a. *climat*, *lieu-dit* and *cru*

The English word “vineyard” does not capture the nuances of the French terms, “*climat*”, “*lieu-dit*” and “*cru*”. *Climat* and *lieu-dit*<sup>8</sup> are often used interchangeably to refer to the name of a vineyard, for example, Chambertin. *Climat* is a particularly Burgundian concept of considering a named patch of vineyard which produces wine of a specific style, quality and character that theoretically should distinguish it from another named patch of vineyard. The matter is complicated because within some of the vineyards now considered *grand cru* such as Chappelle-Chambertin and Corton, there are plots with their own place names (*lieux-dits*) which also display specific styles, quality and character. In this paper, the term *climat* will be used for the AOC recognized name of the vineyard, for example Chappelle-Chambertin as a *grand cru* or Les Saint-Georges as a *premier cru*, while the term *lieu-dit* will be reserved for the specific plots comprising a *climat* (for example, the *lieux-dits* En la Chappelle and Les Gémeaux that compose the *climat* Chappelle-Chambertin). By this definition, a reference to the *climat* Clos de la Roche encompasses all the *lieux-dits* that constitute AOC Clos de la Roche, including the *lieu-dit* of Clos de la Roche itself (one of eight *lieux-dits* that wholly or in part qualify for AOC Clos de la Roche).<sup>9</sup>

The word “*cru*” roughly translates into the word “growth” and is often associated with levels of quality, eg *premier cru*, *grand cru*. It is with this meaning that the word

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<sup>8</sup> Charles Curtis MW in his book, *The Original Grand Crus of Burgundy*, gives a summary of the different usages of *lieu-dit* and *climat*. The author is much indebted to his book for the selected translations of key 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century works on the Burgundy *grands crus*. Sylvain Pitiot and Jean-Charles Servant in *The Wines of Burgundy* (2012) also have a useful discussion on the distinction between the two, suggesting that *lieu-dit* is a technical cadastral unit used by geographers whose name recalls “a topographical or historic particularity”, whereas *climats* are a ‘vigneron’s notion’. See also *Les Climats du Vignoble de Bourgogne -Dossier de candidature à l’inscription sur la liste du patrimoine mondial de l’UNESCO, (Application for the Registration of the Climats of the Vineyards of Burgundy in UNESCO’s World Heritage List)*, l’Association des Climats du vignoble de Bourgogne pour l’inscription au patrimoine mondial de l’Unesco (2012).

<sup>9</sup> The other *lieux-dits* comprising Clos de la Roche are Monts Luisants, Les Froichots, Les Fremières, Les Mochamps, Les Genavrières, Les Chabiots and Les Chaffots.

“*cru*” will be used in this paper. Historically, the use of the term ‘*cru*’ was rarely used in publications and by authors before the establishment of the AOC system in the late 1930s. Words such as “*cuvée*”<sup>10</sup> or “*classe*”<sup>11</sup> were used.

b. “*grand cru*”

Charles Curtis MW has noted that the use of “*grand cru*” for the top vineyards of Burgundy is relatively recent, suggesting its use from the 1930s<sup>12</sup>. The previous terms used by Morelot and Lavalley are *tête de cuvée/hors ligne* or *première cuvée*, *deuxième cuvée* and so on. The CAB used the word “*classe*” in its classification. Consistent with this, the common usage of the term “*grand cru*” in the literature (at least in English) was not widespread until the 1980s.<sup>13</sup>

Interestingly, there was no legal reference to the term “*grand cru*” in CNAO or INAO decrees for the Côte d’Or until 1988. The compulsory requirement to state “*grand cru*” on the labels of the specifically named Côte d’Or *climats* initially granted AOC status in 1936 and 1937 (what are now called *grands crus*) was only imposed in 1988<sup>14</sup>. There appears to have been no earlier reference to “*grand cru*” in the legislation with regard to Côte d’Or wines.

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<sup>10</sup> Eg, by Dr Morelot and Dr Lavalley.

<sup>11</sup> Eg, by the Comité d’Agriculture de Beaune.

<sup>12</sup> *The Original Grand Crus of Burgundy*, Charles Curtis (2014)

<sup>13</sup> For instance, up to the 1970s John Arlott and Christopher Fielden were using a four-tier classification (*tête de cuvée*, *première*, *deuxième* and *troisième cuvées*) that was first cited by André Simon between the 1930s and 1950s, although Simon does not himself indicate the origins of this classification as none of the French authors have a four-tier classification. As late as the 1974 (second) edition of Hugh Johnson’s *Wine* (first published in 1966) and the 1977 (second) edition of Hugh Johnson’s “*World Atlas of Wine*”, the term “*grand cru*” was used as an alternative to “*tête de cuvée*”. By the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of the “*World Atlas of Wine*” published in 1985 and in Hugh Johnson’s “*The Wine Companion*” first published in 1983 there was no longer any reference to “*tête de cuvée*”, only recognizing “*grand cru*” as referring to those *climats* entitled to their own AOC.

<sup>14</sup> Décret 6 Décembre 1988-Utilisation de la mention “Grand Cru” sur l’étiquetage de certains vins à appellation d’origine contrôlée de Bourgogne (J.O 8 Décembre 1988)

In fact, there might have been no legal basis for labeling wines from these AOC *climats* as “*grand cru*”. The Comité National of the INAO noted in 1988 that it was traditional in Burgundy to describe certain Côte d’Or AOC *climats* recognized by the CNAO decrees of 1936 to 1938 as *grand cru*<sup>15</sup>, even though such mention on the labels was not provided for by the decrees.<sup>16</sup> Article 13 of a decree dated 19<sup>th</sup> August 1921 (as modified by a decree 17<sup>th</sup> June 1964) prohibited in all circumstances the use of the words “*grand cru*” or “*premier cru*” on containers, packages and in commercial papers, catalogues, invoices etc, except when the use was incorporated in an AOC defined by a decree caught by the application of article 21 of the 30<sup>th</sup> July 1935 Act.<sup>17</sup> None of the decrees up to 1988 allowed the use of “*grand cru*” for Côte d’Or wines. Subsequently the decree of 6<sup>th</sup> December 1988 made obligatory and legally endorsed the use of the word “*grand cru*” for those specific named *climats* of the Côte d’Or entitled to their own AOC under the decrees of 1936, 1937 and 1981<sup>18</sup>.

The term “*grand cru*” is therefore of relatively recent legal effect although it has been long assumed to be part of the AOC system laid down in the 1930s. Although it became a customary term of usage for recognising the *climats* special enough to be each accorded their own AOC instead of falling under the *communale* appellation, that usage is itself relatively recent. The older use of the words “*tête de cuvée*” had a greater or at least equal currency up to the 1970s.<sup>19</sup> It was well into the second half of

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<sup>15</sup> Namely-Bonnes Mares, Chambertin, Chambertin-Clos de Bèze, Chapelle-Chambertin, Charmes-Chambertin, Clos de la Roche, Clos Saint-Denis, Clos de Tart, Clos des Lambrays (added in 1981), Clos Vougeot, Échezeaux, Grands Échezeaux, Griotte-Chambertin, La Tâche, Latricières-Chambertin, Mazis-Chambertin, Mazoyères-Chambertin, Musigny, Richebourg, La Romanée, Romanée-St-Vivant, Ruchottes-Chambertin, Romanée-Conti, Corton, Corton-Charlemagne, Charlemagne, Chevalier-Montrachet, Bâtard-Montrachet, Bienvenues-Bâtard-Montrachet, Criots-Bâtard-Montrachet and Montrachet. La Grande Rue was elevated in 1992.

<sup>16</sup> “Étiquetage”-Indication de la mention “Grand Cru” pour certaines appellations de Bourgogne (INAO, Comité National, Roneo No 6429, 29 Janvier 1988)

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.* *premier cru* was permitted on the labels because it had been defined in décret 2639 14 Octobre 1943.

<sup>18</sup> And eventually La Grande Rue in 1992. Clos des Lambrays was allowed its own AOC in 1981.

<sup>19</sup> See footnote 13.

the 20<sup>th</sup> century before a slew of authoritative books in the 1980s embedded “*grand cru*” as the universal term recognizing the top tier of quality in Burgundy.<sup>20</sup>



Plate 1: Example of labeling differences for Grand Cru before and after 1988  
(Photo by author)

This may be semantics, but it is important for two reasons. First, at its core is the creation of the idea of “*grands crus*” (top quality wines produced from specific and special vineyard plots) that is an integral part of the Burgundian philosophy and that is also inextricably linked to another concept of peculiarly Burgundian origin - “*terroir*” as being specific to *climats* or *lieux-dits*. The grant of AOC status to named

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<sup>20</sup> For example, *Burgundy*, Anthony Hanson MW (1982, 1995); *Burgundy- A Comprehensive Guide to the Producers, Appellations and Wines*, Robert M Parker (1990), *Côte d'Or – A Celebration of the Great Wines of Burgundy*, Clive Coates MW (1997) as well as references in Hugh Johnson’s *Wine Companion* (1983), *The World Atlas of Wine* (from the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, 1985 onwards); *Académie du Vin Guide to Wines*, Steven Spurrier (1986); *Wines of Burgundy*, Serena Sutcliffe MW (1986 and subsequent editions)

Côte d'Or *climats* since 1936 is indivisibly linked to the birth and evolution of the concept of “*grands crus*” as we now understand it. Consequently, it provided a legal framework within which much of the discussion on *terroir* for defining the stylistic and quality differences between *climats* has progressed.

Second, it illustrates the point, often overlooked today, that the AOC system was itself a work in progress. None of the official publications referred to the AOC *climats* as *grands crus* before 1988. The designation of *premier cru* was only recognized by decree in 1943, seven years after the initial AOC *climat*, AOC *communale* and AOC *régionale* designations were established in 1936. It reflects the CNAO navigating its way through uncharted waters in the early days of AOC.

For the purposes of this paper, the term “*grand cru*” describes the specified top quality Côte d'Or *climats* that were renowned enough to be given their own AOC status from 1936 onwards without reference to the commune in which they were located, as though it had been in legal force from 1936 and even if other customary terms such as *tête de cuvée* may have been used for such *climats* before and after 1936.

The AOC quality classification referred to in this paper refers only to that of the Côte d'Or<sup>21</sup> – *régionale* (regional), *communale* (village/commune), *premier cru* (first growth) and *grand cru* (great growth) in increasing order of quality. The French version of the term is used, for example, *communale* for village or commune, *premier cru* for first growth.

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<sup>21</sup> For example, Chablis Grand Cru has 7 *climats* (eg Les Clos, Vaudésirs), each of which is not entitled to AOC status in their own right unlike the Côte d'Or classifications.

c. Classifications of the Côte d'Or vineyards

Early classifications were varied and it was not until the AOC regime was implemented that there was a legally enforceable classification. The principal classifications of the Côte d'Or vineyards by French authors up to the AOC classification can be found in Appendix 3. What follows in this section gives a chronological context to the development of classifications for the wines of the Côte d'Or.

Claude Arnoux published the earliest known categorisation in 1728<sup>22</sup> that is more a stylistic differentiation than a quality classification. He described three broad categories of wines of the Côte d'Or: first, *Vins de Primeur* were wines to be drunk within the year of their harvest<sup>23</sup>; second, *Vins de Garde* were wines that needed aging to show their best<sup>24</sup>; and third, *Vins Blancs* where he named one *climat*, Montrachet, as being the finest white wine of all France.

André Jullien's classification of 1816<sup>25</sup> had five classes in descending order of quality – *première classe* (first class) through to *cinquième classe* (fifth class). In his first four classes of red wine, Jullien named various *climats* (eg. Romanée-Conti in the first class) but not in his fifth class where he refers to the second, third and fourth *cuvées* of the vineyards cited in the first four classes as comprising some of the wines of the fifth class<sup>26</sup> as well as wines of villages such as Montagny.

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<sup>22</sup> *Dissertation sur la situation de la Bourgogne sur les vins qu'elle produit*, Claude Arnoux (1728)

<sup>23</sup> Mainly from the Côte de Beaune with Volnay and Pommard leading the list.

<sup>24</sup> Found in the Côte de Nuits citing two *climats* Chambertin (which he considered the best wine in all of Burgundy) and Clos Vougeot.

<sup>25</sup> *Topographie de tous les vignobles connus*, André Jullien (1816)

<sup>26</sup> Somewhat akin to the Bordelais concept of second and third wines or declassified wines in Burgundy today

Morelot<sup>27</sup> published a six-level classification for the red wines of the Côte d'Or in 1831. At the top of his hierarchy was *tête de cuvée* followed by *première cuvée*, *bonne* (good) *cuvée*, *cuvée ronde* (round), *passé-tout-grain* (half Pinot, half Gamay) ending with wines of pure Gamay. Morelot only named *climats* in the *tête de cuvée* category.<sup>28</sup>

Lavalle had five levels of quality starting with top ranked *tête de cuvée/hors ligne* through to *quatrième cuvée*.<sup>29</sup> Lavalle's was the most comprehensive and detailed classification up to that point of time (1855) with very nuanced assessments of a large number of *climats* and *lieux-dits*, (in some cases specifying the area of the *lieu-dit* and its ownership), accompanied by the first detailed map of the Côte d'Or vineyards showing specific *lieux-dits*.

The classification published by the CAB in 1861<sup>30</sup> consisted of three classes: *première classe*, *seconde classe* and *troisième classe*. Taking advantage of the cadastres produced as part of the land registry system developed during and after the French Revolution, it was the first published work to make reference to cadastral numbers of the individual parcels that comprised each *lieu-dit*. The classification provided a level of precision to *lieux-dits* or different parcels within a *climat* assigned different rankings (such as in Bâtard-Montrachet, part of which fell into the CAB's *première classe* and part in *seconde classe*).

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<sup>27</sup> *Statistique de la Vigne dans le Département de la Côte-d'Or*, Dr Denis Morelot (1831). Morelot's spelling of *passé-tout-grain* differs from the modern *passé-tout-grains*.

<sup>28</sup> Namely (as spelt by Morelot) le Chambertin, le clos de Bèze, le clos de Tart, les Musigny, les Amoureuses, clos de Vougeot, les Romanée, les Richebourg, la Tâche, le Saint-George, le Corton, la Bataillère, les Fèves, les Grèves, les Épeneaux, le clos de Côteaux, les Champans, les Caillerets, le Santenot, le Morgeot.

<sup>29</sup> *Histoire et Statistique de la Vigne et des Grands Vins de la Côte-d'Or*, Dr Jules Lavalle (1855)

<sup>30</sup> *Plan statistique des vignobles produisant les grands vins de Bourgogne*, Comité d'Agriculture de Beaune (1861)

Later works of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century were based largely on Lavalley's and the CAB's. René Danguy and Charles Aubertin<sup>31</sup> did not create their own classification system, simply quoting the classifications of Lavalley and the CAB with the occasional reference to C Loc – "*classement local*"<sup>32</sup>. Bertall<sup>33</sup> and J-M. Guillon<sup>34</sup> both reproduced a list classifying the top wines of Burgundy which was a modification of Lavalley's<sup>35</sup> incorporating *hors ligne*, *tête de cuvée* and *première cuvée* for the top wines of the Côte d'Or.

The last significant classification of Burgundy vineyards before the implementation of the AOC system was offered by Camille Rodier in 1920.<sup>36</sup> Rodier acknowledged that his classification was based on those of Lavalley and the CAB, but adopted the CAB's three-tier classification, noting that its *première classe* in general incorporated the *têtes de cuvées* and *premières cuvées* of Lavalley.

Charles Curtis MW<sup>37</sup> synthesized the classifications produced by the authors mentioned above for both red and whites. For the reds, he proposed five classes *tête de cuvée* 'A', *tête de cuvée* 'B', *tête de cuvée* 'C', *tête de cuvée* 'D' and other *cuvées*, the basis of his classification being the degree of consensus between the earlier authors.

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<sup>31</sup> *Les Grands Vins de Bourgogne*, René Danguy and Charles Aubertin (1892)

<sup>32</sup> Meaning local classification based on tradition and having the status of authority in the relevant villages of the Côte d'Or. *Les Grands Vins de Bourgogne*, René Danguy and Charles Aubertin (1892); *The Original Grand Crus of Burgundy*, Charles Curtis MW (2014), p.59

<sup>33</sup> *La Vigne : Voyage Autour des Vins de France – Étude physiologique, anecdotique, historique, et même scientifique*, Bertall (alias of Charles-Albert Arnoux) (1878)

<sup>34</sup> *Étude Générale de la Vigne*, Jean-Marie Guillon (1905)

<sup>35</sup> *The Original Grand Crus of Burgundy*, Charles Curtis MW (2014)

<sup>36</sup> *Le Vin de Bourgogne – La Côte-d'Or*, Camille Rodier (1920)

<sup>37</sup> *The Original Grand Crus of Burgundy*, Charles Curtis MW (2014) pp 225-234.

Today's AOC recognises 4 quality levels<sup>38</sup>, but setting aside the bottom tier of AOC *régionale* the three levels of classifications of *grand cru*, *premier cru* and *communale* approximate the CAB's and Rodier's three classes to some extent, but not completely because not all the wines that were classified as *première classe* by the CAB and Rodier were eventually classified as a *grand cru* AOC (notably Les Saint-Georges). On the other hand, there were examples of *lieux-dits*, which were not *tête de cuvée*, *première classe* or *première cuvée*, that were classified *grand cru*. Clos de la Roche is an example. The original AOC was only granted to the *lieu-dit* Clos de la Roche, whereas by 1971, the INAO had admitted seven other *lieux-dits* (in whole or in part) contiguous with the *lieu-dit* Clos de la Roche.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> The AOC quality tier system for the Côte d'Or developed over time with the initial decrees between 1936 and 1938 creating Appellations d'Origine Contrôlée for *régionale*, *communale* and *climats* (ie the "grand crus") corresponding to three of the quality levels of what is today commonly taken for granted as a four tier level. In fact the AOC for Côte d'Or is still technically a three-tier AOC system as *premier cru* was only created by decree in 1943 (Décret 2639 14 Octobre 1943) as a sub-category of AOC *communale* allowing certain superior quality *climats* of the AOC *communale* status to be labeled AOC *communale premier cru* with the option of naming the *climat*.

<sup>39</sup> The complete list of *lieux-dits* comprising AOC Clos de la Roche is found at Appendix 2: The Current Composition of AOC Clos de la Roche, Grand Cru. The progressive growth of AOC Clos de la Roche through the addition of *lieux-dits* over time is found at Appendix 4: The Growth of Clos de la Roche.

### 3. Clos de la Roche before 1936

#### a. Origins and historical mentions of Clos de la Roche

The historical origin of the name “Clos de la Roche” is uncertain. Marie-Hélène Landrieu-Lussigny<sup>40</sup> suggests that it refers to the bedrock<sup>41</sup>, a theme that is picked up by Françoise Dumas.<sup>42</sup> Laurent Ponsot, of Domaine Ponsot, proposes a different theory that the singular reference to “La Roche” refers to a single stone used in ancient druidical traditions.<sup>43</sup> Whilst Danguy and Aubertin list possible ancient origins of the names of many *lieux-dits* in Morey, an explanation for Clos de la Roche is noticeably absent. Although the land was once owned by the Cîteaux abbey, there is no documentary or commercial reference to the *lieu-dit* Clos de la Roche, before the French Revolution.

Before the establishment and development of the cadastral system in France<sup>44</sup>, many *climats* that are well known today were not cited specifically in the early written works on the wines of Burgundy. Claude Arnoux, writing in 1728<sup>45</sup>, mentioned only Clos de Vougeot and Chambertin as *vins de garde*. Courtépée and Bégouillet<sup>46</sup> named only Chambertin, Bèze, Romanée, Vougeot and Saint-Georges as the top *climats* of Burgundy with no mention of Clos de la Roche in 1778, contenting themselves with a reference to Morey as among the villages (others being Chambolle and Vosne) that

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<sup>40</sup> *Les lieux-dits dans le vignoble Bourguignon*, Marie-Hélène Landrieu-Lussigny (1983)

<sup>41</sup> Physically walking from Clos Saint-Denis past Clos de la Roche to Monts Luisants, it is noticeable that the *lieu-dit* Clos de la Roche itself does appear to have more pieces and fragments of rock than the *lieux-dits* to the south (Clos Saint-Denis) and north of it (Monts Luisants).

<sup>42</sup> *Les climats du vignoble bourguignon: de la dénomination régionale à la reconnaissance universelle*, Françoise Dumas published in *Les climats du vignoble de Bourgogne comme patrimoine mondial de l'humanité* (ed Jean-Pierre Garcia)

<sup>43</sup> *AOC Morey-Saint-Denis et ses Vignobles*, Henri Cannard (2008); interview by the author with Laurent Ponsot 2013. Ponsot says that part of it still exists in the forest just beyond the *lieu-dit* “Pierre Virant”.

<sup>44</sup> Initiated during the French Revolution

<sup>45</sup> *Dissertation sur la situation de la Bourgogne sur les vins qu'elle produit*, Claude Arnoux (1728)

<sup>46</sup> *Description Générale et Particulière du Duché de Bourgogne*, Claude Courtépée and Edme Bégouillet (1778) where there is a reference to the Beaunois seeing their wines as the best in Burgundy with some notable exceptions in the Côte de Nuits. *The Original Grand Crus of Burgundy*, Charles Curtis MW (2014)

produced wines of comparable quality to those of Côte de Beaune.<sup>47</sup> Morelot's list of *tête de cuvée* named only 20 *climats*.<sup>48</sup>

The first mention of Clos de la Roche appears to be by Jullien<sup>49</sup> in 1816. The next mention is by Morelot in 1831 followed by Lavalley in 1855. Subsequently, it is named and classified by the CAB in 1861, Danguy and Aubertin in 1892, and Rodier in 1920 before acquiring AOC status in 1936.

The first published map showing Clos de la Roche was Lavalley's which accompanied his 1855 study. Older published maps showed only principal towns and villages without indicating the specific locations of the *climats* and *lieux-dits*.<sup>50</sup> After the French Revolution, the government's work in creating the legal cadastres marking out legal ownership of specific plots provided increasing precision to the representation of *lieux-dits* and *climats* on Lavalley's and the CAB's maps in 1855 and in 1861 respectively. The CAB map was colour coded to show the different quality levels of the vineyards of the Côte d'Or.<sup>51</sup>

#### b. Rankings of Clos de la Roche before 1936

Jullien included Clos de la Roche in his top ranking of *première cuvée* alongside Clos de Tart in 1816. Morelot mentioned Clos de la Roche as being the equal of Clos de

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<sup>47</sup> Much of the early literature noted the high regard for Beaune wines. Cf footnote 46

<sup>48</sup> In contrast to 32 *grand cru climats* and 546 *premier cru climats* for the Côte d'Or recognized by the AOC system today. See footnote 28-for Morelot's list.

<sup>49</sup> *Topographie de tous les vignobles connus*, André Jullien (1816)

<sup>50</sup> *Historique de la Cartographie des Grands Vignobles de Bourgogne*, Henri Poisot (2001)

<sup>51</sup> The first edition of the CAB's map omitted the colouring scheme for *lieux-dits* north of Chambolle-Musigny apparently because the winemakers of Gevrey-Chambertin did not want to have anything to do with a classification produced by a committee in Beaune. See *Inside Burgundy*, Jasper Morris MW (2010) p 90. Perhaps it was simple bureaucratic tardiness as the communes of Chambolle-Musigny and north of it up to Dijon were under the administrative *arrondissement* of Dijon. Notably, the CAB list of 1861 omitted a number of Gevrey-Chambertin *lieux-dits*. Whether or not it was local politics or bureaucratic inefficiency, later editions of the maps issued by the CAB rectified this situation.

Tart but omitted it from his top ranking of *tête de cuvée* (although Clos de Tart was listed). Likewise, Lavalley did not place it in his top ranking (*tête de cuvée/hors ligne*) classifying it a *première cuvée*. Curiously, Lavalley also excluded it in his summary classification of *vins hors ligne, tête de cuvée no. 1* and *tête de cuvée no. 2*, but included Lambrays and part of Bonnes Mares, although all three Morey *climats* were rated *première cuvée* in his main text.

On the other hand, six years later in 1861, the CAB ranked Clos de la Roche as *première classe* alongside many other *lieux-dits* that had been classified *hors ligne*, or *tête de cuvée* by Lavalley and Morelot. As noted by Rodier, the CAB's *première classe* combined Lavalley's *tête de cuvée* and *première cuvée* on the basis that the differences between them were marginal.

Lavalley's and the CAB's publications are two focal points which, although only six years apart, illustrate an evolving view of quality evaluation and classification of *lieux-dits*. They are particularly relevant in considering Clos de la Roche, for today the AOC *climat* of Clos de la Roche includes not only the original *lieu-dit* of Clos de la Roche, but also all or part of the surrounding and contiguous *lieux-dits* of Monts Luisants (part), Les Mochamps, Les Genavrières (part), Les Froichots, Les Chaffots (part), Les Fremières and Les Chabiots. In 1855 when Lavalley first classified Clos de la Roche as *première cuvée*, it only measured 4ha 57a<sup>52</sup> Likewise, references by other 19<sup>th</sup> century authors (Jullien, Morelot) to Clos de la Roche before 1936 were probably only to the *lieu-dit* Clos de la Roche, excluding other *lieux-dits* that are now part of the AOC *climat* Clos de la Roche. Rodier's 1920 classification of Clos de la Roche is

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<sup>52</sup> *Histoire et Statistique de la Vigne et des Grands Vins de la Côte-d'Or*, Dr Jules Lavalley (1855). This is almost identical to the current AOC measurement of 4ha 56a 93c of the *lieu-dit* Clos de la Roche.

also only for the *lieu-dit* Clos de la Roche as he ranked the other *lieux-dits* separately.<sup>53</sup>

Of the other *lieux-dits* that now comprise Clos de la Roche, Lavalley ranked Chabiots, Fremières, Mochamps as *deuxième cuvée* and Froichots, Le Bas de Chaffots as *quatrième cuvée*.<sup>54</sup> He did not list Genavrières and Monts Luisants.<sup>55</sup> The CAB on the other hand ranked all these *lieux-dits* as *première classe* except for Genavrières and parts of Monts Luisants which were ranked *seconde classe*. Rodier ranked the *lieux-dits* Clos de la Roche, Froichots, Chabiots, Chaffots, Fremières, Mochamps as *première cuvée*, Monts Luisants *deuxième cuvée* and Genavrières *troisième cuvée*.

Bertall and Guillon made no references to Clos de la Roche at all.

It is apparent that the quality assessments of the eight *lieux-dits* that now comprise AOC Clos de la Roche were very mixed before 1936. Consequently, Curtis placed it under “Other Cuvées” in his synthesized classification of the French authors.<sup>56</sup> It is against the background of this mixed reputation of the *climat* Clos de la Roche that its receipt of AOC status will be considered.

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<sup>53</sup> *Le Vin de Bourgogne, La Côte-d'Or*, Camille Rodier (1920)

<sup>54</sup> *Histoire et Statistique de la Vigne des Grands Vins de la Côte-d'Or*, Dr Jules Lavalley (1855)

<sup>55</sup> *ibid*

<sup>56</sup> *The Original Grand Crus of Burgundy*, Charles Curtis MW (2014)

#### **4. The Grant of AOC to Clos de la Roche**

The CNAO decree of 8<sup>th</sup> December 1936 granted AOC status to the *lieu-dit* Clos de la Roche measuring 4ha 57ca 40a.<sup>57</sup> By decree of 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1944, Les Mauchamps<sup>58</sup>, Les Froichots, Les Fremières, Les Monts Luisants Bas and Les Chabiots were included within the AOC *climat*, Clos de la Roche. In 1971, parts of Les Genavrières and Les Chaffots were added, bringing the current *climat* area to 16ha 90a 27ca for AOC Clos de la Roche.<sup>59</sup>

The minutes of the meeting of the CNAO dated 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1936 do not elucidate the factors that were considered in coming to this decision. The minutes recorded the unanimous decision of the committee that in Morey-Saint-Denis, the three clos of “Clos La Roche, Clos St Denis and Clos des Bonnes Mares” with minimum alcohol degree of 12.5% and maximum *rendement* (yield) of 30hl/ha over 5 years be adopted for AOC.<sup>60</sup>

The committee contented itself with the declaration that the “conditions of control of the appellation [Morey Saint-Denis], put to the vote, were adopted unanimously”, apparently relying on the principle of “*les usages locaux, loyaux et constants*” (established, honest local customs) first elucidated in the law of 1919.<sup>61</sup>

Although the notes of the CNAO meetings did not specify the exact criteria it used to determine that Clos de la Roche (or any other of the *climats* named in 1936 and 1937) should be granted AOC status, the committee did impose conditions and legal

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<sup>57</sup> Décret 8 Décembre 1936 (J.O. 11 Décembre 1936)

<sup>58</sup> Today spelt Les Mochamps

<sup>59</sup> *Climats et Lieux-dits des Grands Vignobles de Bourgogne – Atlas et Histoire des Noms de Lieux-dits*, Marie-Hélène Landrieu-Lussigny and Sylvain Pitiot (2012); Appendix 4 – The Growth of Clos de la Roche.

<sup>60</sup> Extrait du Procès-verbal du Comité National, Séance du 3 Septembre 1936, INAO Archives du Comité National

<sup>61</sup> Appendix 6 - Chronology of the Establishment of the AOC system

requirements for a wine to qualify as a named AOC *climat*.<sup>62</sup> These requirements became the standards with which wine labeled with AOC *climat* appellations had to comply after 1936. It appears that these conditions and specifications were based on representations and proposals made by the relevant growers' syndicates for each of the villages seeking AOC status for their *lieux-dits*. The growers' syndicates<sup>63</sup> played an important role in the establishment of the AOC making representations on the conditions that would define AOC *régionale*, AOC *communale* or AOC *climat* wines and determine which *lieux-dits* would qualify for each of these AOCs.

The submission for AOC status for Clos de la Roche was made by the Morey syndicate<sup>64</sup> whose president was Hippolyte Ponsot at the time. Ponsot, a respected lawyer and diplomat, was the owner of Domaine Ponsot. He supported the AOC regime in creating a sustainable structure for preserving the reputation of Burgundy's great wines. Hippolyte Ponsot's grandson, Laurent Ponsot<sup>65</sup>, refers to him as a principal protagonist in building the reputation of Domaine Ponsot, holding a strong belief in the quality of Clos de la Roche of which *lieu-dit* the domaine owned a significant part. Hippolyte Ponsot instituted domaine bottling in 1934<sup>66</sup> following the lead of Marquis d'Angerville and Henri Gouges (both of whom were on the CNAO). He also began work in the vineyards to identify the vines that produced the best

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<sup>62</sup> These included requirements on grape varieties, sugar levels, minimum alcohol levels, yield restriction in the production of wine and also, specified the parcels of land according to the official cadastres to define the areas of *lieux-dits* entitled to AOC status. As published in the Bulletin of the CNAO of decrees between 8 December 1936 and 31 August 1938, the conditions attaching to the AOCs, Clos de la Roche, Clos Saint-Denis and Bonnes Mares, required wines of these AOCs to be red made from "*pinot noirien, pinot beurot, pinot liébault*" but also took note of the customary use of white varieties (pinot blanc, pinot gris and chardonnay) which were authorized to no more of 15% of the plantings. The conditions further stipulated a minimum of 212g/l of sugar before enrichment and a minimum alcohol of 12.5 degrees. The yield was restricted to 30hl/ha on average over 5 years. Article 6 referred to the harvest of grapes of correct maturity and vinified in conformity with local custom. Article 7 required labels to indicate clearly "appellation contrôlée" but with no requirement to state "grand cru" – see discussion above at Section 2b-"grand cru" pp 4-7.

<sup>63</sup> *Un siècle de construction du vignoble bourguignon: Les organisations vitivinicoles de 1884 aux AOC*, Jacquet, Olivier (2009)

<sup>64</sup> Syndicat Viticole de Morey-Saint-Denis

<sup>65</sup> Interviews by the author with Laurent Ponsot (2013, 2015)

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid*

wine.<sup>67</sup> His background combined with his support for establishing AOC<sup>68</sup> make it likely that he was highly respected by the CNAO when it relied on the Morey syndicate's submission. In fact, it is likely that he was very persuasive given the mixed views on the quality of Clos de la Roche described in the previous section.<sup>69</sup>

The minutes of the meeting of the CNAO of 15<sup>th</sup> December 1943 in Paris recorded a more detailed discussion on the proposal to add additional *lieux-dits* to AOC Clos de la Roche.<sup>70</sup> The discussion throws some light on the issues that were of concern to the members of the CNAO at the time.

The meeting was presided by Joseph Capus.<sup>71</sup> Amongst those present were Baron Le Roy<sup>72</sup>, Henri Gouges and Marquis d'Angerville. Under the item "Extension of appellations Clos de la Roche and Clos St Denis, Bonnes Mares" there was a long discussion on the issue of yields.<sup>73</sup>

Today, a discussion on yields would probably be about the relationship between yields and quality.<sup>74</sup> However, the CNAO's focus on yields did not relate to

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<sup>67</sup> That work was continued by his son, Jean-Marie Ponsot (Laurent Ponsot's father), eventually leading to the selection of what are now known as the Dijon clones in the 1960s, many of which were sourced from vines in Ponsot's parcels of Clos de la Roche vineyards: interviews by the author with Laurent Ponsot and Jean-Marie Ponsot (2013, 2015); p34 below

<sup>68</sup> Hippolyte Ponsot wrote a number of articles defending the AOC system in *Le Revue de Vin du France* between 1937 and 1939: *L'INAO, de ses origines à la fin des années 1960 : genèse et évolutions du système des vins d'AOC*, Florian Humbert, Université de Dijon (2011) p268

<sup>69</sup> pp13 – 15 above

<sup>70</sup> Procès-verbal de la Séance du Comité Nationale, Paris, 15 Décembre 1943, INAO Archives du Comité National. The approval of this meeting was formalized by the decree of 3 July 1944 which added five *lieux-dits*-Les Mochamps, Les Froichots, Les Fremières, Les Chabiots and Les Mont Luisants Bas to the AOC *climat* Clos de la Roche. Oddly, the minutes of the meeting refer to only four *lieux-dits* without naming them. One can only surmise it was an error of the record of the meeting or a fifth *lieux-dit* was grandfathered into this approval between the time of the meeting and the decree. No surviving records could be located to throw light on this.

<sup>71</sup> Capus was the Minister of Agriculture responsible for promoting the 1935 Act establishing AOC.

<sup>72</sup> Whose pioneering work at Chateaneuf-du-Pape helped form the basis of the AOC system.

<sup>73</sup> See the critique of the evolution of AOC rules regarding yields by Anthony Hanson MW in *Burgundy* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed, 1995) pp 179-183, pp 108-109, pp 85-86, p 120

<sup>74</sup> There is a conventional wisdom in correlating quality with controlling yield for Pinot Noir (eg *The Art and Science of Wine*, Halliday & Johnson (1992) where Halliday states that "No other variety is so sensitive to yield, and in particular to the adverse effects of excessive yield...first quality Pinot Noir cannot be made from grapes yielding in excess of...48hl/ha, and a counsel of perfection...would suggest no more than 32hl/ha. L' Association pour le Sauvegarde de la Diversité des Cépages de Bourgogne was created in 2008 comprising a group of Burgundian producers to create a library based on the oldest vines of their vineyards

improved quality. Instead, Capus stated that yield limitations were seen as a mechanism for preventing the fraudulent practices of inflating the production of well-known appellation wines with either lesser quality wines or wines from a different region (the South of France was singled out) using fictitious receipts. In agreeing to the request by the Morey-Saint-Denis syndicate of growers, the CNAO seemed to rely on the integrity of the syndicate to adhere to the necessary standards that would not diminish the quality of the original AOC granted to the *lieu-dit* Clos de la Roche in 1936. Implicitly accepted in the committee's discussion was the intrinsic quality of the *lieu-dit* Clos de la Roche. Much discussion flowed on allowing flexibility to the growers (again implicitly trusting the Morey-Saint-Denis syndicate) to vary the cap on the permitted maximum yield (of 30hl/ha) recognizing the agricultural vagaries of reduced yields in poor harvests and increased yields in good harvests. The committee considered that it should be left to the discretion of the local syndicate to decide on the range of any increase<sup>75</sup> above a minimum based on an average yield calculated on the harvests of 5 years. The request to add the *lieux-dits* mentioned above (which had only recently been elevated to *premier cru* status)<sup>76</sup> to the AOC Clos de la Roche was approved.<sup>77</sup> No other issues were discussed. The approval was formalised by the decree dated 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1944 that also stipulated certain new requirements on yields reflecting the CNAO's discussion.<sup>78</sup>

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and amongst their criteria of quality is overall yield (*In Search of Pinot Noir*, Benjamin Lewis MW (2011), p18 also pp 54-57 on discussion of yield and quality, p222, pp286-288). The assumptions of the correlation between reduced yield and improved quality are examined briefly in *Wine Science, Principles and Applications*, Ronald S Jackson (2014) pp124-126 and pp 146-149 where studies by Cortell *et al* (2005) indicated that for Pinot Noir, relative contributions of skin to seed proanthocyanidins increase with a reduction in wine vigor leading to improved colour but not necessarily improved flavor (Chapman *et al*, 2004)- which study also suggested that the manner of yield reduction (pruning vs water deficit) may be more significant than yield reduction itself.

<sup>75</sup> Seemingly laying the groundwork for *plafond limité de classement-classification yield ceiling*.

<sup>76</sup> Décret no 2639, 14 Octobre 1943 (J.O. 31 Octobre 1943)

<sup>77</sup> With one dissension by M. Betaillouloux relating only to adoption of the new conditions relating to yields.

<sup>78</sup> Décret 3 Juillet 1944

It is unclear the extent of the role that Hippolyte Ponsot played in the expansion of AOC Clos de la Roche in 1943. What is evident is that the CNAO was restrained in its prescriptions preferring to rely on the integrity of the growers' syndicates. It showed considerable flexibility in considering the conditions for allowing variable yields to reflect the realities of harvest conditions. Allowing such variability in yields opens itself to abuse in overproduction and potential fraud, anathema to the CNAO. Despite this, the new conditions on permitting variable yields proposed by the Morey syndicate were approved, suggesting the high regard with which the syndicate was held<sup>79</sup>, possibly in consequence of Ponsot's standing.

Emphasis is placed on the regard with which the Morey syndicate and its representatives (particularly Ponsot) were held by the CNAO because there was nothing in the documented reputation or assessment of Clos de la Roche up to that juncture that necessarily made it a compelling candidate for AOC status. As will be seen below<sup>80</sup>, politics and economic duress were in play during this period, but it is the author's submission that the credibility of the syndicate was critical to the success of Clos de la Roche achieving AOC status in 1936.

No surviving notes of meetings by the INAO on the elevation of the *lieux-dits* Genavrières and part of Chaffots to AOC Clos de la Roche in 1971 could be located.<sup>81</sup> Chaffots was classified *première classe* by the CAB and lies adjacent to the *lieu-dit* Clos de la Roche, arguably qualifying it for AOC Clos de la Roche on customary

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<sup>79</sup> Matt Kramer has described the Morey producers as being of "an unusually high-minded cadre of growers": *Making Sense of Burgundy*, Matt Kramer (1990).

<sup>80</sup> pp 37-42 below

<sup>81</sup> It is notable that today's most highly rated producers of Clos de la Roche – Domaine Armand Rousseau, Domaine Dujac, Domaine Leroy, Hubert Lignier and Domaine Ponsot do not own any Genavrières or Chaffots.

use.<sup>82</sup> Genavrières also adjoins the *lieu-dit* Clos de la Roche, but was classified only as *deuxième classe* by the CAB in 1861, *troisième cuvée* by Rodier, and not even mentioned by Lavalley, so the case for it does not seem as strong. On the other hand, Lavalley only rated Chabiots, Fremières and Mochamps *deuxième cuvée*, Froichots and Le Bas Chaffots *quatrième cuvée*<sup>83</sup> while Monts Luisants was only classified *deuxième cuvée* by Rodier, but modern critical assessments over several vintages suggest that contrary to these authors' rankings, these *lieux-dits* properly justify their inclusion in AOC Clos de la Roche.<sup>84</sup> In the absence of any other information and comprehensive assessments specific to Genavrières, it is not possible to be definitive on the validity of the CNAO's decision to add this *lieu-dit* to AOC Clos de la Roche.<sup>85</sup>

The lack of any detailed consideration of criteria qualifying Clos de la Roche or any of the other climats that attained AOC status may be criticized as perfunctory and showing a lack of rigour by the CNAO. On the other hand, it reflected the approach of the CNAO in deferring to local knowledge and expertise rather than a centrally directed one imposed by bureaucrats in Paris who probably had no direct first hand experience or expertise. It underlined the importance of the work of the local growers' syndicates in implementing the appropriate conditions for AOC and the CNAO's reliance on them.

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<sup>82</sup> In the minutes of the 1943 CNAO meeting (Procès-verbal de la séance du Comité Nationale, Paris, 15 Décembre 1943) that approved the additional *lieux-dits* for AOC Clos de la Roche, there is a reference to three *lieux-dits* (without naming them) having usages dating to 1919 and 1921. Most of Chaffots now forms part of AOC Clos Saint-Denis of which Dujac owns a significant portion including Chaffots. Dujac's Clos Saint-Denis is very highly regarded so possibly justifying Chaffots' past usage and acceptance as being of *grand cru* quality. The portion of Chaffots that forms part of AOC Clos de la Roche is owned by Domaine Georges Lignier, but given its tiny quantity it would be impossible to assess its impact on the domaine's bottlings of AOC Clos de la Roche which are principally from Mochamps and Chabiots.

<sup>83</sup> Lavalley does not mention Monts Luisants and Genavrières and Curtis speculates whether or not the land of Monts Luisants was planted with vines at that time: *The Original Grand Crus of Burgundy*, Charles Curtis MW (2014) p99.

<sup>84</sup> See below: Section 5a – The current reputation and standing of Clos de la Roche today – critical and market views pp 24-26

<sup>85</sup> However, recent critical assessments of Maison Albert Bichot's Clos de la Roche that is sourced from Genavrières suggest that it is of *grand cru* quality; see p 26 below.

Instead, the CNAO focused on the strategic issues affecting the agricultural economy of wine in France, attacking fraudulent practices that were damaging the long term sustainability of France's wine industry qualitatively and reputationally. The situation was exacerbated by the devastation of phylloxera in the late nineteenth century and an adverse economic environment in the first half of the twentieth century marked by two world wars and the Great Depression. Against this background, the concern was to protect and sustain the reputation of France's greatest wines by controlling the use of famous names so it is understandable why the committee's discussion took the course it did.<sup>86</sup>

The concern to protect the reputation and integrity of France's great wines was evident. So when the committee acknowledged the highest quality and specificity of certain *climats* in the Côte d'Or by granting them AOC status, it also unintentionally germinated the seed of the idea of "*grand cru*" for the Côte d'Or and, in the author's submission the subsequent development of the concept of "*terroir*". By creating an officially endorsed and legally enforceable classification that was based on a differentiation of a *lieu-dit*'s intrinsic ability to produce a wine superior to another's (with the help of a competent wine producer), it also generated an opportunity to consider the reasons why one *lieu-dit* intrinsically produces a better wine than another so laying the foundation of decades of discussion and debate on "*terroir*". Granted there had been earlier discourses on the factors that drove the quality of wine<sup>87</sup> but not

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<sup>86</sup> The first decrees and declared AOCs in 1936 and 1937 were focused on most of the leading wine regions in France with Burgundy and Bordeaux being the beneficiaries of 47 and 37 decrees respectively between August 1936 and July 1937: *La naissance du système des AOC : étude sur la mise en place du Comité National des Appellations d'Origine (1935-1938)*, Florian Humbert in *Territoires et terroirs du vin du XVIII<sup>e</sup> au XXI<sup>e</sup> siècles: Approche internationale d'une construction historique*, ed Serge Wolikow and Olivier Jacquet (2011).

<sup>87</sup> Morelot's views on this are fascinating and still relevant today: *The Original Grand Crus of Burgundy*, Charles Curtis MW (2014) pp 37-38, 44-46.

with the level of detailed specificity that the AOC framework afforded with its classified *climats*.

## **5. The Case for Clos de la Roche as a Grand Cru**

### a. The current reputation and standing of Clos de la Roche – critical and market views

Clos de la Roche is today firmly entrenched in the firmament of the Côte d’Or quality classification as a *grand cru* notwithstanding its mixed reception in the nineteenth and early decades of the twentieth centuries.

Clive Coates MW<sup>88</sup> placed it amongst the top vineyards of the Côte d’Or bracketing it with the fabled *climats* of Chambertin, Clos de Vougeot and Romanée-Conti as a three star vineyard (on a ranking of one star to the top level of three stars)<sup>89</sup>. Allen Meadows rated Clos de la Roche as “probably the finest” vineyard of the commune and compared it favourably with Chambertin and Musigny.<sup>90</sup> Robert Parker was similarly enthusiastic about the grand cru *climats* of Morey-Saint-Denis, expressing surprise that their reputation was in the shadow of Gevrey-Chambertin and Chambolle-Musigny.<sup>91</sup> Most recently Jasper Morris MW confirmed Clos de la Roche’s position as a *grand cru* noting that the greatest Morey-Saint-Denis wines that he had drunk were from Clos de la Roche.<sup>92</sup> Many of today’s highly regarded wine critics have affirmed the view that Clos de la Roche from the best producers certainly deserves its place amongst the AOC *grands crus* of the Côte d’Or.

Table 1 compares average scores over 20 vintages (from 1990 to 2009) of Clos de la Roche compared with seven other *grands crus* awarded by various highly respected critics (including Allen Meadows, Robert Parker and Jancis Robinson MW). A

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<sup>88</sup> *Côte d’Or – A Celebration of the Great Wines of Burgundy* (1997) and re-affirmed in *The Wines of Burgundy* (2008), Clive Coates MW

<sup>89</sup> One wonders how much the Michelin Restaurant Guide system influenced the choice of this system of ranking when one can be promoted and demoted inter-stars (or more properly rosettes).

<sup>90</sup> *Burghound Issue 10* pp115-116 (2004)

<sup>91</sup> *Burgundy-A Comprehensive Guide to the Producers, Appellations and Wines*, Robert M. Parker (1990)

<sup>92</sup> *Inside Burgundy*, Jasper Morris MW (2010) p163

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ranking of the eight *grands crus* based on these composite scores provides the result in Figure 1.

**Table 1 : Comparison of composite average scores 1990-2009 of selected *grands crus* by leading wine publications and critics**

	Chambertin	Clos de la Roche	Musigny	Clos Vougeot	Grand Échezeaux	Romanée Saint-Vivant	Richebourg	Romanée-Conti
<b>2005-2009</b>								
AM	94.78	93.96	96.70	92.99	93.32	95.16	94.56	NR
WA	95.51	94.85	96.07	92.95	93.5	94.36	93.86	97.25
PP	90.80 (18.16)	89.20 (17.84)	91.60 (18.32)	85.45 (17.09)	85.30 (17.06)	89.05 (17.81)	85.90 (17.18)	95.50 (19.10)
<i>Ave for 5 years 2005-2009</i>	<b>93.70</b>	<b>92.67</b>	<b>94.79</b>	<b>90.46</b>	<b>90.71</b>	<b>92.86</b>	<b>91.44</b>	<b>96.38</b>
<b>2000-2004</b>								
AM	92.61	92.50	94.62	90.95	90.57	93.33	92.85	96.00
WA	94.00	93.75	94.78	92.46	92.90	93.25	95.13	92.50
PP	90.05 (18.01)	89.45 (17.89)	92.50 (18.50)	90.25 (18.05)	87.85 (17.57)	90.20 (18.04)	90.65 (18.13)	94.50 (18.90)
<i>Ave for 2000-2004</i>	<b>92.22</b>	<b>91.90</b>	<b>93.97</b>	<b>91.22</b>	<b>90.44</b>	<b>92.26</b>	<b>92.88</b>	<b>94.33</b>
<b>1995-1999</b>								
AM	91.53	91.83	92.40	89.48	89.63	91.73	91.63	95.80
WA	92.00	94.32	92.60	92.62	91.92	93.75	94.11	95.00
PP	86.50	87.20 (17.44)	NR	90.00 (18.00)	NR	88.75 (17.75)	NR	NR
<i>Ave for 1995-1999</i>	<b>90.01</b>	<b>91.12</b>	<b>92.50</b>	<b>90.70</b>	<b>90.78</b>	<b>91.41</b>	<b>92.87</b>	<b>95.40</b>
<b>1990-1994</b>								
AM	90.83	91.82	92.30	90.87	90.38	90.53	91.05	93.80
WA	87.94	93.83	88.03	89.13	90.78	90.30	91.86	93.33
PP	87.50	88.75	90.00	87.50 (17.50)	NR	87.50 (17.50)	95.00 (19.00)	95.00 (19.00)
<i>Ave for 1990-1994</i>	<b>88.49</b>	<b>91.47</b>	<b>90.11</b>	<b>89.17</b>	<b>90.58</b>	<b>89.44</b>	<b>92.64</b>	<b>94.04</b>
<i>Ave for 1990-2009</i>	<b>91.17</b>	<b>91.79</b>	<b>92.87</b>	<b>90.38</b>	<b>90.62</b>	<b>91.49</b>	<b>92.42</b>	<b>94.89</b>

AM : Allen Meadows; WA : Wine Advocate; PP : Jancis Robinson's Purple Pages.

Notes :

- 1) PP uses a 20 point scoring system which has been multiplied by 5 to create a score on a 100 point basis. The average 20 point score is in brackets.
- 2) The table is based on scores given to a selection of Côte d'Or domaines that is detailed in Appendix 5.
- 3) Scores are as of 27<sup>th</sup> May 2015.
- 4) NR : Not Rated; BT : Barrel Tasting

Romanée-Conti:	94.89
Musigny:	92.87
Richebourg:	92.42
Clos de la Roche:	91.79
Romanée-St-Vivant:	91.49
Chambertin:	91.17
Grands Échezeaux:	90.62
Clos Vougeot:	90.38

**Figure 1 : Ranking of selected *grands crus* based on composite scores for vintages 1990-2009**

The ranking places Clos de la Roche squarely amongst the most highly regarded grand crus of the Côte d'Or behind Musigny and Richebourg but ahead of Chambertin and Clos de Vougeot. This assessment is not limited to the *lieu-dit* Clos de la Roche. The producers of Clos de la Roche selected for deriving the ranking (see Appendix 5) also own other *lieux-dits* that were rated *première classe* by the CAB. Apart from *lieu-dit* Clos de la Roche, Dujac owns *lieux-dits* Chabiots, Fremières, Froichots and Monts Luisants; Leroy, Mochamps and Monts Luisants; and Ponsot, Monts Luisants. Hubert Lignier's AOC Clos de la Roche is sourced only from Monts Luisants. The rankings suggest that the CNAO's decision to elevate these *lieux-dits* in 1943 was justified<sup>93</sup>. For Genavrières, there are no well-known growers who bottle and sell their production from it. However, the critical assessments of recent bottlings (2008 onwards) of AOC Clos de la Roche that are sourced from Genavrières by the *négociant*, Maison Albert Bichot, suggest that its quality is equal to the other *lieux-dits* of AOC Clos de la Roche.<sup>94</sup> These have been highly rated by Meadows and Wine Advocate (both awarding scores in the low to mid 90s) and Jancis Robinson's Purple Pages (17+ to 17.5). With regard to Chaffots, the area of the *lieu-dit* constituting AOC Clos de la Roche (7a) is so small as to be insignificant.<sup>95</sup>

In Curtis' synthesized classification, the top tier of *tête de cuvée* "A" listed Romanée-Conti, Chambertin, Chambertin-Clos de Bèze and Clos Vougeot, the second tier (*tête de cuvée* "B") included Musigny, Richebourg and Romanée-Saint-Vivant and the third tier (*tête de cuvée* "C") Grands Échezeaux<sup>96</sup>. The ranking in Figure 1 appears to throw the 19<sup>th</sup> century order into disarray apart from Romanée-Conti holding its pole

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<sup>93</sup> Clive Coates MW does not see anything unnatural in the absorption of Chabiots, Fremières, Froichots, Mochamps and Monts-Luisants Bas as they are at the same altitude and of the same geological mix. He makes no reference to Genavrières and Chaffots: *Côte d'Or – A Celebration of the Great Wines of Burgundy*, Clive Coates MW (1997); p33 below.

<sup>94</sup> Allen Meadows, *Burghound* database

<sup>95</sup> Most of Chaffots was elevated to AOC Clos Saint-Denis. See footnote 82.

<sup>96</sup> *The Original Grand Crus of Burgundy*, Charles Curtis MW (2014)

position. However, it should be noted that Romanée-Conti is the only *climat* in the ranking that is a *monopole*, i.e. wholly owned by a single person or entity. Jeremy Seysses of Domaine Dujac referred to the *monopole climats* as having an advantage of single ownership and control that can favour their reputation.<sup>97</sup> In contrast, all the other *climats* in Table 1 and Figure 1 are split between different owners. The multiplicity of owners poses a serious challenge to ensuring a consistent and uniform expression of the *climat*'s quality.<sup>98</sup> Clos de la Roche is fortunate that many of its producers (Dujac, Lignier, Leroy, Ponsot, Rousseau) are also amongst the most highly regarded in the Côte d'Or, ensuring it a solid placing compared with some other grand cru *climats*.

Two of these producers, Ponsot (from Morey-Saint-Denis) and Rousseau (Gevrey-Chambertin) both produce Clos de la Roche and Chambertin. Table 2 shows the relative ranking of each producer's wines from the two *climats* with critics preferring Rousseau's Chambertin over its Clos de la Roche whilst preferring Ponsot's Clos de la Roche over its Chambertin. The notable point is that the critical opinion of Clos de la Roche from a top Morey-Saint-Denis producer is very close to that of a Chambertin from a top Gevrey-Chambertin producer. The disparity between the *climats* by each producer might support a notion that a producer from a particular commune is better at producing wines from *climats* within that commune than outside it. However, the narrowing of the difference with each successive quinquennial from 1990 to 2009 suggests otherwise with the biggest disparity in scores being for 1990 – 1995.

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<sup>97</sup> Interview with Jeremy Seysses by the author (April 2015). Seysses is the current wine maker of Domaine Dujac and son of the domaine's founder, Jacques Seysses.

<sup>98</sup> Appendix 5 shows the basis on which Tables 1 to 3 were derived, using a selection of what are considered by a modern consensus to be some of the top producers of the seven non-*monopole climats*.

**TABLE 2: Comparison of scores of Chambertin and Clos de la Roche produced by Domaine Ponsot and Domaine Armand Rousseau**

	Ponsot		Rousseau	
	Chambertin	Clos de la Roche	Chambertin	Clos de la Roche
<b>2005 - 2009</b>				
AM	BT	95.50	96.40	93.00
WA		95.00	96.00	93.00
PP		88.35 (17.67)	88.15 (17.63)	92.00 (18.40)
<b>Ave for 2005 - 2009</b>		<b>91.68</b>	<b>93.22</b>	<b>93.80</b>
<b>2000 - 2004</b>				
AM		89.67	91.40	93.00
WA		91.00	NR	92.33
PP		NR	90 (18.00)	89.50 (17.90)
<b>Ave for 2000 - 2004</b>		<b>90.34</b>	<b>90.70</b>	<b>91.61</b>
<b>1995 - 1999</b>				
AM		85.33	91.00	93.60
WA		BT/NR	89.33	94.00
PP		NR	87.75 (17.55)	86.50 (17.30)
<b>Ave for 1995 - 1999</b>		<b>85.33</b>	<b>89.36</b>	<b>91.37</b>
<b>1990 - 1994</b>				
AM		76.00	91.00	94.00
WA		95.00	98.00	94.80
PP		NR	92.50 (18.50)	87.50 (17.50)
<b>Ave for 1990 - 1994</b>		<b>85.50</b>	<b>93.83</b>	<b>91.83</b>
<b>Ave for 1990 - 2009</b>		<b>88.62</b>	<b>91.60</b>	<b>92.40</b>

Notes : See notes to Table 1 p. 25

Another perspective is obtained from considering the ranking of the production of a selection of *grands crus* produced by a single highly regarded domaine. Figure 2 shows the ranking of six *grands crus* produced by Domaine Leroy<sup>99</sup>, a leading producer of the Côte d'Or, benchmarked against Romanée-Conti.

<sup>99</sup> Table 3

Romanée-Conti:	94.89
Chambertin:	94.68
Clos de la Roche:	94.44
Musigny:	93.91
Richebourg:	93.64
Romanée-Saint-Vivant:	93.41
Clos Vougeot:	93.39

**Figure 2: Ranking of selected Domaine Leroy *grands crus* based on composite scores for vintages 1990 -2009**

From a single domaine applying identical wine production methods and quality control standards to these six non-*monopole grands crus*, the scoring bunches more closely together. It is particularly striking that Clos de la Roche ranks third after Chambertin with an average score separation of 0.24/100 and after Romanée-Conti with a separation of 0.45/100. The next ranking *climat*, Musigny, is 0.47/100 points behind Clos de la Roche.

A caveat on the interpretation of these scores: not all the critics reviewed the same bottle or even all the vintages in common, so there will be variability. Because of the potential variability in the data points for any particular vintage, scores were taken for twenty vintages to obtain a larger set of data points and divided into four quinquennials to minimise variability over time. Taking this into account, a sense can still be garnered of the high quality of these *climats* and their relative standings inter se.

These rankings suggest a quality level for AOC Clos de la Roche at the very highest levels comparable to Chambertin, Musigny and Romanée-Conti, some of the most sought after *climats* that have had a fame and reputation for a far longer time than

Clos de la Roche. In that, it supports the contentions of the writers who have noted its quality despite its historical obscurity and provides validation for the CNAO's decision to grant it and its component *lieux-dits* AOC.

**TABLE 3 : Comparison of average scores 1990-2009 of selected *grands crus* produced by Domaine Leroy benchmarked against Romanée-Conti**

	Chambertin	Clos de la Roche	Musigny	Clos Vougeot	Romanée-St-Vivant	Richebourg	Romanée-Conti
<b>2005-2009</b>							
AM	98.00	95.75	97.50	95.75	97.25	95.50	NR
WA	96.80	94.80	96.20	95.00	96.20	94.80	97.25
PP	95.00 (19.00)	95.00 (19.00)	91.25 (18.25)	92.50 (18.50)	92.50 (18.50)	89.15 (17.83)	95.50 (19.10)
<i>Ave for 2005-2009</i>	<b>96.60</b>	<b>95.18</b>	<b>94.98</b>	<b>94.42</b>	<b>95.32</b>	<b>93.15</b>	<b>96.38</b>
<b>2000-2004</b>							
AM	94.75	95.00	95.67	93.00	95.67	95.00	96.00
WA	94.67	94.25	95.50	93.75	93.25	94.75	92.50
PP	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	94.50 (18.90)
<i>Ave for 2000-2004</i>	<b>94.71</b>	<b>94.63</b>	<b>95.59</b>	<b>93.38</b>	<b>94.46</b>	<b>94.88</b>	<b>94.33</b>
<b>1995-1999</b>							
AM	93.40	93.33	NR	92.00	92.40	92.00	95.80
WA	95.00	96.60	94.80	93.80	95.25	96.20	95.00
PP	NR	NR	NR	NR	90.00 (18.00)	NR	NR
<i>Ave for 1995-1999</i>	<b>94.20</b>	<b>94.97</b>	<b>94.80</b>	<b>92.90</b>	<b>92.55</b>	<b>94.10</b>	<b>95.40</b>
<b>1990-1994</b>							
AM	92.33	90.67	95.50	92.33	91.75	92.40	93.80
WA	92.20	94.60	88.75	92.40	93.20	93.00	93.33
PP	NR	NR	90.00 (18.00)	NR	90.00 (18.00)	NR	95.00 (19.00)
<i>Ave for 1990-1994</i>	<b>92.27</b>	<b>92.64</b>	<b>91.42</b>	<b>92.37</b>	<b>91.65</b>	<b>92.70</b>	<b>94.04</b>
<i>Ave for 1990-2009</i>	<b>94.68</b>	<b>94.44</b>	<b>93.91</b>	<b>93.39</b>	<b>93.41</b>	<b>93.64</b>	<b>94.89</b>

Notes : See notes to Table 1, p. 25

Analysing the market price data as a reflection of quality does not lead to any meaningful conclusions because of the marked variation in production volume, the multiplicity of ownership of most of the *climats* and the pursuit of certain brands (such as Domaine de la Romanée-Conti). To illustrate, the market prices<sup>100</sup> of the 2005 vintage of Domaine Armand Rousseau's Chambertin, Domaine Ponsot's Clos

<sup>100</sup> Based on Liv-ex quotes as at 26 May 2015

de la Roche and Romanée-Conti show these widely variant prices (all for a case of a dozen bottles): £16,500 (Chambertin, Domaine Armand Rousseau), £9,420 (Clos de la Roche, Domaine Ponsot) and £114,000 (Romanée-Conti, Domaine de la Romanée-Conti).

Anomalies abound even for a single estate's production (Table 4). For example, although the average critics' scores for Domaine Leroy's Chambertin, Clos de la Roche and Musigny are 94.68, 94.44 and 93.91 respectively, the corresponding average prices per case of a dozen bottles over 20 years are £11,978, £9,787 and £35,307. The very high price for Musigny could be attributed to scarcity but if the areas of production of the six *climats* are taken into account there is no evident correlation between potential production volume and price and there is no correlation between critics' ratings and prices.

The lack of any patterns or correlations in the price data reflect the difficulty of teasing apart the influences of scarcity, reputation of wine producer, critics' scores or sentimentality<sup>101</sup> as drivers of prices. Accordingly, market prices are not a reliable reflection of the relative quality between the *grands crus* inter se. Suffice it to say that these are prices that rank amongst those paid for only the most highly rated wines in the market and from that perspective, Clos de la Roche is solidly regarded even if not the most sought after of the Côte d'Or *grands crus*.

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<sup>101</sup> The author has noted, anecdotally, an increased interest in buying birth or anniversary years that can skew prices for any particular vintage in a way that bears little relationship to the quality of the wine.

**TABLE 4 : Average Market Prices of Domaine Leroy *Grands Crus* for Vintages 1990-2009**

Average price per case of 12 bottles	Chambertin	Clos de la Roche	Musigny	Clos Vougeot	Romanée-Saint-Vivant	Richebourg
Vintages 2005-2009 (£)	19,795	11,211	50,199	9,408	17,805	18,781
Vintages 2000-2004 (£)	8,378	11,766	27,423	7,484	11,112	11,034
Vintages 1995-1999 (£)	12,601	7,014	43,551	7,055	12,338	17,400
Vintages 1990-1994 (£)	8,925	9,160	23,106	15,582	13,315	15,243
Vintages 1990-2009 (£)	11,978	9,787	35,307	9,855	13,923	16,367
<i>Climat</i> size owned by Domaine Leroy (ha)	0.5	0.67	0.27	1.91	0.99	0.78

Prices based on Liv-Ex data as at 26<sup>th</sup> May 2015.

#### b. Geographical considerations

Much store is put into the concept of “*terroir*” by the Burgundians in differentiating quality between and amongst *climats* and *lieux-dits* although the use of the word “*terroir*” is of relatively recent origin. Originally it seems to have had derogatory connotations.<sup>102</sup> In today’s context it provides a convenient short-hand for a composite view of a vineyard’s situation or environment that might have an impact on the quality of the wine produced (bearing in mind the variability of the skills and methods employed of wine producers),<sup>103</sup> incorporating elements of the geology, topography and climate of a *climat*. From the Burgundians’ perspective, differences in quality are as much driven by *terroir* as by the hand of the winemaker.

From a geological perspective, the entire ridge of Côte de Nuits (on which Clos de la Roche sits), lies on essentially the same bedrock of Jurassic limestone with a fault line

<sup>102</sup> Charles de Saint-Évremond in extolling the virtues of Aÿ wine in the 17<sup>th</sup> century highlighted the absence of “*terroir*”-“*gout de terroir*” meant the taste of earth literally. Having said that, de Saint-Évremond respected the quality the wine as uniquely reflective of the place it came from.

<sup>103</sup> In *Statistique de la Vigne dans le Département de la Côte-d’Or*, Morelot was also probably using “*terroir*” in a literal sense asserting that quality differences had to be derived from *terroir* (the soil and rock sub-strata) but not in the composite holistic sense the term is used today.

lying just to the east of the foot of the top rated vineyards. Further east of the fault line lie the alluvial fills where many of the AOC *régionale* vines are located<sup>104</sup>. The exact stratification of the soils, sub-soils and bedrocks varies considerably over the course of the Côte de Nuits with outcrops and coombs providing a wide range of geological and topographical characteristics. Despite this, all the grand cru *climats* of the Côte de Nuits sit over limestone bedrock: *calcaires Comblanchien, calcaires Prémieux, calcaires à entroques* or a combination of them<sup>105</sup>. These are of Bathonian (166-168 million years old) or Bajocian (168-170 million years old) origin overlaid by a mainly limestone substrate covered by a layer of scree or clays and red silts. The soils vary in depth from barely 30cm to nearly 3m<sup>106</sup>.

Comparing the *lieu-dit* Clos de la Roche with, for example, Chambertin and Romanée-Conti, they topographically share gentle slopes of varying degrees and sit between 270m and 300m of altitude near the base of the hills. All are east facing catching the sunlight and warmth of the rising sun. With regard to the other *lieux-dits* comprising AOC Clos de la Roche, Coates avers that from a geological and topographic perspective the five *lieux-dits* added to AOC Clos de la Roche in 1943 are effectively identical to the *lieu-dit* Clos de la Roche. Coates did not opine on Genavrières and Chaffots. However, a view of the slope from the Route des Grands Crus would not suggest anything different for the parcels of these two *lieux-dits* that form part of the AOC. They are both also part of the strip of grand crus vineyards sitting at elevations between 270 and 300m stretching from Chambertin-Clos de Bèze through to Bonnes Mares.

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<sup>104</sup> *Terroir*, Wilson (1998)

<sup>105</sup> *Terroir*, James Wilson (1998) pp 116-118, 131-139. INAO Cahier des charges l'appellation d'origine contrôlée for the Côte de Nuits *climats*. Wilson provides a detailed description of the stratification of the geologic components of the Côte d'Or from Dijon to Santenay (eg. See fig 48 on p116) supported by seismic studies of specific *grand cru climats* in Morey-Saint-Denis, Gevrey-Chambertin, Vosne-Romanée and Clos de Vougeot.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid*

The differences in orientation, slope, morphology of the bedrock, soil components (there are more ferrous compounds in Romanée-Conti providing a redder looking soil) and exact depth of soil may deliver stylistic differences for the three *climats*, but they all share the components for encouraging the production of the very finest wines – shallow pebbly soils on east facing gentle slopes that allow good ripening potential from a rising sun, adequate drainage and with sub-soil components permitting a moderate reservoir of water.

Aside from geology, the quality of the wines can also be affected by the choice of strain or clone of grape variety. The picture is complicated by the diverse range of clones and strains of Pinot Noir planted on these *climats*. Importantly, the source of many of the Dijon clones now widely planted in Burgundy and worldwide originated from Domaine Ponsot's plot of Clos de la Roche. The work on Dijon clones began with Raymond Bernard in 1959. He was supported by Jean-Marie Ponsot of Domaine Ponsot who provided some of the material for Bernard's work<sup>107</sup>. When Jacques Seysses established Domaine Dujac in 1967, he sourced some of his clones from Jean-Marie Ponsot.<sup>108</sup> The recognition of both Domaines' high quality bottlings of Clos de la Roche<sup>109</sup> is a testament to the quality of the plant material that originated from Ponsot's parcels of Clos de la Roche.

Therefore, from an “objective” consideration of the geography of a *climat* (in contrast to the “subjective” measure of organoleptic assessments by critics in the previous section), it is evident that Clos de la Roche is in a position that puts it on a par with other Côte de Nuits *grands crus*.

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<sup>107</sup> Interview with Jean-Marie Ponsot by the author (April 2015)

<sup>108</sup> Interview with Jeremy Seysses by the author (April 2015)

<sup>109</sup> Pp 24-30 above; Appendix 5.

c. Possible reasons for the historically mixed reputation of Clos de la Roche

If the geography of the *climat* Clos de la Roche suggests its intrinsic potential to produce wine as good as some of the most famous *climats* like Chambertin and Clos Vougeot and this is confirmed by critics' assessments today<sup>110</sup>, the puzzle is why Clos de la Roche was not recognized as such before the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The general lack of enthusiasm for Clos de la Roche by the French authors noted in Section 3b extended to much of the literature in English. Clos de Tart and Clos des Lambrays<sup>111</sup> found more favour.<sup>112</sup> André Simon when discussing Morey described Clos de Tart and Clos des Lambrays as “its two largest and most illustrious vineyards” making no special mention of Clos de la Roche which however he listed under *Têtes de Cuvées* at the end of the chapter on Burgundy.<sup>113</sup> Even after gaining AOC status, the reception for Clos de la Roche was lukewarm. T.E. Carling in 1957 referred to Romanée-Conti, Clos Vougeot, Chambertin and Corton as “The Supreme Red Growths” consigning Clos de la Roche and other *grands crus* to the statement “but notice must also be taken of the excellent qualities of the Morey, Chambolle and Flagey grand growths.”<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> Section 5a. pp 24 – 30 above

<sup>111</sup> Interestingly given the general lack of enthusiasm for Clos des Lambrays by Morelot and Lavallo.

<sup>112</sup> For instance, Maurice Healey mentioned Clos de Tart, Les Lambrays and Bonnes Mares but not Clos Saint-Denis nor Clos de la Roche, waxing lyrical about 1904 Clos de Tart and 1921 Bonnes Mares: *Stay With Me Flagons – A book about wine and other things* Maurice Healey (1949).

<sup>113</sup> *The Noble Grapes and the Great Wines of France*, André Simon; *A Wine Primer*, André Simon (1946)

<sup>114</sup> *Wine Aristocracy: T. E. Carling's Guide to the Best Wines of the World* (1957) – also incidentally one of the earlier references to “*grands crus*” in its literal English translation. H. Warner Allen in *How to Choose and Enjoy Wine* published between 1957 and 1962 cited only Clos de Tart from the Morey vineyards as amongst the “grandest of all Burgundies”. More positively Raymond Postgate included Clos de la Roche as one of Burgundy's great names in 1962 (*The Plain Man's Guide to Wine*, Raymond Postgate 1962).

Several reasons have been given for the general indifference to the wines of Morey-Saint-Denis and its great *climats*.<sup>115</sup>

One was that the *communale* and *premier cru* wines of Morey- Saint-Denis were often overlooked because the commune was so well endowed with *grand crus* – Clos de Tart, Clos Saint-Denis, Clos de la Roche, part of Bonnes Mares (and eventually Clos des Lambrays), so few consumers even realized that the village’s grand crus fell within its borders. This does not persuasively explain the lack of reputation of the wines of Morey-Saint-Denis generally and of Clos de la Roche specifically. Even if only two of its *grand crus* were famous (ie. Clos de Tart and Clos de Lambrays), it did not put Morey-Saint-Denis in any worse position to Gevrey-Chambertin that also had only two consistently famous *climats* – Chambertin and Chambertin-Clos de Bèze. After 1937, Gevrey-Chambertin had even more *grands crus* within its commune (eight)<sup>116</sup> and this did not seem to harm the fame of its *communale* wines.<sup>117</sup>

Another reason put forward was that Morey-Saint-Denis was squeezed between two better known communes – Gevrey-Chambertin and Chambolle-Musigny, communes which had appended the famous names of Chambertin and Musigny in 1847 and 1878 respectively. Morey only appended Saint-Denis to its name in 1927 – the last of the Côte d’Or villages to do so. Although Clos de Tart had had a long standing fame, Morey never chose to exploit it and it is probably a fair assumption that the average consumer would not have realized that it was situated in the commune of Morey.

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<sup>115</sup> An indifference that was alluded to in some of the publications of the 1970s and 1980s, eg Arlott and Fielden; also Anthony Hanson’s introduction to the chapter on Morey-Saint-Denis in both editions of *Burgundy* (1982, 1995).

<sup>116</sup> Chambertin-Clos de Bèze, Chambertin, Latricières-Chambertin, Charmes-Chambertin (including Mazoyères-Chambertin), Griotte-Chambertin, Chapelle-Chambertin, Ruchottes-Chambertin and Mazis-Chambertin.

<sup>117</sup> Gevrey very astutely led the pack in attaching the name of its most famous *climat* to the village name in 1847.

This may have some merit as a reason but in the author's submission, the most plausible explanation that has been proposed is that the wines of Morey were sold as the wines of Gevrey and Chambolle.

Alexis Lichine stated that in "bygone days, well before the Appellation Contrôlée laws of the 1930s, although a considerable quantity of Morey wine was made, hardly any was sold as Morey. Most of it was blended with that of its neighbours or sold unblushingly as Gevrey-Chambertin or Chambolle-Musigny."<sup>118</sup> This was similarly cited as a reason for the relative scarcity and overlooking of Morey wines by Clive Coates MW, John Arlott, Christopher Fielden<sup>119</sup> and almost every author since. That the wines of Morey and its best *lieux-dits* were little known because of this reason is circumstantially confirmed by the range of wines that were noted by Michael Broadbent MW<sup>120</sup> in the first edition of, *The Great Vintage Book*.<sup>121</sup> His notes and comments of pre-World War II red burgundy are illuminating. No Morey wines from the 19<sup>th</sup> century are noted. The 19<sup>th</sup> century wines he noted were dominated by Chambertin and Clos Vougeot. The oldest reference to a burgundy wine sold at Christie's was at a sale on 24<sup>th</sup> January 1768 and the first burgundy vineyards listed by name occurred in a catalogue 10 years later with the sale of "Chambertin, Pommard, Nuits and Chassagnes from the cellar of Marquis de Noailles".<sup>122</sup> The oldest Clos de la Roche that Broadbent records is a 1921 Dr Barolet. It is only after the 1945 vintage that Broadbent begins to note with increasing frequency *négociant*

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<sup>118</sup> Alexis Lichine's *Guide to the Wine and Vineyards of France* (1982, 1986)

<sup>119</sup> *Côte d'Or – A Celebration of the Great Wines of Burgundy*, Clive Coates MW (1997); *Burgundy Vines and Wines*, John Arlott and Christopher Fielden (1978)

<sup>120</sup> At the time, Broadbent was the Head of the Wine Department at auction house Christies affording him an unique insight into old and rare wines.

<sup>121</sup> *The Great Vintage Book*, Michael Broadbent MW (1980)

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid* - These names are remarkably coincident with some of the names that Arnoux cited in the 18<sup>th</sup> century: *Dissertation sur la situation de la Bourgogne sur les vins qu'elle produit*, Claude Arnoux (1728).

bottlings by Drouhin and Bouchard Pere et Fils<sup>123</sup> as well as domaine bottlings by Domaine Dujac, Domaine Ponsot and Domaine Rousseau.

There was no documentation available to directly prove or disprove this assertion that Morey wines were sold as Gevrey or Chambolle. However, Burgundy has always suffered the notoriety of some of its merchants adulterating its wines with wine of lower repute or quality (or lower price). Capus noted the situation of “fictitious receipts” as being especially abundant in Burgundy.<sup>124</sup> It gains credence as a reason with the widespread adulteration and fraud that were rife in the crisis years for the French wine industry after phylloxera destroyed much of the vineyard of France. Some economically threatened wine producers resorted to outright manufacture of wine as well as adulteration, blending and passing off inferior wine as that of superior quality.<sup>125</sup> These practices were the target of the legislative actions that culminated in the law of 1935 establishing the AOC system.<sup>126</sup> The practices continue in Burgundy to this day.<sup>127</sup>

Modern sensibilities militate against such blatant blending or the sale of wines from one appellation as wines from another appellation, but there may have been innocuous reasons for the sale of Morey-Saint-Denis as Gevrey-Chambertin. Historically, the commune of Morey came under the political administration of the canton of Gevrey. Given this administrative reality from at least the time of the Revolution it was perhaps understandable that the practice of selling Morey’s wines as Gevrey was

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<sup>123</sup> *The Great Vintage Book*, Michael Broadbent MW (1980)

<sup>124</sup> Procès-verbal de la Séance du Comité Nationale, Paris, 15 Décembre 1943, INAO Archives du Comité National.

<sup>125</sup> *Burgundy*, Anthony Hanson MW (1995)

<sup>126</sup> Appendix 6. The law of 1905 was passed to protect consumers from fraudulent *vins ordinaires* and legislated the establishment of the Services de le Répression des Fraudes (SRF). As Hanson put it, effectively the Fraud Squad.

<sup>127</sup> Recent high profile cases have involved the Cottin brothers and Chablis producer, Maison Fromont. *Drinks Business*, 15<sup>th</sup> May 2015.

initiated, established and considered acceptable long before the legislation of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Although arguably harmless in some instances (*communale* Morey sold as *communale* Gevrey at similar prices), the practice could have been abused and was apparently so abused by some of the *négociant* houses that had grown in commercial power in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and were the principal conduit between growers and consumers. Once the move towards legal protection of appellations of origin was set in train by the Act of 1905, the *négociants* were hostile to any moves that would compromise their control of wine marketing and sales. Many *négociants* were opposed to AOC and to growers like Henri Gouges and Marquis d'Angerville who played key roles in the AOC process of the 1930s and 1940s. Some *négociants* refused to buy harvests from Gouges and d'Angerville that then spurred them into domaine bottling. Hippolyte Ponsot of Domaine Ponsot (which owned a significant portion of *lieu-dit* AOC Clos de la Roche) followed suit.

Further, the Morey growers seemed to have been especially sanguine about their situation up to as late as the 1920s. At one point, as the impetus was gathering in the 1920s for the passing of the AOC legislation following the Acts of 1905 and 1919, the growers of Morey applied to have their wines treated as falling within the commune of Gevrey-Chambertin. The syndicate for the defence of Gevrey-Chambertin<sup>128</sup> demurred and the dispute went to the tribunal in Dijon that decided in favour of the Gevrey-Chambertin syndicate on 18<sup>th</sup> June 1929.<sup>129</sup> Amongst the evidence presented to the tribunal were the price differences between the wines of Gevrey-Chambertin

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<sup>128</sup> Syndicat de défense des intérêts viticoles de Gevrey-Chambertin; Registre des délibérations du Syndicat de défense des intérêts viticoles et vinicoles de la commune de Gevrey-Chambertin. Assemblée générale, 10 Novembre 1928

<sup>129</sup> *Un siècle de construction du vignoble bourguignon – Les organisations vitivinicoles de 1884 aux AOC*, Olivier Jacquet (2009)

and Morey-Saint-Denis. Gevrey wines fetched prices 14% higher for *grands crus* and up to 35% higher for other *climats*<sup>130</sup>. One can understand the motivation for the Morey growers selling their wines under the label Gevrey.

The reasons for the relative obscurity of Clos de la Roche are one side of the coin. The other side is why Chambertin, Clos Vougeot and Romanée-Conti achieved a fame and reputation that eluded other vineyards for decades. Their prominence possibly contributed to a corresponding suppression of the fame of other *climats* like Clos de la Roche.

Chambertin, Clos Vougeot and Romanée-Conti had ecclesiastical<sup>131</sup> or aristocratic connections. They were therefore backed by wealth and power ensuring a consistency and uniformity of investment and expertise favourable to assuring their reputations. Those that stayed in single ownership after the French Revolution fared better (for instance Romanée-Conti).<sup>132</sup> In contrast those that did not because of the fragmentation of ownership (the case for the majority of the Côte d'Or's best *climats*) suffered considerable variability in the quality of wine in bottle not helped by the blending and adulteration practices of some *négociants*.

Celebrity endorsement helped. Chambertin was reputedly Napoleon I's favourite wine<sup>133</sup>. From the other side of the Atlantic, Thomas Jefferson cellared and drank Chambertin when ambassador to France. The fame, reputation and commercial values

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<sup>130</sup> *Un siècle de construction du vignoble bourguignon: Les organisations vitivinicoles de 1884 aux AOC*, Olivier Jacquet (2009) p197

<sup>131</sup> Romanée-Conti, Chambertin-Clos de Bèze and Clos Vougeot were originally planted and tended by monasterial orders while Chambertin, which adjoins Chambertin-Clos de Bèze, was apparently planted and exploited by an enterprising person called Bertin, hence Champs Bertin that evolved into Chambertin.

<sup>132</sup> See comments by Jeremy Seysses p. 27 above

<sup>133</sup> Albeit he drank it cut with water.

of the wines of these *climats* resulted not only from any intrinsic quality reflective of geography<sup>134</sup>, but also of a canny combination of patronage (the church, aristocracy), marketing to selected clients (royal courts, aristocracy, wealthy merchants) and a little celebrity endorsement (the use of Burgundy to treat King Louis XIV's gout<sup>135</sup> on the recommendation of the royal physician, Dr Guy-Crescent Fagon).<sup>136</sup> It was an ideal combination for building the brands and brand values of these *climats*.

There was probably no elaborate branding or marketing plan of course, but the combination of these factors in all likelihood led to the heightened perception of these *climats* over others. In the case of Clos de la Roche, little is known about its early ownership. Although Cîteaux owned much of the land in the parish of Morey, there is no evidence of direct cultivation of vines at Clos de la Roche by the monks. The *climat* did not enjoy the support of the church, aristocracy or wealthy merchant class to develop its brand and reputation. Given the motivation for Morey growers to ride the commercial benefit of royal endorsement of a longer-established *climat* (with the corresponding price advantage of selling Clos de la Roche as Chambertin<sup>137</sup>) in the neighbouring commune of Gevrey, it is perhaps unsurprising that there was little incentive to develop the reputation of Clos de la Roche in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Add to that an administrative arrangement that did not discourage the sale of Morey wines as Gevrey and the picture becomes increasingly clear why Clos de la Roche's reputation was as quietly mixed as it was.

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<sup>134</sup> Which Clos de la Roche also shares with them.

<sup>135</sup> *Land and Wine: The French Terroir*, Charles Frankel (2014)

<sup>136</sup> In addition to Napoleon I's attachment to Chambertin and Jefferson's purchases.

<sup>137</sup> In interviews that the author had with Laurent Ponsot of Domaine Ponsot, Ponsot suggested that Clos de la Roche was often labeled as Chambertin, a practice that his grandfather, Hippolyte Ponsot, was attempting to redress with his efforts in connection with the implementation of the AOC regime: interviews with Laurent Ponsot by the author (November 2013 and April 2014).

The commercial dynamics changed with the judicial decision of 1929 that excluded Morey from selling its wines as Gevrey-Chambertin. The confluence of this rebuff by the Gevrey-Chambertin syndicate combined with the hostility of some of the *négociants* to growers supporting the implementation of the AOC regime probably created considerable economic stress for some growers. The appointment of Hippolyte Ponsot as president of the Morey syndicate probably led to a focus by the Morey growers and domaines on their situation. Laurent Ponsot recalls that his grandfather was instrumental in getting AOC recognition through his efforts and representations to the CNAO.<sup>138</sup> Indeed Morey-Saint-Denis and its *grand cru climats* were amongst the first to be granted AOC status in Burgundy ahead of most of the other grand crus<sup>139</sup> – arguably an indication of Hippolyte Ponsot’s efforts and dedication in organizing and presenting the case for Morey, no doubt using his unique skills as diplomat and lawyer.

The introduction of AOC provided an opportunity for Morey to make its own reputation and the Morey syndicate led by Ponsot appears to have used that opportunity to good advantage in 1936. Even so it took the better part of half a century for the reputation of Clos de la Roche to be properly established, even if it was known to connoisseurs such as the members of the Club des Cents<sup>140</sup> as long ago as the 1930s. The spread of its fame was helped by the growing practice of domaine bottling and an increased public awareness through publications such as *Revue du Vin de France*.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> Interviews with Laurent Ponsot by the author (November 2013 and April 2015)

<sup>139</sup> The first climats to obtain AOC in September 1936 were the cluster in Vosne-Romanée, namely Romanée-Conti, Romanée-Saint-Vivant, La Tâche, Richebourg. The Morey-Saint-Denis climats of Clos de la Roche, Clos Saint-Denis, Clos de Tart were the next in December 1936.

<sup>140</sup> A group of industrialists, politicians, professionals limited to 100 persons.

<sup>141</sup> According to Jeremy Seysses, one of the reasons (among other possible reasons of favourable price and limited availability of more famous *climats*) that his father bought vineyards in Morey-Saint-Denis in 1967 to establish Domaine Dujac was that he was

## 6. Conclusions

Clos de la Roche is clearly ranked amongst the top Côte d'Or *climats* by wine critics and Burgundy authorities today.<sup>142</sup> Apart from critical opinion, the essential elements of geology and topography for making top quality wine at Clos de la Roche<sup>143</sup> are shared by it with other historically more famous *climats* such as Chambertin and Romanée-Conti.<sup>144</sup> Further, the high quality of the clonal material at the *climat* is acknowledged by the fact that many of today's Dijon clones were sourced from Ponsot's parcel of Clos de la Roche.<sup>145</sup>

These were not factors that were ostensibly relied on by the CNAO in the early years of the AOC. It is evident from the surviving documentation<sup>146</sup> that in the early years of the AOC system, the CNAO did not have a preconceived set of criteria by which a *climat* was given AOC status. It granted AOC not by any centralized precepts of what would constitute these wines, but relied very much on local growers to make the case for the names that deserved protection using the principle of “*les usages locaux, loyaux et constants*”. Consequently, the committee seemed agnostic to the precise criteria that would justify a *climat* to be deserving of its own AOC. Instead it seemed to depend on the integrity and reputation of the syndicates making the AOC applications to make bona fide proposals on the conditions for a *climat* to qualify for an AOC.

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of the view that these wines represented red burgundy at its best citing the particular high regard with which he held Clos de la Roche. Jacques Seysses's father was a member of the exclusive Club des Cents where he tasted many top burgundies including domaine bottled Clos de la Roche, singling out in particular those of Domaine Armand Rousseau: interview with Jeremy Seysses by the author (April 2015).

<sup>142</sup> Pp 24-30 above

<sup>143</sup> Including the contiguous 7 *lieux-dits* or parts thereof that now comprise the *climat* Clos de la Roche

<sup>144</sup> pp 32 -34 above

<sup>145</sup> pp 34 above

<sup>146</sup> Procès-verbal de la Séance du Comité National, Paris, 15 December 1943; INAO Archives du Comité National; pp 16-23 above.

Allowing the local growers and wine-makers such latitude in defining the various qualities of wine deserving AOC protection could be cynically viewed as allowing local interests and agenda to get in the way of rational, unbiased sense. Further, it may appear to many today that there was a lack of rigour and depth in the methods applied by the CNAO to grant AOC.

Yet in allowing that remarkable level of latitude to local interests, the CNAO did two things.

First, it allowed Morey to come into its own and gave Clos de la Roche the opportunity to be respected and enjoyed for its quality. The trust that the CNAO placed in the Morey syndicate was evidently not misplaced in view of the current high regard for Clos de la Roche by critics and the market.<sup>147</sup> In the context of the CNAO's concern to protect the reputation of its best known wines using the AOC system, it was unsurprising that *climats* like Chambertin, Clos Vougeot and Romanée-Conti made the cut into the top tier of recognition as an AOC *climat* given their historical fame and the political or commercial clout of some of their owners.

Clos de la Roche, on the other hand, was not an obvious candidate. The mixed views of its relative standing were well documented. The commune of Morey-Saint-Denis within which the *climat* sat had itself always been overlooked and apparently had little political or commercial influence as illustrated by the judicial rebuff by Gevrey Chambertin in 1929. The alleged practice of selling Morey wines as Gevrey seemed

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<sup>147</sup> Perhaps it is as Henri Cannard enthusiastically put it – “If Chambertin is the king of wines and Musigny the queen, Clos de la Roche is the Emperor!” *AOC Morey-Saint-Denis et ses Vignobles*, Henri Cannard – p74 “Si le Chambertin est le roi des vins et le Musigny la reine, le Clos de la Roche en est l’Empereur!”

to have been acquiesced to given the political and administrative position of Morey vis-a-vis the canton of Gevrey. The fact that there was little Morey wine (or for that matter Clos de la Roche or Clos Saint-Denis) noted or documented indirectly substantiates the existence of that practice. If there was not much Morey wine labeled as such, it reinforced the lack of reputation for Morey's wines. The dominant position of the *négociants* in this environment in all probability compounded the problem as there were no legally enforceable checks and balances to prevent them from mislabelling wines. The situation seems to have been made worse by an apparent complacency by the Morey growers with regard to their situation highlighted by what could be viewed as a politically naïve and ultimately frustrated attempt to legally ride the reputation of Gevrey-Chambertin when they lost the judicial decision of 1929.

That decision must have been a commercial body blow to the Morey growers with the loss of the price advantage of selling their wines as Gevrey-Chambertin. That commercial distress was exacerbated by the refusal of some *négociants* to purchase wine from growers who were supporting domaine bottling or AOC or both. The commercial outlook for many of these growers must have looked dire. Remarkably, the Morey growers bounced back. The combination of these adverse circumstances appeared to galvanize the Morey syndicate into action under the leadership of Hippolyte Ponsot. The syndicate mustered their resources to persuade the CNAO of the worth of their wines and their best *climats* to the extent they achieved AOC status seven months before Gevrey-Chambertin. There is no evidence that the committee took these economic issues into account when they granted AOC to Morey-Saint-Denis and its *grand cru climats*, but with that grant, the CNAO gave the wine producers of Morey-Saint-Denis a lifeline.

Second, it created a legal framework for a differentiation of quality levels that eventually resulted in the concept of the *grands crus*. The CNAO did not have a preconceived idea or set of criteria by which a *climat* was considered a *grand cru* or not. In fact, there was no move to create “*grands crus*” per se, as it was not a term of common usage at the time.<sup>148</sup> But by granting certain *lieux-dits* AOC *climat* status it created a legal framework for quality differentiation where designated top quality *climats* eventually became known as *grands crus*. In so doing, it created an environment that fostered the interest in what makes a *grand cru* a *grand cru* and what makes one *grand cru* different from another, giving impetus to the evolution of the modern concept of “*terroir*”.

When the CNAO granted its first AOC *climats* in 1936 and included Clos de la Roche in that exclusive club, it not only created Clos de la Roche as a *grand cru*, it may also have laid the fertile ground for the growth of the idea of “*terroir*”.

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<sup>148</sup> Pp 4-7

**APPENDICES**

## **Appendix 1**

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Interviews with Jean-Marie Ponsot and Laurent Ponsot (April 2015)

Interviews with Jeremy Seysses (April, May 2015)

**Appendix 2**

The Current Composition of AOC Clos de la Roche, Grand Cru

<u>Commune</u>	<u>Lieux-dits</u>	
Morey-Saint-Denis	Clos de la Roche	4ha 56a 93ca
	Monts Luisants	3ha 74a 18ca
	Les Mochamps	2ha 56a 72ca
	Les Genavrières	0ha 88a 17ca
	Les Froichots	0ha 64a 23ca
	Les Chaffots	0ha 07a 00ca
	Les Fremières	2ha 28a 40ca
	Les Chabiots	2ha 14a 64ca

Total surface area of production of wines of AOC Clos de la Roche – 16ha 90a 27ca

**Appendix 3**

**Côte d’Or Classifications from Arnoux to AOC<sup>1</sup>**

<b>Claude Arnoux (1728)<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>André Jullien (1816)</b>	<b>Denis Morelot (1832)</b>	<b>Jules Lavalle (1855)</b>	<b>CAB (1861)/ Rodier (1920)</b>	<b>AOC (1936-1988)</b>
Vins de Primeur	Première Classe	Tête de Cuvée	Têtes de Cuvée/Hors Ligne	Première Classe/Cuvée	AOC Climat (Grand Cru from 1988)
Vins de Garde	Deuxième Classe	Première Cuvée	Première Cuvée	Seconde Classe/ Deuxième Cuvée	AOC Communale Premier <sup>3</sup> Cru
Vins Blancs	Troisième Classe	Bonne Cuvée	Deuxième Cuvée	Troisième Classe/Cuvée	AOC Communale
	Quatrième Classe	Cuvée Ronde	Troisième Cuvée		AOC Régionale
	Cinquième Classe	Passe-tout-grain	Quatrième Cuvée		
		Gamay			

<sup>1</sup> The layout of the table does not imply any correlation horizontally across the classification or categorisation levels.

<sup>2</sup> Technically not a classification, Arnoux’s was a categorization of styles of wines, but it is interesting to note the evolution of how precise categories / classifications became over two hundred years.

<sup>3</sup> Premier Cru is a higher quality ranking of designated climats within the communale category.

**Appendix 4**

The Growth of Clos de la Roche  
(surface area in brackets)

	<b>Dr Lavalle 1855</b>	<b>CAB 1861</b>	<b>CNAO 1936</b>	<b>CNAO 1943</b>	<b>CNAO 1944</b>	<b>INAO 1971</b>	<b>INAO 1988</b>
Clos de la Roche	Première Cuvée (4ha 57ha 40ca)	1 <sup>re</sup> Classe (4ha 57a 40ca)	AOC Clos de la Roche (4ha 57a 40ca)	NA	AOC Clos de la Roche	AOC Clos de la Roche (4ha 57a 40ca)	AOC Clos de la Roche Grand Cru (4ha 56a 93ca)
Monts Luisants (Les Bas)	NR	1 <sup>re</sup> Classe/2 <sup>e</sup> Classe (3ha 44a)	AOC Communale (3ha 11a 0ca)	AOC Communale 1 <sup>er</sup> Cru (3ha 11a 0ca)	AOC Clos de la Roche (3ha 11a 0ca)	AOC Clos de la Roche (3ha 11a 0ca)	AOC Clos de la Roche Grand Cru (3ha 74a 18ca)
Les Chabiots	Deuxième Cuvée (2ha 14a 75ca)	1 <sup>re</sup> Classe (2ha 44a 77ca)	AOC Communale (2ha 14a 0ca)	AOC Communale 1 <sup>er</sup> Cru (2ha 14a 0ca)	AOC Clos de la Roche (2ha 14a 0ca)	AOC Clos de la Roche (2ha 14a 0ca)	AOC Clos de la Roche Grand Cru (2ha 14a 64ca)
Les Fremières	Deuxième Cuvée (2ha 36a)	1 <sup>re</sup> Classe (2ha 36a)	AOC Communale (2ha 36a)	AOC Communale 1 <sup>er</sup> Cru (2ha 36a)	AOC Clos de la Roche (2ha 36a)	AOC Clos de la Roche (2ha 36a)	AOC Clos de la Roche Grand Cru (2ha 28a 40ca)
Les Mochamps	Deuxième Cuvée (2ha 51a 20ca)	1 <sup>re</sup> Classe 2ha 54a 20ca	AOC Communale (2ha 51a 25ca)	AOC Communale 1 <sup>er</sup> Cru (2ha 51a 25ca)	AOC Clos de la Roche (2ha 51a 25ca)	AOC Clos de la Roche (2ha 51a 25ca)	AOC Clos de la Roche Grand Cru (2ha 56c 72ca)
Les Froichots	Quatrième Cuvée (NA)	1 <sup>re</sup> Classe (64ha 40ca)	AOC Communale (64a 40ca)	AOC Communale 1 <sup>er</sup> Cru (64a 40ca)	AOC Clos de la Roche (64a 40ca)	AOC Clos de la Roche (64a 40ca)	AOC Clos de la Roche Grand Cru (64a 23ca)
Chaffots (Les Bas)	Quatrième Cuvée (NA)	1 <sup>re</sup> Classe (1ha 26a 40ca)	AOC Communale (1ha 26a 40ca)	AOC Communale 1 <sup>er</sup> Cru (1ha 26a 40ca)	AOC Communale 1 <sup>er</sup> Cru (1ha 26a 40ca)	AOC Clos de la Roche (7a)	AOC Clos de la Roche Grand Cru (7a)
Les Genavrières	NR	2 <sup>e</sup> Classe (2ha 07a 27ca)	AOC Communale (2ha 07a 27ca)	AOC Communale 1 <sup>er</sup> Cru (2ha 07a 27ca)	AOC Communale 1 <sup>er</sup> Cru (2ha 07a 27ca)	AOC Clos de la Roche (88a 70ca)	AOC Clos de la Roche Grand Cru (88a 17ca)

NR: Not ranked  
NA: Not applicable

## Appendix 5

### Comparative scores of Clos de la Roche against selected Grands Crus

The scores of these ratings are from Burghound (Allen Meadows – AM), The Wine Advocate (TWA) and Jancis Robinson’s Purple Pages (PP). The reviewers for The Wine Advocate were Robert Parker, Pierre Rovani, David Schildknecht, Antonio Galloni and Neil Martin. The reviewers for Jancis Robinson’s Purple Pages were Jancis Robinson MW and Julia Harding MW.

The scores used related only to ratings of bottled wines. To the extent disclosed by the reviewers, scores of barrel tastings were excluded as there may be uncertainty in terms of *élevage* and final barrel blending decisions taken by the producer between barrel tastings and bottling.

The scoring system by AM and TWA is a hundred point system. PP uses a 20-point system which has been multiplied by 5 to achieve parity with the 100 point scale for averaging purposes. Although not a precise transcription of one scoring system to the next, it provides a sense of the relative scoring within the PP scores. Averages were taken over 5-year periods to even out (a) vintage variation and (b) variability in the frequency that any particular reviewer may have had the opportunity to taste these wines, most of which are scarce.

NR: Not Rated

	Leroy	Rousseau	<u>Chambertin</u>		Trapet-Pere	Denis Mortet	Ave Score
			Dugat-Py	Rossignol-Trapet			
<b><u>2005-2009</u></b>							
AM	98.00	96.40	NR	93.00	94.00	92.50	94.78
WA	96.80	96.00	97.00	NR	91.75	96.00	95.51
PP	19.00	18.40	18.25	18.00	17.80	17.50	18.16
<b><u>2000-2004</u></b>							
AM	94.75	93.00	NR	90.60	92.20	92.50	92.61
WA	94.67	92.33	98.00	NR	91.00	94.00	94.00
PP	NR	17.90	19.00	17.63	17.50	NR	18.01
<b><u>1995-1999</u></b>							
AM	93.40	93.60	94.00	86.50	90.00	91.67	91.53
WA	95.00	94.00	NR	87.00	NR	NR	92.00
PP	NR	17.30	NR	NR	NR	NR	17.30
<b><u>1990-1994</u></b>							
AM	92.33	94.00	NR	86.00	NR	91.00	90.83
WA	92.20	94.00	NR	83.00	83.00	87.50	87.94
PP	NR	17.50	NR	NR	NR	NR	17.50

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**Clos de la Roche**

	<b>Ponsot</b>	<b>Dujac</b>	<b>Leroy</b>	<b>Hubert Lignier</b>	<b>Ave Score</b>
<b><u>2005-2009</u></b>					
AM	95.50	93.60	95.75	91.00	93.96
WA	96.00	94.60	94.80	94.00	94.85
PP	17.63	17.90	19.00	16.83	17.84
<b><u>2000-2004</u></b>					
AM	91.40	91.60	95.00	92.00	92.50
WA	NR	93.00	94.25	94.00	93.75
PP	18.00	17.67	NR	18.00	17.89
<b><u>1995-1999</u></b>					
AM	91.00	90.60	93.33	92.40	91.82
WA	92.67	92.50	96.60	95.50	94.32
PP	17.38	17.50	NR	NR	17.44
<b><u>1990-1994</u></b>					
AM	91.00	90.60	90.67	94.00	91.82
WA	98.00	90.33	94.60	92.40	93.83
PP	18.50	17.00	NR	NR	17.75

**Musigny**

	<b>De Vogüé</b>	<b>Mugnier</b>	<b>Leroy</b>	<b>Ave Score</b>
<b><u>2005-2009</u></b>				
AM	96.40	96.20	97.50	96.70
WA	96.00	96.00	96.20	96.07
PP	18.30	18.40	18.25	18.32
<b><u>2000-2004</u></b>				
AM	94.80	93.40	95.67	94.62
WA	95.50	93.33	95.50	94.78
PP	18.50	18.50	NR	18.50
<b><u>1995-1999</u></b>				
AM	93.00	91.80	NR	92.40
WA	90.00	93.00	94.80	92.60
PP	NR	NR	NR	NR
<b><u>1990-1994</u></b>				
AM	91.00	90.40	95.50	92.30
WA	94.33	81.00	88.75	88.03
PP	NR	NR	18.00	18.00

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	Clos Vougeot								Ave Score
	Méo-Camuzet	Denis Mortet	Jean Grivot	Engel / Eugénie	Gros Frère et Soeur	Anne Gros	Hudelot-Noëllat	Leroy	
<b><u>2005-2009</u></b>									
AM	92.50	92.20	93.20	94.25	92.00	92.00	92.00	95.75	92.99
WA	91.67	94.00	93.50	NR	93.00	92.00	91.50	95.00	92.95
PP	16.75	16.50	17.30	17.50	16.17	16.86	17.10	18.50	17.09
<b><u>2000-2004</u></b>									
AM	91.33	91.20	91.00	91.00	88.33	91.00	90.75	93.00	90.95
WA	NR	93.00	90.00	92.00	94.00	92.00	NR	93.75	92.46
PP	18.00	NR	17.60	18.13	NR	18.50	18.00	NR	18.05
<b><u>1995-1999</u></b>									
AM	90.20	89.67	89.33	88.75	86.33	90.75	88.80	92.00	89.48
WA	NR	NR	92.50	93.00	NR	91.67	NR	93.80	92.62
PP	18.50	NR	18.00	17.50	NR	NR	NR	NR	18.00
<b><u>1990-1994</u></b>									
AM	90.40	92.50	NR	90.00	90.50	NR	89.50	92.33	90.87
WA	87.50	86.00	89.00	88.00	93.00	NR	88.00	92.40	89.13
PP	NR	NR	NR	17.50	NR	NR	NR	NR	17.50

	Grands-Échezeaux				Romanée-Saint-Vivant					Ave Score
	Gros Frère et Soeur	Engel / Eugénie	DRC	Ave Score	Hudelot-Noëllat	Sylvain Cathiard	Robert Arnoux (Arnoux-Lachaux)	Leroy	DRC	
<b><u>2005-2009</u></b>										
AM	92.40	93.75	93.80	93.32	94.00	NR	94.20	97.25	95.20	95.16
WA	93.50	NR	93.50	93.50	93.00	NR	94.25	96.20	94.00	94.36
PP	16.00	17.17	18.00	17.06	17.17	18.00	17.00	18.50	18.40	17.81
<b><u>2000-2004</u></b>										
AM	89.00	90.50	92.20	90.57	90.67	93.50	93.00	95.67	93.80	93.33
WA	NR	93.50	92.33	92.90	NR	NR	94.00	93.25	92.50	93.25
PP	NR	17.63	17.70	17.57	17.50	18.50	18.75	NR	17.40	18.04
<b><u>1995-1999</u></b>										
AM	89.50	87.00	92.40	89.63	91.50	92.75	90.60	92.40	91.40	91.73
WA	NR	92.33	91.50	91.92	NR	NR	92.00	95.25	94.00	93.75
PP	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	17.00	NR	18.00	18.25	17.75
<b><u>1990-1994</u></b>										
AM	NR	89.50	91.25	90.38	90.00	NR	89.75	91.75	90.60	90.53
WA	90.00	89.33	93.00	90.78	87.00	NR	92.00	93.20	89.00	90.30
PP	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	18.00	17.00	17.50

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	<b>Richebourg</b>						<b>Romanée-Conti DRC</b>	
	<b>Méo-Camuzet</b>	<b>Gros Frère et Soeur</b>	<b>Jean Grivot</b>	<b>Anne Gros</b>	<b>Leroy</b>	<b>DRC</b>	<b>Ave Score</b>	
<b><u>2005-2009</u></b>								
AM	95.50	93.40	94.60	93.33	95.50	95.00	94.56	NR
WA	93.00	93.75	94.33	93.00	94.80	94.25	93.86	97.25
PP	16.50	16.00	16.50	17.63	17.83	18.60	17.18	19.10
<b><u>2000-2004</u></b>								
AM	93.20	89.67	93.25	92.60	95.00	93.40	92.85	96.00
WA	95.00	95.00	93.00	96.00	94.75	97.00	95.13	92.50
PP	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	18.13	18.13	18.90
<b><u>1995-1999</u></b>								
AM	94.20	89.80	89.00	92.20	92.00	92.60	91.63	95.80
WA	92.00	NR	95.00	93.33	96.20	94.00	94.11	95.00
PP	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR
<b><u>1990-1994</u></b>								
AM	94.00	89.00	88.33	NR	92.40	91.50	91.05	93.80
WA	89.75	NR	91.00	NR	93.00	93.67	91.86	93.33
PP	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	19.00	19.00	19.00

## Appendix 6

### Chronology of the Establishment of the AOC System<sup>149</sup>

- 1 August 1905                      Act to protect consumers from fraudulent *vins ordinaires*;  
Service de la Répression des Fraudes established; wine may  
only bear an “*appellation d’origine*” if it came from the zone  
where such wines were produced; required producers to  
make declarations of production quantities; limited  
chaptalisation; intention to map fine wine regions; wine  
regions delimited by administrative order
- 1906                                      Société des Viticulteurs de France organized Congress of  
Names of Origin
- 6 May 1919                              Act granting power to local courts to decide conflicts upon  
intervention of interested persons; every producer required to  
declare name of origin in harvest declaration; *appellation  
d’origine* wines to be made in accordance with “*les usages  
locaux, loyaux et constants*” (established, honest local  
customs); wine merchants required to keep a record of all  
*appellation d’origine* wines entering and leaving their  
premises.
- 22 July 1927                              Act allowing local tribunals to decide which vines might

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<sup>149</sup> \* The author is indebted to the excellent summary of legal developments leading to the establishment of AOC in the chapter entitled “Naming, Controlling and Letting Go” in Anthony Hanson MW’s book *Burgundy* (1982. 1995).

- (“Loi Capus”) produce *appellation d’origine* wines – hybrid, direct vines prohibited; Pinot Noir legally defined as Burgundy’s noble grape; Gamay and other varieties permitted in certain circumstances.
- 1931 Statut Viticole – prohibited plantation of vineyards for 10 years for properties larger than 10 hectares; taxed high yields and big harvests; blocked a percentage of a large estate’s wine at the property; compulsory distillation if total production exceeded a fixed maximum; producers of *appellation d’origine* wines exempted.
- 20 July 1935 Act with laws to: (a) help consumers differentiate between names of origin given to *vins ordinaires* and those given to fine wines; (b) discipline production; and (c) control and guarantee the quality of fine wines. Eliminated ignoble vines, unsuitable soils; established a minimum alcohol degree and maximum yield; required establishment procedures for viticulture and vinification. Establishment of the Comité National des Appellations d’Origine des Vins et Eaux-de-Vie. Created designations “*appellation d’origine contrôlée*” (AOC) and “*appellation d’origine simple*” (AOS).

14 October 1943	Decree creating the designation of premiers crus in the Côte d'Or
18 December 1949 (completed by decree 30 November 1960)	Established Vin Délimité de Qualité Supérieure (VDQS); approval by tasting
12 December 1973	abolition of VOS, replacement by vins de pays
6 December 1988	Decree requiring the compulsory statement of "Grand Cru" on labels of listed AOCs generally acknowledged as <i>grand cru</i> not requiring the appellation of the commune

## Appendix 7

### 2014-2015 Revised Research Paper Proposal

Candidate Number: 22685

Date: 12th January 2015

<b>Proposed Title: Clos de la Roche: The Creation of a Grand Cru</b>
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<b>Define the subject of your Research Paper and specify the research questions you plan to pursue:</b>
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An historical review of how Clos de la Roche (“CdR”) was classified a grand cru in 1936 under the Appellation Contrôlée (“AC”) system despite its mixed reputation before then.

1. What criteria (eg reputation, historical assessments, market prices, wine production methods) did the 1936 AC committees use to decide which *climats* were grand cru?
2. How were these criteria used to classify CdR (by examining the extent to which they were applied or discounted with a particular focus on the inclusion of the *lieux-dits* Mochamps, Froichots, Fremières, Chabiots and Monts Luisants)?
3. Have subsequent events, measured by critical assessments (eg Clive Coates, Anthony Hanson, Remington Norman, Jasper Morris, Charles Curtis, Jancis Robinson and Allen Meadows), market prices, improved scientific analysis (eg geological and clonal analysis) and the INAO’s expansion of CdR to include the *climats* Genavrières and Chaffots in 1971, confirmed and validated the 1936 classification?

<b>Background and Context:</b>
--------------------------------

Explain what is currently known about the topic and address why this topic requires/offers opportunities for further research.

Prior to its 1936 classification as a grand cru under the AC system, CdR had a mixed reputation as a leading climat of Burgundy. For example, in Dr Jules Lavalley’s treatise on Burgundy, it only merited a Première Cuvée ranking in comparison to the higher Tête de Cuvée awarded to Clos de Tart and, more starkly (in the context of today’s classification), Les Saint-Georges. Amongst the 19<sup>th</sup> century commentators and scholars only André Jullien appears to have rated CdR in his top class alongside vineyards such as Clos de Tart, Les Saint-Georges, Romanée-Conti, La Tâche and Chambertin.

Works such as those of Dr Lavalley, Dr Morelot, André Jullien, Camille Rodier, Claude Arnoux and others doubtless formed the basis of the decision making of the AC committees in defining the quality descriptors of burgundy – grand cru, premier cru, villages and regional, but there has been little research into how the AC committees operated, the criteria by which they made classification decisions and determined regulations on wine production that may have had an impact on perception of quality and authenticity of the great wines of Burgundy.

**Sources:**

Identify the nature of your source materials (official documents, books, articles, other studies, etc.) and give principle sources if appropriate.

1. Legal documents on the classification of Burgundy grand crus from 1936 to date.
2. INAO meeting notes, memoranda and other documents on the classification of vineyards in 1936 and 1971 (expansion of CdR) within the AC system.
3. Documents at BIVB, négociant houses and relevant producers (Ponsot, Dujac).
4. Pre-1936 works eg Lavallo, Morelot, Arnoux, Jullien and Rodier.
5. Post-1936 works eg Coates, Hanson, Norman, Morris, Curtis.
6. Critic's reviews eg Jancis Robinson and Allen Meadows.
7. Market data from Liv-Ex and other records.
8. Geological and clonal analyses.

**Research Methodology:**

Please detail how you will identify and gather the material or information necessary to answer the question(s) and discuss what techniques you will use to analyse this information.

Secondary works (eg Morris, Hanson) refer to much primary material. Curtis provides translations of many pre-1936 source publications. Primary sources for the laws, regulations, and deliberations of the AC committees are the INAO and BIVB to whom application will be made to obtain access. Négociant houses and producers will be approached for access to any relevant documents.

INAO and BIVB documents should indicate the data collected by the AC committees, criteria applied and committees' deliberations allowing a critical analysis of the methodology used and the relative weight given to different criteria in coming to decisions. The analysis will focus on and assess the factors that persuaded the committees to classify CdR a grand cru given its inconsistent reputation amongst the pre-1936 authorities and whether these were adequate, sufficient or comprehensive enough for an accurate decision of its quality classification.

Analysis of the pre-1936 literature could point to reasons behind the discrepancies between different commentators' assessments of CdR's quality and reputation. Balancing and complementing this will be documentation from the négociant houses and today's leading producers to determine whether or not there were other reasons explaining the mixed assessment of CdR before 1936 and to what extent these reasons may have played a role in influencing the committees' confidence in granting grand cru status to CdR.

Analysis of post-1936 information including critics' reviews, deliberations surrounding the expansion of CdR in 1971 and market and price dynamics of CdR relative to other grand crus such as Clos de Tart and Chambertin (indisputably ranked as leaders by both pre- and post- 1936 commentators) will provide a perspective on whether the 1936 decision was justified taking into account variances between different producers, market price trends, sales practices, consumers' buying patterns and the impact in itself of having grand cru status conferred on the vineyard.

Additional analysis of information (such as geological and clonal analyses available

from BIVB) not available in 1936 and 1971 but which could now arguably form part of a modern approach to determining grand cru status will be considered for their potential utility in confirming or granting quality status.

**Potential to Contribute to the Body of Knowledge on Wine:**

Explain how this Research Paper will add to the current body of knowledge on this subject.

Growing demand for top quality Burgundy, recent steep price rises and continuing discussions on the relative qualities of *climats* give a current topicality to understanding how the quality classifications were awarded in 1936 and the validity of criteria used. The paper also aims to examine how effective these criteria were in protecting the reputation of grand cru burgundy and maintaining consumer confidence using CdR as an example. These are issues that have not been previously investigated and should add to understanding the efficacy of the AC system in delivering an authentic product commensurate with the promise of grand cru quality in Burgundy.

**Proposed Time Schedule/Programme:**

This section should provide a summary of the time schedule for the research, analysis and write-up of the Research Paper and should indicate approximate dates with key deliverables.

January to February – Review and analysis of primary documents, publications, relevant research studies; interviews with INAO, BIVB officials and leading wine producers in Burgundy.

March and April – Analysis of source material

May – Write up of Research Paper

30 May – Submission of RP to Advisor

30 Jun – Submission of RP to IMW

**Acknowledgements**

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