



DOMAINE PONSOT

APPELLATIONS

MOREY ST DENIS CLOS DES MONTS LUISANTS

This original white wine is a rarity for several reasons.

First of all, it is one of the rare white first growths of the Côte de Nuits, and it is especially the only one which is planted with white grapes since the Middle Ages.

And its name has been given then because of this characteristic, already unusual at that time. Indeed, in the autumn, when the leaves of the vines turn their colour, the pinot noir becomes ochre, red, while the white grapes vines see their leaves changing into yellow, or gold.

And this vine of Aligoté is planted very high on the slope.

In the sun of October, this square of vine of around one hectare (2.5 acres) seems to shine in the middle of the Red Sea of the Grand Crus pinots noirs.



On top of the slope, a jewel flashes shone: the Shining Mounts !
Secondly, this wine is original by being produced from different type of grapes.

At the origin, the monks, who had for them time, undoubtedly tried to plant various type of vines for finally deciding that the triad between the soil and the vine stock would be in favour of Aligoté grape.

Moreover the Aligoté type of vine saw its reputation tarnished by the phylloxera, whereas it was used everywhere in Burgundy to produce the high-class wines.

Thus, on the hills of Corton, of Meursault, Chassagne and Puligny Montrachet, the Aligoté grape was planted on the top of the slope, while Chardonnay occupied the semi-slope and the projecting ledge. It is easy to understand this choice, the Aligoté grape vines being more suited from their rusticity, to push on thinner soils.

The loss of several harvests because of the phylloxera having seriously damaged the incomes of the vine growers at the end of the 19th century, they sought to get a better financial health as fast as possible as soon as the grafting appeared.

As Chardonnay was famous to produce very quickly good and beautiful grapes, everyone replanted this type of vine from the bottom to the top of all the slopes.

But the plants on the top needed a very long time to extract the terroir.... Probably even more than would have done the Aligoté grape!

The evil was made and to accentuate it, always in a preoccupation with profitability, one planted Aligoté grape vines on grounds with garden, bellow of the villages, where from time immemorial, only beet, potatoes pushed or carrot. What produced a wine light and so sharp that one due to associate blackcurrant or peach liquors to him to make it drinkable.

The Aligoté grape had become a type of vine second-rate... sadly.

But some vine growers decided to preserve the tradition, founded on the good sense, and replanted Aligoté grape on noble soils, in particular in Corton Charlemagne.

And my ancestor William Ponsot decided to reconstitute the Clos des Monts Luisants as it was before will phylloxera. In 1911 thus he replanted Aligoté grape stocks, these even which are always in productions today.

Some time later in the late Thirties, my Grandfather Hippolyte Ponsot tried to plant a very original type of vine, "Pinot Gouges". It is a Pinot Noir, planted in a vine at Gouges in Nuits St Georges, which in the Thirties undergoes a mutation. A stock which gave red grapes since its plantation suddenly put to produce white grapes...

Mr Gouges reproduces it by grafting, planted a piece of land named Perrières of them, and gave some plants of them to my Grandfather who planted them in the Clos des Monts Luisants, to replace a vine of Pinot Noir, under the old Aligoté.

That constituted approximately 15% of the production.

We kept these stocks until the 1992harvest, to then replace them by Pinot Noir.

My father Jean-Marie Ponsot planted some Chardonnay in the early Fifties on approximately 20% of the surface of production, in addition to the Aligoté grapes of origin.

Having myself carried out during ten year separate wine makings of three types of vines, it appeared obviously that the only grape able to reveal the "terroir" was the Aligoté grape.

Chardonnay was thus torn off definitively after harvest 2004.

From 2005, this wine is produced only with Aligoté grape, resulting exclusively from the stocks of 1911.

It is thus the only "Premier Cru" of Burgundy authorized with being produced containing this Aligoté type of vine, since at the time of its classification in 1935 in AOC, the stocks were the same ones as those of today.

Lastly, on the technical level, this wine is produced on average with less than 30 hectolitres per hectare. It almost never goes thru malo-lactic fermentation and we do not act at all to oblige this wine to do it.

It is aged in oak barrels during two years, but very seldom in new barrels (only two new wood barrels in 1985, to test...). It is bottled without fining and especially without any sulphur dioxide addition. The great vintages require to age, sometimes until more than 30 years. On the other hand, the years when Nature is not generous with the quality of the grapes, we do not make wine at all, as in 1993 for example.

In short, we want absolutely to keep to this wine its original character, resulting from the authenticity of its terroir, even if sometimes, it can shock certain tasters by his vivacity in his youth. We will have never the claim to compare it with anything else, but we wish above all to respect the typicity and the terroir.

It should be noted in addition, that the red wines produced under this appellation by our colleagues are sold with this denomination only since the 80's. Before that one would never use the name "Monts Luisants" for a red wine, naming it only with "Morey St Denis 1er cru", leaving the denomination "Monts Luisants" with the white wine, which is at the origin of the name.

If the name "Morey St Denis Monts Luisants" is now used by several vine growers, the "Clos des Monts Luisants" is a monopoly of the Domaine Ponsot.