

A Sweeping View and Monumental Value

THE BEJOT GROUP FEATURES **MOILLARD AND CHARTRON & TRÉBUCHET BURGUNDIES** AT ALIZÉ IN LAS VEGAS

by Jessie Birschbach / photos by Mona Shield Payne



The Moillard 2012 Bonnes Mares: "The complexity is different, a kind of baking spice in the middle of the palate. It blew everybody away." —Claudio Vigani, Wine Director of Alizé, Las Vegas.



Cédric Dechelette, Export Director of the BEJOT Group.

I WAS IN A PARTICULARLY GOOD MOOD HAVING JUST WON 50 BUCKS

on a slot machine. I must say though was already in a good mood to begin with, being whisked up to the 56th floor of the Palms Hotel in Las Vegas—I knew what awaited me at the ding of the elevator: a Regency Wines Nevada Inc./Hillside Wines & Spirits LLC/BEJOT-sponsored Burgundy tasting presenting Moillard Estate and Chartron & Trébuchet, paired with a lunch set in Michelin-starred French restaurant Alizé at Palms Casino Resort.

The elevators doors opened; I was early. I wandered over to two gentlemen speaking French. One of them was a regal looking man with kind eyes, this was Cédric Dechelette, Export Director of the BEJOT group. The other was the debonair Bruno Laclotte, President of Regency. After shaking their hands, I headed for the floor to ceiling windows that separated the dining room from the heavens and picked up a tech sheet and glass of 2012 Chartron & Trébuchet Meursault 1er Cru Les Genevrières on the way. There I stood at the edge, amazed that I was actually looking down at the behemoth towers of Sin City.

But it was not the height that made my heart beat a little faster— it was the first sip of the Meursault and its price listed on the tech sheet. At \$66 this was an excellent value for a Premier Cru. I asked Dechelette how BEJOT was able to provide such value. "Burgundy actually offers a lot of extremely good value. Certain appellations suffer of a lack of awareness; Burgundy is mainly known for some key appellations, very few out of the 100. Many appellations have their own "typicity"/character and are worth discovering. Even more so when, price-wise, they are cheaper than the classical and can be just as pleasing. Our challenge is to get the trade and journalists to consider these wines. But as soon as we are given the opportunity to show them and taste the wine, acceptance is often very good." The BEJOT Group has seized this challenge, buying up as much Burgundian vineyard as possible. They now own 300 hectares of directly run domaines-estates in Burgundy, giving them more control over quality in areas like Chablis, Côte de Nuits, Côte de Beaune, Côte Chalonnaise and Mâconnais-Beaujolais. Simultaneously, they've been acquiring strong Burgundian brands such as Moillard, Chartron & Trébuchet, Pierre André and Moingeon.

Laclotte recognized the great potential in partnership with the BEJOT Group, already one of the leading distributors of French wines; they're in more than 40 international markets. "They've set themselves up for long-term success by purchasing vineyards, providing them with great access to a large diversification of single vineyards/climats, and building a great wine making facility in Meursault; along with a marketing strategy to build affordable quality Burgundy brands. The value of the brands is in the glass!"

I could go on and on about BEJOT, but this is a story about a few of its more prestigious brands and the incredible lunch at Alizé. Here's a blow-by-blow rundown:

Canapés: Quiche with prosciutto and gruyère cheese, foie gras terrine on toasted brioche with apricot marmalade and smoked salmon with herb cream cheese, paired with the 2012 Chartron & Trébuchet Meursault 1er Cru Les Genevrières.

I asked Gabriel Garcia, Beverage Manager at Lupo by Wolfgang Puck and Mandalay Bay what he thought. "I've always liked Chartron et Trébuchet as a producer because I think they offer great value. They're consistent. This Meursault today—it's fresh, I think it's good, very well balanced. You get that nice acid right up front and very subtle minerality on the finish. It paired very well with all the tray passing that they were doing."

First course: Market greens torchon consisting of duck confit, sunflower seeds, prosciutto and truffle vinaigrette, paired with the **Chartron & Trébuchet 2013 Puligny Montrachet 1er Cru Les Chalumeaux (\$59).**



Chartron & Trébuchet 2008 Bâtard-Montrachet Grand Cru offers yellow flowers and green papaya.

Second course: Steamed salmon with forbidden black rice, pickled daikon, salmon spring roll, fresh wasabi and tamari soy, paired with **Chartron & Trébuchet 2008 Bâtard-Montrachet Grand Cru (\$230)** and the **Chartron & Trébuchet 2011 Corton Charlemagne Grand Cru (\$115).**

Third course: Braised veal cheeks with crispy veal sweetbreads, chestnut confit, roast parsnips, pastina galette, and Burgundy wine sauce paired with **Moillard 2012 Nuits-Saint-Georges 1er Cru Les Saint Georges (\$63), Moillard 2012 Vosne-Romanée 1er Cru Les Suchots (\$105)** and **Moillard 2012 Clos de la Roche Grand Cru (\$162)**—of which they only made three barrels.

During the tasting Dechelette made it a point to tell us that Les Saint Georges is competing to become a Grand Cru. "There is no Grand Cru in Nuits-Saint-Georges so far. There are 11 growers that have been trying for years to promote the area as a potential Grand Cru. It takes a while, but we hope that it will gain the prestige it deserves."

Finally, the cheese course: Époisse with Port-poached prunes, candied pistachios and rosemary raisin crisp, paired with the **Moillard 2012 Clos Saint-Denis Grand Cru (\$150).**

I'd be remiss not to tell you that the **Moillard 2012 Bonnes-Mares Grand Cru (\$255)** was poured for those of us that had time to mingle after lunch. I'm so glad they did. As difficult a vintage as 2012 was in Burgundy, you would never know it from this wine. Alizé Wine Director Claudio Vigani agreed: "For me the Bonnes-Mares was the star; the complexity is different, a kind of baking spice in the middle of the palate. It blew everybody away. I'm always kind of weary about Bonnes-Mares because it's such a large cru. I'm a Musigny fan, but interestingly enough Bonnes-Mares is next to it—this Moillard wine is just incredible." Blowing everybody away was a big accomplishment for this gathering of Las Vegas somms. I've never seen so many green pins (Advanced Level Sommeliers) at a tasting like this; there was even a red and gold pin or two (Master Sommelier) in there as well.

When I mentioned to Dechelette that BEJOT almost sounds like one big happy négociant and domaine hybrid, a very modern and yet somehow traditional approach, he smiles and tells me that this is one of their main philosophies: "To express modernity in each of our wines without denying heritage and tradition." ❧



Somms and wine directors in attendance at the BEJOT Group tasting (in alphabetical order):

Sapin Alprin, Sommelier; Lotus of Siam
Dylan Amos, Sommelier; Delmonico
Caleb Anderson, Sommelier; Fiana
Juan Beltran, Assistant Sommelier; BLT
Joe Borusso, Sommelier; Picasso
Dan Boyer, Sommelier; Ocean Club
Robert Brzostowski, Sommelier; Sensi
John Curtas, CEO, Eating Las Vegas
Cédric Dechelette, Export Director, BEJOT Group
Xavier Dillard, AGM Sommelier; Echo and Rig
Gabriel Garcia, Sommelier; Lupo
Ada Goga, Beverage Operations Assistant, B&B Hospitality Group
Troy Grenstiner, Sommelier; Craftsteak
Sanae Halprin, Sommelier; Le Cirque
Steve Hua, Sommelier; Stripsteak
Yukiko Kawasaki, Sommelier; Yellow Tail
Doug Kim, Sommelier; Aureole
Michael Khote, Sommelier; Lago
Frank Kovalcheck, Sommelier; Lago
Phoenix Murchin, Sommelier; Carnevino
Sarah Pamanat, Sommelier; Jasmine
Kirk Peterson, Wine Director; B&B Hospitality Group
Christian Pollok, GM, Jean-Georges
John Peiser, Sommelier; Jaleo
Tammie Rusenberg, Sommelier; Olive
Derek Sharadin, GM and Sommelier; Echo and Rig
April Short, Event Manager; Bellagio
Sasha Shroeder, Sommelier; Mon Ami Gabi
George Tsolis, Sommelier; Milos
Helen Van Ripper, Sommelier; Aureole
Claudio Vigani, Wine Director; Alizé
Rebecca Werber, F&B, Bellagio Catering
Star Winterbottom, Sommelier; BLT