

Hunting Burgundy vineyards: Domaine de la Commaraine's 'rebuild' plan

Domaine de la Commaraine has bought several parcels of vineyard in the Côte de Nuits, including premier cru vines, as part of ongoing plans to 'rebuild the historic estate'.



Chris Mercer April 28, 2020



Domaine de la Commaraine's estate building in Pommard dates back to the 12th Century. Credit: Domaine de la Commaraine.

Domaine de la Commaraine in Pommard has acquired nearly 2.5 hectares of vines further north in the Côte de Nuits.

That includes 0.3ha and around 0.5ha in the 'Aux Boussselots' and 'Roncières' premiers crus of Nuits-St-Georges.

It's a relatively rare discovery. 'It is not easy to find vineyards of his level in Burgundy and more difficult to find them at a "correct price",' Domaine de la Commaraine's director, Jean-Luc Vitoux, told **Decanter.com**.

He said the opportunity arose several months ago via a real estate agency, although he declined to give price details.

For context, Burgundy premier cru vineyards cost €680,000 per ha on average for red wines and €1.59m per ha for whites in 2018, according to French land agency Safer.

Commaraine's move marks another step within a longer-term plan to rejuvenate the domaine, after American investors took on the running of the estate in 2017.

Thomas Jefferson, who became the third president of the US in 1801, is believed to have visited the Commaraine château building in 1787, although it dates back to the 12th century.

'Our objective is to be present in the finest vineyards of Burgundy to make world-class wines and rebuild the historic estate which formerly covered 10 hectares,' said Vitoux in a press release.

'We are looking to acquire outstanding parcels located on fine terroirs in order to pursue our vision, both in terms of vines and wines.'

Recent changes have already included the return of 'Clos de la Commaraine' as a standalone wine produced by the estate from its 3.75ha premier cru 'clos' vineyard. The grapes were previously sold to Louis Jadot.

The new venture 'is well worth keeping an eye on', said *Decanter's* Burgundy critic, Tim Atkin MW, after reviewing the Clos de la Commaraine 2018 wine. Louis-Michel Liger-Belair, of Domaine du Comte Liger-Belair in Vosne-Romanée, came onboard as winemaking consultant.

Vitoux told *Decanter.com* that the 'clos' would remain the centrepiece, but that the team wanted to recreate 'a Domaine of around 10 hectares with very beautiful terroirs'.

Of the vines recently purchased, 1.1ha will be tended by the winegrower already in place, while the others will be managed directly by Commaraine.

Alongside the premier cru parcels, this includes 0.3ha and just under 0.2ha of village-level vines in Nuits-St-Georges and Chambolle Musigny.

Beyond the vineyards, the main Domaine de la Commaraine building was set to be transformed into a luxury hotel with an underground spa.

The American couple who arrived at the estate in 2017, Mark Nunnally and Denise Dupré, are responsible for the new-look at Royal Champagne Hotel & Spa that overlooks the vineyard landscape north of Epernay. They also own Champagne house Leclerc Briant and Domaine Belleville in Burgundy's Rully area.

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