

# Domaine Drouhin Tasting in Pasadena

By Joel M. Fisher

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**Pasadena, CA, 03/01/06** --- A visit to Los Angeles by one of wine's royal families is always cause for excitement. Only a few years ago Veronique Drouhin invited me to Domaine Drouhin in Oregon and late in 2004 I visited the Drouhin cellars in Beaune, Burgundy and their winery in Chablis. Now, Southern California was paid a return visit by Veronique Drouhin, accompanied by her brother Laurent, the family's new ambassador to the U.S., and both uncorked their wineries' new releases.

This trip they brought 28 white and red samples and we met during a quick tasting in Pasadena, where I had worked my way through their new selections, tasting nearly half.



Joel M. Fisher (left) with Veronique Drouhin and Laurent Drouhin

I've always liked their *Chassagne Montrachet Marquis de Laguiche*. Savor the nose, with strong traces of pear, vanilla and apple coming through. This is a well-balanced, complex wine with good fruit on the long finish. (If the maximum discount determines a bottle price of \$43.50, then retail could be \$20 higher).

I revisited two *Chablis* and a *Chardonnay/Chablis, Domaine de Vaudon*, the taste of which hasn't varied from last year. It's still an elegant, balanced Chablis of an attractive green tint with floral aromas and some spice. (\$20+)

*Vero Chardonnay* (2002), is a bright gold/yellow, with fruit aromas and a velvet-y sensation on the mouth. Look for a backing of minerality, along with almonds, nuts and flowers (described as lotus). Overall, this is a light, harmonious and elegant sample. (Around \$20)

The 2004 red choices lead off with the *Savigny les Beaune*. An elegant wine, like its relatives, there is a strong berry note as well as spices, so typical in this part of the region. On the palate this has finesse and smoothness and will age well. (Around \$25)

The Chambolle-Musigny, from the pinot noir grape, has aged in the barrel for 18 months. This has suburb color with complex aromas of cherries, blackberry, violets and tannins on the palate. Note the complex finish: with age, the nose picks up mushroom and other earthy qualities. (\$44+)

The Charmes-Chambertin grand cru has an impressive ruby color, and a nose dominated by cherry and berry flavors. With some aeration, a spicy aroma emerges. We experienced candied cherry, bark, and spices. Put this on your list as one for special life events.

While I have the fondest memories of Domaine Drouhin Oregon Laurine, the pinot noir named for Veronique's eldest daughter, fickleness almost overcame me as we sampled the 2003 Pinot Noir, which had a great nose, lots of fruit, and ended on a silky tone. This could age 10 plus years and if you can still find it under \$40, buy it!

The Drouhins are happy with their 2004's, as they should be, and they suggest drinking them in 2007 or so. They will be a good buy, since it is expected that prices will be reasonable.

Drink, enjoy and look forward to the next royal visit. Hail Drouhin!

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