

The beauty behind the walls of Chateau Commaraine

By [Steen Öhman](#) August 4, 2020 - [Leave a Comment](#)

Pommard has a classical historic ambiance with most of the houses and walled vineyards kept intact to give us the visitors a peaceful and mind settling experience

I love Pommard with its petite square – seductive and with a romantic yet slightly exotic feel – this village has something special.



Commaraine before the restaurantion

While Pommard has a good historic presence it has for quite many years been overlooked by the wine collectors but now the new styled Pommards seems to be

captivating the collectors.

The houses and estates are now getting rebuilt to make the most of the beautiful settings and the short distance to Beaune.

One such estate is the beautiful fairytale estate la Commaraine

Chateau la Commaraine

Clos de la Commaraine is a Pommard 1er cru located just outside the center of the village of Pommard. A prominent estate by all standards, with a beautiful Chateau located in the southern part of the vineyard – adjacent to the village.

The estate has since 2017 been owned by Harvard professor Denise Dupré and Mark Nunnally, ex-managing director of the Boston-based Bain Capital investment fund. With them, they have – Jean-Luc Vitoux -who is a french investor and Directeur of Commaraine currently.



Isabelle Laurand and Jean-Luc Vitoux

Furthermore, Comte Louis-Michel Liger-Belair of Chateau de Vosne-Romanée has entered an agreement with the owners of Pommard Clos de la Commaraine to help with the making the wine from this historic 3.75 ha monopole vineyard. Isabelle Laurand is the on-site winemaker working with the Liger-Belair team.

The estate ... the beauty and the future hotel

The Commaraine is located wide open seen from the Beaune vineyards yet it is somehow in a blind spot of the village of Pommard. The beauty is hidden within the village just waiting to unfold ... and on the vineyard side, it is already showing its beauty and potential splendor.



The Hotel ... a beauty waiting to unfold

The project has two main parts – one is to establish the image of the Commaraine wine, secondly, the owners want to put Burgundy and Pommard on the map with a top-end hotel – only a short distance from the core of Beaune...

The buildings do need some restoring and rebuilding ... but the potential is there and will in a few years unfold in a 33 room Hotel with a high-quality restaurant.

The quiet chateau has started its rebuilding from an old estate to a top-end hotel. This will take some time ... as the people behind this project are doing things the right way with respect to the historic values of the old buildings.



The main building seen from the village side

At the moment the main building has been stripped down for renovation, but soon the project will take form and shape.



The Chateau seen from Commaraine

One beautiful detail is the view through the future lobby that unfolds the full beauty of the Commaraine vineyard.

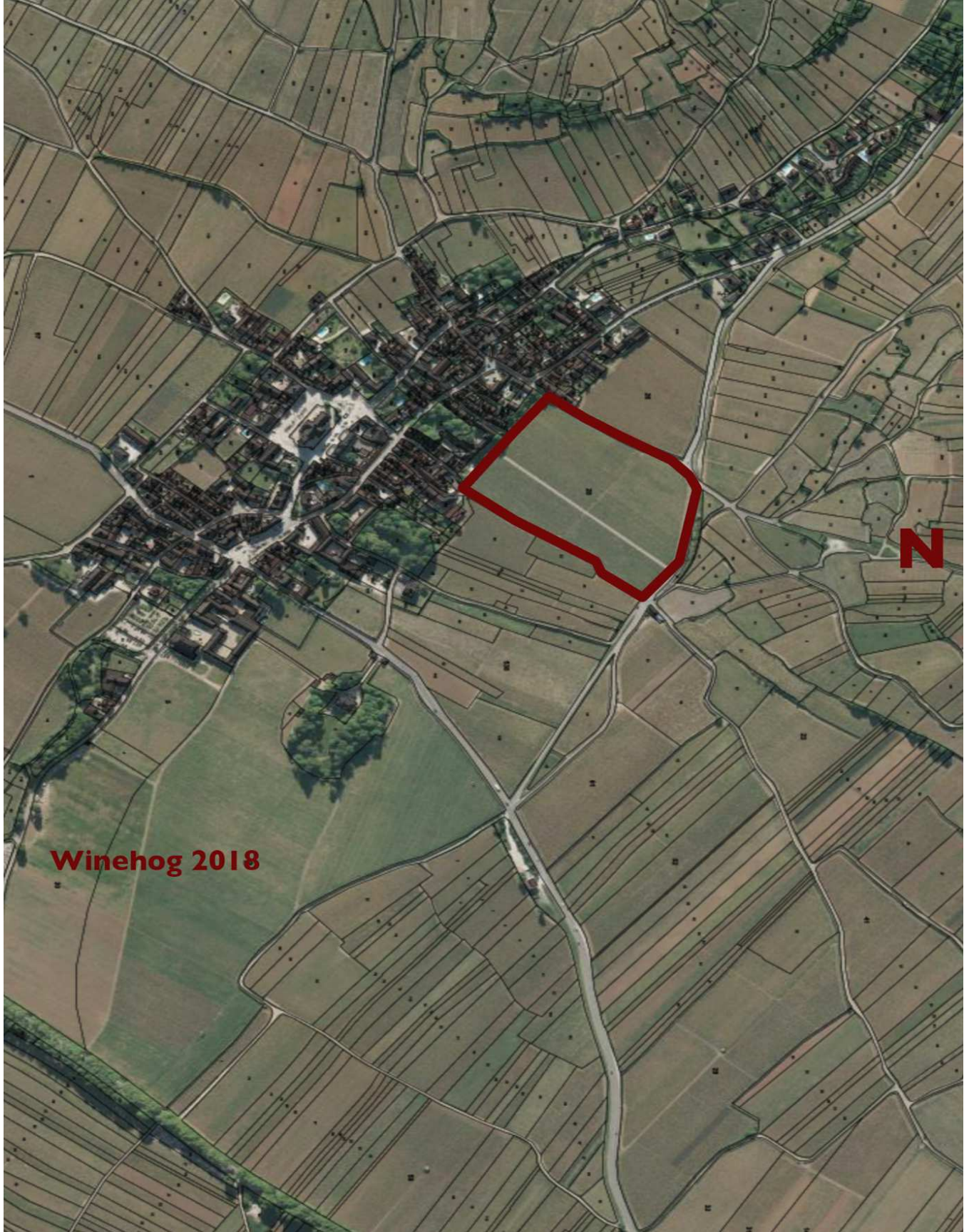


The lobby view

Clos de la Commaraine the vineyard

Clos de la Commaraine is a true Clos with walls and a beautiful Chateau enclosing the 3.75 ha monopole.

The vineyard is located just to the north of the Pommard village with the Chateau located on the northern border of the village – and the wall enclosed vineyard extending to the north of the village – see map below.



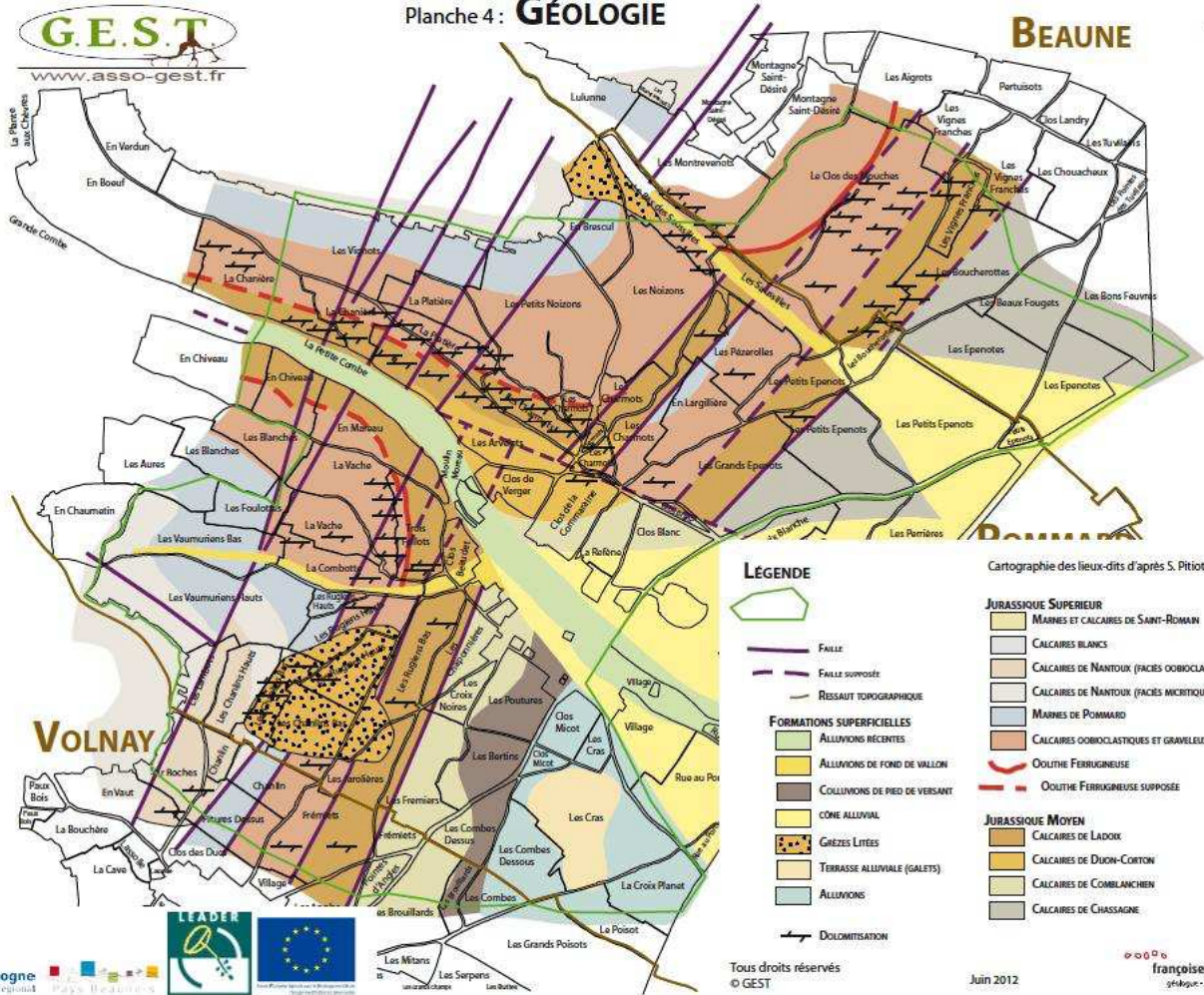
The vineyard encompasses one large cadastre plot (000 BE 28) with an area of 3.7450 ha – and this includes the park in front of the Chateau and the gardens located on the southern border of the estate.



Interesting and changing Geology

The Geology of Pommard Clos de la Commaraine is interesting, as the vineyard is on the border of the combe running through Pommard.

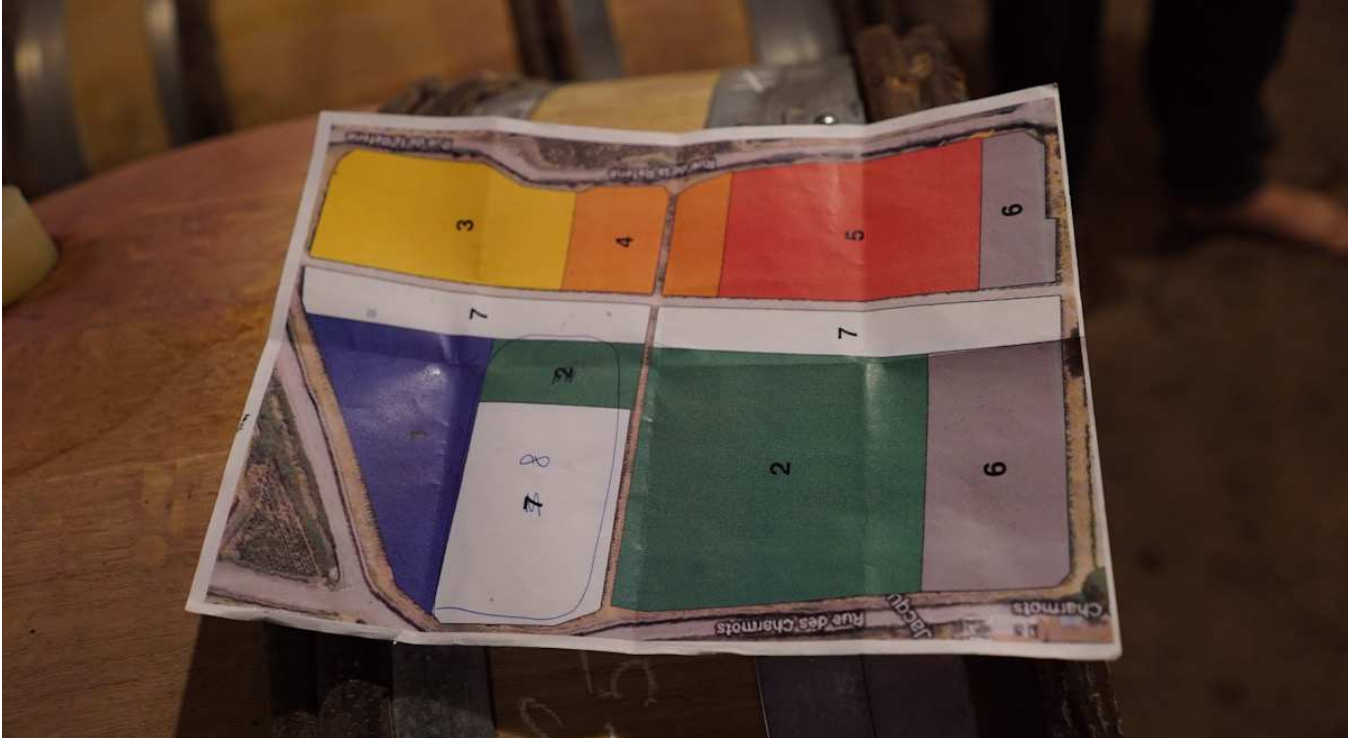
The geology show shifts within the Clos de la Commaraine, hence some variation in the expression of the terroir of the different sectors within the vineyard – see map below.



The vines per section

The vineyard is divided into eight main sections – with a road or path separating the western and eastern parts – going from the Chateau park to a gate in the northern wall of the Clos – see photos below.

The sections have been chosen upon geology and viticultural profile – soil and age of the wines mainly and presumably.



The wines of the 8 sections are vinified separately and are aged separately in a cellar in Meursault.

Let me be clear regarding the terroir there is apparently quite a difference between the geology and terroir expression between the different plots – not surprising if one looks at the geological map above.

The tastings of some of the individual plots/sections showed quite a difference with a section like “1” in the northwestern part of Commaraine does offer a more complex and detailed minerality and expression – whereas some of the other plots coming from the area near the Chateau is deeper and more earthy – presumably lacking some airy complexity.

Add to these three different casks used – Francois Freres, *Seguin Moreau*, and Tonnellerie Plantagenet ... then we have around 24 different components, and adding the age of the barrel will multiply this number of different

casks significantly.

It is a great assemblage task where Louis-Michel Liger-Belair and Jean-Luc Vitoux will choose the casks that will ensure the style they want to represent the estate. We have a new and lighter winemaking style judged by the 2018 – that in my view suits the Pommard appellation. The cold soaking/cold maceration of the grapes is used like in Liger-Belairs other wines – a method that makes the wines more fruity expressive.

It is not a simple task to make the assemblage – as it seems that there are quite some deeper and darker cuvées that will perhaps work counter to the efforts to make a more airy and lightfooted wine.

The right balance will presumably be found with the right choice of oak – although one would imagine that the classical main cuvée and secondary wine could be difficult to implement – as the deselection of the heavier soil near the chateau will create a secondary wine that is sort of heavier than the main cuvée.

Regardless the main wine will be assembled in the fall of 2020 and I would imagine an even more vivid and expressive wine than the lovely 2018 – see note below.

In the end, it is a question to maintain the floral and airy minerality of the northern part of the vineyards and to add some oomph from the middle part to give the wine sufficient muscle. But this is a balance as the complexity

can be fragile in the blending.

For me the assemblage is too big and complex to guess on the outcome. It will be exciting though.

... as a reference

Domaine Pommard Clos de la Commaraine 2018

The Pommard Clos de la Commaraine 2018 is showing very well – a fine combination of Cote de Beaune fruit with Liger-Belair vinification (cold soaking and modest, careful extraction, with 60% new oak as opposed to the 100% normally used for his Cote de Nuit wines). The Commaraine is beautifully perfumed with spicy minerality, blue fruit and a stony, almost fully limestone impression. It is an elegant wine with a delicate balance between the refined vinification and the interesting terroir. It does lack a bit of depth, energy and effortlessness that will presumably come with additional years of biodynamic viticulture. The potential is there however; this is a very enjoyable first attempt, so let's see what this terroir reveals. It seems like the limestone soil in the northern part of the vineyard in particular produces an interesting mineral canvas for this wine.

(Drink from 2030) – **Fine+** – (92 – 93p) – Tasted
12/11/2019 – cask sample

References & Sources:

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