

PROSPER MAUFOUX

Prosper Maufoux is one of only a handful of American-owned wineries in Burgundy, putting it in the elite company of such others as Louis Jadot and Camille Giroud. Until recently, it has received much less attention than the others, but owner Robert Fairchild appears determined to chart a smarter course in the years ahead. "It's taken 10 years to get them to make the wines the way I want them," explains Fairchild, who purchased the long-established négociant business in 1994.

The firm itself, founded in 1860, is headquartered in Santenay, in the southern portion of the Côte de Beaune. A traditional négociant-éleveur, Prosper Maufoux owns no vineyards, relying on verbal agreements carried forward over the decades for its sourcing of grapes, must and wine. Winemaker Jan Castaing joined the house from Laroche in Chablis in time for the 2000 harvest, and has slowly taken a firmer grip over the cellar.

We tasted the following wines with Fairchild in our Westchester offices. All are represented in the U.S. market by House of Burgundy.

WHITE WINES

90 Prosper Maufoux 2003 Les Charmes Premier Cru (Meursault); \$70. Toasty and nutty on the nose, this is a lush, fruit-filled Burgundy that nevertheless retains a sense of minerality amid its baked-apple flavors. It's plump and custardy in texture, with ample power and concentration, turning minerally on the finish.

88 Prosper Maufoux 2005 Viré-Clessé; \$16. This early release gives a sense of the improvements made at Prosper Maufoux, as well as a taste of the potential quality of the 2005 vintage. Spiced pears and minerals add enough honeyed notes on the palate to seem rich, then finish long. This is all from a single grower, according to Fairchild.

88 Prosper Maufoux 2002 Comme Dessus (Santenay); \$24. From the village in which Prosper Maufoux is based, this is a wine the company takes special pride in. It's nutty, but also fresh citrusy, and more vibrant and alive than the 2003. Despite ample weight

and forward apple and citrus flavors, it shows plenty of minerality on the long finish.

87 Prosper Maufoux 2002 Clos Saint Jean Premier Cru (Chassagne-Montrachet); \$NA. Fruit-driven and fleshy on the palate, this wine's tropical fruit and baked apple flavors pose a sharp contrast to the lemon and chalk aromas.

87 Prosper Maufoux 2003 Les Folatières Premier Cru (Puligny-Montrachet); \$72. This should be a star in the lineup, but for whatever reason, on this day it was merely very good. Treated to 100% new oak, it comes off as a bit caramelly, with smoky, toasted nut notes that partially mask big tropical fruit.

87 Prosper Maufoux 2002 Meursault; \$44. Full-bodied, but still well structured, this seems like it could age another few years. Its nutty, slightly buttery aromas are complemented by flavors of hazelnut, pineapple and lemon. According to Fairchild, this is from a single grower who bottles the rest of his production under his own label.

86 Prosper Maufoux 2004 Saint-Véran; \$15. A nicely textured Saint-Véran, with honey, pear and melon flavors all working in harmony. It's on the simple side, but definitely scratches the Chardonnay-from-Burgundy itch.

85 Prosper Maufoux 2003 Comme Dessus (Santenay); \$24. Baked apple and cinnamon notes on the nose fail to carry all the way through, as the wine turns crisp and a bit metallic on the finish. Atypically austere for a wine from such a warm vintage.

85 Prosper Maufoux 2005 Pouilly-Fuissé; \$NA. Focused and lean, this lacks the generosity shown by the Viré-Clessé. Pear and melon flavors carry a hint of vanilla through the tart finish.

84 Prosper Maufoux 2004 Chardonnay (Bourgogne); \$12. A fresh and fruity simple Bourgogne blanc, with hints of

honey layered atop pear and apple fruit. Crisp on the finish; try as an apéritif.

RED WINES

89 Prosper Maufoux 2005 Clos Paradis Premier Cru (Mercurey); \$NA. Another promising 2005. This has a beautiful forward bouquet of flowers and red berries, a supple, creamy texture and satisfying raspberry and chocolate flavors. Long and ripe on the finish.

89 Prosper Maufoux 2003 Les Gravières Premier Cru (Santenay); \$36. Complex from the start, marrying floral aromas with hints of stemminess, herbs and spice, all supported by lush black-cherry fruit. Picks up notes of black tea on the finish, so while this tastes good now, it may even improve in another year or two.

88 Prosper Maufoux 2002 Les Gravières Premier Cru (Santenay); \$32. More structured than the 2003, with more leather and spice notes but still well-fruited underneath. Finishes fresh and firm; hold another 2–3 years.

86 Prosper Maufoux 2003 Les Angles Premier cru (Volnay); \$47. Meaty and earthy on the nose, adding a complex note to the black cherry and spice flavors. Rich and velvety in texture, but it finishes with some dusty tannins that may never fully integrate. Drink this young, for its fruit.

84 Prosper Maufoux 2004 Pinot Noir (Bourgogne); \$12. Nicely perfumed, with unusual structure for a Bourgogne rouge. Herbal notes wrap around a core of cherry fruit, finishing fresh and crisp.

82 Prosper Maufoux 2004 Clos Paradis Premier Cru (Mercurey); \$23. A bit of a step down from the 2005 version of this wine. Tart cherries are accented by herbal notes that come perilously close to green bean. Not much texture or richness here, finishing crisp.