

## Domaine du Comte Liger-Belair (Vosne-Romanée)

2006	Echézeaux Grand Cru	red	(91-94)
2006	➔ Nuits St. Georges "Les Cras" 1er	red	(90-93)
2006	Nuits St. Georges "Lavières"	red	(88-90)
2006	La Romanée Grand Cru	red	(94-96)
2006	Vosne-Romanée	red	(87-89)
2006	➔ Vosne-Romanée "Brulées" 1er	red	(90-92)
2006	Vosne-Romanée "Chaumes" 1er	red	(89-91)
2006	Vosne-Romanée "Clos du Château"	red	(87-90)
2006	➔ Vosne-Romanée "La Colombière"	red	(87-89)
2006	➔ Vosne-Romanée "Petits Monts" 1er	red	(90-92)
2006	➔ Vosne-Romanée "Reignots" 1er	red	(91-93)
2006	➔ Vosne-Romanée "Suchots" 1er	red	(89-92)
2005	La Romanée Grand Cru	red	97
2005	➔ Vosne-Romanée "Chaumes" 1er	red	93
2005	➔ Vosne-Romanée "Clos du Château"	red	91
2005	➔ Vosne-Romanée "La Colombière"	red	90
2005	➔ Vosne-Romanée "Reignots" 1er	red	94

As fans of the domaine will certainly notice, there are quite a number of new wines present at this domaine for 2006. As was reported last year, Louis-Michel Liger-Belair told me that there have been a number of recent developments as he has taken over a sizeable property which will expand his exploited vineyards from 3.2 to 8.7 ha, a big jump by any measure. 2.5 ha are in the *appellation* Bourgogne, which he has decided to sell under a different label than Liger-Belair. The higher level vineyards that are new *appellations* to the domaine include .6 ha in Echézeaux, .22 ha in Suchots, .12 in Brulées, .12 in Petits Monts and .37 ha in the fine Nuits 1er Les Cras. There will also be additions of .15 ha in La Columbière and another .60 in various Vosne *villages* parcels and finally a .13 ha parcel of the Nuits Lavières. Liger-Belair also noted that for the most part, these parcels contain very old vines that have low yields but very high quality. Moreover, in other developments the family lease arrangement with Bouchard Père et Fils terminated in 2005 so for 2006, the domaine will retain 100% of the production and commercialization rights for La Columbière, Reignots and La Romanée. The domaine is also constructing a new *cuvée* to accommodate the increased volume.

With respect to 2006, Liger-Belair calls it a "really pretty vintage that surprised me by its excellent maturity. We waited a few extra days to begin the harvest on September 23<sup>rd</sup> and were rewarded with the same acidities that we obtained in 2005 but even higher sugars, which is to say between 13.2 and 14.2%. Yields were all over the place with fairly significant differences of between 20 and 38 hl/ha with an average of around 30. We really didn't have all that much sorting to do though there was some. There wasn't a lot of malic acid so the malos weren't a problem and overall, I very much like the wines and I'm very excited to be working with so many new, interesting and high caliber *terroirs*." As the comments suggest, it didn't take Liger-Belair long to make the most of his new appellations and 2006 is a most auspicious start. And as my reviews last year projected, the 2005s at this address are nothing short of brilliant. Both the Reignots and the La Romanée have turned out to be even better than I expected, and I expected quite a bit! (A Becky Wasserman/Le Serbet Selection - [sbw@wanadoo.fr](mailto:sbw@wanadoo.fr) – additional distributors include Vinalia Imports, Camarillo, CA and USA Wine Imports for "Selection Pas Mal", New York, NY; Justerini & Brooks and Richards Walford, UK).

**2006 Vosne-Romanée:** (from 11 different parcels). A beautifully ripe nose of spicy blue and black fruit that is very Vosne in character merges into elegant and pure flavors that are well balanced, fresh and precise, all wrapped in a lengthy and well balanced finish. A lovely *villages* and worth a look. (87-89)/2011+

**2006 Vosne-Romanée "La Colombière":** (a .78 ha parcel of vines between 50 and 70 years of age). A more deeply pitched and not quite as elegant nose of black and blue fruit and violet aromas with hints of soy, anise and clove that are picked up on the round, rich and more concentrated flavors that possess a seductive mouth feel on the slightly less elegant but more powerful finish. A qualitative choice. (87-89)/2012+

**2006 Vosne-Romanée “Clos du Château”**: (a *monopole* of the Domaine with 35+ year old vines and much rockier soil than Columbière - 100% new wood). Lower register blue berry, violet, warm earth, stone and distinct Asian style spice hints slides gracefully into floral-infused medium-bodied flavors that offer very good richness and ample volume on the admirably intense, plummy and driving finish. Terrific quality for a villages level wine and again, certainly worth considering. (87-90)/2012+

**2006 Nuits St. Georges “Lavières”**: (this .13 ha parcel of 80+ year old vines produced 1.5 barrels in 2006). This moderately reduced nose was tough to get an accurate bead on but the earthy and red pinot fruit-infused flavors are round, rich and precise with excellent dry extract levels that confirm the old vine intensity found on the driving and living finish. This is a very impressive *villages* and certainly a strong cellar medium-term candidate. (88-90)/2012+

**2006 Vosne-Romanée “Chaumes”**: (from vines planted in 1945). Again, fairly strong reduction causes problems in accurately evaluating the nose though the spicy, precise and delicious middle weight flavors are fresh, vibrant and intense, all wrapped in a sappy and dusty finish. Lovely balance and punch here. (89-91)/2013+

**2006 Vosne-Romanée “Petits Monts”**: (from a .12 ha parcel). Unlike several of the prior wines, here the nose is fresh, sophisticated, refined and airy with the naturally cool, stony, elegant and classy aromatic profile of a classic Petits Monts. The intense, precise and mineral-inflected medium full flavors are ripe, balanced and focused while culminating in a linear, dusty and mouth coating finish. There is a sleek muscularity too and this very much resembles a smaller version of a fine Richebourg. (90-92)/2013+

**2006 Vosne-Romanée “Brulées”**: (from a .12 ha parcel). This is riper still with a blackberry liqueur nose nuanced by hints of clove, tea, hoisin and anise where these spice notes can also be found on the rich, mouth coating, intense and very sappy, distinctly muscular flavors that are wonderfully complex and gorgeously long. It's interesting to compare the different personalities between this and the Petits Monts as it's a trade-off between power and elegance, though to be sure both have some of each just in varying degrees. (90-92)/2013+

**2006 Nuits St. Georges “Les Cras”**: (from a .37 ha parcel). As this *terroir* often does as it is one of the most elegant and sophisticated in all of Nuits, it has produced a gorgeously elegant red berry fruit nose suffused by an almost pungent minerality and saline character that continues onto the supple, fresh and vibrant medium-bodied flavors that possess excellent concentration and stunning if structured length. This is a wine of harmony and drive with everything it needs for a long life. Highly recommended. (90-93)/2013+

**2006 Vosne-Romanée “Suchots”**: (from a .22 ha parcel). A highly expressive nose of notably and seductively spicy black and blue pinot fruit aromas nuanced by rose petal and violets that introduce supple, round and delicious flavors that are very attractive but not quite at the same level as the fantastic Les Cras. Still, this is very Suchots with its sexy nose and flavors culminating in a linear, intense and classy finish. Recommended. (89-92)/2013+

**2006 Vosne-Romanée “Reignots”**: (the Liger-Belair vines in this small vineyard run from top to bottom whereas the others are situated in segments; Cathiard is on top, Grivot in the middle and Arnoux at the bottom). Relatively strong reduction knocks the nose down to the point of it being unreadable though the flavors are classic Reignots with their cool, reserved and almost “aloof” character that emphasizes the intense minerality of the site, which when combined with the better natural acidity causes the flavor profile to be one of taut and highly sophisticated muscularity with an intense stony quality to the driving, detailed, precise and moderately austere finish. This is a classy effort that is beautifully balanced but one that will also required the better part of a decade to arrive at its prime. (91-93)/2014+

**2006 Echézeaux**: (from a .6 ha parcel situated two-thirds in Cruots and the rest in Champs Traversin). As one might reasonably expect, this is notably riper than the Reignots with a spicy black berry liqueur nose that is really quite densely fruited and that sense of concentration continues onto the delicious, serious and palate staining medium full flavors supported by buckets of sap that completely buffer the otherwise very firm tannins that also coat the palate on the gorgeously long finish. An impressive debut and recommended. (91-94)/2014+

**2006 La Romanée**: This is as reserved and cool as the Reignots but more complex, refined and sophisticated still as it just exudes class and breed with a fantastically broad array of spicy and pure black fruit aromas where the reserve and spice components are also reflected by the minerally, serious and delicious medium full-bodied flavors brimming with *sève* and extract on the very firm finish supported by buried tannins and huge length that doesn't stop. This isn't quite as concentrated and powerful as the '05 version but it's more than a respectable successor. (94-96)/2016+

Note: the Liger-Belair '05s were bottled in January, 2007.

**2005 Vosne-Romanée “La Colombière”:** (vines between 50 and 70 years of age). Vosne spice and very fresh red pinot and currant aromas lead to racy, intense and precise flavors that possess solid definition on the linear, delicious and vibrant finish. Excellent quality for its level and recommended though note that this has already started to shut down so if you're going to try one young just to see, be sure to give it plenty of air first. 90/2013+

**2005 Vosne-Romanée “Clos du Château”:** (a *monopole* of the Domaine with 35+ year old vines and much rockier soil than Columbière - 100% new wood). A floral nose resplendent with violets, Vosne spice, raspberry liqueur and black currant that is both slightly riper and very pure combines with delicious, precise and sweet flavors that display ample minerality, all wrapped in an understated and beautifully balanced that possesses top 1er length on the beautifully long finish. Again, terrific quality at this level and highly recommended. 91/2013+

**2005 Vosne-Romanée “Chaumes”:** (from vines planted in 1945). A beautiful mix of red and black pinot fruit aromas nuanced by hints of smoke, earth and underbrush merges into textured and layered medium full flavors that possess plenty of underlying material and a punchy, strikingly long finish. This is quite backward at the moment and like the Colombière is closing up fast so again, plenty of air is advised. In sum, this is highly recommended as it's of reference standard quality. 93/2015+

**2005 Vosne-Romanée “Reignots”:** (the Liger-Belair vines in this small vineyard run from top to bottom whereas the others are situated in segments; Cathiard is on top, Grivot in the middle and Arnoux at the bottom). Much airier and more elegant floral notes of rose petal and violet aromas plus sweet blue and black pinot fruit notes that can also be found on the mineral-suffused flavors that are precise, linear, focused and cool on the chiseled and beautifully long finish. I very much like this and while it's less generous than the Chaumes, it's classier and absolutely crystalline in its purity. A stunner. 94/2017+

**2005 La Romanée:** As good as the Reignots is, it's immediately clear that this is at another level with its positively kaleidoscopic and utterly knockout nose featuring exuberant Vosne-style spicy black fruit and a panoply of underlying nuances including anise, clove, minerals, underbrush, warm earth and smoke introduce much more reserved, even cool medium full flavors that are like silk on the palate though the hugely long finish tightens up in a real rush. This is really quite fine and less youthfully austere than it usually is at this early stage. This is also a stunner of a wine with that wonderful character of inner mouth perfume that the great wines always have plus it's built for the long haul. 97/2020+