



*The genial Manu Bautista's small winery in the hamlet of Touches is one of the Côte Chalonnaise's finest estates, and while he counsels me that his 2017s are almost entirely sold out, I encourage readers wishing to encounter red and white Mercurey at its most gourmand and seductive to seek out his wines. Emphasizing that everything follows from the quality of the raw materials, Bautista harvests by hand in small cases. Whites are vinified without stirring, the naturally rich wines of Mercurey having, he contends, no need for supplemental "fat" from the lees, while reds see long cuvaisons with temperatures kept in the mid-80s Fahrenheit to preserve the expression of fruit. Elevage then takes place in barrels and demi-muids exclusively derived from—and made to measure by—the talented Stephane Chassin, whose Rully cooperage supplies many of the region's best addresses. Topping up is meticulous, and Bautista's attention to detail will be evident to anyone who visits his cellars. The results speak for themselves: supple, fragrant reds bursting with vibrant fruit that entirely conceals their velvety tannins and precise, flavorful and harmonious whites. His 2017s are among the wines of the vintage, and after sampling a few 2018s from barrel, I can confirm that they are immensely promising, too. In short, Bautista is one of a small handful of producers that demonstrate just what is possible when Mercurey's terroirs are lavished with the same attention devoted to their more famous Côte d'Or counterparts.*

An expressive bouquet of spices, berries, cherries, vine smoke and dark chocolate introduces the **2017 Bourgogne Pinot Noir**, a medium to full-bodied, satiny and succulent wine with a fleshy core of crunchy fruit and a flavorful finish. It's a beautifully made daily drinker that's already showing well. **88/100**

A superb effort, the **2017 Mercurey Vieilles Vignes** offers up scents of smoky cherries and blackberries, mingled with savory bass notes of grilled squab and raw cocoa. On the palate, it's medium to full-bodied, fleshy and enveloping, its fine tannins and racy acids largely concealed by an ample core of fruit. **91/100**

Aromas of red cherries, raw cocoa, dried flowers and spices introduce the **2017 Mercurey 1er Cru En Sazenay**, a medium to full-bodied, satiny wine that's racy and precise, framed by powdery tannins and tangy acids. It's another elegant, attractive red from Bautista. **92/100**

The **2017 Mercurey 1er Cru Les Vellées** is showing very well, wafting from the glass with aromas of minty red berries, pomegranate, spices and dark chocolate. On the palate, it's medium to full-bodied, lively and fleshy, with broader structural shoulders than the Sazenay, framed by a firmer but still fine-grained chassis of tannin and revealing excellent depth and concentration. **92+/100**

Readers shouldn't miss the **2017 Mercurey 1er Cru Clos du Roy**, a superb wine that bursts with scents of red cherries, licorice, spices and dark chocolate. On the palate, it's medium to full-bodied, ample and enveloping, with lively acids and fine structuring tannins that are entirely hidden by an ample and layered core of concentrated fruit, concluding with a long, penetrating finish. **93/100**

Aromas of crisp orchard fruit, almond paste and vanilla pod introduce the **2017 Mercurey 1er Cru En Sazenay Blanc**, a medium to full-bodied, satiny and succulent wine with a beautifully textural attack, excellent concentration and a bright spine of mouthwatering acidity, concluding with good grip on the finish. This is well worth seeking out. **92/100**