



Burgundy's Gros Clan Keeps It All in the Family

Matriarch Jeanine Gros is the glue that binds together two generations and five domaines that make Richebourg and a host of other great wines

By Per-Henrik Mansson, Vosne-Romanée, France

Twice a week, Jeanine Gros, this town's mayor, sits down to a power lunch with her two sons, Bernard, 34, and Michel, 36. Over a home-cooked meal that may include a tasting of the family's various Richebours, the trio functions as the Gros clan's kitchen cabinet, influencing what happens at five different domaines: Domaine Jean Gros, Domaine Gros Frère et Soeur, Domaine Anne & François Gros, Domaine A.-E. Gros and Domaine Michel Gros.

There is no shortage of famous names in the legendary town of Vosne-Romanée, starting with estates such as Domaine de

la Romanée-Conti, Méo-Camuzet, René Engel, Mongeard-Mugneret and Georges Mugneret. But with the terrific winemaking of the new generation, the Gros (pronounced *GROW*) clan arguably may be Vosne-Romanée's leading winemaking family today, as evidenced by a number of spectacular wines from great vineyards.

Last year, in a blind tasting of '89 red Burgundies, *The Wine Spectator* reviewed 350 wines from 49 top producers in the Côte d'Or, and the Gros domaines produced some of the best. Of the 12 Gros wines tasted, nine rated outstanding (90 or higher on the 100-point scale). Domaine Jean Gros produced the

Two generations of the Gros family, from left: Jeanine's son Bernard, Jeanine, daughter Anne-Françoise, husband Jean Gros, son Michel, Jean's sister Colette, his niece Anne and brother François



Jeanine and Jean Gros with son Michel, winemaker at the family's spiritual homestead, Domaine Jean Gros

Gros Family's Flagship Domaine

Vosne-Romanée, France

Domaine Jean Gros is the flagship winery of the Gros family estates, the spiritual homestead of the Gros clan. Jean Gros, 64, inherited nearly 9 acres of top Côte de Nuits vineyards in 1963, when his father's Domaine Louis Gros was split up in a succession division. He and his wife, Jeanine, have almost tripled the size of the domaine, with yearly production that could reach about 5,000 cases when all the vines are bearing fruit.

Jean and Jeanine have three children who have inherited their parents' passion for producing top-quality wines. The couple's oldest son, Michel, who is now 36, is winemaker at Domaine Jean Gros. Michel can craft sublime wines, and his '89 Richebourg was the highest-rated wine in a large tasting of '89 Burgundies conducted last year by *The Wine Spectator* (Cover Story, Jan. 31, 1992.)

From the time he was very young, Michel knew that he wanted only to make wine, and when he was 15, he announced that he was going to enroll in the Beaune enology school. While his parents had hoped that he would at least explore other vocational paths, Michel didn't deviate a step from his single-minded pursuit to become a winemaker.

Thus, he was ready when his father became gravely ill in 1975 to take over winemaking duties at Domaine Jean Gros. At 19, Michel had to assume re-

sponsibility for supporting his mother, his hospitalized father and his sister and brother. A hard test for a young boy, but Michel passed with flying colors.

A calm man who weighs every word as he speaks, Michel is a vigneron firmly rooted in the vineyards that have made his family's fame. The family's holdings include: 1 acre in Richebourg (with average annual production of 150 cases); half an acre of Clos Vougeot (80 cases); 1990 is the first crop since replanting the vineyard in 1985); 5 acres of Vosne-Romanée *premier cru* Clos des Réas (a *monopole* vineyard with a potential production of 900 cases); three-quarters of an acre of Chambolle-Musigny Village (mostly being replanted, but potential production of 200 cases a year); 1 acre of Nuits-St.-Georges Village (170 cases); 5.5 acres of Vosne-Romanée Village (about 1,000 cases); 10 acres of Bourgogne regional appellation vineyards (2,000 cases); and a little less than 1 acre of Hautes Côtes de Nuits (400 cases).

Michel also runs his own estate, Domaine Michel Gros. He makes more than 3,700 cases of wine from 17 acres of Pinot Noir vineyards in Hautes Côtes de Nuits and three-fourths of an acre of Vosne-Romanée Village. Another 3.7 acres of Chardonnay vines in Hautes Côtes de Nuits should yield fruit this year.

At Domaine Jean Gros, Michel uses charred oak barrels to impart toasty notes to his *grand cru*. His Richebourg and Clos des Réas are aged in 100 percent new oak, while the other wines

are aged in 30 percent new oak.

He thinks the Gros wines are better today than they were when his parents and uncles made the wines. "We are better educated and trained than the previous generation, and we benefit from 30 years of research," says Michel. "The winemaking materials, such as stainless steel tanks, are better and cleaner. They had to work hard just to keep a barrel in good condition. It's just easier to make good wine now than it was 30 years ago."

Domaine Jean Gros

The following 1989-1991 wines were tasted by *The Wine Spectator* editors and rated on the 100-point scale: 95-100, classic; 90-94, outstanding; 80-89, good to very good; 70-79, average; 60-69, below average; 50-59, poor. Barrel samples are scored in five-point ranges. Dates in parentheses indicate when tasting notes were first published. Wines tasted by me are followed by my initials. "\$NA" means price not available.

98 Domaine Jean Gros Richebourg Grand Cru 1989 (\$180): A monster of a wine, with an amazing concentration of fruit and violet aromas. Like a young Taylor vintage Port, but still full

of finesse. Try from 1996 to '98. (1/31/92)

95-100 Domaine Jean Gros Richebourg 1990 (barrel sample): Remarkable depth and character, layered with wild berry, black cherry and a hint of violet, with a toasty finish marked by new oak (100 percent for this wine). —PHM

92 Domaine Jean Gros Vosne-Romanée Clos des Réas 1989 (\$70): A multidimensional Burgundy, with plummy, earthy, toasty notes and a rich mouth-feel. Try from 1992. (1/31/92)

90-94 Domaine Jean Gros Richebourg 1991 (barrel sample): A superbly crafted Richebourg, with a very toasty character from heavily charred oak barrels. Quite light, but offers a great deal of personality, with its cherry and smoked bacon notes. —PHM

90-94 Domaine Jean Gros Vosne-Romanée Clos des Réas 1990 (barrel sample): A fantastic wine, with toasty vanilla and black cherry aromas and flavors. Incredibly round and supple, it melts in the mouth, with plenty of texture to beckon you back for more. —PHM

90-94 Domaine Jean Gros Vosne-Romanée 1990 (barrel sample): Toasty vanilla and black cherry notes dominate this charmer. Medium-bodied and very supple. —PHM

90 Domaine Jean Gros Vosne-Romanée 1989 (\$39): A village Vosne of great quality and concentration, with an intriguing smoky, toasty character and red licorice and plum aromas and flavors. Try after 1993. (1/31/92)

87 Domaine Jean Gros Nuits-St.-Georges 1989 (\$39): A pretty wine, with attractive spice and blueberry flavors, silky tannins and an earthy finish. Try from 1994 to '97. (1/31/92)

85-89 Domaine Jean Gros Vosne-Romanée Clos des Réas 1991 (barrel sample): A distinct style, with grilled meat, smoked bacon and toasty notes that are quite attractive. Medium-bodied, with a supple finish. Try upon release. —PHM

82 Domaine Michel Gros Bourgogne Hautes Côtes de Nuits 1989 (\$NA): A wine with lovely aromas and fresh flavors. Not structured for the long term, but delicious now. (1/31/92)

80-84 Domaine Jean Gros Vosne-Romanée 1991 (barrel sample): A pretty wine that is rather light, with appealing, lively cherry and strawberry aromas. Drink on release. —PHM

highest-rated wine of the tasting with its 1989 Richebourg (98, \$180), followed by the Richebourg of Domaine Anne & François Gros (97, \$130). Domaine Gros Frère et Soeur also produced a classic Richebourg (95, \$130). (For tasting notes on the Gros wines, see the following pages.)

Michel makes the wines of Domaine Jean Gros and Domaine Michel Gros, while brother Bernard makes the wines of Domaine Gros Frère et Soeur (which means "brother and sister" in French). Their sister, Anne-Françoise, 35, started her own estate, Domaine A.-F. Gros, in 1988. (Her brother Michel vinifies and

ages her Richebourg, while her husband, François Parent, 37, makes her other wines.) Also in 1988, their cousin Anne, who is 26, took over winemaking duties at her father's estate. It was renamed to reflect this change, from Domaine François Gros to Domaine Anne & François Gros.

Individually, the Gros estates make tiny quantities of wines—230 cases of Richebourg here, 80 cases of Grands Échézeaux there. With so many Gros labels on the market, it is difficult to keep track of who makes what; taken individually, the domaines each average

from as little as 1,800 cases to 5,300 cases a year.

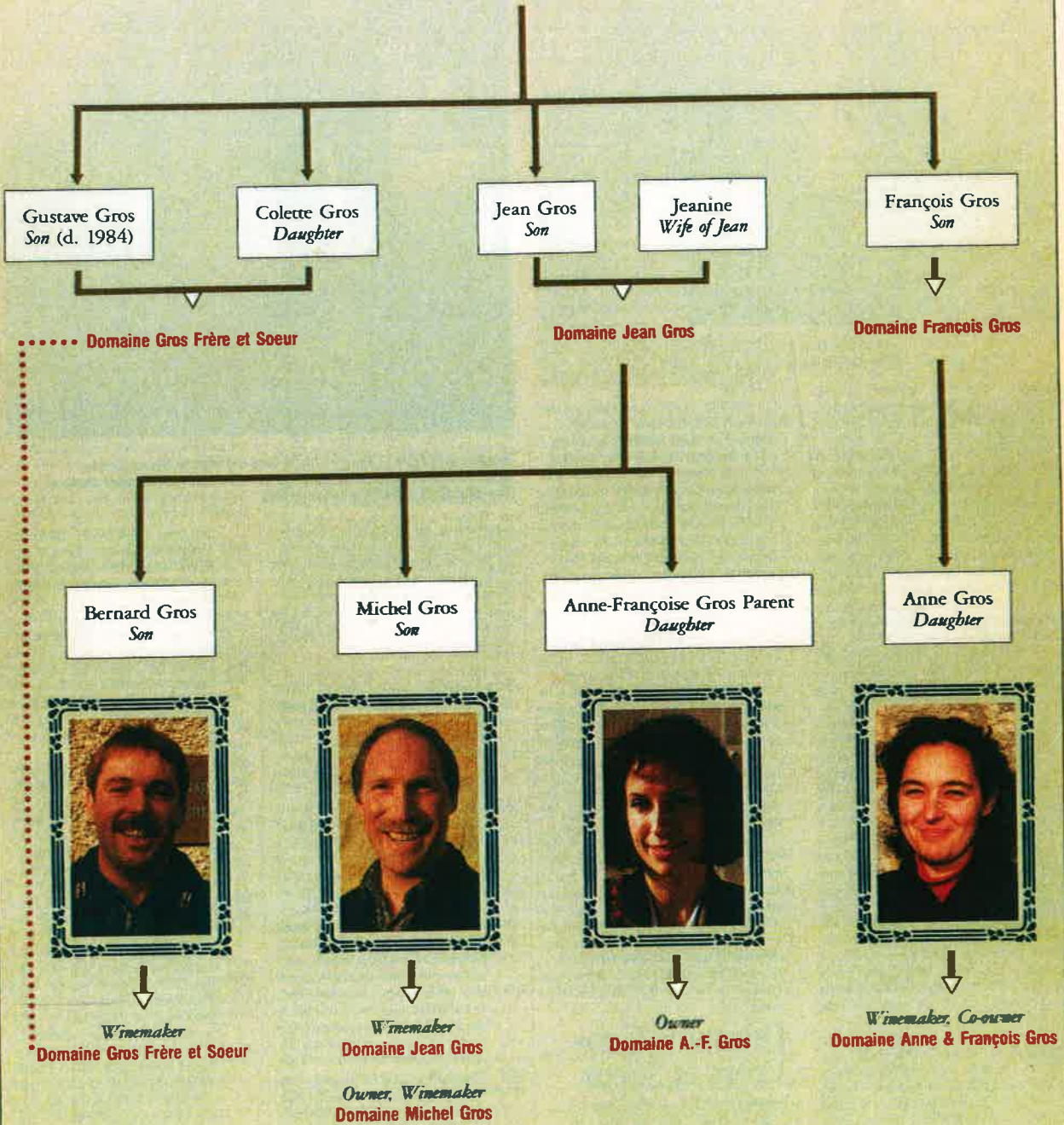
But taken together, the five Gros domaines make a total of 17,500 cases, including four different bottlings of Richebourg. The Gros family's 4.6 acres in the famous Richebourg vineyard is second only to Domaine de la Romanée-Conti's holdings in that *grand cru*.

The Gros clan's 101 acres of vineyard holdings in the heart of Burgundy are worth, conservatively, an estimated \$20 million. These holdings include almost 13 acres of *grands crus* (Clos Vougeot, Grands Échézeaux, Échézeaux and Riche-

bourg), 27 acres of village, *premier cru* and *les-dits* vineyards (the majority in Vosne-Romanée) and 61 acres of regional appellations (Bourgogne and Hautes Côtes de Nuits).

Leading this dynasty is the formidable Madame Gros. She has been mayor of Vosne-Romanée, population 490, since 1971. Public service runs in the family: A Gros has held the town's top political job 31 of the past 51 years. The mayor's conversation and manner are focused and direct. Not surprisingly, she commands considerable respect

How the Gros Domaines Grew



The Gros children have inherited their passion for producing top-quality wines

not only in public life, but at home as well. Although she administers only Domaine Jean Gros, which she owns with her husband, Jean, 64, she wields her influence, directly or indirectly, over all five Gros domaines. Of the four younger family members now running the domaines, Madame Gros is the mother of three and the aunt of the fourth, and all credit her for playing a key role in their professional growth. "When we have a problem, we come to her," says Bernard.

A dynamic 63-year-old, Madame Gros is a distinguished lady with a warm smile and large, round glasses. She looks motherly, with her gray hair severely pulled back and her understated jewelry and clothes.

Neither a winemaker nor a viticulturist, Madame Gros doesn't get involved in the cellars or vineyards. She is not a woman to climb on a tractor or strap on boots for work in the vines. Her forte is as administrator of the family patrimony.

More coach than quarterback, Madame Gros has played an inspirational role in fostering a climate of cooperation, enthusiasm and commitment to quality that affects all the wines coming out of the Gros estates.

"She advises me and occasionally sends me clients when she can't supply them a wine like her Richebourg," says her niece Anne, the winemaker at Domaine Anne & François Gros. "She is a woman with a lot of energy, une femme de tête [a thinking woman]. She has given her children a sense of responsibility and a taste for hard work. My cousins are very balanced, and they are people who love what they do."

Anne and her three cousins are a bright, dynamic, eloquent bunch, and they all speak of wanting to make sure that the estates passed on to them will continue to improve.

"When Anne has a problem she often comes to us, and we lend her equipment," says Bernard. "We are a team, and we help each other. Michel and I buy material together. There are a lot of things we couldn't buy if we were just one domaine."

"I've tried to foster a super-alliance among them," says Madame Gros, "and I've tried to make them feel harmonious so they can go as far as possible in their lives. For me, at this point, it's a bit of a mission accomplished. It is a true pleasure for me to see that they are succeeding, and I am not referring to financial questions but to such things as their

Sibling Richebourg, Not Rivalry

Vosne-Romanée, France

Consumers are more likely to see a *grand cru* bottle from Gros Frère et Soeur than from any of the family's other domaines.

That's because Domaine Gros Frère et Soeur, as the name implies, is an estate created by a Gros brother and sister, Gustave and Colette. They combined their respective inheritance to create a substantial domaine when their father's estate, Domaine Louis Gros, was divided up among his four children in 1963.

This explains why Domaine Gros Frère et Soeur makes more Richebourg and more Clos Vougeot than any of the other four Gros estates. It's also the only Gros estate making a Grands Echézeaux.

Gros Frère et Soeur annually produces about 5,300 cases from some 33.5 acres of vineyards, a fifth of which lie in *grands crus*. The domaine has 1.6 acres of prized Richebourg vines (producing annually about 250 cases).

The estate makes about 580 cases from its 3.7 acres of Clos Vougeot and nearly 130 cases of Grands Echézeaux from 0.8 of an acre. The winery also owns 7.5 acres of Vosne-Romanée Village that averages yearly about 1,330 cases, 2.5 acres of regional red Bourgogne (about 550 cases), 12.4 acres of Bourgogne Hautes Côtes de Nuits Rouge (2,500 cases) and 5 acres of Hautes Côtes de Nuits Blanc (young vines, no production yet).

Neither Colette nor Gustave ever married, and they have no children, so they had no direct descendant to turn to when Gustave became ill in 1980.

Enter Bernard Gros, the son of Jean and Jeanine Gros. A stocky, sharp young man, he had just finished high school and military service when his aunt and ailing uncle asked him to join them at Domaine Gros Frère et Soeur.

After Gustave's death in 1984, Bernard changed little of the domaine's winemaking style. "I didn't want to shock my uncle's clients," he says.

But since 1988, he has made what he describes as rounder wines, using new oak in 50 percent of the *grands crus* and 30 percent of the village wines. (His uncle used no new oak at all, making wines that were fruitier but had less spicy, smoky complexity.) Bernard prides himself in making richer, more powerful and concentrated wines, adding that new oak helps soften the tannins and the fruit to produce the polished style he seeks.

Bright and eloquent, Bernard, 34, rattles off facts and figures like a well-rehearsed university lecturer. He brims with confidence as he declares that his intention is to fashion wines that are accessible within 10 years. He believes old wines all taste the same, claiming they lose fruit and the distinctive taste of their vineyard when they mature. But he still manages to pack plenty of flavor into his *grands crus*.

Domaine Gros Frère et Soeur

The following 1966-1990 wines were tasted by *The Wine Spectator* editors and rated on the 100-point scale: 95-100, classic; 90-94,



Domaine Gros Frère et Soeur's Colette Gros and nephew Bernard, who serves as winemaker. Colette combined her inheritance with brother Gustave's (now deceased) to form the estate in 1963.

outstanding; 80-89, good to very good; 70-79, average; 60-69, below average; 50-59, poor. Barrel samples are scored in five-point ranges. Dates in parentheses indicate when the tasting notes were first published. Wines tasted by me are followed by my initials. "\$NA" means price not available.

95-100 **Domaine Gros Frère et Soeur Richebourg 1990 (barrel sample):** Fabulous texture, with a lovely array of black cherry, violet, rose petal and red licorice flavors that build beautifully on the supple finish. Try after 1994. —PHM

95 **Domaine Gros Frère et Soeur Richebourg 1989 (\$130):** A brooding monster, with Port-like aromas and concentration, tons of black cherry, chocolate and cedar flavors and a big tannic grip. Try from 1995 to '97. (1/31/92)

90-94 **Domaine Gros Frère et Soeur Clos Vougeot 1990 (barrel sample):** Terrific intensity, with toasty violet and chocolate notes that are amplified by wonderfully seductive wild berry and black cherry flavors. A complex wine that's well worth seeking out for its impeccable balance. —PHM

92 **Domaine Gros Frère et Soeur Grands Echézeaux 1989 (\$80):** An extremely aromatic, fresh style of Grands Echézeaux, with clean berry and fruit flavors and compact, hard tannins. Built for aging.

Try from 1994 to '97. (1/31/92)
91 **Domaine Gros Frère et Soeur Clos Vougeot Musigni 1989 (\$60):** Offers an impressive concentration of fruit and tannins. The smoke, berry and violet aromas and flavors are superb and very classy. Try in 1993. (1/31/92)

91 **Domaine Gros Frère et Soeur Vosne-Romanée 1989 (\$39):** Aromatic and concentrated, with full-throated plum and strawberry aromas and flavors. Try after 1994. (1/31/92)

85-89 **Domaine Gros Frère et Soeur Vosne-Romanée 1990 (barrel sample):** A harmonious package, bursting with violet and cherry aromas and flavors. A charmer, with an almost sweet finish. Should be ready for drinking soon after release. —PHM

85-89 **Bourgogne Hautes Côtes de Nuits 1990 (barrel sample):** A cuvée made for shipping to the United States, with new oak. Offers roasted bread, vanilla and black cherry notes and a nicely layered finish that has a solid backbone of tannin. —PHM

85 **Domaine Gros Frère et Soeur Vosne Romanée 1966 (half-bottle) (\$NA):** A brick-colored wine that is light but holding up well, with spicy truffle, licorice and ripe cherry notes and a lovely, supple, sweet finish that makes it pleasant to drink. —PHM

Branching Out in Pommard

reputations [as winemakers and vintners], and a balanced family and professional life."

By birth, Madame Gros is neither a Gros nor a Burgundian; she was born Jeanine Deville, the daughter of a wood broker, in the French Jura region that borders Switzerland. She made Burgundy her home in 1954 when she married Jean Gros, one of four children of Louis Gros, a man who had amassed one of the Côte d'Or's most impressive domains by the time of his death in 1951.

Louis Gros' children—Gustave, François, Colette and Jean—split up their father's estate, *Domaine Louis Gros*, in 1963 into four equal parts. How the Gros children then managed their inheritance—bartering vineyards, starting and ending alliances and feuds, naming and renaming domains and, in recent years, passing on the family patrimony to the next generation—is a Byzantine tale. One constant throughout the family saga, however, is a commitment to this golden rule: Buy but never sell vineyards.

This explains how the Gros family has prospered by more than doubling its vineyard holdings, which has proved extremely shrewd because the value of the vineyards has increased enormously in recent decades.

Domaine Jean Gros, for instance, almost tripled its vineyard holdings—from 9 to 26 acres—in less than a generation. Jean and Jeanine inherited some land, sold some that was unsuitable for vineyards and bought more that was. They planted Pinot Noir on some undeveloped parcels.

Madame Gros sold assets she had inherited from her parents and invested the money in Burgundy. "And we saved a lot," she says. "We didn't buy a chalet in the Alps or a house in the Midi. We put our money in vineyards."

Illnesses and a death among the Gros brothers left Madame Gros' children in strategic positions within the family domains, and made her a matriarch.

In 1975, her husband lay in a coma for months, his life threatened by meningitis, a dangerous brain disease. When he regained consciousness, Jean Gros was deaf and suffering from vertigo. He could no longer work in the cellars because mundane tasks such as climbing stairways and ladders could prove fatal. He couldn't work in the vineyards because bending down made him dizzy. His wife took over administering the estate alone, while the couple's son Michel replaced his father as the domain's winemaker. Jean Gros has turned his attention to raising wild boars and is not involved in the day-to-day business of running the winery.

Jean and Jeanine Gros' youngest son, Bernard, became winemaker of *Domaine Gros Frère et Soeur* as a result of another illness in the family. In 1980, Jean's brother Gustave, the founder of *Gros Frère et Soeur* with his sister Colette, suffered from kidney failure, and asked for Bernard's help. Gustave died in 1984, at the age of 59.

Madame Gros' daughter, Anne-Françoise, also became involved in *Domaine Gros Frère et Soeur* after Gustave became ill. She worked on the administrative side of the business. "I started out helping my uncle Gustave, and that got me back into wine," she says. She frequently consults her mother about *Domaine A-F Gros* in Pommard, producing wines from vine-

Pommard, France

Vosne-Romanée may be the Gros family's hometown, but not every Gros lives or makes wine in that village. Take Anne-Françoise Gros, 35, who launched her *Domaine A-F Gros* with the 1988 vintage.

She is married to a prominent vintner, 37-year-old François Parent of Pommard, the town south of Beaune in the heart of the Côte de Beaune. He makes his wife's wines, from her Côte de Nuits vineyards, in the same cellar where he produces his excellent, deep *premier cru* Pommards *Epenots* and *Rugiens*. *Domaine A-F Gros* makes, on average, 1,800 cases a year from about 10 acres of vineyards.

But it gets more complicated. The flagship wine of *Domaine A-F Gros*, the *Richebourg*, is made by Anne-Françoise's brother, Michel Gros, winemaker at *Domaine Jean Gros*. Her *Richebourg* is actually the same wine as Michel's *Domaine Jean Gros Richebourg* because they are vinified together, and just bottled under different labels. (Quantities are so small that it's not worth it to vinify the wines separately.)

Michel also takes care of his sister's vineyards; his team of pickers harvests her *Echézeaux*, *Vosne-Romanée* and *Hautes Côtes de Nuits* vineyards. Her grapes are then trucked for the one-hour trip to Pommard where they are vinified.

Anne-Françoise readily admits that she is no *vigneronne*. There may not have been a *Domaine A-F Gros* if not for this fortuitous marriage. "Like her mother, she is not a *terroiriste* [someone who enjoys cultivating the land], and it would shame Anne-Françoise to death to be caught on a tractor," says Anne-Françoise's mother, Jeanine Gros.

Slim and elegant, with jet-black hair and finely chiseled features, Anne-Françoise looks glamorous in the fashionable clothes she likes to wear. She is the second of Jean and Jeanine Gros' three children.

In 1988, in time for the harvest, Anne-Françoise's parents gave her some of the *Domaine Jean Gros* vineyards, as sort of an advance on her inheritance; the move was part of the financial juggling act that many vineyard owners must go through to escape huge inheritance taxes upon the death of the parents.

Domaine A-F Gros received 1.7 acres of *Vosne-Romanée Village Aux Réas* (average annual production of 300 cases), 0.7 of an acre of *Vosne-Romanée Village Maizières* (149 cases), 0.8 of an acre of other *Vosne-Romanée Village* vines (180 cases), a half-acre of *Richebourg* (80 cases), 5 acres of *Hautes Côtes de Nuits* (1,000 cases) and about two-thirds of an acre of *grand cru Echézeaux* (100 cases).

At *Domaine A-F Gros*, Parent says

yards her parents have transferred to her as a sort of advance inheritance. "We now speak almost only business when we see each other," says Madame Gros.

At *Domaine Anne & François Gros*, the third big Gros estate, Anne began to work in the winery in 1986, because her father, François, suffered from heart com-



Anne-Françoise Gros launched *Domaine A-F Gros* with the 1988 vintage. Her brother Michel makes the estate's *Richebourg*, while her husband, François Parent, makes the domain's other wines.

he makes his wife's wines like he makes his Pommards, destemming all grapes before pressing to prevent a green taste in the wine. The grapes macerate for about 48 hours before fermentation, which lasts 12 to 14 days. Parent presses down the cap two or three times a day to produce maximum extraction of color and matter in the *A-F Gros* wines. Sixty percent of the *Echézeaux* and 30 percent of the *Vosne-Romanée Village* wines are aged in new oak.

Domaine A.-F. Gros

I tasted the following 1988-1990 wines in Europe and rated them on *The Wine Spectator* 100-point scale: 95-100, classic; 90-94, outstanding; 80-89, good to very good; 70-79, average; 60-69, below average; 50-59, poor. Barrel samples are scored in five-point ranges.

- 93 *Domaine A-F Gros Echézeaux* 1989: A sensational *Echézeaux*, extremely concentrated. A real gem, made from low yields, it is almost sweet on the finish, with roasty violet and blackberry notes from start to finish. Give it time to show all it has. Try 1994 to '95.
- 90-*Domaine A-F Gros Echézeaux*

94 1990 (barrel sample): Very clean, with lovely pure fruit extract. Dark and closed, this shows terrific black cherry and violet notes, with wonderful finesse and a stylish finish.

90 *Domaine A-F Gros Vosne-Romanée Les Maizières* 1989: Seductive and charming, very ripe and aromatic, it's full of pretty wild flower and sweet black cherry aromas and flavors, vanilla, chocolate and cedar notes and freshly cut roses on the finish. Firm enough to suggest drinking in 1994 or '95.

89 *Domaine A-F Gros Vosne-Romanée Aux Réas* 1989: Not as immediately charming as the *Maizières*, but firmer and deeper, it's rich and delicious on the palate, with blueberry, currant, cedar and cherry notes. Needs time to come around. Try 1995 to '96.

88 *Domaine A-F Gros Vosne-Romanée Maizières* 1988: Closed and shy on the nose, quite hard and unyielding, but deep, ripe and rich, with brooding black cherry, currant and raspberry. A lovely wine that will need time to come around.

85-*Domaine A-F Gros Vosne-Romanée Aux Réas* 1990 (barrel sample): A very pretty wine, full of finesse, with raspberry and cherry flavors. Made in a supple style. Should improve with age.

lications. She vinified her first vintage in 1988.

"Poor health was the cause of their generation," says Madame Gros, referring to her husband's and his brothers' illnesses. "World War II was hard on them. There was not much food. They had a tough youth."

Since her brother Gustave's death, Colette is sole owner of *Gros Frère et Soeur*, and at age 57 has not yet taken the legal steps to pass on the estate to the next generation. Inheritance taxes can reach nearly 60 percent of the value of the vineyards, and her relatives have tried to convince Colette to protect her estate

Right, Jean and Jeanine Gros. Originally from the Jura region of France, Jeanine made Burgundy her home in 1954 when she married Jean. Far right, the new generation of Gros vintners (clockwise from top left): Anne, Anne-Françoise, Michel and Bernard



from this tax burden by reorganizing its ownership, partly by passing it on to her nieces and nephews.

This unsolved issue is a sore subject for Madame Gros. She worries that the family may have to sell more vineyards than would otherwise be necessary to afford the estate taxes upon Colette's death. "Even if we save by eating rice for

the rest of our lives, we may not be able to keep all the vines," says Bernard, the estate's talented winemaker.

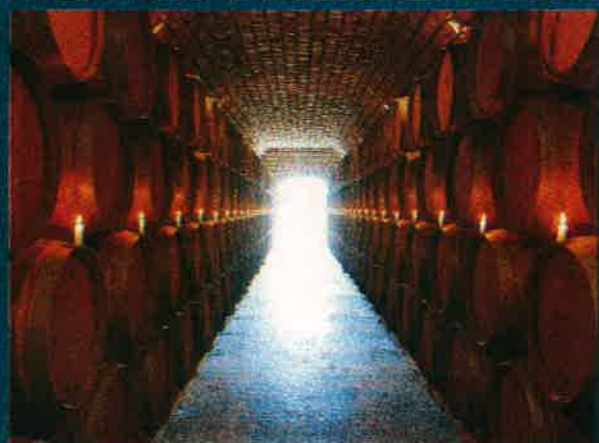
Although the estate tax could break up Domaine Gros Frère et Soeur, leaving Bernard in the lurch, he tries to keep his mind on making the best wines he can. Under the Gros family's complex ownership structure, the younger Gros

members co-own much of the vineyards they till; thus, Michel works vines at Domaine Jean Gros that one day will be split up among him, his sister and brother Bernard. The same thing is true with the vineyards cared for by Bernard at Domaine Gros Frère et Soeur.

Because all four younger family members will inherit pieces of their aunt

Colette's Domaine Gros Frère et Soeur, they all stand to lose from poor estate planning. And that would go against the grain established by Madame Gros. If they lose vineyards and must cut back production, it won't be for lack of trying, because the younger generation, like Madame Gros, wants nothing more than to keep it all in the family. □

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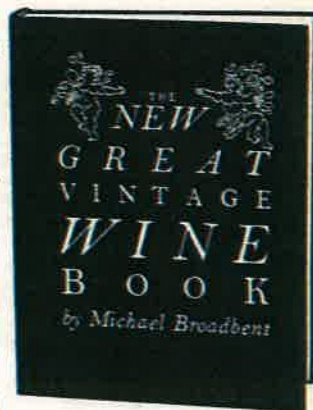
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François Gros' daughter Anne took control of his winery and boosted its reputation

In With the New

Vosne-Romanée, France

At Domaine Anne & François Gros, a generational struggle has ended with daughter Anne, 26, in firm command of a winery that's clearly on the upswing.

Tensions have subsided somewhat since the days when father François, 61, banned Anne from working in the winery. François, now retired, still teases his winemaker daughter, commenting about her wines, and not always favorably. "He didn't think girls belonged in a winery," says Anne.

But the charming, smart Anne rolls with the punches, her hide thickened by all those years when she had to struggle to be taken seriously. When her father exiled her from the winery, the willful Anne walked down the street and trained under her supportive cousin, Michel Gros, the 36-year-old winemaker of Domaine Jean Gros. She also studied viticulture in Beaune and enology in Dijon.

It didn't take long for her father to conclude that Anne had wine in her blood, just like generations of Gros family members before her, with the possible exception of François himself. He let his domaine slide a bit, according to his relatives, because he lacked the passion needed in this business and didn't have the robust health to cultivate his vineyards.

Not so with his healthy daughter. On the eve of giving birth last year to her first child, Anne was working in the cellar. "She is the one who goes up and drives the tractor in the vineyards," says her aunt, Jeanine Gros. "She has great energy. In two years, she has brought up the reputation of the domaine and succeeded in making people talk about her. He [François] should thank his daughter."

She started working at the winery in 1986, but 1988 was the first vintage she can claim as her own. Her 1989 Richebourg was rated 97 in a *Wine Spectator* tasting of more than 550 Burgundies from top Côte d'Or producers last year. She vinifies in a winery situated on the outskirts of town and after fermentation trucks the wine to a cellar underneath her father's home in the center of Vosne-Romanée.

The estate makes an average of about 2,000 cases a year from 11 acres in these appellations: 3.7 acres of

Bourgogne Rouge (750 cases on average yearly), 1 acre of Vosne-Romanée Village (155 cases), 2.7 acres of Chambolle-Musigny (500 cases), 2.3 acres of Clos Vougeot (360 cases) and 1.5 acres of Richebourg (233 cases).

Domaine Anne & François Gros

The following 1989-1990 wines were tasted by *Wine Spectator* editors and rated on the 100-point scale: 95-100, classic; 90-94, outstanding; 80-89, good to very good; 70-79, average; 60-69, below average; 50-59, poor. Barrel samples are scored in five-point ranges. Dates in parentheses indicate when the tasting notes were first published. Wines tasted by me are followed by my initials.

97 Domaine Anne & François Gros Richebourg 1989: Decadent, with intense, gamy, smoky, fruity flavors, velvety tannins and an ultralong, flavorful finish. Try from 1994 to '98. (1/31/92)

90-Domaine Anne & François 94 Gros Clos Vougeot Le Grand Maupertuis 1990 (barrel sample): Quite green, hard and inky, backed by plenty of deep, rich black cherry and currant notes. The finish is rather intense, but harmonious and shaded with a touch of mint. —PHM

90-Domaine Anne & François 94 Gros Richebourg 1990 (barrel sample): A very elegant style, quite racy and almost lean, but focused and well made. Better on the nose than palate, with violet, wild berry and cherry notes and an ethereal finish. —PHM

90-Domaine Anne & François 94 Gros Vosne-Romanée 1990 (barrel sample): Very aromatic, with extremely appealing wild berry, black cherry and floral notes and a taut finish that is supple yet intense. Has lots of flesh now, but try in 1994. —PHM

90 Domaine Anne & François Gros Clos Vougeot Le Grand Maupertuis 1989 (\$75): Excellent and understated, with roasty berry and plum flavors and silky tannins. Try in 1993. (1/31/92)

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