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91 pts

**Château des Rontets 2015 Saint-Amour Côte de Besset**

**Saint Amour, Beaujolais**

**Red wine from France**

**Drinking window: 2020 - 2026**

Brilliant ruby. Highly perfumed, mineral-accented dark berry and floral aromas show excellent clarity and lift. Chewy and focused on the palate, offering intense blackberry and cherry liqueur flavors enlivened by a spicy element and a suggestion of candied violet. Picks up a hint of gaminess with air that carries into a very long, juicy finish shaped by dusty, building tannins.

**Josh Reynolds. Tasting date: December 2017**

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From 2015 Beaujolais: Monumental But Often Atypical (Dec 2017)

**Château Des Rontets**

**Grape/Blend**

Gamay

**Release price**

Not Available

**Château des Rontets 2015 Pouilly-Fuissé Les Birbettes****Mâconnais, Burgundy****White wine from France****Drinking window: 2017 - 2024**

(14.6% alcohol): Pale bright yellow. A bit more late-harvest in style on the nose than the Pierrefolle, offering scents of orange, apricot, hazelnut and macadamia. Quite plush and seamless but not hot or harsh, with its flavors of orange marmalade and nuts showing a slight sweetness (3.3 g/l) nicely countered by 4 grams of acidity. In a rather extreme style but finishes very long and powerful. I'd like to come back to this wine in five years, after it has had a chance to lose some of its baby fat. (Incidentally, Montrasi showed me a bottle of the 2014 and while that wine was a bit nuttier than Montrasi expected, its combination of penetrating soft citrus, hazelnut and smoke flavors and mineral-driven acidity was exhilarating and palate-staining, but this wine, which I rated 93 points on this occasion, still needs a couple more years of patience.)

**Stephen Tanzer. Tasting date: October 2017**

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From Mâconnais 2016 and 2015: Dealing with the Elements (Nov 2017)

**Château Des Rontets**

This estate lost 70% of its crop to the hail in 2016, making an average yield of just 18 hectoliters per hectare, and actually purchased some grapes for the first time to partly make up for the lost production. The harvest began on September 16 and was finished in just three and a half days owing to the tiny quantity, said Fabio Montrasi. He told me that the '16s are "a little like the '14s, with pHs on the high side, normal sugars, but healthy acidity levels around 4.5 grams per liter." The young '16s from barrel showed impressive potential.

Vinous reader may recall that I did not provide tasting notes on Montrasi's 2015s last year as they were still fermenting their sugars. In the end, they only finished in the spring of 2017 (they were bottled between April and July) and even then some residual sugar remained. "The wines were very high in alcohol and the yeasts were tired, so we had to inoculate to finish the fermentations," Montrasi explained. "But the wines have turned out less extreme than I feared."

**Grape/Blend**

Chardonnay

**Release price**

Not Available

**Château des Rontets 2015 Pouilly-Fuissé Pierrefolle****Mâconnais, Burgundy****White wine from France****Drinking window: 2017 - 2023**

(15.3% alcohol, the highest of these 2015s; this wine and the Les Birbettes were bottled in July of this year): Medium yellow. Distinctly exotic aromas of mango, quince, mandarin orange and honey; one senses the high alcohol here. Fat and moderately sweet, conveying an impression of lowish acidity but huge dry extract. Quite billowy in the middle, showing good fruit for its elevated alcohol but not quite the layers or length of the '16--and a bit less refined on the back end. But this wine avoids the touch of finishing bitterness shown today by the 2015 Clos Varambon. This wine has 3.76 grams of acidity with a pH of 3.36.

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**Grape/Blend**

Chardonnay

**Release price**

Not Available

**Château des Rontets 2015 Pouilly-Fuissé Clos Varambon****Mâconnais, Burgundy****White wine from France****Drinking window: 2017 - 2021**

Pale bright yellow. Very ripe aromas of yellow stone fruits and orange. Dense, thick and powerful; a bit aggressive following the estate's '16s but with surprising freshness to its slightly warm yellow fruit flavors. I would not describe this wine as particularly refined but it's not over the top either. Finishes with a touch of youthful bitterness. Incidentally, Montrasi told me that his rather extreme 2003s, which finished with between four and six grams per liter residual sugar but were not filtered (the '15s *were*), eventually fermented a bit more in the bottle "and may have enjoyed a second youth about five years ago."

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