

Domaine Roger/Joseph Belland (Santenay)

2007	Chassagne-Montrachet "Clos Pitois" 1er	red	88
2007	Les Maranges "La Fussièrè" 1er	red	87
2007	Pommard "Les Cras"	red	85
2007	Santenay "Les Charmes"	red	86
2007	Santenay "La Comme" 1er	red	87
2007	Santenay "Les Gravières" 1er	red	88
2007	Santenay "Beauregard" 1er	red	88
2007	➔ Volnay "Santenots" 1er	red	91

Roger Belland succinctly noted that 2007 "gave us a growing season that was the exact opposite of 2006. It's like the temperature spikes were reversed. 2006 was cold and delayed at first, 2007 was hot and early. 2006 was blazing hot in the middle, 2007 was cool, gloomy and wet. 2006 harvested late, 2007 harvested early. We began picking the reds on the 5th of September and there was no problem with rot at all and the only sorting necessary was for under ripe berries. I used between 25 and 30% whole cluster for most of the reds and I really like what the vintage gave us. I know that I will be in the minority but here at least, I believe that our 2007s are every bit as good as our 1999s." As I have noted before but it bears repeating, Belland has an interesting approach to vinifying his reds as he ferments very slowly, indeed up to 6 weeks at very low temperatures and then lets them spike at the end for one to four days. He's careful to note that these spikes are never higher than 40° C. I say the approach is interesting as it gives the wines two distinctly different aspects. Oddly, the long *cuvaison* does not (typically) impart the very firm structure of a long vinification nor does it give the slightly cooked fruit of those domaines that heat to even higher levels. It does confer a certain individualistic mouth feel to the wines and one either likes that or one doesn't. It's not classic but it's not "gummy" or excessively suave and round either. In another change reported last year, Belland has now gone 100% to Diam corks, which are a composite so there are no more TCA-affected wines. He told me that after one year, he likes the results so far and has decided to continue using them. How the wines will age is another question but Belland explains that he has done tests and is satisfied that his wines will age as well as before. Time will tell. The reds were bottled between November and January. I repeat here what I have said for the last several vintages, which is that Belland's wines represent very good quality/price values, provided of course that you like the style as it won't be for everyone. I wish to stress that the style is not extreme but neither is it traditional. Lastly, while I don't personally see the same quality in these 2007s as Belland's 1999s, I would highlight for readers that the '07 Santenots is quite a lovely wine and worth a look, especially for the price – it was made with 100% whole cluster.

2007 Les Maranges "La Fussièrè": This is an unusually ripe '07 and borders on being *surmature* with an earthy yet still acceptably fresh nose offering plum and cassis notes that merge into textured and supple flavors that display almost no rusticity though the depth is limited on the otherwise delicious finish. To drink young. 87/2010+

2007 Santenay "Les Charmes": This is also rather ripe yet slightly fresher with an aromatic profile of red berries, plus, warm earth and a hint of *animale* that leads to medium-bodied flavors that possess good energy and punch, all wrapped in a finish that is soft and forward. As with the prior wine, the depth is limited but this is easy to like and will drink well young. 86/2010+

2007 Santenay "La Comme": Here the nose is more in keeping with the general style of the vintage with a ripe, pure and more complex set of aromas that revolve primarily around plum, cassis, spice and a hint of cranberry that is picked up by the precise and lightly mineral infused flavors that possess limited depth and a hint of finishing dryness that my score assumes will round out with a year in bottle. 87/2011+

2007 Santenay "Beauregard": The nose closely resembles that of the La Comme though here the earthiness is a bit more pronounced and continues onto the detailed, precise and slightly more complex middle weight flavors that culminate in a solidly long finish. This offers good if not exceptional quality for what it is. 88/2011+

2007 Santenay "Les Gravières": A slightly grapey but fresh nose of red berries and cassis that merges into ripe, textured and precise flavors that possess an attractive texture on the supple, round and delicious finish where the only nit is a slight edginess where again the score assumes that this will round out after a year in bottle. 88/2011+

2007 Chassagne-Montrachet "Clos Pitois": (a huge 3 ha *monopole* of the Domaine, planted 50% to each color and which sits at the south end of the commune on the Santenay border; the pinot vines are approximately 60 years of age). An expressive and relatively pretty nose of red raspberry, cranberry and a touch of plum slides gracefully into round and nicely detailed flavors that deliver good volume with a subtle hint of minerality. Like the Gravières, there is a hint of backend acidity which doesn't really intrude yet it prevents this from ascending to the next level though I do like the length. 88/2011+

2007 Pommard "Les Cras": There is a slightly roasted, even cooked character to the nose that seriously limits the appeal though the rich and full flavors possess a better sense of freshness on the textured, round and solidly long finish. However, the nose is difficult to like unless you appreciate very ripe fruit. 85/2010+

2007 Volnay "Santenots": (fashioned with 100% whole cluster in 2007). An intensely floral nose of red and blue pinot fruit that is easily the most elegant among this group introduces rich, round, detailed and solidly concentrated middle weight flavors that carry both depth and excellent length. While it's not unexpected given the class of the Santenots vineyard, this really is head and shoulders above everything else here. Recommended. 91/2012+