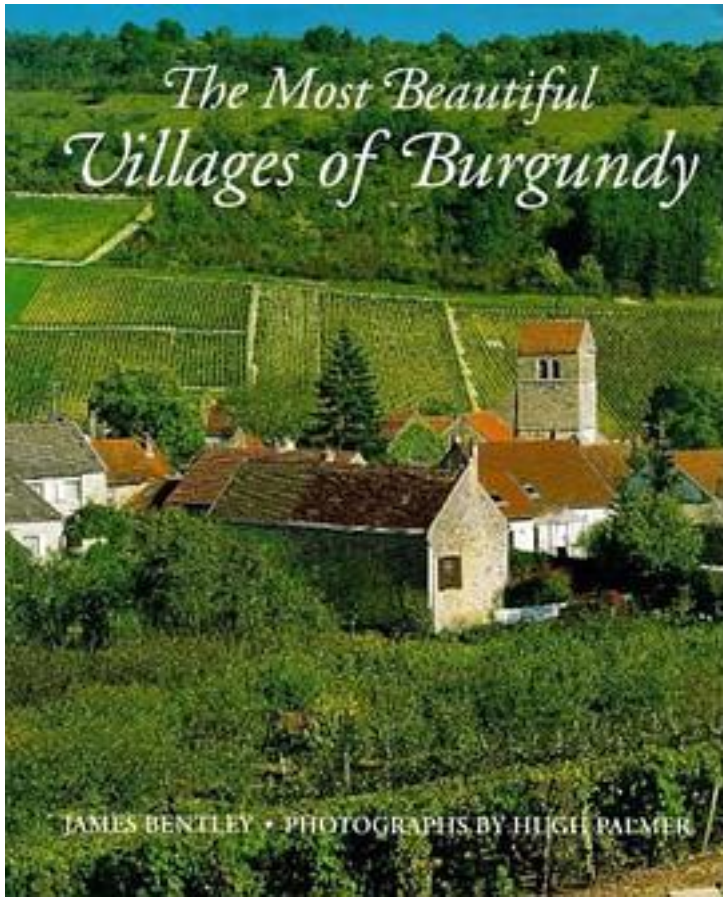


The Most Beautiful Villages of Burgundy



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Synonymous with fine wine, elegant cuisine, and good living, Burgundy is also a land of great architecture and appealing villages. Many of these ancient communities stand beside the leisurely rivers that wend their way through the duchy--the beginnings of the Seine, the delightful Yonne, the Arroux, which flows to the Loire, and the Ouche,

which eventually adds its waters to the Saone. And beside these rivers flow another eight hundred miles of languid canals, bordered by woodlands, pasture, and some of the greatest vineyards in the world. The four departements of Burgundy offer a delightful diversity in their villages. Many of those of the Yonne, a country of meadows and river valleys, are waterside communities, while others like Ancy-le-Franc and Vezelay cluster around architecturally splendid houses or gems of Romanesque churches. The villages of the Cte d'Or read like a register of the world's finest wines: Montrachet, Meursault, Pommard. There are other delights, too: Flavigny-sur-Ozerain, a beautifully preserved village of Gothic and Renaissance houses, or Semur-en-Auxois, a medieval fortified town. In the Nièvre lies the natural park of the Morvan, with a wealth of hill-villages set among luxuriant woodland. Saone-et-Loire, the southernmost departement of Burgundy, includes the Maconnais wine country, in which are gathered a notable group of well-preserved medieval villages, famous for their Romanesque churches. The influence of religious architecture can be seen everywhere in the duchy, the work of Benedictine and Cistercian monks who spread the Romanesque style. But the villages of Burgundy are much richer than the twin presences of vineyard and church would suggest. The variety, celebrated here by James Bentley and Hugh Palmer, is nowhere better suggested than in the journey from north to south, from villages of black-slate roofs to those where red and ochre tiles announce the Midi. Burgundy's fascinating history and present-day devotion to the fine arts and crafts of living well are justly celebrated, and its villages make this land one of the most enchanting in the western world.

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