

# BEAUJOLAIS

## WHAT IS BEAUJOLAIS NOUVEAU?

Beaujolais Nouveau began as a local event in Burgundy, France, to celebrate the end of the harvest and congratulate the workers and wine growers for a successful growing season. But soon it became a celebration across the world, where people gathered to taste the first wines of the new season, and welcome the coming holidays. So it always makes us think ... a party!

Beaujolais Nouveau gets its easy drinkability from a winemaking process called *carbonic maceration*—also called “whole berry fermentation”. This technique keeps the fresh, fruity quality of the wine, without extracting the bitter tannins from the grape skins and seeds. It differs from the normal fermentation process in that the grapes are not crushed first. Instead, the whole grapes are put into a vat with a layer of carbon dioxide over the top so that the yeast doesn't begin fermentation from the top. The grapes at the bottom are crushed under the weight of the grapes above, and fermentation begins inside the grape so less tannin is extracted. The resulting wine has appealing aromas, lighter and fruitier flavors, and less tannic acidity. Carbonic maceration can be used for making any light, fruity red wine, but is most famous for its use in making Beaujolais. It is never (or almost never) used for making white wines, because

white grapes generally have fewer tannins than red grapes.

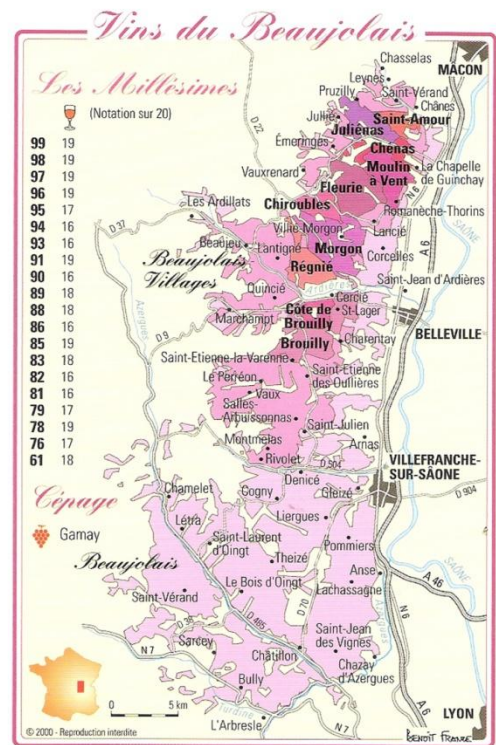
The 3rd Thursday of November is always the official release day for that year's Beaujolais Nouveau wines, regardless of when the harvest began. This tradition was established to ensure that no wines were sold before fermentation was complete.

Beaujolais Nouveau should be served slightly cool, but not cold. At about 55°F the wine is more refreshing and its bright fruit is more up front than if you serve it at room temperature.

## WHAT IS CRU BEAUJOLAIS?

A map of the Beaujolais region is a great example of how an Appellation Control

The 12 appellations of the region are divided into three categories or levels of quality - basic Beaujolais, Beaujolais-



Villages and the 10 Crus of Beaujolais.  
(Think of the Cru as specific villages.)

About half of all Beaujolais produced is sold as basic Beaujolais, with most coming from the southernmost part of the region. These vineyards are flatter and produce grapes that only have enough sugar in them to make wines with a minimum alcohol level of 9% per volume. These are light, flowery and fruity wines that should be drunk young, and are not intended for putting away. Beaujolais-Villages is the next quality level, and these wines account for about a quarter of the region's annual production. Grapes for these wines must come from at least 2 of the 39 villages in the northern part of the region. This part of Beaujolais has more hills so the growing conditions are better, which makes better grapes. Better grapes make better wines with more complexity and depth. They can be kept from one to three years.

Within the northernmost part of the region are the 10 Crus - Saint-Amour, Juliènas, Chénas, Moulin-à-Vent, Fleurie, Chiroubles, Morgon, Régnié, Brouilly, and Côte de Brouilly - that have been singled out and named due to their distinctive characteristics. That being said, these distinctive characteristics are not always that easy to detect and can be quite subjective. Brouilly is said to be grapey, while Fleurie is said to have the aroma of violets and Saint-Amour of peach. Brouilly, Côte de Brouilly, Fleurie, Saint-Amour, and Chénas, share a common elegance and fragrant delicacy, while Juliènas, Morgon, and

Moulin-à-Vent, are fuller, have a deeper flavor and have more lasting power.

Chiroubles is the highest in altitude of the cru wines and is the most balanced. The wine made here is highly sought after for its lacy texture and suppleness. Here is a little bit of wine trivia. Victor Pulliat came from the village of Chiroubles. He is the man who perfected the technique of grafting French vines on to American rootstock back in 1888, thus saving the vines of France from phylloxera.

Régnié is the most recent of the Beaujolais wines to be assigned the prestigious cru status, joining the others in 1988.

The most famous of the cru is probably Moulin-à-Vent. Its name comes from an ancient windmill built on the hills surrounding the town of Romanèche-Thorins. It's great aging potential and exceptional quality that is generally attributed to the granite subsoil of the area.

Chénas is next door to Moulin-à-Vent and is the rarest of the 10 crus. It has more aroma than Juliènas, and can be a wine for putting away.

Brouilly and Côte de Brouilly are separate cru; with Côte de Brouilly grown on the volcanic hillsides of the 1585 foot Mont Brouilly, while the grapes of Brouilly are grown on the plains around about it. Brouilly is the largest and highest yielding of the Beaujolais crus with 3000 acres under vine.