

The Personality of Cru Beaujolais, From Elegant to Profound

Burgundy often overshadows Beaujolais, so much so that it's easy to miss the region's many high-value and high-quality bottles. Explore Cru Beaujolais, wines from 10 top sites worthy of aging in your cellar.

BY ROGER VOSS



Sun Rising Over Vineyards of Beaujolais, France / Getty

Often overshadowed by Burgundy to the north, many wine drinkers are not aware of the excellent quality coming out of Beaujolais. We aim to put that right. Excluding the gush of nouveau that hits shelves every November, this region is producing serious wines at attainable prices.

Beaujolais is a region of two halves: In the south, close to the gastronomic city of Lyons, it produces simple, fruity wines, while the north is known for its rich, long-lived wines from the area's iconic granite soils. The grape—Gamay—remains the constant, yet the results are very different depending on soil type and vineyard location.

While some wines in the northern half come from two basic appellations—Beaujolais and Beaujolais-Villages—the best come from a series of 10 individual crus, each with its own personality.

Starting with the lightest of the crus, Brouilly and Régnié are easy, soft and supple, with moderate concentration. Most are ready to drink within a year, yet the best can age for three to four years.

Up the slopes of the Mont de Brouilly, the small Côte de Brouilly makes wines with structure and elegance. Chénas is a deceptive wine—soft to begin with and then with firm tannic structure for aging. Chiroubles, the highest altitude of the crus, is the crispest and purest in fruit. Saint-Amour, the most northerly of the crus, offers powerful, structured wines which can resemble the Pinot Noirs to the north.

Then we come to the big guns among the Beaujolais Crus. Juliéas is spicy, perfumed and richly tannic. Fleurie has a floral character that suits its flowery name, while also having power and concentration. Moulin-à-Vent and Morgon vie for the title of most profound and long-lived of the Beaujolais Crus. Both have a number of fine producers and both are seriously worth of aging.

Recommended Cru Beaujolais Wines

Saint-Amour

Domaine du Clos du Fief 2016 Les Capitans (Saint-Amour); \$25, 93 points. Les Capitans is one of the top sectors of Saint-Amour, producing wines that are perfumed and have great fruit. This wine also has some firm tannins that add to the richness. It is likely to age well and, with its juicy acidity, will be best from late 2018. Skurnik Wines, Inc. **Editors' Choice.**

Domaine de la Pirolette 2016 Saint-Amour; \$25, 91 points. This is the fourth harvest from owners Virginie and Grégory Barbet and they've made a fine job of it. The wine, with its rich black fruits and concentrated tannins has the structure typical of this appellation. The juicy fruits go along with tannins to give a wine that should age. Drink from late 2018. Bertrand's Wines. **Editors' Choice.**

Juliéas

Domaines Laurent Perrachon & Fils 2016 Roche Bleue (Juliéas); \$20, 92 points. With vineyards in the family since 1877, this producer offers a good range of wines, of which this is an excellent example. It is fruity, firm and seriously structured with juicy black fruit and acidity allied to a solid tannic base. Drink this ageworthy wine from 2019. Vineyard Road. **Editors' Choice.**

Domaine des Chers 2016 Vieilles Vignes (Juliéas); \$22, 92 points. From one of the more structured of the cru villages, this wine is full of tannins as well as black-cherry fruit. It is dense from the concentration of old vines as well as the rich fruitiness and acidity of the vintage. This ripe wine will be ready to drink from late 2018. Alain Junguenet Selection. **Editors' Choice.**

Chénas

Domaine Anita 2016 Cuvée P'tit Co Les Brureaux (Chénas); \$25, 92 points. This wine comes from a three-acre parcel of 50-year-old vines. It is beautifully structured with dense tannins as well as deliciously juicy black fruits. The acidity and the firm dry core both point to good aging ability. Drink from mid-2018. AP Wine Imports.

Henry Fessy 2016 Chénas; \$20, 90 points. Chénas, the small appellation next to Moulin-à-Vent, shares something of the same structure. Coming from steep hillside slopes, this wine has a mineral character as well as solid tannins. Its black fruits are still developing, so drink this wine from mid-2018. Louis Latour Inc.

Moulin-à-Vent

Richard Rottiers 2016 Moulin-à-Vent; \$29, 94 points. Made from organically grown grapes, this wine comes from vines that are between 40 and 80 years old. It has structure, tannins and concentration as well as richness, powerful blackberry flavors and a balance with acidity. The wine will age, so drink from 2019. Authentique Vin. **Cellar Selection.**

Château du Moulin-à-Vent 2016 Couvent des Thorins (Moulin-à-Vent); \$20, 93 points. This wine that comes from three different parcels has an open style, ripe with berries and rich flavors. The style is rich and concentrated, with a solid core of tannins. This wine could well age, and it will be best from 2019. Wilson Daniels Ltd. **Cellar Selection.**

Fleurie

Domaine Gaget 2016 La Madone (Fleurie); \$26, 93 points. The chapel of La Madone is the landmark of Fleurie, set at the top of a hill above vineyards. This wine from a five-acre parcel of 70-year-old vines is concentrated and full of ripe black-cherry fruits. Its weight and intensity will allow the wine to age. Drink from 2019. Roche-Mère Wine Selections. **Cellar Selection.**

Domaines Dominique Piron 2016 Fleurie; \$25, 93 points. Produced from vines that are more than 50 years old, this wine is concentrated and dense. It also has the great style and elegance that is the hallmark of Fleurie. Black fruits are cut with good acidity, giving a juicy character to balance the ripe tannins. This beautiful wine will be ready to drink from late 2018. Baron Francois Ltd. **Editors' Choice.**

Chiroubles

Château de Javernand 2016 Indigène (Chiroubles); \$25, 90 points. The name of this cuvée refers to the natural yeast used in fermentation. Bottled without added sulfur, the wine is soft with a direct line of juicy acidity. It is a complex, structured wine with some firm tannins. Drink this wine from 2019. K&L Wine Merchants.

Florent Descombe 2016 Cuvée C (Chiroubles); \$40, 90 points. This wine is rich and ripe with red fruits. Its structure and dry tannins suggest a wine that will age. Red berries, acidity and a dry core point to a well-structured wine to drink from mid-2018.

DHI Selections.

Morgon

Jean-Marc Burgaud 2016 Côte du Py (Morgon); \$28, 94 points. Reveling in the tannins of a young Côte du Py, this wine is rich, structured and dense. The tannins give the dry edge this wine needs to age. Intense with ripe black fruits, this is a powerful wine. Drink from 2019. Ideal Wine and Spirits. **Cellar Selection.**

Domaine des Terres Dorées 2016 Morgon; \$22, 93 points. Fermented with natural yeasts and with little added sulphur, this wine concentrates on its fruit character. Fine tannins, rich black fruits and a dense texture all contribute to its distinctiveness. With its structure and acidity it does need to age. Drink from 2019. Louis/Dressner Selections. **Cellar Selection.**

Régnié

Domaine des Capréoles 2016 Diaclase (Régnié); \$28, 92 points. Produced from organically grown grapes and with 12 months in wood, this wine is open and rich. A Burgundian character gives it a dense texture and obvious aging potential. With firm tannins as well as great red fruits, the wine will age and should be ready to drink from mid-2018. VOS Selections.

Domaine de Colette 2016 Vieilles Vignes (Régnié); \$18, 89 points. A dense planting of old vines has yielding small quantities of concentrated fruit. This wine is dense, with a firm tannic character as well as bold blackberry fruits. It is rich and will age well. Drink from mid-2018. Charles Neal Selections.

Brouilly

Robert Perroud 2016 Pollen (Brouilly); \$25, 91 points. From a selection of the estate's best fruit, this wine is richly structured, firmly textured and likely to age well in the medium term. The black fruits are still young, giving a brightness to the wine that perhaps should be allowed to calm down. Drink this ripe wine from late 2018. Zancanella Importing Co.

Georges Duboeuf 2016 Domaine de Lafayette (Brouilly); \$20, 90 points. Named after the general who was so involved in American independence, this ripe and generous wine is warm with red-berry fruits and attractive acidity. It is smooth, with hints of vanilla and tangy black fruits at the end. Drink now. Quintessential Wines.

Côte de Brouilly

Château Thivin 2016 Cuvée Zaccharie (Côte de Brouilly); \$45, 93 points. This small-production wine, produced from parcels of old vines, is impressive for its richness and density. With flavors from wood aging adding spice as well as giving extra structural dimension, the wine is set for good aging. Do not drink before 2019. Kermit Lynch Wine Merchant. **Cellar Selection.**

Domaine Baron de l'Ecluse 2016 Vieilles Vignes (Côte de Brouilly); \$25, 90 points. This ripe, soft wine is rich with red-cherry fruit and a generous texture from old vines. Spice, fruitiness and a hint of tannins contribute to a wine that is delicious and rounded, ready to drink now. Kirkcrest Imports



About the Author

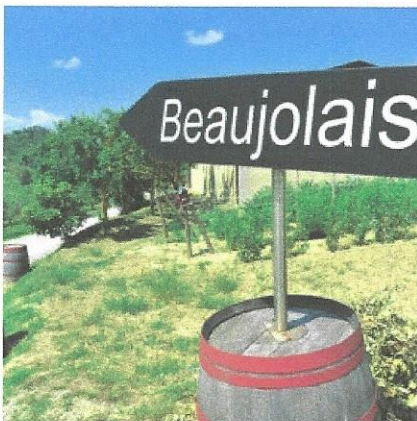
ROGER VOSS

@vossroger

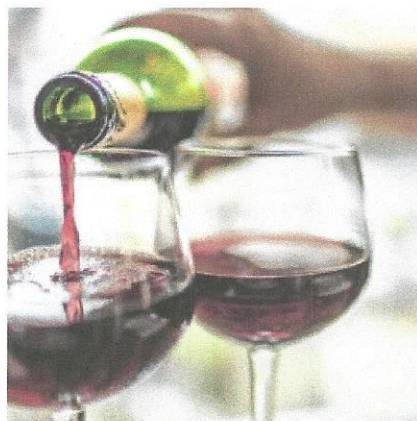
European Editor, Reviews wines from Portugal and France

Roger Voss covers Bordeaux, Burgundy, Champagne, the Loire and South-West France as well as Portugal. His passion is matching food with wine, bringing the pleasures of the table to wine lovers. He has written six books on wine and food, and was previously national correspondent on wine for the London Daily Telegraph. He is based in the Bordeaux region. **Email: rvoss@wineenthusiast.net**

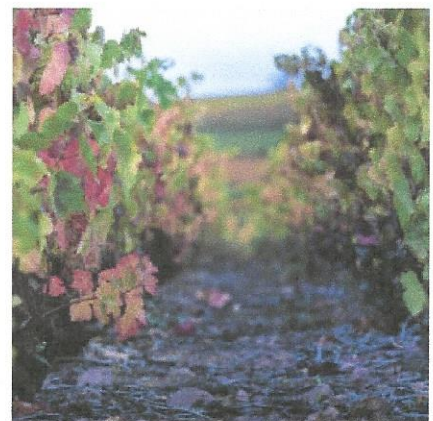
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