

## 16

## Beaujolais

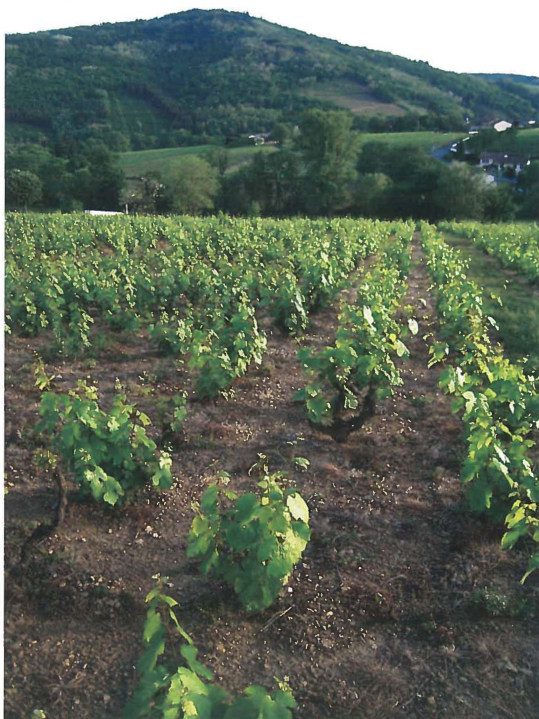
Although it is possible to make red, rosé and white wines in Beaujolais, production is dominated by the red wines made from Gamay. Therefore only these wines will be considered here. Styles range from wines that are light and fruity and best consumed when young, to those that can develop complexity with bottle age.

## GRAPE GROWING

The climate here is similar to the southern Mâconnais and is ideally suited to the early budding and ripening **Gamay**. If not well managed, Gamay can produce large yields, which results in lower-quality wines. It is therefore no surprise that the best wines are made from grapes grown in the granite soils that have low levels of nutrients. This limits the yields and as a result the flavours in the grapes are more concentrated. The traditional method of pruning in the region is called *gobelet*. The vines are pruned to spurs around the head, and then the shoots are tied together, to hold them vertically. However, an increasing number of grape growers are now training their vines along wires to allow for mechanisation.

Gamay gives fragrant wines with aromas of raspberry and cherry fruit. The wines rarely have more than medium levels of tannin and body, and the lightest styles can even be served lightly chilled.

Gamay vines *en gobelet* early in the season.

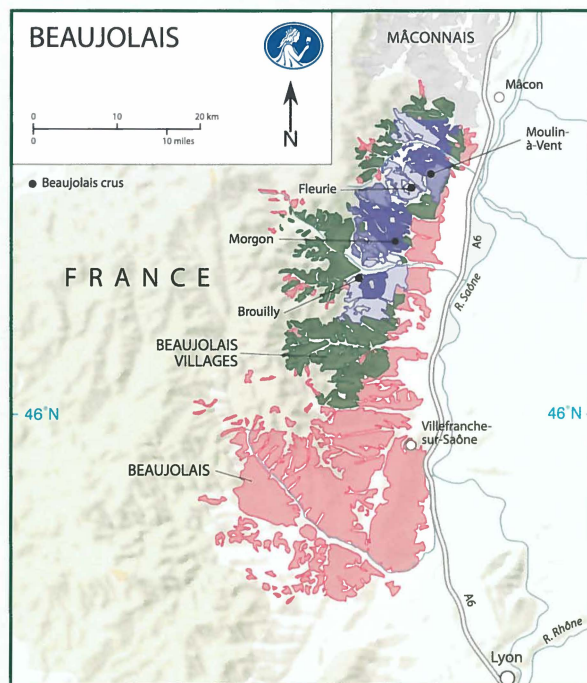


## APPELLATIONS AND WINES

There is a hierarchy of appellations in Beaujolais. At the bottom is the regional appellation of Beaujolais, this is followed by Beaujolais Villages and at the top are the individual appellations of the Beaujolais *crus*.

## Beaujolais and Beaujolais Nouveau

To the east and south of the region lies the alluvial plain of the River Saône and it is here that **Beaujolais** is produced, mainly by carbonic maceration and semi-carbonic maceration. This is also the major source of **Beaujolais Nouveau**, a wine that is specifically made for early drinking. It cannot be released to the consumer until the third Thursday in November after the vintage, and cannot be sold by growers or *négociants* after the following 31 August. Wines labelled as Beaujolais Nouveau can only be of Beaujolais or Beaujolais Villages quality; the ten *crus* cannot be sold in this way. Both Beaujolais and Beaujolais Nouveau are light in body



## KEY

1000 m+

500–1000 m

200–500 m

and tannin, with red berry fruit and often notes of kirsch, banana and cinnamon-like spice from carbonic maceration.

### **Beaujolais Villages and the Beaujolais Crus**

To the north and west of the region, the vineyards are planted on a series of rolling hills, where the granite soils are found. Thirty-nine villages here have the right to call their wine **Beaujolais Villages**. Individual village names rarely appear on wine labels. Beaujolais Villages tend to be made from blending wines from different villages.

Ten villages are entitled to their own appellation; these are the Beaujolais *crus*. The four with the greatest

production are **Brouilly, Morgon, Fleurie** and **Moulin-à-Vent**. Moulin-à-Vent and Morgon often produce the most structured wines. The fruit concentration and level of tannins mean that these wines can improve with bottle-ageing. Brouilly and Fleurie tend to produce lighter, more perfumed styles. A range of techniques may be used in the production of these wines. Many of these wines undergo a crushed-fruit fermentation and some will receive oak ageing, often in large vats rather than casks; the wines rarely display pronounced aromas or flavours of new oak. Other producers use semi-carbonic maceration or a small proportion of whole bunches to give brighter fruit aromas.