

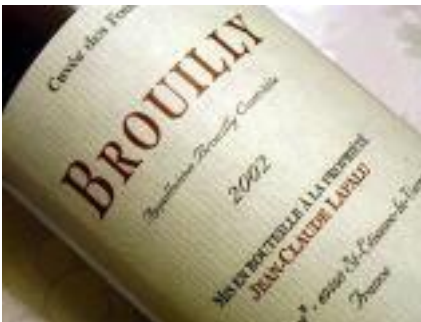
Brouilly

Sometimes a wine the likes of which one has never before tasted lies waiting behind a deceptively familiar label. “Beaujolais,” for example. The low yield, low sulfur, back-to-nature and back-to-the-future wines crafted in recent decades by vintners like Maurice Lapierre and Pierre Chermette have little except a name in common with the ocean that annually laps our shores from this most prosaic of French appellations. Nor do their wines resemble the successive waves of numerous crus and sub-appellations which, frankly, are all but indistinguishable from one another.

Vintner Select has scorned the formulaic mold by which these dubious, tutti-frutti, banana bubble gum, heady, some-times headache-inducing beverages are concocted and to offer you instead wines gloriously redolent of gamay and granite. Still, even we weren't prepared for a new, 21st Century Beaujolais Revolution. But after taking Jean-Claude Lapalu's opening shots, there is no going back!

In an October, 2003 article in Gault-Millau, Manuel Viron - chef of Lyon's notable restaurant Maison Borie - extolled “a winemaker with lots of ideas, always searching, put simply taking a new approach to gamay. [This] shocks more than one person and there are those who cry that it is sacrilegious. But we shall see in a few years ...”

Count on us at Vintner Select to thoroughly investigate any and all charges of vinous sacrilege! What we found was a young man guilty as charged ... guilty of taking a sledgehammer, if not to the palate then certainly to all of one's preconceptions. There is not going to be enough of Lapalu's wines to go around, but once you taste, you might even share the astonishment expressed in a recent issue of *The Wine Advocate*!



Unquestionably, Lapalu is for real and his Beaujolais must be tasted to be believed.”

Pierre Rovani,
The Wine Advocate 8/04

Beaujolais-Villages Brouilly

Varieties: *Gamay*

Total acreage: *Not even 5 acres!*

Average production: *ca. 1,000 cs.*

Vines & vinification: *see below*

Beaujolais-Villages V.V.

One of the three densely-planted parcels of vines for this cuvée is close to a hundred years old, and the average age for the cuvée is well over 50. All are on sandy, decomposed granite. Grapes are hand picked and sorted, loaded by conveyor to avoid damage, and given neither SO₂ nor cultured yeasts. During 8-10 days maceration a wooden grill is used to enhance extraction. The wine stays at least a half year on its fine lees. Around 350-400 cases produced.

Brouilly Vieilles Vignes

These vines were old when Jean-Claude's grandfather began farming them in 1940. Is this where the schist of Côte de Brouilly touches the signature granite of Brouilly? It seems almost to inhabit a hypothetical halfway house between Beaujolais and Priorat! 125-150 cases.

Brouilly Croix des Rameaux

Parcels with optimum exposure are given 10-12 days maceration, aged in 2-3 year-old barriques. 500 cs.

Brouilly Cuvée des Fous

This “fool's cuvée” comes from one acre of 95 year-old vines macerated from three weeks and aged in seasoned barriques ...

Beaujolais-Vil. Rang de Merle

... but surely the inspiration here is even more foolish. Lapalu leaves a portion of the crop hanging for a month or more, then vinifies the often shriveled late-harvested result *a la maceration carbonique*. The fermentation is slow in late Fall and with the by then distinctive ambient yeast populations.



Mont Brouilly from Regnié