

# Selections



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## Introducing the Beautiful Beaujolais from Les Vins du Penlois

Our good friend Graham Nutter, owner of Château Saint Jacques d'Albas was presenting his wines at a SOPEXA trade show in Montreal a while ago and struck up a conversation with the lady serving her products in the adjacent booth (Graham, as all of you who have met him know, is a shade on the garrulous side). It turned out her name was Corrine Besson and she and her wines hailed from Beaujolais. Pretty soon one thing led to another ... she tried his wines and he tried hers (what were you thinking??). Both were mightily impressed with the other's wares.

A few days later, the show, Graham and Corrine put on a repeat performance at the Carlu in



*Les Vins du Penlois near Lancié*

Toronto. I was helping Graham dole out his wonderful Minervois to the thirsty throngs when he told me about the beautiful Beaujolais (the wine, not the woman) he had come across in Montreal. During a rare lull in the elbow bending he introduced me to Corrine. After a few faltering pleasantries (neither of us has quite mastered the other's mother tongue – it is moments like this I wish Hélène was there) I tried her wines. Oh, my, they were good ... fruity, aromatic and pure. Best of all, Corrine told me that they were looking for an Ontario agent. And that is how it happens that we are able to offer you the beautiful Beaujolais from Les Vins du Penlois.

## Beaujolais

About three years ago I joined cousin Robert de Krieger for a driving (and drinking, but not together) tour of the fabulous wine country between Dijon and Avignon. First came the familiar delights of Burgundy - Fixin, Gevry-Chambertin, Clos Vougeot and so many other famous sites capped off by an evening of fine dining in the charming town of Beaune. The next day we headed south to the Beaujolais region of which we knew very little except for the annual Beaujolais Nouveau festivities and the flowery labels of Georges Duboeuf. We were quite unprepared for the



stunning beauty of the Beaujolais countryside ... rolling hills covered with impeccably tended vines punctuated by fairytale villages with vaguely familiar names like Brouilly and Chiroubles. That evening we found a good restaurant that had an excellent cellar of Beaujolais of every type and description. We tried many, for purely academic reasons of course, and became as charmed by the wines as we were with the people and geography.

Beaujolais owes its name to the Sires of Beaujeu, who reigned over this region during the 9th to 11th centuries. Historians believe that wines were first planted here in the Gallo Roman era, dating back to the 4th and 5th century. Beaujolais occupies an area 30 miles long and 8 miles wide in the southernmost part of Burgundy with Mâcon to the north and the Rhône to the south. Lyon, the third largest city in France after Paris and Marseilles, is a half hour south. Beaujolais is very hilly with granite mountainsides and its latitude is similar to that of Portland, Oregon. Vineyards, soils and grape variety - 1/3 of the area (55,000 acres) is covered by vineyards with the granite soil in the northern vineyards giving aromas of ripe fruit and faded roses and the clay soil in the south reminding many of red fruits. Ninety-eight percent of the vineyards are planted in Gamay Noir à Jus Blanc (Gamay) with 2% in Chardonnay, which is used in the small production of Beaujolais Blanc. There are over 4,000 grape growers and 15 million cases of all type of Beaujolais sold worldwide. This area has the highest density of grapevines in the world; over 4,000 vines per acre.

There are two appellations in the region - Beaujolais and Beaujolais Villages. Beaujolais comes mainly from the southern area with a fragrance of red fruit and berries and are mostly consumed within France and the rest of Europe (7 million cases). Beaujolais Villages, the best seller in North America comes mainly from the central and northern part of Beaujolais (37 communes). These wines are soft, velvety and fruity (almost 4 million cases).

There are ten Crus named after ten northern villages. The Cru name will appear on the label, often without the word Beaujolais. Here they are alphabetically: Brouilly - Largest and most southern, grown just below Côte de Brouilly; Chénas - Smallest Cru that ages well; Chiroubles - Highest altitude and most feminine; Côte de Brouilly - Steep slopes on Mont Brouilly; Fleurie - The queen of Beaujolais; Juliéna - The name comes from Julius Caesar; Morgon - Improves with age after one to two years in the bottle; Moulin-à-Vent - Biggest and longest lived, oak aged, named after the windmill, not the village; Régnié - Newest Cru- 1988; Saint-Amour - Most northerly Cru.

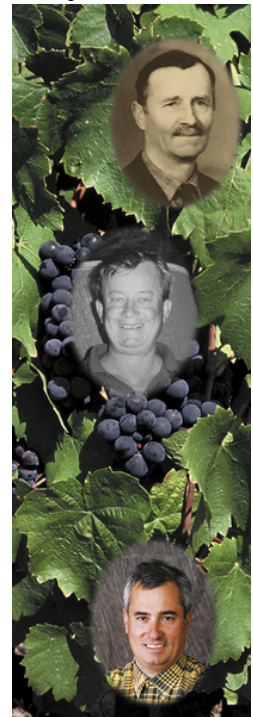
Grape picking in Beaujolais is done manually because machine harvesting is not allowed. Fermentation is accomplished by a unique method known as semi-carbonic maceration where grapes bunches are placed in vats and the weight of the top grapes makes those at the bottom burst and begin to ferment. This warms the vat, causing fermentation to begin inside the skins of the whole grapes. The result is great fruit extraction and wines that benefit from being served slightly chilled.

## Les Vins du Penlois

The Les Vins du Penlois winery is located near Lancié in the northern part of Beaujolais between Morgon and Fleurie. The 25 hectares of beautifully tended vines spread over terroirs in Lancié, Juliéna, Morgon and Chenas which allows the Bessons to produce an exciting array of very different wines.

The Besson family has its roots in the land, having worked it from father to son through countless generations. Maxence Besson's, (the current owner) grandfather moved away from the animal husbandry career of his father to vine growing, starting in Prissé in 1922. He relocated to better vineyards in Chénas in 1925. In the meantime, his brother Paul worked as a cook in the U.S. and when he returned to France he purchased an estate in Lancié and invited his brother to join him there in 1929. When his health failed in 1952, his American wife returned home and sold the property to Maxence's father. He was eighteen at the time and worked the land with passion until eight years ago (although you can still find him among the vines today).

Maxence joined his father in 1977 after having apprenticed to him for four years and the reins (or should that be pruning shears?) were turned over to him about sixteen years ago. Maxence grew up with the estate and it with him ... from four to twenty-five hectares. And, it looks like his son has caught the vintner's bug, all but ensuring the next generation at Les Vins de Penlois. For more details, please visit [www.domaine-du-penlois.com](http://www.domaine-du-penlois.com).



## The Wines of Les Vins du Penlois

We are featuring four wines from Les Vins du Penlois: the festive 2007 Beaujolais-Lancié; the seductive 2006 Beaujolais Villages Cuvée Prestige; the floral 2006 Juliéna, and; the amazing 2007 Moulin-À-Vent. These wines come in **12-bottle cases** and Corrine has created a special Beaujolais sampler case for our wine club – four bottles each of the Beaujolais Lancié, Beaujolais-Villages Cuvée Prestige and the Moulin-à-Vent. We will be taking our order for these wines to the LCBO on **Friday, August 1<sup>st</sup>**.

### 2007 Beaujolais-Lancié – (13.0% Alc./Vol.)

**\$19/btl.; \$228/case of 12**



All of the Penlois wines are harvested by hand and all are made from Gamay Noir (à Jus Blanc). The grapes for the Beaujolais-Lancié (Appellation Beaujolais-Villages Contrôlée) come from the granite slopes bordering the Crus of Morgon, Fleurie and Moulin-à-Vent. The result is a very high quality wine at a very reasonable price. It is a beautiful clear cherry red colour with vibrant aromas of red fruit dominated by black currents and strawberries. This very convivial wine is enjoyable right through a simple meal or at any time for a treat with friends. It should be served chilled (12° - 13°C) and can be laid down for three to six years (although it tastes great right now). [Order](#) some of this festive, well-priced little beauty now.



**2006 Beaujolais-Villages Cuvée Prestige – (13.0% Alc./Vol.) \$22/btl.; \$264/case of 12**



The vines for this very serious, seductive wine are over fifty years old and the yield is quite low. The grapes, in full bunches go through a long fermentation process with the cap being punched down regularly. It is a deep red colour with floral and fruity aromas. It is a very feminine, elegant wine, but surprisingly powerful, rich and full-bodied. It comes from the Besson's best vat and can easily rival a great Cru. It should be served slightly chilled (14°C) and will go wonderfully with red meats, stews, game and cheese. I love it with Coq au vin. This is really terrific Beaujolais that will forever change your impression of Beaujolais (for the better, of course). It is most tasty now and will store happily for up to ten years. [Order](#) some of this big, delicious Beaujolais now.

**2006 Juliéna – (13.5% Alc./Vol.) \$24/btl.; \$288/case of 12**



This Cru is based around the village named after Julius Caesar. The wines made from this area are noted for their richness and spicy with aromas reminiscent of peonies. In contrast to the claims of Régnié, Juliéna growers believe that this area was the site of the first vineyards planted in Beaujolais by the Romans during this conquest of Gaul. The Juliéna from Penlois comes from vines ranging from thirty to sixty years of age situated on beds of clay. It is a ruby red colour and indeed has the floral aroma of peonies. In the mouth it is full, elegant and vibrant. It is drinking beautifully right now but will age for up to ten years. Like most Beaujolais Cru, it should be served chilled (13°C) and goes well with red meat, stews or game. [Latch](#) on to some of this splendid wine now.

**2007 Moulin-à-Vent – (13.0% Alc./Vol.) \$25/btl.; \$300/case of 12**



This region produces some of the longest lasting examples of Beaujolais wine. The region is noted for the high level of manganese that is in the soil, which can be toxic to grape vines in high levels. The level of toxicity in Moulin-à-Vent does not kill the vine but is enough to cause chlorosis and alter the vine's metabolism to severely reduce yields. The resulting wine from Moulin-à-Vent are the most full bodied and powerful examples in Beaujolais. The Moulin-à-Vent from Penlois comes from forty to eighty year old vines planted on pink granite soil rich in magnesium. The robe is a deep purple and the bouquet is full of ripe fruit. This is a full-bodied wine that will benefit from aging for a few years after which it takes on the characteristics of a good Burgundy. It too should be served chilled (14°C) and will go wonderfully with meats in rich sauces and game. It will age for ten years or more. [Get](#) your classic Beaujolais now.

**Corrine's Beaujolais Sampler Case – (13.0% Alc./Vol.) \$22/btl.; \$264/case of 12**

Would you like to try more than one of the delicious wines from Les Vins du Penlois but not by the individual case? Corrine has created a sampler case of four bottles of each of the 2007 Beaujolais-Lancié, 2006 Beaujolais-Villages Cuvée Prestige and 2007 Moulin-à-Vent specially for Arthur's Cellar Wine Club. [Acquire](#) your array of wonderful Beaujolais now.

Please note that our prices include one dollar per bottle handling fee.

**Share a Case**



Is a full case too much of a good thing? No problem. Just click beside the icon shown at the left as it appears on the "Wine Details" on our website and leave a note saying how many bottles you would like. For full details, see [Share a Case](#).



Would you like to visit the source of many of Arthur's Cellar wines? Does a relaxing week living on a luxurious Provençal country estate appeal? Do markets in quaint villages, visits to our vineyards, lunches in restaurants perched on hillsides or cantilevered over streams, gourmet dinners with a local flair and so much more sound tempting? You can with Hélène's tours of Provence



The Bastide in Avignon is sold out for fall 2008, but there is still plenty of room available for fall 2009. The week of September 5 to 12 is wide open; the week of September 12 to 19 is sold out and there are two rooms available for the week of September 19 to 26. Please contact Hélène for inquiries at [hbuisson@cogeco.ca](mailto:hbuisson@cogeco.ca).

Please see [www.ofrance.ca](http://www.ofrance.ca) for all the delicious details and be sure to click on "Our brochure" at the bottom of the homepage.

### **Soon to Emerge from Arthur's Cellar**

Next will come the return of many of your favourites including the highly rated Minervois from Les Cuvées du Firmament, the delicious whites from Domaine Chabrier Fils, the ever popular Côtes du Luberon from Château de l'Isolette, the grand Burgundies from Maison Alex Gambal and others as well as some new wineries - the terrific, value-priced Côtes-du-Rhône from Château Bosc la Croix and the excellent Coteaux du Languedoc from Domaine L'Aiguelière.

### **Member Feedback**

Your feedback is greatly appreciated. It helps us improve our club and better respond to your requirements. Many of your suggestions have been implemented and we are working on several others. Thank you and please keep the comments coming ([jaswalker@arthursellers.com](mailto:jaswalker@arthursellers.com)).

**For the wine club to be successful, we need as many wine buying members as possible – please forward this newsletter to likely prospects and keep those referrals coming.**

Thank you and cheers!

Hélène and Jim

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