



Beaujolais Nouveau 2020 Report

- Beaujolais Nouveau Day is marked in France on the third Thursday in November, just weeks after harvest, with fireworks, music, and festivals held in France and abroad to celebrate the first wine of the season.
- Beaujolais Nouveau is meant to be drunk young and most vintages should be consumed by the following May. In extraordinary vintages, however, the wine can live much longer and be enjoyed until the next harvest.
- Beaujolais Nouveau is made from Gamay grapes that are handpicked in the Beaujolais province, which is technically considered part of Burgundy, but also borders the very northern Rhone Valley.
- The Beaujolais region is 34 miles long from north to south and 7-9 miles wide and home to nearly 4,000 vineyards which produce 12 officially designated AOCs, including Beaujolais and Beaujolais Villages. They also include some of the finest cru wines around, including Régnié, Morgon, and Brouilly.
- Beaujolais Nouveau owes its easy drinking style to a winemaking process called carbonic maceration, also known as whole berry fermentation, which preserves the fresh, fruity quality of the grapes without extracting the bitter tannins from the skins.

The 2020 growing season in Beaujolais was a vintage of extremes. The winter was mild, which led to an early bud burst in March. April and May were warm and dry, June was rainy and cool in the beginning, then extremely warm leading into July. July and August were extremely dry, which led to near drought-like conditions. Picking of this very ripe vintage began on August 20.

Since we couldn't have our usual tasting today, I took on the task of tasting through the wines last night. I enlisted the help of a trusty tasting panel, which included my two most enthusiastic Beaujolais customers and assistant extraordinaire, Arletta. Industry insiders are predicting an uptick in sales for Beaujolais Nouveau this year, so while it seems that I have plenty now, I think these will sell out quickly. Please enjoy my notes here, and let me know if I can put together an order for you.

George Duboeuf Beaujolais Nouveau 2020 \$13.99

This year's offering from this iconic house seemed a little weightier for me compared to last year, showing more blackberry and blueberry fruit notes, rather than the red berry notes of the past couple of vintages. I learned yesterday that, since 2017, Duboeuf has had a label contest where artists can submit entries for the opportunity to have their artwork grace the more than 1 million bottles that will be enjoyed all over the world. This year's winner was California artist Maeve Croghan, and her piece 'Rustic Vines', is stunning. Furthermore, each Duboeuf cork this year has been marked with a code, that can be entered on a website, for the opportunity for consumers to win prizes, so something a little fun to cure your quarantine boredom. Truly a beautiful bottle that will make a fine addition to your Thanksgiving table.

Joseph Drouhin Beaujolais Nouveau 2020 \$14.99

While the ripeness of the grapes at picking is evident in all the wines this year, the tasting panel agreed that this is the most traditional tasting one of the lineup. Red and black fruits abound on the nose and palate, and the tannic structure is fine, with the mouthfeel more fleshy than light. Maison Joseph Drouhin has adopted a biodynamic approach, listening to nature from vine to glass.

Domaine Paul Durdilly Beaujolais Nouveau 'Les Grandes Coasses' 2020 \$11.99

NEW THIS YEAR! This is the lightest bodied wine of the bunch, and shows a lot more red berry fruit than the others, and has a serious savory note on the finish. Domaine Paul Durdilly is a small production father and son team, well known for their refined and supple Beaujolais AOC wines. 'Les Grandes Coasses' denotes an area where the vineyard terroir is slightly different, with pure limestone soils and higher altitude. These small differences result in a wine of great elegance. When I first opened this bottle, I was a little underwhelmed by it, but when I re-tasted it an hour or so earlier, it had changed significantly, and I enjoyed it a lot more.

Domaine Manoir du Carra Beaujolais Nouveau 2020 \$13.99

This one was the overall favorite of the tasting panel, boasting a beautiful deep color, a floral bouquet, great balance between fruit and acid, and a hint of savory black olive, which I love. This had the cleanest finish for me. Manoir du Carra dates back to 1850 and has been passed from father to son for several generations. They now own 34 hectares, with holdings in several AOCs, including the Cru villages of Brouilly, Julienas, Moulin a Vent, and Fleurie.

Domaine Manoir du Carra Beaujolais Villages Nouveau 2020 \$14.99

This is one of two Beaujolais Villages Nouveau that I am offering this year. This smaller area of production tends to produce wines with a more mineral component than the basic Nouveau. This wine is more fragrant and heftier than its little brother, with notes of roses on the nose, and quintessential strawberry flavors from start to finish. The acid on this one is a little more prominent than on the other Villages offering. Probably my second favorite of the bunch, but I am not sure that everyone was in agreement on that.

Domaine de la Madone Beaujolais Villages Nouveau 'Le Perreon' 2020 \$12.99

NEW THIS YEAR! This one has, by far, the most weight and biggest mouthfeel of the line up. It also had the most interesting nose, with sweet fruit and floral notes leaping out of the glass. Deep and rich flavors of ripe wild berry and black cherry dominate here, and the finish is soft. This estate is run by two brothers, who are known in the region for producing wines of exceptional values for their quality. This one was in the top three for at least one on my tasting panel.