

Toasting tradition

On 21st November, a young red wine is released at exactly 12:01am in Beaujolais, France. Local food and wine writer **Ben Colvill** celebrates Beaujolais Nouveau Day.

Fireworks, music and feasts: on the third Thursday in November, the normally sober wine world gets a little giddy. Grapes hanging on the vine just weeks previously are hastily squeezed into bottles, and shipped to fans around the world. At best, it's the perfect drop for the pre-party-season party season. At worst, you might liken it to fruit cordial.

Beaujolais Nouveau and the (usually superior) Beaujolais Villages Nouveau offer a final glass of summer sunshine before it's all oak-aged Malbecs by the fireside. Soft and approachable, you can expect red-berry aromas, kirsch-like cherry and sometimes banana or bubblegum notes.

But Nouveau is only half the story. The region also makes serious, age-worthy wines, particularly in the 10 Beaujolais crus – prestigious wine-producing areas like Fleurie, Morgon and Brouilly. These wines are excellent-value alternatives to neighbouring Burgundy and the Rhône.

WHERE TO BUY BEAUJOLAIS NOUVEAU

Berkhamsted's lovely wine folk are working hard to bring you the good stuff after its release on 21st November.

Grape Expectations will stock Cave de Fleurie's Nouveau (excellent last year). Find a classic Pardon et Fils at Majestic. Look out for a classy Château de Belleville Village at Platform Wines.



**BOUTINOT, LA MADONE,
LA REINE DE L'ARENITE
2023, FLEURIE**
£16.40, PLATFORM WINES

A fine example of old-vine Fleurie. An elegant, floral red that won't overpower the Sunday roast.



**PARDON ET FILS
2023, BROUILLY**
£14.99, WAITROSE

Brouilly's sunnier climes make rounder reds. Still light enough for drinks and nibbles with friends (good ones, mind).



**LOUIS JADOT, COMBE
AUX JACQUES 2023,
BEAUJOLAIS VILLAGES**
£14, TESCO

An impeccably sourced red from one of the oldest of the region's producers. Widely available and perfect for a weekday supper. Waitrose has Jadot's named Village 'Beaujolais-Quincie', a nose ahead in price and provenance. (£14.99).



**JEAN-PAUL BRUN,
TERRES DORÉES CLASSIC
CHARDONNAY 2022,
BEAUJOLAIS**
£19.99, GRAPE EXPECTATIONS

A little Chardonnay grows in Beaujolais, too. Unoaked, packed with lemony stone fruit and savoury notes. A serious, flinty white that works well with roasted butternut squash risotto.



**CHÂTEAU DE PIZAY
2022, MORGON**
£15.99, MAJESTIC

Deeper-fruited, fuller-bodied: brambles with a hint of cocoa-tinged spice. I've earmarked this for Christmas – complex enough to feel special, sufficient acidity to cut through the richness.

If you're travelling further afield, Aldi has some very good wines: their Fleurie is a winner at £9.99.

My tip? Pop a bottle in the fridge for 30 minutes before serving. Just enough time to air an accompanying Brie, or hunk of Gruyère (a bowl of Wotsits in front of Strictly is fine, too).

Find full tasting notes and more at **Bencolvill.com** and **@bencolvillwrites**



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