

Beaujolais Update

Josh Raynolds

American enophiles had their interest in Beaujolais renewed by the powerful, concentrated 2005s. Since then, recession and the weak U.S. dollar have brought this region to the attention of an expanded group of price-savvy consumers, who have come to appreciate these delightful wines and the value they offer. Consider that for the price of a simple and probably mediocre Bourgogne rouge one can buy an outstanding Fleurie or Morgon from one of the best small estates in Beaujolais. While the vintages following 2005 aren't up to the overall quality of that year, many wines of merit were produced in 2006, 2007 and 2008, and pricing remains sharp, if not at pre-2005 levels.

Actually, some old-time Beaujolais lovers might prefer the best 2006s, 2007s and 2008s, as these wines typically offer more vivacity, lighter body and easier sheer drinkability than their often brawny and deep 2005 siblings. (The 2009 cru bottlings, which won't begin to appear in the U.S. market until the middle of next year, may be more in the 2005 style, perhaps with even more fruit, as this vintage was made from a small crop of concentrated grapes harvested under near-perfect conditions at the beginning of September.)

Fans of graceful, tangy, minerally Beaujolais will find plenty to like from both 2007 and 2008, but I suspect that the vast majority of these wines will be at their best over the next couple of years. Recent bottles of 2004 and even 2006 Beaujolais have not necessarily gained in complexity with aging, and some have lost a good part of their vibrancy. Sometimes the highest calling even for a cru Beaujolais is to be lively and juicy, and with rare exceptions 2007 and 2008 will display their charms in their youth. Yes, the wines are balanced, but few have the stuffing and sheer concentration to repay extended cellaring. But that should not be viewed as a criticism for wines that are widely prized for being easy to understand, easy to enjoy and amazingly flexible at the table. Fleurie-based vigneron Alain Coudert (Clos de la Roilette) told me this summer that he thinks "2007 is more velour to 2008's silk," while Claude-Emmanuelle Desvignes (of Louis-Claude Desvignes in Morgon) called 2007 "a year of finesse and fruit, not power and force."

While few Beaujolais bottlings are built for extended aging, a handful not only endure but reward cellar time. To emphasize that point, Jacky Janodet, whose wines have long been among the best and most ageworthy of all Beaujolais, put on one of the most impressive tastings I experienced this year. He showed me a selection of wines starting with his simple 2005 Beaujolais-Villages and proceeding with his 2006, 2000 and 1998 Chenas, following up with 2005, 2000, 1995 and 1991 Moulin a Vent. Every single bottle was fresh, fruity and impressively floral, with good cut and musky earthy character. In other words, classic Beaujolais. In today's crazy world of exorbitant Burgundy prices, cost-conscious wine lovers should take a close look at Beaujolais, especially those who lack the patience or cellar conditions for extended bottle-aging and who are looking for delicious wines to enjoy right now.

While on the subject of Beaujolais I have to put in a plug for one of my favorite restaurants in France, if not the world. Madame Chantal Chagny's Auberge Le Cep, in Fleurie, is devoted to serving only the classic cuisine of Beaujolais, made from ingredients sourced exclusively (unless noted otherwise) from the region. This includes Bresse chicken, frogs' legs, snails, pigeon, duck, Charolais beef and local cheeses. The wine list is exclusively Beaujolais for reds and Beaujolais and Maconnais for whites, plus a single Champagne (the excellent 1996 Lenoble Blanc de Blancs when I was there the second week of November this year). The list is broken down by category and cru and features a number of half-bottles and wines by the glass and carafe.

Prices are insanely low for the quality, with three-course menus starting at 27 euros and degustation marathons at 65 euros. At lunch there are special menus starting at 17 euros for two courses, and most of the wines come in at around 30 euros for cru bottlings, almost all from small producers and most with three or four years of bottle age. The restaurant holds a Michelin star and for years held two before Mme. Chagny notoriously traveled to Michelin's offices in Paris in 2001 to announce that she was returning her restaurant to its Beaujolais roots, eschewing hyper-luxury ingredients (okay, she kept the foie gras) and symbolically handing in her stars. So much the better for serious eaters, her fans said. I can't imagine a visit to this beautiful region without at least a couple of meals at Le Cep and usually try to go at least once a day, assuming the place is open. I should note that Mme. Chagny is fluent in English, not to mention a living encyclopedia of all gastronomic subjects of the region.

Xavier & Nicolas Barbet

2006 Moulin A Vent Vieilles Vignes (\$20) Bright violet. Musky aromas of cherry and dark berries, with a subtle herbal undertone. Deep, sappy dark fruit flavors are firm by chewy tannins and gain sweetness with air. Slightly undifferentiated but delivers solid punch and good finishing spiciness. (David Bowler Wines, New York, NY) **87**

Chateau de Beauregard

2007 Fleurie Classique (\$25) Lightish red. Red berries, brown spices and underbrush on the nose. Tangy, light-bodied redcurrant and bitter cherry flavors are underscored by a musky herbal note, along with hints of bitter chocolate and smoked meat. Clean and brisk but missing the concentration for a higher score. Drink up. **87**

2006 Fleurie Classique (\$25) Medium red. Pomegranate and cherry aromas are complemented by notes of botanical herbs and spices. Light, refreshingly bitter cherry and red berry flavors are braced by tangy minerality, with the herbal element repeating. Gains sweetness with air and finishes with good clarity and tangy bite. Classic Beaujolais and delicious now. **89**

2007 Fleurie Colonies De Rochevres (\$28) Medium red. Complex bouquet of ripe red berries and cherry, plus a subtle note of nutmeg. Smooth, faintly sweet raspberry and cherry flavors betray no rough edges or tannins and pick up a note of bitter chocolate on the back end. A distinctly ripe style, finishing with good breadth and cling and a smoky quality. **88**

2006 Fleurie Colonies De Rochevres (\$28) Bright red. Musky cherry and redcurrant aromas are complemented by notes of dried herbs and violet. Chewy dark fruit flavors are a touch meaty, with dusty tannins firming the finish. A sweeter red berry note emerges on the aftertaste of this nicely persistent wine. **88**

2007 Moulin A Vent Classique (\$24) Medium red. Red berries and cherry on the nose, with subtle mineral and floral notes adding complexity. Spicy and focused, offering light-bodied red fruit flavors and a tart note of orange peel. Very tightly wound initially but aeration brought up more sweetness; the finish is smooth, sappy and nicely persistent. **88**

2006 Moulin A Vent La Salomine (\$30) Medium fading red. Dried red berries, plum and spice aromas are complemented by a subtle floral quality. Firm red fruit flavors show a slightly roasted quality and are framed by silky tannins. A tangy blood orange note comes up on the finish, which is focused if slightly tart. **87**

2007 Moulin A Vent Clos Des Perelles (\$30) Deep red. Spicy dark berries and dried flowers on the nose, plus a hint of anise. Chewy, slightly rigid cherry and blackberry flavors are framed by dusty tannins and pick up a smoky quality on the back end. Leaves a lingering note of candied flowers on the tangy finish. Give this some decanter time to stretch out. **88**

2006 Moulin A Vent Clos Des Perelles (\$30) Bright purple. Sexy, perfumed bouquet of black raspberry, cola, cinnamon, clove and potpourri. Silky, sweet red and dark berry flavors are impressively focused, with strong spicy character on the back end. Finishes with refreshing mineral snap and lingering cinnamon and cola notes. (Ex-Cellars Wine Agencies, Solvang, CA) **90**

Domaine Bergeron

2008 Julienas Light, bright purple. Fresh strawberry and raspberry aromas are complemented by cracked pepper and smoky minerals. Juicy and appealingly sweet, with lively red fruit flavors and a zesty snap of minerals on the back end. Finishes with good spicy persistence and an echo of strawberry. **88**

Domaine Berrod

2008 Beaujolais Villages (\$17) Vivid red. Pungent aromas of redcurrant, cherry and musky underbrush. Light in body and refreshing, offering tangy red fruit flavors and good mineral snap. Finishes on a juicy note, with a firm bitter cherry quality. **87**

2007 Fleurie Les Roches Du Vivier Bright red. Suave, floral-accented red berry and cherry aromas are complicated by notes of cinnamon and allspice. Fresh and understated, offering sweet strawberry and raspberry flavors that gain power with air. This very fresh wine finishes with good lift and sweet persistence. **89**

2007 Moulin-A-Vent Deep, bright red. Musky cherry pulp and pit on the nose, with notes of underbrush and smoked meat adding complexity. This wild and pungent wine gains sweetness and energy with aeration and finishes with good sappy persistence and lingering spiciness. (Adventures in Wine, Daly City, CA) **88**

Domaine des Billards

2007 Saint-Amour (\$20) Bright red. A deeply perfumed bouquet displays raspberry and redcurrant, with notes of smoky minerals and flowers adding complexity. Mineral-driven, juicy red fruit flavors are firmed by fine-grained tannins and lifted by a note of blood orange. Racy and pure, with strong finishing cut and a persistent floral note. This wine will age on its balance. (David Bowler Wines, New York, NY) **90**

Boisen Barbet

2007 Chateau De Fleurie (\$25) Bright medium red. Cherry, red berry and cured meat aromas are complicated by notes of iron and leather. A touch gamey on entry but develops sweet red berry character in the middle palate and offers good tangy cut. On the wild side, finishing with clinging sweetness and a note of smoky minerality. I suspect that this will come off as too old school for those with modern tastes. (David Bowler Wines, New York, NY) **87**

Guy Breton

2007 Morgon Vieilles Vignes (\$28) Bright ruby. Pungent aromas of cherry and dark berry skin, smoky herbs and dried rose. Sappy, penetrating and slightly bitter dark fruit flavors are framed by dusty tannins, which give way to fresher red berry qualities on the back end. Becomes more red-fruity with aeration, and more tangy as well. The smoky note repeats on the finish, which is spicy, gripping and very persistent. (Kermit Lynch Wine Merchant, Berkeley, CA) **90**

Domaine Joseph Burrier

Also recommended: 2006 Beaujolais-Villages Les Belouzes (86). (Ex-Cellars Wine Agencies, Solvang, CA)

2007 Beaujolais-Villages Les Belouzes (\$14) Deep red. Musky red berries and cherry on the nose, with scents of herbs and dried rose adding complexity. Light-bodied strawberry and raspberry flavors are gently sweet and perked up by tangy minerality. A very fresh, silky Beaujolais with good finishing clarity and an echo of raspberry. **88**

2007 Saint-Amour Cote De Besset (\$25) Bright red. Suave, mineral-accented aromas of strawberry and raspberry, with notes of talc and blood orange adding complexity. Nervy and

finely focused, offering vivid red berry flavors and an underpinning of tangy minerality. Finishes with brisk cut and very good snap, repeating the raspberry note. This is balanced to age but already delicious. **90**

2007 Morgon Grand Cras (\$25) Bright ruby. Cherry and dark berry skin aromas are complemented by notes of smoky minerals and licorice. A smoky quality gains strength with air and carries onto the palate, which displays deep, slightly bitter cherry and herbal qualities. This solid, chewy wine finishes with very good clarity and building smokiness and should reward a couple more years of patience. **89**

Domaine de la Cave Lamartine

2007 Saint-Amour Vers L'Eglise Bright purple. Sexy aromas of black raspberry, blueberry and spicecake, plus a note of fresh rose. Silky in texture and alluringly sweet, offering broad red and dark berry flavors and showing no rough edges. The rose note recurs on the finish, which is juicy, focused and nicely persistent. **88**

Chateau de la Chaize

Also recommended: 2006 Brouilly Cuvee Prestige Vieilles Vignes (85). (Diageo Chateau & Estate Wines, New York, NY)

2008 Brouilly Vivid red. Lively aromas of strawberry, raspberry, blood orange and fresh flowers. Clean and gently sweet on the palate, with a mineral bite to its red berry and cherry flavors. More elegant than the 2007 version, showing good finishing clarity and spicy persistence. **88**

2007 Brouilly (\$15) Light, bright red. Floral, spicy and fresh on the nose, displaying red berry, cherry and rose scents. Musky red fruit flavors provide good palate coverage and are framed by dusty tannins. Showing a serious personality today; this would work with richer meat dishes. **87**

Domaine de la Chanaise

Also recommended: 2008 Beaujolais-Villages (86). (Beaune Imports, Berkeley, CA)

2007 Morgon (\$21) Medium red. Musky aromas of dried redcurrant and cherry, with a lively mineral overtone. Straightforward, juicy red fruit flavors are framed by dusty tannins and enlivened by juicy acidity. Plenty fresh but a bit unyielding; the finish leaves a peppery, spicy note behind. **87**

Domaine de la Chapelle des Bois

2008 Chiroubles Bright violet. Intensely perfumed bouquet of blackberry, dark cherry, rose and violet. The floral notes repeat strongly on the palate and add complexity to the sweet red and dark berry flavors. Refreshingly tangy and focused wine with impressive finishing clarity and persistence. **89**

2008 Fleurie Deep, vivid red. Smoky cherry and dark berry aromas are complicated by spicecake and anise. Supple, finely etched red and dark berry flavors are framed by dusty tannins and turn a bit dry with air. Finishes with good clarity and gentle tannic grip. **87**

2007 Fleurie Dark red. Exotically perfumed scents of red berries, mace, cinnamon and smoky herbs. Light in body and nicely focused, offering tangy red fruit flavors and fine-grained tannins. Finishes with good clarity and a hint of bitter cherry skin. (Bercut-Vandervoort & Co., San Francisco, CA) **88**

Domaine Cheysson

2007 Chiroubles (\$16) Light, bright red. Highly perfumed bouquet of strawberry, violet, blood orange and minerals. Lively and precise on the palate, offering sweet red berry flavors and good mineral spine. An elegant and well-balanced wine that finishes with lovely clarity and spicy length. (Wines of France, Mountainside, NJ) **89**

Domaine Chignard

2007 Fleurie Les Moriers (\$25) Deep red with a bright rim. Intensely floral, spicy and focused, displaying scents of red- and blackcurrant, cracked pepper and smoky minerals. At once lively and deep, with good juicy acidity adding lift to the sweet red and dark berry flavors. Finishes with impressive clarity and grip and a strong echo of sweet berries. Here's a

wine that's delicious now but will be even better with a couple years of bottle age. (Kermit Lynch Wine Merchant, Berkeley, CA) **90**

Domaine du Clos du Fief

2008 Beaujolais-Villages (\$18) Bright red. Fresh, focused red berry and cherry aromas are pure and gently spicy. Light-bodied raspberry and mineral flavors are bracing and quite pristine, with no rough edges or tannins getting in the way of the wine's fruit. Clean red fruits dominate the tangy, refreshingly bitter finish. A textbook Beaujolais that should be very flexible at the table. **88**

2008 Saint-Amour Bright red. Intensely floral bouquet displays red berry preserves, rose, violet and honeysuckle. Extremely fresh and pure, offering sweet strawberry and raspberry flavors and a sexy floral pastille quality. Turns spicier with air and finishes with excellent clarity, cut and sweet persistence. **91**

2007 Beaujolais-Villages (\$18) Vivid red. Intensely floral bouquet displays spicy red berries, rose and a hint of smoky minerals. Lively strawberry and raspberry flavors are straightforward and refreshingly brisk, with a sweet note of rose pastille on the back end. Classic Beaujolais, with strong finishing lift and sappiness. **88**

2007 Saint-Amour Deep red. Spicy redcurrant and raspberry aromas are strongly accented by notes of rose, white pepper and tarragon. Deeper than the 2008 but less graceful, with potent red berry and cherry flavors and building sweetness. The mineral note returns on the finish, which is spicy, penetrating and very persistent. **90**

2007 Julienas (\$22) Vivid red. Sexy raspberry and blackberry scents are brightened by zesty mineral and citrus nuances, with a suave floral quality emerging with air. Lively red berry flavors gain depth with air, taking a turn to currant and bitter cherry while maintaining vivacity and focus. Pure, minerally and seductively sweet, with very good finishing clarity and length. **90**

2007 Julienas Cuvee Prestige (\$30) Bright ruby. Youthfully medicinal aromas of cherry, licorice and pungent herbs. Juicy and fresh but also broad and silky, with fleshy raspberry, cherry and baking spice flavors supported by a spine of tangy acids and supple tannins. Finishes with a suggestion of candied flowers. This is delicious now. **91**

2006 Julienas Tete De Cuvee Deep, bright red. Exhilarating, sexy aromas of black raspberry, Asian spices, rose, violet and minerals. Seductively silky and sweet on entry, then vibrant and tighter in the mid-palate, with an explosive floral pastille quality lifting the flavors of fresh red and dark berries. The wine's energetic minerality, fruit and floral character remind me of Vosne-Romanee. Finishes with impressive cut and lift and an echo of floral perfume. (Louis/Dressner Selections, New York, NY) **92**

Clos de Haute-Combe

2007 Julienas (\$22) Vivid red. Fresh red berries on the nose, with complementary notes of cinnamon and anise. Taut and focused, with tangy strawberry and bitter cherry flavors expanding on the back end. Finishes with good grip and nice clarity; a bit short but very satisfying. (Martin-Scott, Lake Success, NJ) **87**

Clos de la Roilette

2008 Brouilly Light ruby. Spicy strawberry and raspberry aromas are complicated by sexy floral and mineral notes. Racy and taut on the palate, offering delicate red berry and cherry flavors complicated by notes of allspice and white pepper. This impressively pure and linear wine is balanced to repay cellaring. Alain Coudert told me that this wine is sourced from a single-hectare holding. **90**

2008 Fleurie (\$22) Bright ruby. Exotically perfumed bouquet of black raspberry, smoky minerals and apricot. Firm, tightly wound red and dark berry flavors are underscored by zesty minerality and pick up a note of rose with air. A lively, impressively pure wine that offers immediate fruit-driven appeal and energy. **90**

2008 Fleurie Cuvee Tardive (\$29) Bright violet. Exotically perfumed aromas of raspberry, apricot, rose and honeysuckle; this shows the vibrancy and floral character of a white wine. Silky in texture and deep in red and dark berry flavors, with sweet floral pastille notes adding complexity. Very pure wine with strong finishing cut and clarity-and a strong effort for this difficult vintage. **91**

2007 Brouilly Vivid red. Black raspberry and Asian spices on the nose, with hints of smoke and rose adding complexity. Supple in texture and alluringly sweet, offering penetrating red and dark berry flavors and a taut spine of minerality. Finishes with impressive juicy persistence and noteworthy clarity. **91**

2007 Fleurie (\$22) Deep red. Smokier and more powerful than the 2008 version, showing deep cherry and dark berry scents and a hint of cracked pepper. Tightly focused and lively, offering gently sweet black raspberry and cherry flavors and notes of cinnamon and mace. This very fresh wine finishes with strong lift and spicy persistence. **91**

2007 Fleurie Cuvee Tardive (\$29) Ruby-red. Spicy black raspberry, blueberry, Asian spices and faded rose on the captivating nose. Rich, broad and sweet, but kept fresh and focused by zesty minerality, which adds urgency to the deep dark berry flavors. The sweet finish features a chewy impression of extract, suave minerality and vibrant length. This is already very alluring but I'd stash mine away for at least another five years. Coudert also showed me the regular bottling of his 2001 and 1996 Fleuries. The 2001 is a study in elegance, with spicy red fruit character and admirable freshness. The 1996 is deep, powerful and eerily Rhone-like in its expression of dense dark fruits, smoke and black olive. It is evolving at a snail's pace, at least in the Coudert cellar. (Louis/Dressner Selections, New York, NY) **93**

Domaine de la Combe au Loup

Also recommended: 2008 Morgon (85+?).

2008 Chiroubles Light, bright violet. Sexy aromas of raspberry, spicecake, potpourri and minerals. Juicy and alluringly sweet, offering lively red and dark berry flavors and a lush, silky texture. The spice and floral notes repeat on the finish, which is sweet, focused and quite persistent. This is delicious now but will drink well for at least the next four or five years. **88**

2007 Chiroubles Bright red. Cherry, raspberry and cola on the nose, with complicating notes of smoke, spicecake and dried flowers. Sweet red berry flavors pick up a tangy edge with air, along with white pepper and candied floral qualities. Finishes brisk, with firm mineral grip and refreshing bitterness. This is textbook Beaujolais. **87**

Domaine de Combiaty

2007 Brouilly (\$19) Light red. Deep, musky aromas of berry skin, cherry, cola and sassafras. Broad and juicy, with sweet cherry and dark berry flavors and a note of smoky herbs. The dark berry flavor lingers nicely on the long, sappy, gently sweet finish. This wine is rich enough to handle full-flavored foods. (Beaune Imports, Berkeley, CA) **88**

Domaine Georges Descombes

2007 Brouilly (\$22) Light, bright red. Spicy, impressively precise aromas of strawberry, raspberry and blood orange. Supple, appealing sweet red fruit flavors are given spine by a zesty mineral quality and pick up an exotic rose pastille note with air. The blood orange note recurs on the long, focused, sappy finish. **90**

2007 Morgon (\$22) Vivid red. Subtle, mineral-driven aromas of red berries, rose and violet. Firm, focused and pure, offering strong cherry and redcurrant flavors and a note of smoky minerals. The chewy finish offers lingering red and dark berry qualities. This will benefit from decanting or a couple years of patience. **89**

2007 Brouilly Vieilles Vignes (\$30) Bright red. Exotically perfumed bouquet of cherry-vanilla, red berries and orange peel. Sweet, sappy raspberry and blackberry flavors are enlivened by juicy acidity and show no rough edges. Leaves lively blood orange and mineral notes behind on the sappy, seamless finish. Sexier than the regular bottling, and with greater breadth and depth. **91**

2007 Morgon Vieilles Vignes (\$30) Saturated red color. Strong dark berry aromas are strikingly deep for Beaujolais. Lush, creamy blackberry and boysenberry flavors pick up a livelier redcurrant quality with aeration and betray no tannins. A zesty mineral note adds urgency to the long, spicy, focused finish. This is drinkable now. **90**

2007 Chiroubles (\$22) Deep red. Intensely floral red berry aromas are appealingly pure and straightforward. Fresh, sappy and pure, offering tangy strawberry and raspberry flavors and a bite of minerality. This fresh, spicy wine will work well with lighter red meat dishes and strong cheeses. **87**

2007 Regnie (\$22) Vibrant red. Dark berries and cherry on the nose, with notes of cracked pepper and black tea coming up with air. Juicy and sweet, with deep dark berry flavors and good back-end cut. Gains sweetness with air and finishes with very good clarity and juicy persistence. **89**

2006 Brouilly Vieilles Vignes (\$32) Bright red. Cherry pie, black raspberry and mineral scents are complemented by notes of fresh rose and violet. Supple, gently sweet red and dark fruit flavors are seamless and pure, with no rough edges and a suave candied rose quality. Finishes with excellent clarity, spiciness and sweet persistence. **90**

2006 Morgon Vieilles Vignes (\$32) Vivid red. Intensely perfumed bouquet of raspberry, potpourri and smoky minerals. Juicy red berry flavors stain the palate, picking up a hint of graphite with air. A spherical and alluringly sweet Beaujolais that finishes with strong mineral snap and an echo of candied flowers. This is delicious right now. (Louis/Dressner Selections, New York, NY) **90**

Louis-Claude Desvignes

2007 Morgon La Voute Saint-Vincent Bright red. Hugely aromatic bouquet of fresh strawberry, raspberry, rose oil and blood orange. Firm on entry but expands in the middle palate to offer sweet red berry preserve flavors and a sexy floral pastille quality. This lively, pure wine finishes with good cut and a hint of bitter cherry skin. **89**

2007 Morgon Cote Du Py (\$24) Deep, bright red. Mineral-driven aromas of blood orange, raspberry and Asian spices, with a subtle floral note gaining power with air. Lush and creamy on entry but gains energy and tightens up with air, showing sweet red fruit flavors and very good mineral cut. Expands on the finish, leaving pure red berry and floral notes behind. This reminded me of a serious Chambolle-Musigny. **90**

2007 Morgon Javernieres (\$25) Vivid red. Lively redcurrant and wild strawberry aromas are complicated by rose, minerals and white pepper. The mineral quality adds energy to the sweet red fruit flavors and gives the wine nervy spine and precision. An exotic Asian spice quality comes up with air and carries through the long, juicy, clean finish. This wine is seductive enough to drink right now. (Louis/Dressner Selections, New York, NY) **90**

Domaine Diochon

2007 Moulin-A-Vent Cuvee Vieilles Vignes (\$23) Vivid ruby. Bright, sharply focused red berry and floral aromas are underscored by zesty minerals and complicated by smoky herbs and spices. The palate offers juicy, pure flavors of sweet red and dark berries along with a strong jolt of peppery spices. The mineral note comes on strong on the long, sappy finish. Give this a couple years of aging. Diochon opened a bottle of his 2002, which is fully mature but shows no sign of decline. (Kermit Lynch Wine Merchant, Berkeley, CA) **91**

Georges Duboeuf

Other wines tasted: 2008 Beaujolais-Villages Flower Label, 2008 Chateau des Vierres Beaujolais-Villages*. (W.J. Deutsch & Sons, Harrison, NY)

Also recommended: 2008 Regnie Flower Label (86), 2008 Cote de Brouilly Flower Label (86), 2008 Fleurie Flower Label (86), 2008 Julienas Flower Label (85), 2008 Morgon Flower Label (86), 2008 Morgon Cote du Py (86), 2008 Oak-Aged Moulin a Vent (85).

2008 Regnie Domaine Des Buyats (\$12) Bright ruby. Primary black raspberry and candied cherry aromas are complicated by nuances of violet and Indian spices. Plump, juicy and nicely focused, offering sweet red berry flavors and a note of candied flowers. Becomes more tangy with air and finishes with good lift and snap. **87**

2008 Brouilly Flower Label (\$14) Deep, bright red. Raspberry and cherry aromas are complemented by floral and spice qualities. Juicy and a touch sweet, offering round dark berry flavors and a touch of black tea on the back end. Finishes with a gentle peppery bite and lingering blackberry and cherry notes. Pretty tasty. **87**

2008 Domaine De Grand Croix Brouilly (\$15) Lurid red. Lively aromas of wild strawberry, raspberry and orange peel, with energetic mineral and floral notes picking up steam with air. Racy and sharply focused, offering sweet red berry flavors and a zesty mineral underpinning. A note of cherry pit adds grip to the refreshingly bitter and tangy finish. **87**

2008 Chiroubles Flower Label (\$13) Light, bright red. Spicy red and dark berries on the nose, with notes of cinnamon and mace adding complexity. Light-bodied redcurrant and cherry flavors are pleasantly bitter but could use a bit more power and cut. Finishes on a peppery note, with good tangy persistence. **88**

2008 Fleurie Clos Des Quatre Vents (\$17) Bright ruby-red. Primary dark berry and cherry aromas are spiced up by notes of cinnamon, clove and nutmeg. A juicy midweight that offers sweet black raspberry and candied cherry flavors and shows no hard edges. Pretty inviting now: I'd drink it over the next couple of years. **89**

2008 Fleurie Domaine Des Quatre Vents (\$18) Deep red. Fresh blackberry and rose on the nose, with a hint of white pepper and a suave mocha quality. Rich, gently sweet dark fruit flavors are a touch jammy and are given a bitter edge by a late note of licorice. Larger in scale than the Clos des Quatre Vents but I prefer that wine's spiciness today. The finish is broad, sappy, a touch sweet and gently persistent. **88**

2008 Julienas La Trinquée (\$14) Deep red. Spicy red berries and cherry on the nose, with subtle floral and mineral notes adding nuance. Light-bodied and silky in texture, offering sweet red fruit flavors and a late note of orange peel. Easygoing and fresh, with good finishing sweetness. **87**

2008 Julienas Chateau Des Capitans (\$18) Pale, bright red. Fresh redcurrant and strawberry aromas are given a sharp edge by a note of blood orange. Racy and precise, with sweet red berry flavors turning a touch bitter on the back end. Clean and focused Beaujolais with good finishing clarity and an echo of orange. **88**

2008 Chenas Flower Label (\$14) Bright violet. Spicy red berry and cherry aromas are underscored by a zesty mineral quality. Light-bodied, juicy redcurrant and blackberry flavors are complemented by a subtle candied rose note. Finishes with firm grip and a slight dryness. **87**

2008 Domaine Mont Chavy Morgon (\$14) Ruby-red. Ripe cherry and dark berry aromas are complemented by licorice and smoky minerals. Deep, palate-coating dark fruit flavors are given a tart edge by hints of redcurrant and cherry skin. Finishes with good sweetness but a slightly sour quality. **87**

2008 Morgon Jean-Ernest Descombes (\$16) Deep, bright red. Musky red berries and cherry pit on the nose, with complicating notes of underbrush and gunpowder. Light, juicy and pliant, offering gently sweet strawberry and raspberry flavors and a late hint of white pepper. A bit stern on the finish but I like this wine's sweet red fruit. I'd drink it on the young side. **88**

2008 Moulin-A-Vent Flower Label (\$16) Vivid ruby. Spicy cherry and dark berry aromas are complicated by notes of rose and smoky minerals. Zesty, sharply focused and light-bodied cherry and berry skin flavors are refreshingly brisk and turn firmer with air. Picks up a peppery note with air and leaves a bitter cherry quality behind. **87**

Domaine Dupeuble Pere et Fils

2008 Beaujolais (\$14) Vivid ruby. Alluring aromas of cinnamon, strawberry and flowers, with a subtle undercurrent of pungent herbs. Velvety in texture and showing no hard edges. Smooth, sappy and gently sweet, with good finishing cling. Serve this with a light chill alongside some garlicky sausages or salty cheeses. **87**

2007 Beaujolais (\$14) Light, bright purple. Musky red berries and Asian spices on the nose, with a hint of underbrush. Lush, creamy red berry flavors are a touch jammy but appealingly sweet and smooth in texture. Very similar to the 2007, boasting good back-end juiciness and better length. (Kermit Lynch Wine Merchant, Berkeley, CA) **88**

Domaine Durdilly

2008 Beaujolais Cuvee Tradition Les Gryphees Bright red. Bright red berry and cherry scents are complicated by notes of rose, underbrush and spices. Firm, gently chewy cherry and berry skin flavors possess a refreshingly bitter quality and are further enlivened by juicy acidity. I like this wine's blend of earthiness and sweetness. Finishes persistent, with a note of candied rose. **88**

2008 Beaujolais Villages (\$13) Light, vivid red. Expressive aromas of red berries, cherry, white pepper and rose. Tightly wound and focused, offering tangy strawberry and cherry flavors that turn sweeter with air. A textbook Beaujolais with good finishing cut and red berry character. (Michael Skurnik Wines, Syosset, NY) **87**

Henry Fessy

Other wines tasted: 2008 Brouilly*. (Louis Latour USA, San Rafael, CA)

Also recommended: 2008 Regnie (85).

2007 Moulin-A-Vent (\$19) Deep red. Cherry and dark berries on the nose. Juicy, pliant blackberry and cherry flavors are on the simple side but provide good palate coverage. Picks up a bitter chocolate note with air and finishes with solid grip and an echo of cherry. **87**

Jean Foillard

2007 Morgon Cuvee Corcelette (\$34) Bright red. Aromatically expressive aromas of red berries, cherry and smoked meat, with a hint of dried flowers. Musky cherry and red berry skin flavors are firming by dusty tannins and given spine by tangy minerality. A touch rustic but provides good palate coverage and finishes with very good sweet persistence. **89**

2007 Morgon Cote Du Py (\$34) Light, bright violet. Mineral-driven red berries and Asian spices on the nose, with nuances of pungent herbs and dried rose. Spicy redcurrant and wild strawberry flavors are complemented by a pungent floral pastille quality and gain power with air. The minerality returns on the finish, which is tangy, focused and impressively persistent. (Kermit Lynch Wine Merchant, Berkeley, CA) **91**

Chateau Gaillard

2007 Brouilly Bright red. Powerful aromas of blackberry, musky herbs, spices and dried flowers. Initially chewy and brooding but gains sweetness and energy with air, offering sweet black and blue fruit flavors and a hint of smoky herbs. Shows no rough edges and finishes with very good clarity and punch. I'd serve this with richer meat dishes. **89**

Domaine des Grands Fers

Also recommended: 2006 Fleurie Les Roches (86). (T. Edward Wines, New York, NY)

2007 Fleurie Les Cotes (\$18) Vivid red. Redcurrant and strawberry on the nose, with a building floral quality adding complexity. Light in body and nicely balanced, offering lively red fruit flavors and showing no rough edges. A graceful, finely etched wine that finishes with excellent clarity and juicy persistence. **90**

2007 Fleurie Fers Saint-Eloi Grande Cuvee (\$35) Bright red. Seductively perfumed bouquet offers scents of wild strawberry, raspberry, rose oil and incense. Light in body and precise, with no rough edges to its sweet red berry and floral flavors. A very pretty wine with good finishing clarity and lingering minerality and sweetness. **90**

Pascal Granger

2007 Beaujolais-Villages Vieilles Vignes Le Bouteau (\$15) Vivid red. Attractive strawberry and rose scents are complemented by a note of orange peel. Racy, tightly focused red berry flavors are brisk and focused but slightly tart. A lively, uncomplicated Beaujolais that will be good served chilled with lighter foods. **87**

2007 Chenas (\$17) Bright red. Spicy, mineral-dominated aromas of redcurrant, strawberry and rose. Silky in texture and tightly wound, with sweet red berry character and a touch of candied rose. Very lively and pure, with good finishing lift and clarity. No fat on these bones. **88**

2007 Julienas (\$18) Bright ruby. Deep, pungent aromas of raspberry, cherry, smoky minerals and rose. Spicy red fruit flavors are braced by a tangy mineral quality and pick up a suave spiciness with aeration. Finishes with good cut and a persistent mineral note. This is balanced to age for another few years. **89**

2007 Moulin-A-Vent (\$21) Vivid red. Highly aromatic bouquet displays redcurrant, floral and spice scents, plus a touch of white pepper. Juicy and pure in the mouth, offering sweet red berry flavors and showing no rough edges. Gains richness with air and finishes with lingering notes of candied rose and cherry. **89**

2007 Julienas Cuvee Speciale (\$21) Bright red. Sexy, intensely floral aromas of cherry, Asian spices and a hint of vanilla. Rich and smooth in texture, with deep dark fruit flavors and a slow-building spicy quality. Impressive for its power but I marginally prefer the vivacity of the basic bottling right now. This will be even better in a couple of years. (Rosenthal Wine Merchant, Pine Plains, NY) **89**

Louis Jadot

2008 Beaujolais Villages (\$12) Light, bright red. Fresh redcurrant and cherry aromas are complemented by white pepper and pungent herbs. Light-bodied, tangy red berry flavors are sharply focused and slightly tart, with a peppery quality emerging on the back end. This racy, uncomplicated wine finishes with good lift and cut. **87**

2007 Chateau Des Jacques Clos Du Grand Carquelin Moulin A Vent (\$37) Deep, bright red. Ripe red berry and cherry on the nose, with notes of licorice and bitter chocolate adding complexity. Chewy, faintly bitter red and dark berry flavors are firm by dusty tannins, which add back-end grip and a touch of dryness. While this rather serious wine may be deep, powerful and built for aging, I suspect it falls outside most consumers' parameters for Beaujolais. **87**

2007 Chateau Des Jacques Clos De RocheGRES Moulin-A-Vent (\$37) Bright ruby. Fresh redcurrant and blackberry aromas are complicated by notes of anise, violet and cinnamon. Juicy, sharply defined dark fruit flavors are firm by zesty minerality, which adds spine and back-end cut. Blends richness with vivacity and finishes with very good lift and focus. I prefer this wine's energy and clarity to the Clos du Grand Carquelin today. (Kobrand, New York, NY) **90**

Jacky Janodet

2007 Beaujolais-Villages Vivid red. Fresh strawberry and raspberry aromas are complemented by underbrush and black tea. At once sweet and structured, offering firm red berry flavors and gaining depth with air. Finishes with good grip and lingering red fruit flavors. Janodet told me these vines are more than 45 years old. **88**

2007 Chenas Bright red. Mineral-driven aromas of redcurrant and raspberry, with sexy floral and spice notes adding complexity. The minerality adds vivacity to sweet red berry flavors, contributing spine and focus. Leaves notes of candied rose and raspberry behind on the long, sappy finish. This will reward aging. **89**

2007 Moulin-A-Vent Bright ruby. Exotically perfumed bouquet displays an array of red and dark berry scents, along with apricot, Asian spices and minerals. Extremely fresh and seductively sweet, offering vivid raspberry and blueberry flavors and a wild pit fruit quality. The spiciness dominates the finish, which is sappy, sweet and very long. This is showing a lot of complexity now but will reward patience. **90**

2006 Chenas Medium red. Powerful cherry and dark berry aromas are complemented by smoked meat, iron and cola. Pretty serious for Beaujolais, offering deep cherry and blackcurrant flavors that are nicely framed by dusty tannins. This meaty, chewy wine will match up well with rich meat or game dishes, or pungent cheeses. **88**

Marcel Lapierre

2007 Morgon (\$24) Light, bright red. Very fresh nose offers spicy red berries, flowers and minerals. Lithe redcurrant and raspberry flavors are focused and impressively pure, benefitting from tangy mineral lift and cut. This turned spicier with air, finishing with excellent clarity and mineral-driven persistence. One of the most graceful and energetic wines of the vintage. **91**

2007 Morgon Cuvee Marcel Lapierre (\$42; from 100-year-old vines) Bright red. Intensely perfumed aromas of spicy red berries, minerals and rose, with an exotic note of apricot pit. Juicy and alluringly sweet, with lively strawberry and raspberry flavors and a silky, seamless texture. The floral note comes on strong on the finish, which is sappy, focused and very long. Reminds me of Chambolle-Musigny in its elegant display of red fruits and flowers. (Kermit Lynch Wine Merchant, Berkeley, CA) **92**

Domaine de la Madone

2007 Fleurie Vivid red. Spicy red berries and cherry skin on the nose, with lively mineral and floral elements adding complexity. Juicy and finely etched, offering tangy strawberry and raspberry flavors and a late note of white pepper. A graceful and focused Fleurie with good finishing clarity and lingering minerality. Nicely balanced and drinking well now. **88**

Domaine Manoir du Carra

Also recommended: 2008 Beaujolais-Villages (86), 2008 Fleurie (86). (Kysela Pere et Fils, Winchester, VA)

2008 Brouilly Terre De Combiaty (\$23) Light, vivid red. Fresh redcurrant and strawberry on the nose. Lively, finely etched red berry flavors combine a tangy quality with slow-building sweetness and are underscored by zesty minerality. This is a textbook example of refreshing, uncomplicated Beaujolais with good finishing lift and sappiness. **87**

2007 Moulin A Vent (\$23) Bright ruby. Exotically perfumed bouquet of black raspberry, rose and apricot, with a hint of white pepper adding vivacity. Juicy and precise, offering lively red and dark berry flavors and showing no rough edges. Nicely balanced wine with strong finishing sweetness and a lingering note of pit fruits. **89**

Domaine des Marrans

2008 Morgon Vivid red. Mineral-driven aromas of wild strawberry, raspberry and potpourri, plus a hint of anise. Sappy, gently sweet red fruit flavors are underscored by zesty minerality and show no rough edges. Open-knit and drinking well now, finishing with good lift and clarity. **88**

2007 Chiroubles Deep red. Black raspberry and cracked pepper on the nose, with a touch of graphite adding vivacity. Sweet red and dark berry flavors are framed by silky tannins and become more minerally with air. Deep but lithe and precise, finishing with strong lift and very good clarity. **89**

2007 Fleurie Medium red with a bright rim. Spicy red berries and flowers on the nose. Red fruit flavors give way to deeper cherry and cassis in the mouth, with dusty tannins adding grip and focus. The floral note repeats on a nicely persistent, gently sweet finish. **88**

2006 Chiroubles Medium red. Fresh red berries and minerals on the nose. Light in body and nicely focused, offering sweet strawberry and raspberry flavors and a strong jolt of baking spices. The brisk finish repeats the red fruit and spice notes and clings with impressive persistence. **90**

2006 Fleurie Terroir Du Pavillon Medium red. Deep, brooding aromas of cherry, blackcurrant and licorice, with a touch of smoky minerals adding energy and lift. Sappy, palate-staining dark fruit flavors are braced by zesty minerals, which gives the wine a somewhat unyielding character. Finishes with strong mineral snap and persistent smokiness. **88**

2006 Fleurie Vivid red. Fresh raspberry and cherry on the nose. Deeply pitched, nicely focused cherry and dark berry flavors are complemented by a note of licorice. Shows no rough edges and finishes with a subtle note of smoky minerals. This is drinking well now. **89**

2006 Julienas Deep red. Powerful scents of blackberry, cherry and cracked pepper. Tightly wound and refreshingly juicy, offering vivid raspberry and blackberry flavors and a refreshing jolt of white pepper. Finishes with strong thrust and a persistent note of cherry compote. **90**

Domaine Alain Michaud

2007 Brouilly Vibrant red. A complex bouquet displays scents of red berries, anise, spicecake and minerals. Firm, slightly dry-edged raspberry and cherry flavors show a bitterness that fades away with aeration. A rather unyielding wine with good finishing grip and clarity. **87**

2007 Morgon Deep red. Fresh redcurrant and strawberry aromas give way to deeper cherry and blackberry with aeration. Rich but tangy, offering an array of taut red and dark fruit flavors and spicy pepper and anise qualities. The finish strongly repeats the red fruit notes and lingers with very good clarity and persistence. **89**

Mommessin

Other wines tasted: 2008 Beaujolais-Villages Vieilles Vignes. (Boisset Family Estates, Sausalito, CA)

2007 Chateau De Pierreux Brouilly (\$17) Bright red. Deep red berry and cherry aromas are complemented by notes of smoked meat and orange peel. Chewy, rather brooding redcurrant and cherry pit flavors gain sweetness with air and pick up a hint of cola. The orange note returns on the finish, which is chewy, persistent and a tad rough. **87**

Domaine du Niagara

2007 Fleurie Deep red. Mineral-driven aromas of cherry, dried rose and black tea. A chewy, linear midweight that offers sweet cherry and dark berry skin flavors supported by good mineral spine and fine-grained tannins. Combines elegance with structure and finishes with good persistence and repeating mineral and cherry notes. **88**

Domaine des Nugues

Other wines tasted: 2007 Quintessence du Gamay Beaujolais-Villages. (Robert Kacher Selections, Washington, D.C.)

Also recommended: 2006 Quintessence du Gamay Beaujolais-Villages (85).

2008 Beaujolais Villages Vibrant purple. Intensely floral bouquet displays scents of spicy dark berries, violet, wisteria and white pepper. Juicy raspberry and cherry flavors are sharply focused and very fresh, with good acid snap providing lift. Leaves spicy redcurrant and cherry pit notes behind on the persistent finish. **88**

2008 Fleurie Deep, bright red. Lively red berry and cherry aromas are complemented by notes of dried rose and violet. Dusty tannins add firm grip to the spicy red fruit flavors, and tangy minerality provides spine. Loosens up a bit with air and finishes with gently tangy persistence. **88**

2007 Beaujolais Villages (\$17) Vivid red. Zesty red berries and cherry on the nose. Tangy and sharply focused, offering fresh red fruit flavors and strong jolt of peppery spices. A textbook Beaujolais, with good finishing cut and lingering sweetness. **87**

2007 Fleurie (\$27) Medium red. Ripe red berry and cherry aromas are complicated by notes of anise and cola. A richer style of Beaujolais, offering powerful dark fruit flavors and solid tannic structure. Gains freshness with air and leaves tangy berry skin notes behind on the persistent finish. (This producer's top-of-the-line Quintessence du Gamay Beaujolais-Villages bottlings wouldn't have been out of place in a tasting of hot-vintage southern Rhone wines.) **89**

Domaine du Pavillon de Chavannes

2008 Cote De Brouilly Cuvee Des Ambassades (\$20) Vivid red. Finely etched red berry and floral aromas are underscored by a bright mineral quality and sharpened by a note of white pepper. Tangy and tightly wound, offering lively, alluringly sweet redcurrant and wild strawberry flavors, along with notes of Asian spices and orange zest. The finish is sweet, focused and sneakily persistent. A strikingly pure, quintessential Beaujolais: its balance will allow it to age but it's delicious now. (Vintage '59 Imports, Washington, D.C.) **91**

Domaine Piron-Lameloise

2007 Chenas Quartz (\$18) Saturated red. Pungent, expressive aromas of blackberry, pepper, spices and dried rose. Round and sappy, with chewy tannins adding shape to the dark berry and spice flavors. Showing a tough side today; I wonder if this will gain sweetness and soften with a bit more bottle age. (Fruit of the Vine, New York, NY) **88(+?)?**

Dominique Piron

2007 Fleurie Vivid red. Red and dark berries on the nose, with a cola note adding depth. Broad and fleshy in texture, offering sweet black raspberry and cherry flavors and gentle tannins. The finish is a touch clipped, with the cola note repeating. **87**

2007 Moulin-A-Vent Bright red. Spicy cherry and dark berry skin aromas are complemented by notes of black pepper and smoky minerals. Fresh and focused, offering tangy, slightly bitter cherry and blackberry flavors and good mineral snap. There's a tangy, incisive quality to the nicely persistent finish. (Beaune Imports, Berkeley, CA) **88**

Chateau de Pizay

2008 Beaujolais (\$12) Light, bright red. Fresh red and dark berries on the nose. Pliant, light-bodied and sweet, offering raspberry and boysenberry flavors and showing no hard edges. Honest and very easy to drink, with good finishing cut and clinging sweetness. **87**

2008 Morgon (\$15) Bright purple. Powerful black and blue fruit aromas are complemented by subtle floral and spice notes. Lush and slightly jammy, showing an array of dark berry preserve flavors. Emphatically sweet, with a long, sappy, seamless finish. I'd drink this now for its ostentatious display of fruit. **88**

2007 Morgon (\$17) Vivid red. Fresh, mineral-driven aromas of red berries and Asian spices. Pure and focused, offering open-knit strawberry and raspberry flavors and firm, gripping tannins. The spice note echoes on the finish. This will benefit from decanting. (Martin-Scott Wines, Lake Success, NY) **87**

Potel-Aviron

Other wines tasted: 2007 Moulin a Vent Vieilles Vignes. (Frederick Wildman & Sons, New York, NY)

Also recommended: 2008 Beaujolais-Villages (86).

2007 Julienas Vieilles Vignes (\$19) Light, bright red. Earthy redcurrant and cherry aromas are complicated by notes of dried flowers and herbs. Light-bodied, slightly bitter cherry and berry skin flavors are firm by dusty tannins and given bite by tangy minerality. Comes up a bit short on the finish, which is also a tad uninviting. I'd serve this with rich charcuterie or strong, creamy cheeses. **87**

2007 Cote De Brouilly Vieilles Vignes (\$23) Bright purple. Oak-spiced cherry and blueberry on the nose, with strong notes of vanilla and cola; reminds me of a Spanish garnacha. Deep, rich and smoky, with sweet cherry and dark berry preserve flavors and low acidity. No way that I've have guessed this to be a Beaujolais. **87**

2007 Fleurie Vieilles Vignes (\$23) Medium red. Ripe cherry and dark berry aromas are a touch brooding, with notes of dark chocolate and black tea adding complexity. Fleshy and deep in dark fruit flavors, with dusty tannins adding grip. Would I have guessed this to be Beaujolais? Finishes with chewy cherry and dark berry skin character and good persistence. This could handle richer foods with ease. **87**

2007 Morgon Cote Du Py Vieilles Vignes (\$23) Bright red. Seductive aromas of cherry-cola and raspberry, with an overlay of fragrant oak spices. Fleshy and gently sweet, offering round dark berry and cherry flavors and notes of cola and cinnamon. Quite modern in style and undeniably tasty, with very good finishing clarity and sweet persistence. **89**

Domaine de la Roche Saint-Martin

Also recommended: 2008 Regnie (86). (T. Edward Wines, New York, NY)

2008 Brouilly (\$15) Lurid violet. Pungent red berries, flowers and cracked pepper on the nose, with a subtle herbal quality adding complexity. Nervy and focused, with tangy red and dark fruit flavors and gentle tannins. The dark berry note repeats on the finish, which is brisk and gently sweet. This clean, energetic wine has the focus and depth of flavor to handle richer foods. **88**

2008 Cote De Brouilly (\$20) Light, bright red. High-pitched, spicy aromas of red berries and cherry, with a suave floral undertone. Firm and refreshingly bitter, offering zesty red fruit flavors and a late note of cherry skin. Turns a bit dry on the finish, with the cherry skin note repeating. **87**

2006 Brouilly Cuvee D'Exception (\$30) Vivid red color. Smoky cherry and dark berry aromas are complicated by notes of musky herbs and underbrush. A brooding style with powerful dark fruit flavors and firm structure. I'm not sure I would have picked this as a Beaujolais. The finish repeats the smoke and cherry notes and hangs on with good tenacity. **87**

Domaine Rochette

2008 Beaujolais-Villages (\$13) Bright violet. Fresh red and dark berry aromas show a slightly jammy aspect. Raspberry and blackberry flavors are firm by juicy acidity but turn softer on the back end. Easygoing and tasty now; I'd serve this with a light chill to tighten up the berry flavors. **87**

2008 Regnie (\$17) Vivid red. Highly perfumed aromas of strawberry, raspberry, rose and violet. Pliant red and dark berry flavors verge on jammy but are firm by juicy acidity and given spine by a brisk mineral quality. Suavely blends crackling, almost citric juiciness with sweetness, finishing with refreshing snap and very good persistence. **90**

2008 Brouilly Pisse-Vieille (\$17) Light, bright violet color. Sexy aromas of creme de framboise and strawberry, with subtle notes of white pepper and fresh rose. Light-bodied, palate-coating and sweet, offering slightly jammy red and dark berry preserve flavors braced by gentle minerality. Hangs onto the palate with strong red fruit character; this would be great with spicy or salty foods. **90**

2008 Regnie Cuvee Des Braves (\$18) Deep, bright red. Intensely perfumed nose offers bright red and dark berry scents and notes of dusty minerals and potpourri. Light, juicy and

precise, offering sweet strawberry and black raspberry flavors and a strong mineral spine. This pure, focused wine finishes with very good clarity and spiciness. **89**

2008 Cote De Brouilly (\$18) Light, bright purple. Spicy, floral bouquet displays red and dark berries, violet, rose and cinnamon. Tightly wound, tangy redcurrant and black raspberry flavors are a bit hard-edged and show a slightly bitter fruit skin character. Finishes with very good length, though, and a strong echo of brown spices. **88**

2008 Morgan Les Micouds (\$18) Deep, bright violet. Sexy black raspberry and cinnamon aromas are complemented by notes of dusty minerals and rose. Light-bodied, racy and concentrated, offering tangy red and dark berry flavors and an exotic note of blood orange. This very fresh, tightly wound Beaujolais boasts impressive finishing lift and clarity. **90**

2007 Regnie Cuvee Des Braves Vieilles Vignes (\$18) Lurid violet. Expressive scents of wild strawberry, raspberry, rose and minerals. Very fresh on the palate, offering sweet red berry preserve flavors and a strong mineral undertone. Gains weight and a deeper dark berry personality with air and finishes with very good smoky persistence. (Wines of France, Mountainside, NJ) **89**

Domaine Joel Rochette

2007 Regnie (\$17) Bright red. Primary red fruit aromas are complemented by notes of dried rose and baking spices. Light-bodied strawberry and raspberry flavors are given grip by fine-grained tannins and lifted by tangy minerality. The slightly clipped finish repeats the tangy strawberry note. Serve this on the chilly side, with charcuterie. **87**

2007 Brouilly Pisse-Vieille (\$17) Bright red. Fresh strawberry and raspberry on the nose, with notes of flowers and Asian spices gaining strength with air. Light, juicy and incisive, offering sweet red and dark berry flavors, with a zesty blood orange note adding bitterness and vivacity to the nicely persistent and focused finish. Quintessential Beaujolais that will go with all kinds of lighter, full-flavored foods. **89**

2007 Morgon Les Micouds (\$18) Medium red. Intensely floral nose displays scents of dried rose and violet, strawberry, minerals and white pepper. Racy and finely etched, offering tangy red berry and floral pastille flavors and impressive purity. A sweet note of raspberry lingers on the finish. (Wines of France, Mountainside, NJ) **90**

Matthieu Rochette

2007 Cote De Brouilly (\$17) Light purple. Fresh, spicy red berry and blood orange aromas are complemented by notes of minerals and Asian spices. Deeper blackcurrant and cherry flavors come up with air and carry onto the palate where the blood orange quality adds cut and lift. The minerality defines the long, focused, racy finish. (Wines of France, Mountainside, NJ) **90**

Domaine Ruet

2007 Brouilly Bright ruby-red. Spicy, floral-accented red berries on the nose, with a zesty mineral quality adding urgency. Tightly wound and pure, offering tangy red fruit flavors and a jolt of smoky minerals. Very fresh wine with strong finishing spiciness and a lingering note of white pepper. **89**

2007 Morgon Les Grands Cras Deep red. Exotic, highly expressive aromas of blackberry, blueberry and dried violet, with complicating notes of Indian spices and pungent herbs. Surprisingly light in body following the powerful nose, offering sweet red and dark berry flavors and zesty minerality. The floral component note returns on the finish, which is well-focused and very persistent. I wouldn't hesitate to drink this seamless wine now. **90**

2006 Brouilly Vieilles Vignes Medium red. Smoky cherry and red berries on the nose, with notes of rose, black tea and cracked pepper adding complexity. Weighty cherry and black raspberry flavors show no rough edges or tannins and gain sweetness with air. Smooth and expansive, with very good finishing punch and lingering red and dark berry qualities. This is drinking really well right now. **90**

Chateau de Saint-Lager

2008 Brouilly Light, bright purple. Highly expressive bouquet displays strawberry, raspberry, blood orange and dried flowers. Taut and finely etched, offering zesty red berry flavors and firm minerality. The mineral note carries through the finish, which is nervy, refreshingly bitter and long. **89**

Domaine Sancy

2008 Chenas Bright red. Mineral-driven aromas of raspberry and cherry, with a sexy floral note adding complexity. Juicy and focused, offering lively red berry flavors that gain sweetness with aeration. The finish repeats the floral note and lingers with good intensity and spiciness. **89**

2007 Julienas Light red. Spicy red berries and dried cherry on the nose. Red fruit and herbal flavors are open-knit and a touch dry, with a tangy mineral note adding cut. The herbal element repeats on the finish, which is nicely focused and persistent. **87**

Domaines des Terres Dorees

2008 Beaujolais L'Ancien Vieilles Vignes (\$18) Bright violet. A complex bouquet of red berries, dried flowers, Asian spices and musky underbrush. Dry, firm and mineral-driven, with light-bodied but sweet red berry flavors and firm grip. The clean finish features a strong echo of dusty minerals. These vines are a minimum of 40 years of age, Jean-Paul Brun told me. **88**

2008 Fleurie (\$21) Light, bright red. Very fresh, sexy bouquet of red berries, minerals and flowers. Tangy and focused, offering lively strawberry and raspberry flavors along with notes of candied rose and brisk minerality. The finish repeats the red fruit and floral notes and lingers with excellent clarity. I really like this wine's precision. **90**

2008 Morgon (\$24) Light, bright red. Mineral-driven aromas of strawberry, raspberry and rose, with a subtle undercurrent of pungent herbs. Silky in texture and alluringly sweet, offering lively red and dark berry flavors and nervy minerality. Very precise and long on the finish, which repeats the sweet red fruit notes. These vines are over 50 years old. **90**

2008 Moulin-A-Vent (\$28) Medium red. Highly seductive bouquet displays raspberry, cherry skin and blood orange, along with a sexy floral quality. Bright and focused, offering sweet red berry flavors and a deeper note of bitter cherry. Packs a solid punch but this is a surprisingly graceful, admirably balanced wine that will repay cellaring. **91**

2007 Cote De Brouilly (\$20) Bright red. Intensely floral nose offers scents of strawberry, raspberry, minerals and white pepper. Vibrant, mineral-driven red fruit flavors are juicy and fresh, displaying admirable focus. Finishes with strong thrust and an echo of spicy red berries and candied flowers. This will age. (Louis/Dressner Selections, New York, NY) **91**

Domaine des Terres Vivantes

2008 Beaujolais-Villages Vieille vignes (\$19) Vivid red. Fresh strawberry and raspberry on the nose. A sexy floral note gains strength with air and carries onto the palate, adding complexity to the sweet red berry flavors. The sweet finish features lingering floral and raspberry qualities. **89**

2008 Beaujolais Villages La Lutine (\$17) Vivid red. Exotically perfumed bouquet of fresh strawberry, raspberry, rose, magnolia and white pepper. Bright and energetic, with very good mineral lift and cut to its sweet red berry flavors. Gains sweetness with air and finishes with persistent flavors of red berries and candied flowers. **90**

2007 Beaujolais-Villages Vieille vignes (\$19) Light red. Intensely perfumed aromas of red and dark berries, rose, violet and cracked pepper. Round but juicy cherry and black raspberry flavors are underscored by zesty minerals and a hint of brown spices. I like this wine's blend of sweetness and grip, as well as its finishing clarity. (Bonhommie Wine Imports, South Orange, NJ) **88**

Chateau de la Terriere

Other wines tasted: 2007 Beaujolais-Villages*.

2007 Brouilly Bright red. Fresh red and dark berry aromas are complicated by smoky minerals and spicecake. Pliant black raspberry and blueberry flavors are quite deep but are nicely enlivened by juicy minerality. The mineral quality returns on the finish, which is sweet and persistent. Lots of fruit here. **88**

2007 Moulin A Vent Cuvee De La Lure Vivid red. Potent, oak-spiced aromas of candied cherry and vanilla. Lush and creamy, with sweet cherry and raspberry flavors, but the oak character is pretty strident. Pleasant enough but I'm not sure I would have guessed that this came from the most esteemed terroir of Beaujolais. **87**

Charly Thevenet

2007 Grain & Grainite Regnie (\$32) Bright red. Smoky aromas of cherry pit, herbs and dried flowers. Structured and on the brooding side, offering chewy cherry and floral flavors

and late-arriving minerality. There's nothing easygoing about this Beaujolais. The finish is chewy and persistent, with the smoke and mineral notes repeating. (Kermit Lynch Wine Merchant, Berkeley, CA) **89**

Jean-Paul Thevenet

2007 Morgon Vieilles Vignes (\$30) Vivid red. Pungent, highly aromatic scents of cherry, blackcurrant, iron and licorice. Tangy on entry, then gains depth and power in the mid-palate and offers gently sweet dark fruit flavors and notes of succulent herbs and anise. Finishes with very good persistence and an echo of smoky minerals. This is balanced to age. (Kermit Lynch Wine Merchant, Berkeley, CA) **90**

Chateau Thivin

2007 Brouilly (\$18) Light purple. Fresh red berry and floral scents are underscored by tangy minerality and a touch of white pepper. Light-bodied, easygoing strawberry and raspberry flavors are nicely focused and juicy. Fresh, focused and pure wine with good finishing clarity and snap and an echo of dried flowers and dusty minerals. **88**

2007 Cote De Brouilly (\$24) Light, bright violet. Strawberry and black raspberry on the nose, with a strong floral quality gaining strength with air. Round, velvety red berry flavors are complemented by candied rose and violet, with smoky minerals adding depth. Richer than usual for this bottling: this wine became sweeter with air and will complement richer foods. **89**

2007 Cote De Brouilly Cuvee Zaccharie (\$39) Vivid ruby. Powerful aromas of cherry, cola, vanilla, smoked meat and dried rose. Weighty, succulent cherry and dark berry flavors are reminiscent of a wine from up north, and the sweet oak note adds to the effect. This is deeper in flavor, packs more punch and finishes with greater persistence than the classique but doesn't display the same vivacity. I suspect that this will be a pretty interesting wine in a few years. (Kermit Lynch Wine Merchant, Berkeley, CA) **89(+?)**

Georges Trichard

2007 Chenas Deep red. Spicy strawberry and raspberry scents are complemented by rose and violet, with a strong mineral undertone contributing complexity. Pure, focused and gently sweet, with red and dark berry flavors and good spicy cut. The floral element resonates on the sappy, penetrating finish. **90**

Domaine des Vieilles Caves

2007 Saint-Amour Deep, bright red. Blackberry and mulberry aromas complicated by cracked pepper and mace. Fleshy, deeply concentrated dark berry flavors show no rough edges and pick up zesty Asian spice notes with air. Packs good punch and finishes with very good lift and juicy persistence. **89**

Domaine des Vignes des Jumeaux

2007 Beaujolais-Villages (\$15) Deep, bright red. Raspberry, cherry and plum on the musky nose, with notes of underbrush and dried flowers adding complexity. Sweet red berries on palate, with a racy blood orange quality adding vivacity. Softens with air and finishes on a sweet note of black raspberry, with good tangy cut. (Martine's Wines, Novato, CA) **88**

Cedric Vincent

2007 Pouilly Le Monial Vieilles Vignes Beaujolais (\$20) Medium violet color. Musky aromas of dark cherry, redcurrant and underbrush, with a hint of anise. Fleshy and slightly bitter in a good way, offering zesty berry and cherry skin flavors and a suggestion of cracked pepper. Very refreshing Beaujolais with good finishing clarity and an echo of smoky herbs. (Kermit Lynch Wine Merchant, Berkeley, CA) **88**

J. J. Vincent & Fils

2006 Julienas Domaine Le Cotoyon (\$23) Bright ruby. Black raspberry and cherry aromas are complemented by smoked meat and dried rose. Supple, palate-coating cherry and dark berry flavors are braced by tangy minerals and enlivened by a kiss of black pepper. The mineral quality builds on the finish, which is taut and nicely focused. I like this wine's low-fat profile. **88**

2006 Beaujolais Morgon Charmes (\$23) Vivid red. Musky redcurrant and cherry aromas are complemented by musky underbrush and herbs. Chewy on the palate, with a slightly bitter cherry fruit component complicated by notes of black pepper and smoky minerals. Finishes

with good grip and musky persistence. I'd give this a couple years of bottle age. (Frederick Wildman & Sons, New York, NY) **88**

Domaine du Vissoux

2008 Beaujolais Cuvee Pierre Chermette (\$16) Light, bright purple. Lively, finely etched red berry aromas are complemented by dried rose and white pepper. Light in body and crisp, offering racy strawberry and bitter cherry flavors and a fine-grained texture. Its finishing crispness and sappy persistence make this Beaujolais easy to drink. **87**

2008 Beaujolais Vieilles Vignes Cuvee Traditionelle (\$18) Light, bright purple. Sexy aromas of strawberry, raspberry, cinnamon and allspice, plus a strong floral overlay; reminds me of a sexy wine from Burgundy. Light, lively and focused, offering sweet red fruit flavors and a jolt of baking spices on the back end. Very attractive wine with good finishing lift and mineral cut. **89**

2008 Brouilly Pierreux (\$27) Light, bright red. Exotically perfumed bouquet of raspberry, incense and potpourri. Fresh, finely etched red berry flavors are complicated by notes of candied rose and spicecake, with tangy minerality adding spine. The finish is clean, focused and impressively long, leaving sweet red fruit notes behind. **90**

2008 Fleurie Poncie (\$28) Vivid red. Very expressive aromas of raspberry, cherry, rose and spicecake. Lively, finely etched red fruit and candied flower flavors gain depth and sweetness with air, picking up notes of blackberry and cola. Leaves lush dark fruits behind on the long, sweet finish. This is deep and rich enough to handle a strongly seasoned beef dish. **89**

2008 Fleurie Les Garants (\$28) Bright red. Highly perfumed bouquet of cherry and berry skin, anise and smoky herbs. Richer and chewier than the Poncie, offering powerful, slightly tannic cherry and blackcurrant flavors. Becomes firmer on the finish, which features a spicy note of cracked pepper. Decant this or hold it for another couple of years. **90(+?)**

2007 Brouilly Pierreux (\$26) Deep, bright red. Explosively perfumed aromas of raspberry, potpourri, Asian spices and smoky minerals. Juicy red fruit flavors are braced by zesty minerality and show an exotic candied rose quality. There are no tannins to get in the way of immediate gratification, and the finish is tangy, focused and sneakily sweet. **90**

2007 Fleurie Poncie (\$27) Deep, vivid red. Peppery redcurrant and cherry aromas are complemented by musky underbrush, minerals and dried flowers. Initially sweet, with deep red and dark berry flavors, then picks up an earthy element and shows a note of bitter cherry skin on the back end. The sweetness returns on the finish, which is nicely spicy and persistent. I'd serve this with richer foods. **89**

2007 Fleurie Les Garants (\$27) Bright violet. Powerfully scented bouquet displays cherry and dark berries, with notes of smoke and minerals adding complexity. A broad-shouldered, somewhat chunky wine that seems a bit ungainly right now. The deep, dark fruit flavors expand on the finish, which echoes the smoky note. I'm not sure I'd have guessed this to be Beaujolais. **88(+?)?**

2007 Moulin-A-Vent Les Trois Roches (\$28) Bright red. Black raspberry and cherry aromas are complicated by anise, black tea and wilted rose. Chewy but not heavy, offering bitter cherry and berry skin flavors and a light dusting of tannins. Becomes sweeter on the finish, which leaves smoky mineral and floral notes behind. This is beginning to drink well now.

(Weygandt-Metzler, Unionville, PA) **88**

Domaine de la Voute des Crozes

2007 Cote De Brouilly (\$22) Deep, bright red. Powerful aromas of raspberry, blackberry, rose and smoky minerals. Deep in red berry flavors but graceful and tangy, offering mineral-driven flavors and a silky texture. The finish repeats the raspberry note and lingers with impressive clarity and persistence. This will be even better in a year or two. (Kermit Lynch Wine Merchant, Berkeley, CA) **90**