



Beaujolais Nouveau – *the annual Worldwide Event*

On the third Thursday of each November, at a minute past midnight, over a million cases of Beaujolais Nouveau begin their journey through a sleeping France to Paris for immediate shipment to all parts of the world. One of the most animated rituals in the wine world has begun. According to French Law, Beaujolais Nouveau is released no earlier than the third Thursday of November, regardless of the start of the harvest. It has become a worldwide race to be the first to serve this new wine of the harvest. Just weeks ago, the grapes were in the vineyard.

The picturesque Beaujolais region is located just north of Lyon, France. The region is 34 miles long and 9 miles wide. Gamay is the only grape permitted for Beaujolais. (Some California wineries label their wine "Gamay Beaujolais"; this is not the same grape variety as what is grown in France.) All of the grapes in the region must be picked by hand. Beaujolais Nouveau owes its easy drinkability to a winemaking process called carbonic maceration – also known as whole berry fermentation. This technique preserves the fresh, fruity quality of the wine, without extracting bitter tannins from the grape skins.

Beaujolais Nouveau began as a local phenomenon in the local bars, cafes and bistros of Beaujolais and Lyons about a century ago. Each fall the new wine would arrive with celebration. It was wine made fast to drink, while the better Beaujolais was taking a more leisurely course. Eventually the government regulated the sale of the quickly transported wine. It wasn't until after World War II that the wine began to reach beyond its regional borders. In the last 45 years, sales have risen from one million to more than 70 million bottles.

In a marketing triumph, Georges Duboeuf is a huge promoter of Beaujolais and Beaujolais Nouveau. More than a fifth of his annual production, 4 million bottles, is Beaujolais Nouveau. Duboeuf reports that the 2005 vintage looks very promising. The total number of grapes was significantly less than last year, due to early hail, so that the remaining grapes looked very healthy. The weather throughout the summer months was picture perfect -- a hot, dry summer. This allowed for early harvesting. The wine color is "remarkable" this year -- a deep ruby red. He says that this year's wine has remarkable aromas of "currant, blueberry, blackberry, black cherry and kirsch, intermingled with violet, cocoa, coffee, pepper, licorice and warm spices." "This is a warm wine, bold and fleshy."

Beaujolais Nouveau is meant to be drunk young. In general, it should be consumed by the following May after its release. Excellent vintages (such as 2000) can live much longer. Why has Beaujolais Nouveau become so popular in the United States? Due to the way it is made, the astringent tannins, normally found in red wines, isn't there, leaving an easy to drink, fruity wine. In addition, it tastes good when chilled – making it closer to a white wine. It is a wine that can be gulped, rather than sipped. Beaujolais Nouveau is perfect with a turkey dinner. Serve Beaujolais Nouveau slightly cool, at about 55 degrees. The wine is more refreshing and its forward fruit more apparent if you serve it at room temperature.

By an expeditious harvest, a rapid fermentation, and a speedy bottling, we will receive our air shipment on Thursday, November 17. The follow-up shipments by boat arrive a week to two weeks later. This year's wine will embrace you with its freshness, jasmine perfume and subtlety. It will sell out fast! We have limited bottles this holiday season.

Keep up-to-date with Wine Specials, New Arrivals and Education at our website:

www.belfairwinesandspirits.com

Sign-up to receive our periodic e-mail notices regarding specials