

Crus Beaujolais 2013

Forget the lightweight wines of old. For a growing number of producers in the 10 best areas in Beaujolais, it's all about individuality and quality, says James Lawther MW

REGISTER THE WORD 'Beaujolais' and then recalibrate. This is not Nouveau we are talking about, but the Beaujolais crus. The Gamay grape is the unique factor, but instead of a light, innocuous beverage these are wines of real personality with a truly authentic touch. And the good news is that they are getting still better and better. Recent vintages have been rewarding and there is a new dynamism pushing quality forward.

The 10 crus are located in a hilly terrain in the north of the Beaujolais region, just south of the Mâconnais, and the poor, granite-based soils here offer great diversity even over a short distance, and individual nuance.

Pink granite is the mainstay of Chiroubles, Fleurie and Moulin-à-Vent, but whereas Chiroubles at a higher altitude produces lively, delicate wines, Fleurie, with its dramatic inclines lower down, is elegant, perfumed and finely textured; Moulin-à-Vent, with its gentler contours, is complex and longer ageing. The blue stone schist found in Juliéna, Côte de Brouilly and part of Morgon provides minerality and structure, particularly in the last two. Granite-based Chénas is also structured, whereas Régnié is supple and fruity. St-Amour and Brouilly have the greatest diversity of soils, the former light, fruity and floral, the latter more generous in style.

Quality shift

Add a semi-continental climate to the notion of terroir and a concentration of parcels of old vines ranging in age from 50 to 140 years and clearly the potential has always been there. The exceptional 2009 vintage provided a real fillip and the following years (except 2012) have also been successful. But what has been really gratifying is the newly found qualitative drive of the producers. There has always been a handful of leading names, but a change in generation and the arrival of new investors (particularly from Burgundy) has raised the bar across a broader base.

As for winemaking, machine harvesting is permitted but the crus are still generally picked by hand. The majority of growers practise a form of semi-carbonic maceration coupled with pumping over or pigeage to gain more substance and structure. The wines are then aged in neutral tank or old casks for roughly a year.

Another winemaking practice, known locally as the 'Burgundian method', is to classically destem and crush the grapes then age the wine in barrel. The method suits the more powerful wines, such as Moulin-à-Vent, which, along with Chénas, Morgon and Côte de Brouilly, can age up to 10 years, sometimes longer, acquiring a Pinot-like character as the wines mature.

The 2013 vintage was one of the latest-picked in a number of years, the harvest finishing in mid-October. Cold spring weather with a late flowering around 15 June set the pattern. The early part of July remained cool and rainy but thereafter sunny weather continued into the



Beaujolais crus: know your vintages

2014 Highly promising. Fruit, colour and supple tannins. Close to 2011.

2013 Classic in style. Fine, fresh and structured. Drink now-2020.

2012 Difficult year: frost, hail and rain. Only the very best wines are worth considering.

2011 Concentrated, complex and balanced, with eight to 10 years' ageing potential.

2010 Opposite of 2009. Fresh, elegant and floral. Drink now.

2009 Exceptional but atypical. Rich and opulent. Will keep 10 years.

Beaujolais crus: the facts

Total vine plantings (2013) 6,191ha
Brouilly 1,257ha; **Chénas** 249ha;
Chiroubles 334ha; **Côte de Brouilly** 340ha; **Fleurie** 914ha; **Juliéna** 578ha;
Morgon 1,114ha; **Moulin-à-Vent** 717ha;

Régnié 368ha; **St-Amour** 319ha
Total production 35 million bottles
Exports 20%
Structure approximately 1,350 declared producers, 150 négociants, 12 cooperatives

late season. Ripening was slow but sure, assisted by a little rain in early September. The wines are classic in style, with the freshness and structure of a late harvest coupled with adequate fruit and substance.

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The results

Morgon, Chénas and Chiroubles emerged as the top-performing villages, and the judges were keen to see less use of oak and an increased focus on fruit, mineral character and structure. Tina Gellie reports

IF THERE WERE ever a time to revisit your opinion of Beaujolais, it's now, our expert panel enthused after this extensive tasting of 158 wines from the region's 10 crus.

'It certainly blew away my misconceptions about Beaujolais,' said Andy Howard MW. 'These cru wines are seriously underrated as a wine style. I'll be looking out for them much more now.'

Rob MacCulloch MW agreed: 'The one thing you can't deny is that the Gamay grape gives flavour, minerality, generosity and ageability as well as both a food-friendliness and a drink-on-its-own deliciousness that is virtually unmatched, especially at the price.'

'With its inherent drinkability of juicy fruit, good acidity and low alcohol, Beaujolais has a great card to play,' added Master Sommelier Xavier Rousset. 'It's surprising we don't drink it more often.'

Our experts agreed that Morgon (with 34 entries) was the standout cru. 'Given the size of this appellation, you'd expect it to be a bit up and down, but the quality was impressively consistent,' said Rousset. Others that impressed included Chénas and Chiroubles (just two

'The view that Beaujolais should be drunk young was challenged here' Andy Howard MW

and five wines entered respectively). Fleurie (40 samples), Brouilly (24) and Moulin-à-Vent (31) received the most criticism, with over-extraction or excessive new oak giving 'green sappy tannins'.

MacCulloch urged producers to 'realise that the extra cost of oak ageing isn't an answer', while Howard added: 'When you have no oak, it shows off the purity of the fruit, which is Gamay's calling card.'

Conversely, producers were commended for keeping alcohol levels modest at 12.5% or 13%. 'In other regions, a successful vintage with quite high extraction levels would lead to big, alcoholic wines, and that wasn't the case here. It was great to see,' said MacCulloch.

Howard was also impressed by the ageability of the

The scores

158 wines tasted

3

Outstanding

14

Highly recommended

119

Recommended

21

Fair

0

Poor

1

Faulty

majority of the wines. 'People assume Beaujolais and the Gamay grape are one-dimensional, to drink as soon as it's bottled. But these cru wines have complexity and structure.' Our judges said these were wines that would drink well over the next five years, with the best able to cellar until 2023. 'I know more than one good taster who has been tricked into thinking a 25-year old Beaujolais was mature Burgundy,' added Rousset.

This comparison was raised more than once. 'Because Beaujolais isn't as popular and doesn't command the same high prices as Burgundy, it does represent great value,' said Howard. 'I'd be surprised if there were many wines here that were more expensive than fairly average Pinot Noir.' For MacCulloch, some cru Beaujolais represented a 'serious alternative' to Syrah. 'The region is closer to the northern Rhône than Burgundy – especially in the southern crus such as Morgon – and the wines showed those delicious pepper, spice and savoury qualities.'

On a final note, our experts implored readers not to chill these wines. 'This is not Beaujolais Nouveau, Beaujolais or Beaujolais Villages!' said Rousset. 'These are serious, concentrated, complex, artisan wines.'

Entry criteria: producers and UK agents were invited to submit wines from the 2013 vintage in the 10 Beaujolais crus of Brouilly, Chénas, Chiroubles, Côte de Brouilly, Fleurie, Juliéna, Morgon, Moulin-à-Vent, Régnié and St-Amour

Outstanding 18.5–20pts (95–100pts)



Raymond Bouland, Cuvée des Délés Vieilles Vignes, Morgon

Decanter average score: 18.75/20pts (95+/100pts)
Individual judges' scores: Andy Howard MW 19 Rob MacCulloch MW 18.5 Xavier Rousset MS 19

£13 Haynes Hanson & Clark

This tiny parcel of about half a hectare is located in the lieu-dit Délés and produces on average 2,000 bottles a year. The vines are around 80 years old and the soils in this sector of Morgon (Corcelette) distinctly granitic. Raymond Bouland vinifies in pure Beaujolais fashion, using semi-carbonic maceration. The cuvaion lasts 10 days and the wine is then aged in concrete tanks. Raymond will be retiring in the next couple of years, so take advantage of his last vintages.

Andy Howard MW Vibrant nose, hints of wild flowers. Fleshy and fresh, a juicy, forward wine with sufficient tannin and acidity to allow ageing.

Rob MacCulloch MW A delicious, complex, spicy nose, quite a fresh, delicate style for Morgon, attractively balanced, with great promise.

Xavier Rousset MS Aromatic and mineral with great acidity. A pure and very elegant style with tannins that are very well integrated.

Drink 2015-2019 Alcohol 13%

The tasters' verdicts

Andy Howard MW



With more than 30 years' experience as a buyer at Marks & Spencer, Howard became a Master of Wine in 2011. His key areas of expertise are Burgundy and Bordeaux. In 2013, Howard left M&S to focus on his consultancy, Vinetrades. He has written for both Decanter and JancisRobinson.com, and has chaired the judging at the South East Vineyards Association awards for seven years.

Howard's verdict

'This was a great opportunity to see whether the recent news about the breakaway of the crus from the generic Beaujolais body was likely to be a move in the right direction. The results show that the hype about the quality of Beaujolais crus has been, to a large extent, justified. In quite a few cases, the wines showed the heights that well-made Gamay can reach. They were nearly all refreshing and some of the better examples showed real finesse – in some cases providing an excellent-value alternative to Pinot Noir from Burgundy. Not surprisingly Morgon stood out, but there was real interest in the higher altitude wines of Chiroubles and unexpected success for Chénas. Fleurie was, sadly, rather variable.'

'The view that Beaujolais should be drunk young was challenged at this tasting – some wines will only reach their full potential after several years' cellaring. Taking value into account, it suggests that consumers should acquaint themselves with the crus as soon as possible. They are well worth considering next time you're assessing a restaurant list.'

Rob MacCulloch MW



MacCulloch served his apprenticeship in wine after joining Oddbins in 1995, going on to work in New Zealand for Montana Wines, then in the UK for Hatch Mansfield, Bibendum Wines, and recently for Burgundy and Beaujolais specialist Domaine Direct. He is now retraining for a career in viticulture & oenology.

MacCulloch's verdict

'For wines best enjoyed during sunny, charcuterie-laden picnics overlooking some vines, a London tasting room can never do complete justice to cru Beaujolais. Nevertheless, this was a fascinating tasting – where else but Beaujolais produces such delicious wines, from venerable domaines with high average vine ages, and at such reasonable prices?'

'Despite showcasing the sunny, low-yielding 2013 vintage, a few wines displayed underripe, sour, green notes. Variations in oak use, occasionally just plain heavy-handed, can needlessly mask the alluring combination of spices, fresh red fruits and ripe, brisk tannins shown in the best wines from 2013. Apparent too was how successful more southerly crus were in 2013 – Morgon, Brouilly and Côte de Brouilly. The 10 Beaujolais crus really encompass too wide a region, with too many variances in cellar practices, to always produce consistent wines.'

'These are minor points, though. The consistency of cru Beaujolais lies in uncovering wonderfully evocative wines that appeal directly to the senses, all at brilliant value: the best of the 2013s are delicious.'

Xavier Rousset MS



Rousset became the youngest Master Sommelier in the world in 2002, having worked at Gerard Basset's Hotel du Vin in Bristol. Appointed head sommelier at Michelin-starred Le Manoir aux Quat'Saisons in 2004, he teamed up with head chef Agnar Sverrisson in 2007 to launch Texture restaurant in London, which won a Michelin star in 2010. The pair's second venture, 28°-50° Wine Workshop and Kitchen, was launched in Fetter Lane, London in 2010.

Rousset's verdict

'Overall a great tasting, highlighting Gamay as a more serious grape than most of us give it credit for. I strongly believe sales of cru Beaujolais from quality-driven producers will seriously increase over the next five to eight years. Elegant, easy drinking – a good asset for a wine to have nowadays – generally great value. What's not to like?'

'I was impressed by Morgon's class, purity, depth and character, while Chénas was also attractive, aromatic, with juicy fruit and soft texture. But I was underwhelmed by the overall performance of Moulin-à-Vent and Brouilly, either due to some inconsistency due to their size and number of producers, or in some cases to wines being over-worked with oak or over-extraction, which in my view is the opposite of what Gamay is all about. The elegance and delicacy of Gamay means it should be handled accordingly in the winery.'



Domaine Lagneau, Vieilles Vignes, Côte de Brouilly 18.5 (95) AH 18.5 RM 18.5 XR 18.5

£11.25 Cadman Fine Wines

The Lagneau family – Gérard, Jeannine and their son Didier – cultivates 17ha in the Beaujolais producing Beaujolais Villages, Régnié, Morgon and Côte de Brouilly. The Vieilles Vignes cuvée of the latter comes from 75-year-old vines planted on blue stone schist soils at about 200 metres altitude on the steep slopes of the Côte de Brouilly. The wine is made using semi-carbonic maceration and aged in neutral concrete tanks. About 3,000 bottles are produced annually.

AH Intense black fruit aromas, full bodied with lots of soft, dark, ripe fruits on the palate. A joyous example of Côte de Brouilly with weight, complexity and refinement. Will develop for several years in bottle.

RM Delicate raspberry fruit, nice in a burlier appellation such as Côte de Brouilly. Spice and black pepper around a dense core of fruit that balances out the natural structure. Not yet ready, but still delicious.

XR Pure, spicy, mineral and well balanced with dark cherries and liquorice notes and flavours.

Drink 2015-2020 Alc 13% ➤

Outstanding (continued) 18.5–20pts (95–100pts)



Domaine Piron-Lameloise, Quartz, Chénas

18.5 (95) AH 18.5 RM 18.5 XR 18.5

£17-£19 Domaine Direct

The 10ha Quartz vineyard is jointly owned by Morgon specialist Dominique Piron and the Lameloise family, owners of the eponymous Michelin three-starred restaurant in Burgundy. It is located on a steep granite slope which has a solid base of quartz, hence the name and the minerally, saline character found in the wine. The harvest is partly destemmed to allow a longer period of cuvaison (18 days), 25% of the

wine then aged in barrel. 'I try to preserve the freshness and originality of the wine so avoid the use of too much oak,' says Dominique Piron. The first vintage, 2003, is still tasting well today.

AH Nose is quite serious with hints of violets and wild flowers. Strawberry fruits on the palate with ripe tannins and fresh acidity. Good complexity, with a peppery edge. Interesting, individual cru Beaujolais.

RM A very pepper-scented nose, with a deep-fruited core of black cherry. There's a really attractive layering of fruit flavour and complexity to this wine too, with persistent flavours. The tannins are firm, as is typical for Chénas, but they're supple too and balance the deep fruit flavours nicely. For cru Beaujolais, this is grand cru.

XR Very open and aromatic; a serious wine with sweet fruit, dark cherries, warm spices, firm tannins, and a long finish.

Drink 2016-2020 **Alc** 12.5%

Highly Recommended 17-18.25pts (90-94pts)



Domaine la Bonne Tonne, Côte du Py, Morgon

18.25 (94) AH 17.5 RM 18.5 XR 18.5

N/A UK www.bonne-tonne.com

Rich, savoury and spicy, with some attractively balanced oak notes. Soft, juicy palate with nice ripeness and fleshy quality. Delicate style that could challenge Pinot Noir. Very attractive. **Drink** 2015-2020 **Alc** 12.5%



Château Gaillard, Morgon

17.75 (92) AH 17.5 RM 17.5 XR 18.5

£9.50 Voddens Vintages

Good intensity on the nose, with an elegant structure and crisp acidity. A more savoury, restrained style, with an aristocratic complexity to the gentle red berry fruit. **Drink** 2015-2018 **Alc** 13%



Château Thivin, Reverdon, Brouilly

17.25 (90+) AH 17.5 RM 16.5 XR 17.5

POA Domaine Direct

Spiced fruit nose, where the lead-pencil, stony fruit character of the region is very apparent. Quite a serious Brouilly with an elegant finish and an extra level of structure for longer ageing. **Drink** 2015-2016 **Alc** 13%



Domaine de Bel-Air, Les Charmes, Morgon

17.25 (90+) AH 17 RM 18 XR 16.5

£15.50 Earle Wines

Very attractive rich fruit with beautiful layering that adds complexity. Crisp acidity, freshness and a lovely leafy quality that would make this a great match for meat dishes. **Drink** 2016-2022 **Alc** 12.5%



Domaine des Marrans, Terroir du Pavillon, Fleurie

17.25 (90+) AH 17.5 RM 16.5 XR 17.5

POA Fingal-Rock

Quite a serious nose, not typical of Fleurie as we know it. Sweet red fruit, showing good concentration and minerality. A complex style with grippy tannins. **Drink** 2016-2018 **Alc** 12.5%



Jean-Marc Burgaud, Côte du Py, Morgon

17.25 (90+) AH 18 RM 16 XR 17.5

£17.50 Berry Bros & Rudd, Campbell Moore, Hay Wines, Vinoteca, Wine Society

Brooding, complex but rather closed nose. Concentrated, red berry palate, with tannic grip and fresh acidity. Very mineral; needs a few more years. **Drink** 2016-2020 **Alc** 13%



Patrick Tranchand, Roche Grès, Moulin-à-Vent

17.25 (90+) AH 17 RM 17 XR 18

N/A UK +33 (0)6 87 07 51 25

A pepper-scented nose with fresh raspberry and blackberry, almost Pinot Noir-like. Soft and delicate, very elegant with an attractive finish. Delicious now. **Drink** 2015-2020 **Alc** 13%



Château des Moriers, Miss Vicky, Fleurie

17 (90) AH 17 RM 16.5 XR 17.5

£11.99 The Smiling Grape Company

Immediately attractive, heightened nose, with quite a rich, savoury palate that shows plenty of mineral-toned cherry fruit. An elegant style that makes attractive and rewarding drinking now. **Drink** 2015-2017 **Alc** 12.5%



Château des Tours, Brouilly

17 (90) AH 17 RM 16.5 XR 17.5

£16-£18 Widely available via UK agent Thorman Hunt

Spicy, ripe and quite mineral toned. Soft, smoky fruits on the palate backed up with crisp acidity. Nice grainy edge to the tannins adds to the complexity of this good example of Brouilly. **Drink** 2015-2016 **Alc** 12.5% ➤

Recommended (continued) 15–16.75pts (83–89pts)

Wine	Score	AH	RM	XR	Tasting note	Alc	Drink	Price	Stockists
Guénaël Jambon, Dom des Roches du Py, Côte du Py Réserve, Morgon	15 (83)	16	14	15	Deep purple core, quite chunky, tannic and four-square at the moment. Will settle down over the next year or two.	13%	2015-2022	£17	Carruthers & Kent, McKinley Vintners
Guénaël Jambon, Domaine des Roches du Py, Fleurie	15 (83)	16	16	13	Complex aromas of dark fruits, touch of forest floor and a hint of floor polish. A heap of minerality and attractively balanced tannic intensity too.	13%	2015-2020	£17	Carruthers & Kent, McKinley Vintners
Henry Fessy, Fleurie	15 (83)	16.75	14	14	Fragrant, interesting balance of red fruits with a floral edge. Soft, juicy and attractive, with fresh acidity to balance good concentration of ripe fruits.	12.5%	2015-2018	£13.49-£15.49	amazon.co.uk, Exel Wines, oddbins.com, TJ Wines
Louis Jadot, Château des Jacques, Moulin-à-Vent	15 (83)	15	15	15	Complex aromas of crunchy red berry fruits on the nose. Evident oak on the soft, ripe palate. Needs a bit more concentration.	13%	2015-2018	£16	Hatch Mansfield
Mommessin, Côte du Py, Morgon	15 (83)	15	15	15	Upfront, hint of forest floor notes on the nose, quite light on the palate with soft red fruits.	12.5%	2015-2022	N/A UK	www.mommessin.com
P. Ferraud & Fils, Le Reposoir, Fleurie	15 (83)	15.5	15	14.5	Good colour, crisp fruit characters in the glass, fresh acidity, not overly complex but displays loads of crunchy dark berry fruits.	12.5%	2015-2017	£12.99	Alexander Wines
P. Ferraud & Fils, Les Charmes, Morgon	15 (83)	15	15	15	Slightly under-ripe redcurrants and raspberries, but soft and easy-going.	13%	2015-2020	£12.65	Alexander Wines
Pierre-Marie Chermette, Domaine du Vissoux, Poncié, Fleurie	15 (83)	15.75	15	14	Slightly higher toned notes on the nose, red fruits, touch of spice. It's balanced between fruit, acidity and tannins, yet retains a little hardness.	12.5%	2015-2018	£14.95-£17.95	Carruthers & Kent, Enotria, Exel, Great Western Wine, Hawkshead, Pall Mall Wines, Slurp, The Wine Cellar, Villeneuve
Stéphane Aviron, Domaine de la Madrière, Fleurie	15 (83)	14.5	16	14.5	A ripe, dark cherry nose, with some sour cherry fruit flavours. Palate has medium concentration but is a classic example of the appellation.	12.5%	2015-2020	N/A UK	+33 (0)3 85 36 76 18
Thibault Liger-Belair, La Roche, Moulin-à-Vent	15 (83)	15.5	15	14.5	Pungent aromas of wet earth, dark fruits with a meaty edge. Powerful, visceral palate; not for the faint-hearted.	N/A	2016-2020	£26-£28.95	Berry Bros & Rudd, Flint, Lea & Sandeman, OW Loeb

Fair 13-14.75pts (76-82pts)
 ■ Château de Saint Lager, Brouilly 14.75 (82)
 ■ Château du Basti, Morgon 14.75 (82) ■ Domaine André Colonge et Fils, Gorge de Loup, Brouilly 14.75 (82) ■ Domaine de Bel-Air, Granits Roses, Fleurie 14.75 (82) ■ Domaine de la Combe au Loup, Chiroubles 14.75 (82) ■ Domaine des Chaffageons, La Madone, Fleurie 14.75 (82) ■ Domaine les Roches Bleues, Le Cru du Volcan, Brouilly 14.75 (82) ■ Georges Duboeuf, Flower Label, Fleurie 14.75 (82) ■ Henry Fessy, Brouilly 14.75 (82) ■ Maison Trelen, Cote de Brouilly 14.75 (82)

■ P. Ferraud & Fils, Les Ravinets, Juliéas 14.75 (82)
 ■ Patrice Barraud, Fleurie 14.75 (82) ■ Ropiteau, Fleurie 14.75 (82) ■ Thibault Liger-Belair, Les Rouchaux, Moulin-à-Vent 14.75 (82) ■ Château Chassantour, Régnié 14.5 (81) ■ Domaine Dufour, Moulin-à-Vent 14.5 (81) ■ Domaine Yohan Lardy, Les Michelons, Moulin-à-Vent 14.5 (81) ■ Paul Janin, Les Vignes du Tremblay, Moulin-à-Vent 14.5 (81) ■ Domaine de la Chapelle des Bois, Grand Pré, Fleurie 14.25 (80+) ■ Christophe Pacalet, Fleurie 14 (80) ■ Domaine Bertrand, Pisse-Vieille, Brouilly 13.5 (78)

Faulty
 ■ Domaine Bertrand, Les Déduits, Fleurie (Corked)

For full UK stockist details, see p89

Next month's panel tastings
 Dolcetto d'Alba and white Rhône

Expert summary: James Lawther MW

Recent talk of a renewed energy among the Beaujolais crus has been borne out in this well-subscribed tasting, and reflected in the number of high-scoring wines



James Lawther MW is a Decanter contributing editor, author, lecturer and tour guide

HIGHLY ENCOURAGING RESULTS. A haul of three Outstanding, 14 Highly Recommended and a plethora of Recommended is not bad, and proves that the crus have far more to offer than simple Beaujolais Nouveau. In the context of the vintage it is also a satisfying result, given that 2013 produced wines that were fresh and structured but less obviously seductive than 2009, 2011 or 2014.

Individually, the big surprise was the Outstanding achievement of the Domaine Piron-Lameloise Quartz Chénas: a winner from Beaujolais' smallest cru (only two entries in the tasting) is an eye-opener. Chénas has a great terroir and is one of the crus partially forgotten in the mad rush to produce Nouveau. The other wines rated Outstanding reveal the size (tiny) and venerable age of a large percentage of vineyards in the crus.

The Highly Recommended selection is unsurprisingly dominated by wines from the larger and better known crus, namely Brouilly, Fleurie and Morgon. Brouilly is represented by three solid producers and as Fleurie and Morgon are leading the quality charge in the region it is good to see they figure prominently and that a leading producer like Jean-Marc Burgaud is rewarded.

The other major cru where there is considerable

change is Moulin-à-Vent. Two Highly Recommended wines could be considered slightly under par but these are wines that are made for ageing and they can be shy early on. A name to remember, though, is Domaine Labruyère (same ownership as Jacques Prieur in Burgundy and Château Rouget in Pomerol), which has seen consistent improvement since 2008. Another is Château du Moulin-à-Vent, which has been under new ownership since 2009 and narrowly missed a top spot.

The larger crus again figure heavily among the Recommended wines. In terms of entries (only four) and results, perhaps the biggest disappointment was Juliéas – a sizeable cru with a fabulous terroir (blue stone schist) that can produce superb, deep coloured, mineral wines and deserves to be better known. Maison Trelen (now owned by Chapoutier) and young Pascal Aufranc do a good job, but the numbers need to swell. ■

'The Outstanding wines reveal the size (tiny) and venerable age of many vineyards in the crus'

My top three

Andy Howard MW

■ Raymond Bouland, Cuvée des Délys, Vieilles Vignes, Morgon 2013

Morgon's blue-tinged granite soils and decomposed schist give wines great structure and ageability. This wine really stood out for its balance, purity and great potential. Old vines clearly played a part in the lovely concentration on show. **19/20 (96/100) Drink 2015-2019**

■ Jean-Marc Burgaud, Côte du Py, Morgon 2013 This wine showed all the expected characteristics imparted by the volcanic/granitic soils of the revered Côte du Py, together with finesse from fine exposure on the slopes of this famous hill. Brooding now, but will be exceptional in 2-3 years. **18 (93) Drink 2016-2020**

■ Domaine des Marrans, Vieilles Vignes, Chiroubles 2013 The higher elevations result in later ripening and wines with a lightness of touch, velvety textures and a floral edge. The old vines enhanced the complexity of this elegant example. **17.5 (91) Drink 2015-2017**

My top three

Rob MacCulloch MW

■ Domaine Lagneau, Vieilles Vignes, Côte de Brouilly 2013

Encapsulates the effortless deliciousness produced by some tiny Beaujolais domaines. Beautiful, harmonious, complex wine that really does reflect the mineral qualities of Mont Brouilly's sun-scorched granite slopes. **18.5/20 (95/100) Drink 2015-2020**

■ Raymond Bouland, Cuvée des Délys, Vieilles Vignes, Morgon 2013 Triumphantly bright, fresh, nuanced and very capable of a few years' ageing. For just £13, this is mind-bogglingly brilliant. **18.5 (95) Drink 2015-2019**

■ Jean Loron, Les Thibaults, Brouilly 2013 Négociants often provide the only real outlet for many Beaujolais growers, so they can't be dismissed, particularly when their wines are as consistent as Loron's. This is a stylish, complex Brouilly for only £11. **17 (90) Drink 2015-2018**

My top three

Xavier Rousset MS

■ Raymond Bouland, Cuvée des Délys, Vieilles Vignes, Morgon 2013

A great discovery for me – very impressed by the finesse and elegance of this wine. Not a producer I have come across in the past, but one I will watch from now on. **19/20 (96/100) Drink 2015-2019**

■ Chateau du Moulin-à-Vent, Couvent des Thorins, Moulin-à-Vent 2013 A domaine I've been following over the last 4-5 years. Improving fast, good investment being made, dedicated to quality, thanks to a dynamic family behind it. **17 (90) Drink 2015-2017**

■ Domaine Chignard, Les Moriers, Fleurie 2013 Having visited this producer a few years ago, I was delighted to see it in the top 25 of the 158 wines we tasted. This cuvée has character, minerality and enough tannin structure and fruit to age for a few years if kept in the right conditions. **17 (90) Drink 2015-2016**

NB: the tasters' top wines are not necessarily their top-scoring, rather those which, on learning the wines' identity, they feel are the most notable given their provenance, price or other factors



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 CÔTE-DE-BROUILLY

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