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Decanter

Radical Bordeaux

**Oz Clarke's best
value discoveries**

Screaming Eagle

Inside California's
most exclusive winery

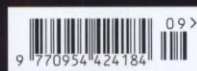
Nature or nurture

Which is stronger -
winemaker or vineyard?



PLUS
the
best of

Crozes-Hermitage 2010
Best new Soaves
Barolo's 2008 vintage
Beaujolais - red & white
South African Chenin Blanc

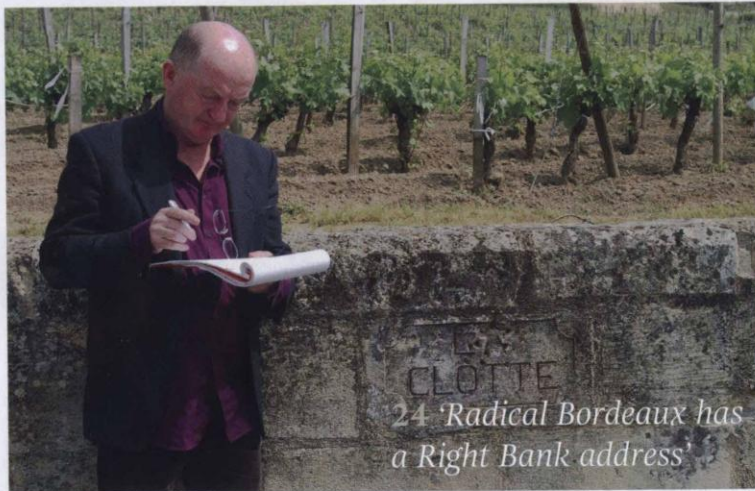


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Decanter



24 'Radical Bordeaux has a Right Bank address'

Features

24 The new Bordeaux

Yes it is possible to find radical, good value claret. **Oz Clarke** talks up the reds of the less prestigious Right Bank appellations

34 Vintage report: Barolo 2008

In a variable vintage, **Tom Maresca** recommends choosing the basic wines over the crus for immediate pleasure

42 Interview: Brent Marris

Rebecca Gibb meets the controversial founder of Wither Hills and the equally successful New Zealand brand The Ned

48 Winemaker influence

Beverley Blanning MW asks whether it's the personality of

60 Producer profile: Screaming Eagle

Few have ever tasted the wine, let alone been granted entry into the winery. **Adam Lechmere** managed to do both

66 Cape Chenin's return

This South African workhorse grape has a new lease of life thanks to producers who realise its potential, says **Sarah Ahmed**



60 'Here, average simply will not do'

BUYING GUIDE

71 Introduction

72 **Spurrier's World**
Our consultant editor Steven Spurrier's monthly travels and tastings

PANEL TASTINGS



75 **Crozes-Hermitage 2010**
67 wines tasted, 1 Outstanding

The basic standard is rising and, if you choose carefully, this is a fine vintage that wine lovers can buy with confidence



83 **Soave**

71 wines tasted, 4 Outstanding
Forget 'neutral, insipid' Soaves – these top-end examples are the ones you should seek out, says our expert panel



90 **Expert's choice: Beaujolais**

These are serious wines, says Rosemary George MW, and the past three excellent vintages show just why

92 **UK stockists**

Where to buy this month's recommended wines

93 **Weekday wines**

Stuck for what to drink on a Tuesday night? Our team find the best-value wines on the UK shelves, from £5 to £15

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90 Expert's choice: Beaujolais

These are serious wines, says Rosemary George MW, and the past three excellent vintages show just why

Beaujolais

Forget 'Nouveau' - real Beaujolais, especially the reds, are serious wines, and the past three excellent vintages show just why. By Rosemary George MW



BEAUJOLAIS WOULD BE one of my desert island wines, for the simple reason that it offers sheer pleasure with simple, uncomplicated drinking. For Xavier Bardet of Maison Loron and vice-president of trade body InterBeaujolais, the charm and typicality of good red Beaujolais lies in 'the purity of the fruits' - like cherries, raspberries, strawberries - which comes from the combination of the Gamay grape on granite soil. There is no other wine quite like it, for nowhere else anywhere in the world produces wines with such a wonderful combination of fruit and drinkability allied to refreshing acidity. Beaujolais is unique.

While it is true that the reputation of Beaujolais was tarnished by the fashion for Beaujolais Nouveau, these days Beaujolais (white, rose and red) has become more serious and authentic. Overall quality has improved enormously, with a better understanding of viticulture and greater attention to work in the cellar, encouraged by an energetic generation of young wine growers.

Simple red Beaujolais is light and fruity. Beaujolais-Villages has a little more weight, and the 10 crus each have their subtle nuances: Chiroubles is the lightest, Brouilly the most fragrant, Fleurie is more floral, Juliénas and Côte de Brouilly are very similar, each with a certain structure, and Chénas has a different terroir, also making it more structured. St-Amour is spicy, while the newest cru, Régnié, has more body than some. Morgon can be quite tannic, and Moulin-à-Vent is the most ageworthy.

The classic vinification of red Beaujolais is semi-carbonic maceration, in that no extra carbon dioxide is

'Nowhere else anywhere produces wines with such wonderful fruit, drinkability and refreshing acidity'

added to the vat. This contributes to the fruity appeal of the wines. Old oak may be used to good effect, especially for the more structured crus, but new oak is quite inappropriate. And Beaujolais, particularly some of the more substantial crus, can age, but the character and taste change completely. 'Ca pinotte', as they say in the region, for more mature Beaujolais takes on the flavours of red Burgundy, with elegant notes reminiscent of Pinot Noir, though as a result it loses its vibrant freshness. It's still a good drink but it is not the same.

Nor should Beaujolais blanc or indeed Beaujolais rosé be ignored. They both account for a tiny part of the production of the appellation, but white Beaujolais certainly has its place, providing another interpretation of Chardonnay in the Burgundy region. Beaujolais has had a run of three lovely vintages. For Bardet, 2009 is the best vintage since the legendary 1947, and the result of a perfect summer. 2010 followed with a more structured style - I found that some of the wines had lost their youthful fruitiness - and the 2011, a vintage saved by a warm, sunny September, have lovely fruit. They are everything that good Beaujolais should be.

Rosemary George MW is an awarded wine journalist and author, and a regular contributor to Decanter. These were the best wines of those tasted, non-blind, at InterBeaujolais trade tasting in London in June.

For full details of UK stockists, see p92

George's Highly Recommended wines



Jean-Paul Brun, Beaujolais Blanc 2010 18 (93)
 £9.08-£11 Bordeaux Index, Savage Selection
 Delicately understated nose. Rounded, leafy notes on the palate, with ripe fruit and a textured mouthfeel. Satisfying depth and a lovely, long finish. Drink 2012-2015 Alcohol 12%

Maison Loron, Les Ronzettes, Beaujolais Blanc 2011 17 (90)
 £8-£9.95 Savvy's Wine Shop, Syko Wines
 Light nose with round, lightly buttery fruit on the palate. Good acidity and a satisfying balance of ample fruit. Drink 2012-2015 Alc 12.5%

Domaine de la Chapelle des Bois, Cuvée Bel Air, Fleurie 2011 18 (93)
 £12.50-£17.30 Charles Mitchell, The Vintner
 Rounded cherry fruit on the nose and palate. Ripe and beautifully balanced. Very appealing with a long finish. Drink 2012-2015 Alc 13%

Beaujolais



Domaine des Marrans, Fleurie 2011 18 (93)
 £14.35 Fingal-Bock, Heaton Wines, Hicks & Don
 Fresh but tight nose of cherry fruit. Very appealing palate with fresh cherries and a youthful edge. Everything that good Fleurie should be. Drink 2012-2015 Alc 12.5%



Domaine Richard Rotiers, Moulin-à-Vent 2010 18 (93)
 £15-£16 widely available via agent Charles Hawkins
 Firm cherry nose with spicy notes and more spice on the palate. Nicely understated, with body and structure. Classic Moulin-à-Vent, with good ageing potential. Drink 2012-2018 Alc 13%



Domaine Damien Coquelet, Chiroubles 2011 17.5 (91)
 £15.49 Les Caves de Pyrene
 A lovely Chiroubles with a slightly wild note on the nose. Very fresh with vibrant acidity. Intriguing and original. Drink 2012-2015 Alc 12%



Domaine de la Chapelle des Bois, Chiroubles 2011 17.5 (91)
 £11.25 Stone Vine & Sun
 Vibrant and young. Rounded nose. Ripe fruit on both nose and palate. Good balance of tannin and acidity, with a youthful finish. Drink 2012-2014 Alc 13%



Domaine Georges Descombes, Brouilly 2011 17.5 (91)
 £15.99 Les Caves de Pyrene
 Firm, tight nose. More forthcoming on the palate, with a ripe, wild brambly flavour. Ripe fruit with an elegant balance of tannin and acidity. Intriguing finish. Drink 2012-2015 Alc 12.5%



Château de Bagnols, Brouilly 2011 17 (90)
 £13 Lancelot Wines
 Another lovely, fragrant Brouilly. Firm, tight-knit nose. Fresh fruit with good structure and balance. Medium weight. A fresh finish. Drink 2012 Alc 13%



Château de Grandmont, Beaujolais-Villages 2011 17 (90)
 £9.40 Christopher Piper, Fallers
 Firm nose. Nicely structured palate, with some firm cherry fruit. Good balance and more structured than some. Drink 2012-2015 Alc 13%



Château de Raousset, Grille Midi, Fleurie 2010 17 (90)
 £11.95-£13.49 Justerini & Brooks, Les Caves de Pyrene, Slurp
 Vibrant. Still youthful and fresh on both nose and palate. Medium weight. Round cherry fruit and a satisfying finish. Drink 2012-2016 Alc 13%



Château du Chatelard, Beaujolais-Villages 2011 17 (90)
 £8.45 Iggles Wine Co, Paul Adams, York Wines
 Vibrant and young. Round nose and firm cherry fruit on the palate. Medium weight with a refreshing edge of acidity and tannin. Good balance. Drink 2012-2014 Alc 13%



Château Grange Cochard, Les Charmes, Morgon 2010 17 (90)
 £15-£18 Berry Bros & Rudd, Jacobs, Secret Cellar
 Firm fruit on the nose. A touch of oak on palate, but very nicely integrated. Solid, ripe and sturdy - needs a bit of time. Stylish and characterful. Drink 2013-2018 Alc 13%



Château Thivin, Brouilly 2011 17 (90)
 £14.40 (2009) Nick Dobson
 Firm, bright cherry fruit nose. Medium-weight palate with a youthful tannic streak. Good fruit and nice balance. Drink 2012-2015 Alc 12.5%



Domaine de Chênepierre, Moulin-à-Vent 2011 17 (90)
 £13.95 Sipp
 Firm, tight-knit nose and palate. Good structure balanced with ripe fruit. Plenty of potential. Drink 2014-2020 Alc 12.5%



Domaine Manor du Carra, Non-Filtré, Beaujolais-Villages 2011 17 (90)
 £9.95 widely available via agent Winegrowers Direct
 Fresh but ripe nose and palate. Spicy red cherry fruit has satisfying depth. Bottled unfiltered. Drink 2012-2014 Alc 12.5%



Maison des Bulliats, Vieilles Vignes, Régnié 2011 17 (90)
 £8 Essentially, Last Drop, Park Vintners, Vagabond
 Bright and young. Solid nose - less forthcoming than some. Refreshing cherry fruit on the palate leads to a ripe finish and a good balance. Drink 2012-2015 Alc 12.5%



Paul-Henri Thillardon, Les Carrières, Chénas 2011 17 (90)
 £13.75 Christopher Piper
 Light cherry nose. Medium-weight palate that is fresh, with a youthful edge. Good cherry fruit finish. Needs time. Drink 2013-2017 Alc 12.5%

Beaujolais

Forget 'Nouveau' – real Beaujolais, especially the reds, are serious wines, and the past three excellent vintages show just why. By Rosemary George MW



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Delicately understated nose. Rounded, leafy notes on the palate, with ripe fruit and a textured mouthfeel. Satisfying depth and a lovely, long finish. **Drink 2012–2015 Alcohol 12%**



Maison Loron, Les Ronzettes, Beaujolais Blanc 2011 17 (90)

£8–£9.95 Davy's Wine Shop, Syko Wines
Light nose with round, lightly buttery fruit on the palate. Good acidity and a satisfying balance of ample fruit. **Drink 2012–2015 Alc 12.5%**



Domaine de la Chapelle des Bois, Cuvée Bel Air, Fleurie 2011 18 (93)

£12.50–£17.30 Charles Mitchell, The Vintner
Rounded cherry fruit on the nose and palate. Ripe and beautifully balanced. Very appealing with a long finish. **Drink 2012–2015 Alc 13%**



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Light nose with round, lightly buttery fruit on the palate. Good acidity and a satisfying balance of ample fruit. **Drink 2012-2015 Alc 12.5%**



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90 | September 2012 • DECANTER



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Domaine des Marrans, Fleurie 2011 18 (93)

£14.35 Fingal-Rock, Heaton Wines, Hicks & Don
Fresh but tight nose of cherry fruit. Very appealing palate with fresh cherries and a youthful edge. Everything that good Fleurie should be. **Drink 2012–2015 Alc 12.5%**



Domaine Richard Rottiers, Moulin-à-Vent 2010 18 (93)

£15–£16 widely available via agent Charles Hawkins
Firm cherry nose with spicy notes and more spice on the palate. Nicely understated, with body and structure. Classic Moulin-à-Vent, with good ageing potential. **Drink 2012–2018 Alc 13%**



Domaine Damien Coquelet, Chiroubles 2011 17.5 (91)

£15.49 Les Caves de Pyrène
A lovely Chiroubles with a slightly wild note on the nose. Very fresh with vibrant acidity. Intriguing and original. **Drink 2012–2015 Alc 12%**



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£11.25 Stone Vine & Sun
Vibrant and young. Rounded nose. Ripe fruit on both nose and palate. Good balance of tannin and acidity, with a youthful finish. **Drink 2012–2014 Alc 13%**



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Firm, tight nose. More forthcoming on the palate, with a ripe, wild brambly flavour. Ripe fruit with an elegant balance of tannin and acidity. Intriguing finish. **Drink 2012–2015 Alc 12.5%**



Château de Bagnols, Brouilly 2011 17 (90)

£13 Lancelot Wines
Another lovely, fragrant Brouilly. Firm, tight-knit nose. Fresh fruit with good structure and balance. Medium weight. A fresh finish. **Drink 2012 Alc 13%**



Château de Grandmont, Beaujolais-Villages 2011 17 (90)

£9.40 Christopher Piper, Fullers
Firm nose. Nicely structured palate, with some firm cherry fruit. Good balance and more structured than some. **Drink 2012–2015 Alc 13%**



Château de Raousset, Grille Midi, Fleurie 2010 17 (90)

£11.95–£13.49 Justerini & Brooks, Les Caves de Pyrène, Slurp
Vibrant. Still youthful and fresh on both nose and palate. Medium weight. Round cherry fruit and a satisfying finish. **Drink 2012–2016 Alc 13%**



Château du Chatelard, Beaujolais-Villages 2011 17 (90)

£8.45 Halifax Wine Co, Paul Adams, York Wines
Vibrant and young. Round nose and firm cherry fruit on the palate. Medium weight with a refreshing edge of acidity and tannin. Good balance. **Drink 2012–2014 Alc 13%**



Château Grange Cochard, Les Charmes, Morgon 2010 17 (90)

£15–£18 Berry Bros & Rudd, Jascots, Secret Cellar
Firm fruit on the nose. A touch of oak on palate, but very nicely integrated. Solid, ripe and sturdy – needs a bit of time. Stylish and characterful. **Drink 2013–2018 Alc 13%**



Château Thivin, Brouilly 2011 17 (90)

£14.40 (2009) Nick Dobson
Firm, bright cherry fruit nose. Medium-weight palate with a youthful tannic streak. Good fruit and nice balance. **Drink 2012–2015 Alc 12.5%**



Domaine de Chênepierre, Moulin-à-Vent 2011 17 (90)

£13.95 Sipp
Firm, tight-knit nose and palate. Good structure balanced with ripe fruit. Plenty of potential. **Drink 2014–2020 Alc 12.5%**



Domaine Manor du Carra, Non-Filtré, Beaujolais-Villages 2011 17 (90)

£9.95 widely available via agent Winegrowers Direct
Fresh but ripe nose and palate. Spicy red cherry fruit has satisfying depth. Bottled unfiltered. **Drink 2012–2014 Alc 12.5%**



Maison des Bulliats, Vieilles Vignes, Régnié 2011 17 (90)

£8 Essentially, Last Drop, Park Vintners, Vagabond
Bright and young. Solid nose – less forthcoming than some. Refreshing cherry fruit on the palate leads to a ripe finish and a good balance. **Drink 2012–2015 Alc: 12.5%**



Paul-Henri Thillardon, Les Carrières, Chénas 2011 17 (90)

£13.75 Christopher Piper
Light cherry nose. Medium-weight palate that is fresh, with a youthful edge. Good cherry fruit finish. Needs time. **Drink 2013–2017 Alc 12.5%**