



# Wine Club Tasting Notes

## May 2007

First of all, I want to let you know that although this wine carries the appellation of Beaujolais, IT DOES NOT TASTE AT ALL LIKE BEAUJOLAIS NOUVEAU! This is an entirely different bird. The best analogy I can come up with is how White Zinfandel unwittingly damaged the reputation of dry rosé wines. The same has happened (unwittingly) in

Beaujolais – people automatically assume that all wines from Beaujolais taste like the grapey, headache-inducing juice that is released the third Thursday of every November. This couldn't be further from the truth. Now for a small crash course in the wonderful world of Beaujolais...

Beaujolais is the southernmost region of Burgundy, France. While in the rest of Burgundy red wines are made from Pinot Noir (that's it, by law), winemakers in Beaujolais use a red grape called Gamay. Over 90% of the wine produced in Beaujolais is red, but some white (Chardonnay) and a bit of rosé can be found. Wines bearing the Beaujolais appellation on the label are simple, everyday quaffers that are delightful when served slightly chilled. (Actually, almost all Beaujolais benefits from being slightly chilled.) The next level is Beaujolais Supérieur, and these wines are a bit better and have a higher alcohol content. The next step up the quality ladder is Beaujolais-Villages, a collection of thirty nine villages with superior vineyard sites in the northern part of Beaujolais. The highest quality level is comprised of ten individual villages, each with its own individual appellation, or *cru* as they call it in France. These villages, or crus, produce the best and most expensive wines, with Juliéna being one of those ten crus. Got it?

Wines from Beaujolais are made almost exclusively in a special process called 'carbonic maceration.' The significance of this process is that outside of Beaujolais it's not widely used. Here's how it works: The carbonic maceration process begins by dumping whole bunches of freshly picked, uncrushed grapes into large vats filled with carbon dioxide and a good wine yeast. In this process, the bottom grapes are crushed by the weight of the grapes above them, and fermentation begins with the exuded juice. This beginning fermentation develops more carbon dioxide gas, which envelops the upper layers of uncrushed grapes and blocks air exposure that normally would occur. Soon, fermentation begins within the whole grapes, and they begin to ooze more juice. Finally the whole batch is pressed and fermentation is finished in a standard way. The end result is wines that are relatively low in tannin and intensely colored with fresh, fruity aromas and flavors.

Wines made in Juliéna are certainly fresh and fruity, but this region is one of the more substantial in Beaujolais. Typically, the wines from this appellation are deeper in color, have a richer fruitiness and have more tannins than most. Also, Juliéna, along with wines from Moulin-a-Vent (another important *cru* in Beaujolais), is considered to be capable of the longest aging. And it should be pointed out that the 2005 vintage in Beaujolais was textbook PERFECT, so the bottle in your bag is a real treat. Beautifully colored, with gorgeous cherry, raspberry and earthy notes, this wine lingers awhile on your palate. If you've never drunk a *cru* Beaujolais before, you're in for something truly unique and delicious! Oh, and did I mention that this is the most perfect red wine to drink during hot South Carolina summers?