Dom des Terres Dor□es, Cuv□e Premi□re 2007 Beaujolais

9 Sep 2008 by Jancis Robinson

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It's high time serious Beaujolais featured in this slot; I don't think, to my shame, I have ever chosen one as my wine of the week. The reason is probably that there is so much extremely ordinary Beaujolais around that it has distracted me from the pleasure of a good one.

Conscientious Jean-Paul Brun is a superbly distinctive and dedicated grower based in the unfashionable far south of the greater Beaujolais region in Charnay de Beaujolais (purple pagers can click here to find Charnay on one of our 169 new, superbly detailed maps from *The World Atlas of Wine* – just put Charnay into the search box at the top of the PDF to locate it). Conventionally, this is where all the rubbish comes from while only the higher Beaujolais Villages zone or the hills where the Crus Beaujolais are made in the north can produce anything decent. But on his 20ha of clay limestone-based vineyards, Brun proves that with determination and really thoughtful winemaking, great wine can come from the south too.

You don't have to take my word for it. The leading French wine gurus Michel Bettane (who lives in the Beaujolais) and Thierry Desseauve say in their latest *Le Grand Guide des Vins de France 2009*, 'Once you're used to Jean-Paul Brun's style, it's very difficult to drink anything else by way of Beaujolais: he knows how to keep the wines' native charm while harnessing modern winemaking techniques and avoiding the stupid stereotypes that have ruined the credibility of what was once such a popular appellation.' Take that, Beaujolais cheese-eating monkeys!

I saw Brun again and tasted his current range chez UK importers OW Loeb yesterday, having long admired his wines after being introduced by Mark Savage MW of Savage Selections, and was again knocked out by how superior they are. They are of course an expression of refreshing Gamay fruit, but they have so much sap and juiciness in the mid palate. So unlike the tart, thin, rasping liquids that are so often sold under this name.

The best wine for current drinking is this **Dom des Terres Dorées, Cuvée Première 2007 Beaujolais** which is amazingly ripe-smelling and yet has great freshness and honesty. The distinguishing feature really though is that it spreads itself horizontally right across the palate rather than tasting like a thin streak from lip to throat. It also tasted very good, and quite complex, at room temperature whereas many Beaujolais need to be cooled to be charming. Wonderful persistence too. I think this wine is also probably the best value of Jean-Paul Brun's offerings.

Worth laying in for next year and beyond however is his **Dom des Terres Dorées, Cuvée l'Ancien 2007 Beaujolais** from old vines. At the moment the acidity is much more marked but there is fantastic substance underneath – really something to get your teeth into, and enjoy with food between 2009 anda 2011. In fact it is really well up to the standard of his gorgeously aromatic **Morgon 2007** from fruit grown very close to the famous Côte de Py, and his multi-layered, mossy **Moulin-à-Vent 2007**. Both these Crus Beaujolais should be kept for a couple of years at least ideally.

I trust these wines are available in the US even though winesearcher can't locate an American stockist, and for the moment cites only http://www.1855.com/ in France at 6.80 euros a bottle and http://www.everywine.co.uk/ at £9.99 a bottle, although you have to buy at leastsix. No sweat, I'd say, to commit yourself to six of these beauties. Everywine is offering the Cuvée l'Ancien at £12.04 a bottle, the Morgon at £13.35 and the Moulin-à-Vent at £14.77. If any of these wines happened to be made in Burgundy proper rather than its southern outpost, they could easily cost twice as much at the very least.

But, much the best value UK retailer is Brun's old friend Mark Savage MW at Savage Selection who is currently offering the 2006 of Cuvee Premiere for just £5.95 as well as the other bottlings on their website here, and says he is offering the 2007 at £6.95, even though it is not on the website yet.

Later that same day – UK stockists are popping usefully out of the woodwork. Best price via OW Loeb is £9 a bottle from

Igloo, Bermondsey High Street, London SE1 (0207 403 7774) who have it currently in stock. Both Corks of Cotham in Bristol in Bristol (tel 0117 973 1620) and Butlers in Brighton (01273 698724) will be getting it in soon and will charge £9.99 a bottle while Zelas.co.uk, who also have a shop in Highgate, London (0208 8347 9006), are asking £10.99 a bottle for single-bottle purchases from this link on their website but offer discounts for bigger orders.

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