

## THE RED WINES OF THE SOUTHERN BURGUNDY FRANCE

The Northern Burgundy is called the Cotes de Nuits, and the wines from there are for another article. The wines of the Cotes de Nuits are widely considered the greatest wines on earth made with the Pinot Noir grape. The Burgundian region of Chablis is well north of the rest of Burgundy, and produces essentially only white wine, known as Chablis.

Southern Burgundy as I use it here comprises four regions: the COTES DE BEAUNE [cōt də bōn], the COTE CHALONNAISE [cōt shāl-ō-nās], the MACONNAIS [māk-ō-nā] and BEAUJOLAIS [bō-zhǎ-lā]. Most, but not all, of the red wine of Beaujolais, and a high percentage of Maconnais is made from the GAMAY grape. The other red wines are made from the much more noble PINOT NOIR. These wines range from the Excellent (with the occasional Outstanding) through many levels of the drinkable and all the way to the truly bad. The overall quality drops markedly from the Cotes de Beaune to the Beaujolais, although there are a number of Excellent red wines from the Beaujolais but not from the Cote Chalonnaise or the Maconnais, from which the top wines are Very Good.

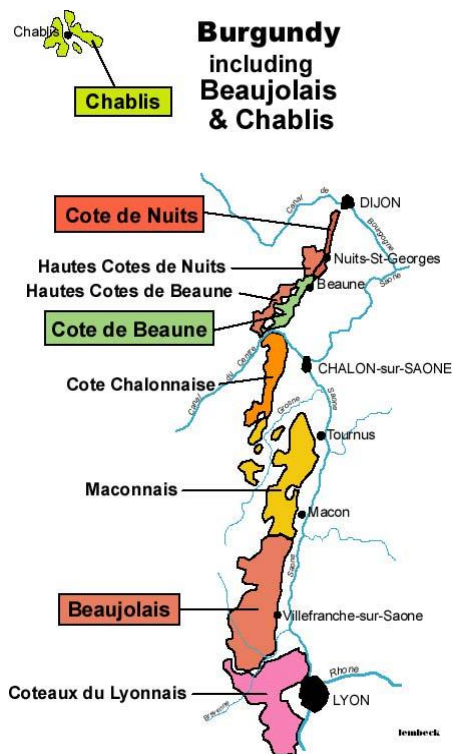
As elsewhere in France, a wine is known by the area in which the grapes are grown. Like the rings and then bulls-eye of a target, a wine grape growing area is deemed to be better as the area falls within another and another larger area. A wine labeled “Bourgogne” can include grapes from any plot of land in the entire Burgundy region.

*In Beaujolais:* A wine labeled “**Beaujolais**” can have grapes from any plot of land in the Beaujolais region. A wine labeled “**Beaujolais-Villages**” or “**Beaujolais-[Village Name]**” must be made of grapes from more than one, or from just one, of thirty eight villages. An additional 10 villages have the elevated status of “Cru Beaujolais;” these wines do not prominently display “Beaujolais” with the village name, just **St. Amour, Julienas, Chenas, Moulin-a-Vent, Fleurie, Chiroubles, Morgon, Regnie, Cote de Brouilly** and **Brouilly**. Each of the 10 uses exclusively the red Gamay grape, except Cote de Brouilly, which allows Pinot Noir and Gamay.

*In the Maconnais:* A wine labeled “**Macon**” can have grapes from any plot of land in the Maconnais region. A wine labeled “Macon-Villages” or “Macon-Villages [Village Name]” is not red, as that is a classification for white wines only. A wine labeled “**Macon-[Village Name]**” must be made of grapes solely from the one of about fifty villages.

*In the Two Other Regions:* Cote Chalonnaise and Cotes de Beaune, have three classifications of grade above that of their own regional names: Village (lowest), and then areas that do not overlap, which are comprised solely of single vineyards: Premier Cru and Grand Cru – with Grand Cru being better plots of land than Premier Cru. Essentially all of these red wines are made using 100% Pinot Noir grapes.

The Premier Cru vineyards of the Cote Chalonnaise as a group provide excellent value-for-quality. These wines are identified by use of one of four village names with the words



“Premier Cru-[*Vineyard Name*]” written in smaller type directly under the village name. The villages are **Givry** (the same name is used for a village in the Cotes de Nuits), **Mercurey**, **Montagny** and **Rully**. Cote Chalonnaise has no vineyards which have achieved Grand Cru status.

The Cotes de Beaune is home to the greatest white wines of the world. There are eight Grand Cru vineyards, but only one produces red wine grapes in addition to white, **Corton**. There are 302 Premier Cru vineyards in Cotes de Beaune, which produce mostly white wines, but there are many Premier Cru vineyards which produce Pinot Noir. The village of **Pommard** has 28 Premier Cru vineyards, producing all red; the village of **Volnay** has 32 Premier Cru vineyards, also producing all red; with other areas producing Premier Cru reds including: the town of **Beaune** which has 40 Premier Cru vineyards; **Aloxe-Corton** in addition to the Corton Grand Cru vineyard has 9 Premier Cru vineyards; **Chassagne-Montrachet**; **Ladoix**; **Marages**; **Meursault**; **Monthelie**; **St. Aubin**; **St. Romain**; **Santanay** and **Savigny-Les-Beaune**. All of the villages named also produce wines that are from vineyards that are not classified as Premier Cru or Grand Cru.

Two characteristics make it difficult to find wines of Burgundy in restaurants. First, while wines of fair to poor quality will be at their best soon after being produced, even moderate quality Burgundian red wines will need at least a year to be ready for drinking; because restaurants do not want to store wine, this adds a dilemma for restaurants. Second, for the higher-end wines from the Premier Cru and especially Grand Cru vineyards, there is so little available that prices are high at each step from winery to you. Below are some recommendations I have for red Burgundy at Houston restaurants. My entire list of recommended wines at Houston Restaurants (compiled August 2010) is available by [clicking here](#).

Catalan: 2007 Lapierre Morgan, Beaujolais, \$27

Noe: 2002 Parent, Monthelie Premier Cru Fulliot, Cotes de Beaune, \$70

Noe: 2002 Mommessin, Beaune Premier Cru Les Greves, Cotes de Beaune, \$90

Pappas Bros. Steakhouse: 1996 G. Roumier Bonnes Mares, Cotes de Nuits, \$380

Catalan: 2004 Meo-Camuzet Echezeaux, Cotes de Nuits, \$200

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