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FOOD & DRINKS · WINE

# The Best Beaujolais Nouveau to Drink This Year

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Getty

Domaine Jean Foillard Beaujolais Nouveau is a sommelier favorite.



**While wine drinkers around the world look forward to its annual debut, Beaujolais Nouveau gets a bit of a mixed reception from the pros. We asked some of the country's top sommeliers to give us the lowdown on this year's Beaujolais Nouveau Day.**

Every year, on the third Thursday of November (that's today!), Beaujolais Nouveau—the young, purple-pink wine made from the Gamay grape in France's Beaujolais region, sold right after the vintage is bottled—is released to big fanfare in celebration of fall and the harvest. There are fireworks and festivals on Beaujolais Nouveau Day, and the new wine is celebrated in restaurants, bars, and markets throughout Europe, North America, and Asia, thanks to a clever and hugely successful marketing campaign. With all the hype and publicity comes the question: Is it really worth it?

We sought advice from some of the best sommeliers here at home. One wine, Domaine Jean Foillard Beaujolais Nouveau, emerged as a favorite among many of the pros consulted. “It’s consistently great year after year: fresh, fruity, and a little bit spicy,” says Michele Bisciegli, sommelier and wine director of Blue Hill New York. But opinions about which Beaujolais Nouveau to drink—and whether it’s worth drinking at all—varied widely.



Courtesy Kermit Lynch Wine Merchant

Jean Foillard in his vineyards.

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Paul Grieco of Terroir|Tribeca defines Beaujolais Nouveau as “nearly’ wine.” He’d rather drink the “real” Beaujolais (i.e., not Nouveau) to “understand why the Gamay grape was the first grape to dominate the Burgundy playing field.” Generally playful yet elegant with juicy fruit and light tannins, a great Beaujolais “tastes of the place—an incredible terroir with primordial hills—the grape, and of vibrant, tension-filled fruit,” says Grieco.

For Laura Maniec of BuzzCork in New York City, Beaujolais Nouveau is about being festive and enjoying the first wine of the harvest. “It represents hope for the New Year,” she said. But not everyone’s a fan. Phillip Dunn of Spago Beverly Hills says he normally doesn’t buy it. “Maybe it’s okay to sip while you’re cooking, but it wouldn’t be my choice for dinner.”

Caleb Ganzer of La Compagnie des Vins Surnaturels in New York is against the artificiality of most Beaujolais Nouveau bottlings. “For better or worse, most Beaujolais Nouveau is hastily produced and uses a lot of non-natural additives to make it ready for market so soon,” he says.

Most sommeliers recommend buying Beaujolais Nouveau from a trusted producer of Cru Beaujolais or Beaujolais-Villages, wines made in the Beaujolais region that aren’t sold the first year of the vintage. “A great winemaker doesn’t make any wine poorly,” says Thomas Pastuszak of the NoMad in New York. “They put the same amount of effort in every wine they make because their reputation is at stake.”

## THE TOP BEAUJOLAIS NOUVEAU OF 2015

[Domaine Jean Foillard Beaujolais Nouveau](#)

## MORE BEAUJOLAIS NOUVEAU RECOMMENDATIONS

**Pierre Marie Chermette**, Beaujolais Primeur Les Griottes (Laura Maniec)

**Domaine Coquelet**, Beaujolais Nouveau (Laura Maniec)

**Domaine Jean-Claude Lapalu**, Beaujolais-Villages Nouveau (Michelle Bisciaglia)

**Jean-Paul Brun Domaine des Terres Dorees**, Beaujolais Nouveau

L'Ancien (Caleb Ganzer; “This wine is produced the old-fashioned way: from ripe grapes, with no added sugar, fermented with indigenous yeasts, no carbonic maceration and low sulphur,” says Caleb.)

**Scribe Winery Nouveau of Pinot Noir**, California (Ashley Ragovin, owner of online wine retailer Pour This, says, “Scribe Nouveau is made from Pinot Noir, not Gamay, which is a fun twist. This wine has local Cali soul, but with a true-to-Beaujolais playfulness.”)

**Mimi Thorisson At Home in the Médoc**