

Ep 159: The Ten Crus of Beaujolais with Dan Farrell-Wright, Founder of Wickhams Wine Merchants (Part 2)



Janina Doyle 00:00:07 Welcome to Eat Sleep Wine Repeat, a podcast for all you wine lovers, who, if you're like me, just cannot get enough of the good stuff. I'm Janina Doyle, your host, Brand Ambassador, Wine Educator, and Sommelier. So, stick with me as we dive deeper into this ever evolving, wonderful world of wine and wherever you are listening to this, cheers to you!

Hello, wine friends. And we are back with part two, focusing on Beaujolais. And as I'm sure you already know, if you've heard part one, we are in safe hands because Dan, the founder of [Wickhams Wines](#), and also my sponsor of this season knows his shit when it comes to especially French wine. And that is reflected in the fact that he won the Decanter Retailer Award for the South and regional France specialist retailer of the year.

Don't forget, you can use my code "EATSLEEP10" to get yourself 10% off your first order. And as I know, you're all gagging to know so much more about the 10 Crus of Beaujolais in insane amounts of detail, pull yourself that glass of Beaujolais. And let's get going.

Janina Doyle 00:01:24 But I think what we talked about in part one, we really focused on Beaujolais Nouveau, but you did touch on you know, we talked about the 10 Crus, we have talked about the Villages. But do you want to possibly just summarise before we move forward on the pyramid, as in starting from AOC Beaujolais, right? So, everyone understands, I guess if they were looking at a label, kind of what they're gonna get.

Dan Farrell-Wright 00:01:51 Yeah. Okay, so as is typical with all French wine regions, the appellation system is a really simple guide to what we can expect. So, you start off with a very broad area. So, AOC Beaujolais grapes can come from anywhere within the Beaujolais region.

There's 96 communes in total. And any one of those 96 communes can make wine that can be labelled AOC Beaujolais. If it's red, it's going to be Gamay. 100% Gamay. It's the only grape that's allowed. If it's Rosé, it's going to be 100%, Gamay, the only grape that is allowed, if it's white, it's going to be 100% Chardonnay, the only white grape that's allowed. It's another reason why I liked Beaujolais so much, it's simple, just like me. So, it's very easy to understand.

Janina Doyle 00:02:38 You said it, I didn't say anything.

Dan Farrell-Wright 00:02:40 So you're looking at an area of about 4000 hectares for AOC Beaujolais. Then taking one step upon the pyramid, so a slight improvement in quality, you have Beaujolais Villages. So, most of the time on the label, you will see those in a Villages. So, you now go down to 38 Villages that are allowed to make Beaujolais Villages.

So, you're basically losing most of the Villages in the flat plains in the south. And we're now just getting slightly more hilly, slightly more altitude. And these are your Villages. Although you can see Beaujolais Villages in the Villages, they are allowed to put the Villages name on the label as well, if they want to.

So, if you see Beaujolais and then the name of a Villages, say something like Beaujolais Blasé, then that is Beaujolais Villages but it comes from the Village...

Janina Doyle 00:03:41 From that...

Dan Farrell-Wright 00:03:41 That Villages of Blasé. Yes. Rather than being a blend from lots of different Villages. And you see that mostly in those Villages that are trying to get Cru status.

Janina Doyle 00:03:54 Okay, this is now interesting. In terms of current information, we've got the 10 Crus we're going to get to that. Are there quite a few others that are really close to perhaps being added into that 10 because that there hasn't been any changes.

Dan Farrell-Wright 00:04:10 So, there are a handful of Villages which are pushing to be, Crus. Blasé being one of them. So, if you see the name on the label, it's because those Villages are making a real play, to say look, we have a distinct identity, we have a distinct terroir, and we feel that should be recognised in the AOC system.

Janina Doyle 00:04:33 Okay, interesting.

Dan Farrell-Wright 00:04:34 So, yeah, so we've gotten Beaujolais Villages. And again, in Beaujolais, you can have Red, Rosé and White, same grapes, Gamay red, Gamay Rosé, Chardonnay white. And then the final step up the pyramid, so the top of the pyramid – I'm sorry, Beaujolais Villages is about 3000 hectares now, so slightly lower volumes as well and slightly lower yields and so on and so forth. We get to the top of the pyramid now, the final step, and that is the Crus Villages of Beaujolais of which there are 10.

Janina Doyle 00:05:05 I see you have a beautiful, lovely map.

Dan Farrell-Wright 00:05:08 Yes.

Janina Doyle 00:05:08 Do you want to go through the 10 Crus in order?

Dan Farrell-Wright 00:05:12 So, starting with the furthest north, we have Juliéna, Saint Amour, Chénas, Moulin-à-Vent, Fleurie, Chiroubles, Morgon, Régnié, Brouilly, Côte de Brouilly.

Janina Doyle 00:05:25 Now do you know what? I'm so confused. You're looking at a map?

Dan Farrell-Wright 00:05:29 Yep.

Janina Doyle 00:05:29 I genuinely always thought Saint Amour was North, then my whole story doesn't work. I'm gonna check a map now as well. Map of Beaujolais. Have they changed the map?

Dan Farrell-Wright 00:05:47 They haven't moved Saint Amour. It has not moved.

Janina Doyle 00:05:50 I just don't believe it.

Dan Farrell-Wright 00:05:52 So if you look on the map there. So, I'm just holding it up.

Janina Doyle 00:05:55 No. Okay. We are all Okay, everybody. Don't worry. Actually, it is about your own personal opinion is, Saint Amour is on top, but Juliéñas has a point that is further north.

Dan Farrell-Wright 00:06:12 Okay. Yes.

Janina Doyle 00:06:14 So I'm sticking with it.

Dan Farrell-Wright 00:06:18 But you could make an argument for either one. Yes. Okay.

Janina Doyle 00:06:20 That's so funny. I was like, how is that even possible? You're looking at a map. But I'm looking at a map now as well. And it is actually Saint Amour sits on top of Juliéñas. But Juliéñas has actually got a little sticky, pointy out bit. Okay, there we go.

So, what I love about Saint Amour is the easiest one to almost describe as a wine region, because you think of love. And you think of just like, oh, and you're happy and it's juicy, and it's fresh. And so, there is this lightness and this easiness to the fruit of Saint Amour.

So, it's great because it's nice for Valentine's Day, buy a bottle of Saint Amour. And it is just going to be that lovely light and easy stuff. Do you feel that that's accurate, though, because you drink more Beaujolais than I do?

Dan Farrell-Wright 00:07:06 So in general, Saint Amour is a lighter, easier wine to understand. Typically, sort of raspberries, violets, iris, maybe a little bit of wild strawberry as well. But because there's always an exception to the rule. So, the bedrock in Saint Amour is more heterogeneous than any other of the Crus in Beaujolais.

So, you can get lots of different profiles from Saint Amour dependent on what your vines are planted on. So, you have granite because you always do in Beaujolais but you also have alluvial deposits, you have blue stones, you have a real mixture of different types of geology. So, you can make very different wines should you choose to.

Janina Doyle 00:08:01 Okay. There's a rule but, everyone, just keep in mind...

Dan Farrell-Wright 00:08:06 There's always an exception to the rule.

Janina Doyle 00:08:07 Okay. So, Juliéñas. What is your interpretation of Juliéñas as a Cru?

Dan Farrell-Wright 00:08:12 Yeah. So, Juliéñas tends to be red fruits, floral, may be a very slight touch of sort of stone fruits as well. So, a little bit of sour cherry, something like that, from stone fruits. It's unique, again, in terms of the bedrock a bit, in terms of the geology, because what you have is a blend of schist, diorite, sandstone and clay.

You actually don't have very much granite. Granite is probably the lowest percentage in Juliéñas to anywhere else.

Janina Doyle 00:08:45 Okay. All right.

Dan Farrell-Wright 00:08:46 So, yeah, you have a slightly, again, usual... So, Juliéñas and Saint Amour, both sort of don't quite fit the profile of the other cruise in so far as they have lots of different geology happening there where they tend to be much more, what's the word?

Janina Doyle 00:09:04 Well, they're outliers a little bit more there. So, if you're more into unity, everybody, go a bit further down in the Crus. What about Chénas?

Dan Farrell-Wright 00:09:21 But equally, bearing in mind that we are talking about... So, the Crus, I don't think we mentioned this earlier, you can only make Gamay. There is no white. There is no Rosé. You can only make red Gamay in the Crus.

So, whilst we say you want more unity, actually, you all have a similarity because they are made from the same grape variety and so you are sticking within a fairly limited range of flavour profiles that you're going to find here.

Janina Doyle 00:09:44 And it's dependent on the producer because also, a lot of these are the most serious Gamay wines. A lot of them are putting it in oak and how much time in oak and what are they doing as to how serious their wine is going to be...

So, exactly from producer to producers in the same region, you are, of course going to find different styles slightly. So, we are trying to make it at least right now, a little bit easier for someone if they have three or four different Crus right in front of them to maybe say, okay, shall I pick a Morgon over a Saint Amour?

Okay. And as they'll learn in a second that Morgon is much bigger. So, let's go to Chénas, which is the third Cru going down. This one's quite hard to find? Or that you have a Chénas on your site, don't you?

Dan Farrell-Wright 00:10:30 Of course.

Janina Doyle 00:10:31 Of course you do.

Dan Farrell-Wright 00:10:34 So, it's the smallest appellation of the Crus. So, it's only 250 hectares in total. So, very small. And actually, Chénas in French, it comes from the word for Oak trees. And it's because actually, there used to be ancient oak forests on the ground in the region of Chénas which were originally cleared by the Romans, and then later by Philip the tall. So, not Philip the bold, or Philip the mad, but Philip the tall. These are all genuine French Dukes and kings. Philip the tall, decided to rip out the oak trees and replace it with vines.

Janina Doyle 00:11:10 Why? Because they were taller than him? Do you think he was sizest?

Dan Farrell-Wright 00:11:17 Maybe! They got over a certain height, because then they were taller than him...

Janina Doyle 00:11:20 He was like, "Out!"

Dan Farrell-Wright 00:11:22 And so, now we are getting into more of the sort of typical geology. You actually got, 50% of the bedrock is granite. And then the rest is alluvial deposits. You do here, in Chénas, tend to get more depth and concentration.

So, you definitely get a spicy note that comes with Chénas. Black fruits as well come through with Chénas, and maybe sort of again, that sort of typical floral or maybe peonies that you can find in Beaujolais.

But yeah, Chénas, definitely worth looking out. It's not one that we see very often in this country. And I think in part, I always have a theory that if it's got an accent on the name, we don't like it because we don't know how to pronounce it. So, that's what we buy Morgon and we don't buy Chénas.

Janina Doyle 00:12:02 Actually, I think that could actually be fair. I mean, we sell a lot of Saint Amour because everyone knows that that means Saint Love. Like, literally do buy things on the words.

Dan Farrell-Wright 00:12:15 Saint Amour was actually known for a Roman soldier called Amour, who sheltered here and built a monastery. He converted to Christianity and fled the massacres that were happening in the valley in Switzerland at the time and settled in the commune of Saint Amour. He was called Amour. It took his name.

Although, now it is associated with Valentine's Day and love. It comes from the name and is actually similar to all of the Crus, or most of the Crus, the name is taken from Roman noblemen, Roman soldiers and generals who settled here. Julié纳斯, who's Julié纳斯 named after?

Janina Doyle 00:12:54 Romeo and Juliet!?

Dan Farrell-Wright 00:13:02 No! Roman Soldiers! It was named after Julius Caesar.

Janina Doyle 00:13:04 Okay.

Dan Farrell-Wright 00:13:04 So, in his book, Commentaries on the Gallic War, Julius Caesar actually mentions stopping in this commune to quench his thirst and having a drink here in what became Julié纳斯, named after Julius Caesar.

Janina Doyle 00:13:20 So, we got to Moulin-à-Vent, didn't we? Now, we will lurk in Moulin-à-Vent. This one is an age worthy beast, most examples.

Dan Farrell-Wright 00:13:25 It is definitely age worthy. And so, Moulin-à-Vent is not named after a Roman soldier, but actually called a windmill. So, that's the translation of Moulin-à-Vent, because there is an old windmill that sits in the middle of the appellation. And this is the oldest appellation, actually, in the whole region.

So, it originally goes back to 1924. So, wine has been made here, as I say, since Roman times, so the Romans are the first people that identified the possibilities of Beaujolais, hence why so many of the Crus and were named after Roman soldiers and noblemen.

And then over time, there's been this real sort of waxing and waning of the popularity of Beaujolais. So, Philip the Bold, came along, hated Gamay, ripped it all up, got rid of it. Louis the 13th would only serve Beaujolais at his table as the King of France. You know, this was the wine that he thought was the best wine to have.

And then, as I say, in 1956, Georges Duboeuf came and created Beaujolais Nouveau. There was a huge demand for it. In the 90s that demand waned again. And so, it waxes and wanes through time, you know, it really does sort of change over time, and it comes into fashion and out of fashion. Anyway, sorry, I digress as always.

Moulin-à-Vent, oldest appellation. Crus in 1924. And granted AOC status in 1936. So, one of the very first places to have appellation status in France. Serious age worthy wines. These can be cellared for five to 10 years.

We always think that Beaujolais should be drunk relatively young. Moulin-à-Vent, you can put this away, it will improve with time. So, it has structure and it's sort of like cherries, floral notes, roses, maybe for the florals with roses and violets that sort of sense. Again, a little bit spicy, and maybe even those sorts of undergrowth notes as well those notes of forest floor and undergrowth that you get with those age worthy wines almost becoming closer to sort of Pinot Noir, as it ages.

Janina Doyle 00:15:24 Hmm. Interesting! I wish I had one that I've aged but that's just never actually happened.

Dan Farrell-Wright 00:15:30 Have I ever told you the story about my 11 year old son at the National Trust Property.

Janina Doyle 00:15:34 No. And does it have something to do with Moulin-à-Vent?

Dan Farrell-Wright 00:15:38 It has something to do with what I've just mentioned. So, we were at the National Trust Drogo in Devon, Easter holidays, and off they go doing their trail, you know, getting all their stamps and their ticks and filling things in and one of the activities that they had to do was they had to go into the forest and they had to imagine that they were a forest animal.

So, they were encouraged to get down on all fours to look, and see what the animals could see. So, the volunteers were like, "What can you see if you're an animal?" I can see these ferns and I can see these brackens. "Yeah, and what can you smell?" And my son picked up a handful of forest floor, sniffed it and said, "I can smell good red wine."

Janina Doyle 00:16:21 11 years old!

Dan Farrell-Wright 00:16:23 Winning as a father. Yes. But yes, that's what you get with an aged Moulin-à-Vent. You get the smell of forest floor like you do with Pinot Noir.

Janina Doyle 00:16:31 Beautiful. Beautiful! Now then, after Moulin-à-Vent, we go to Fleurie, which is funny enough, as well for me, Fleurie, it sounds flirty. It sounds floral. So actually, I think that this is a really good one for the name suggesting the floral pretty style that it can be. I liked that the name works almost.

Dan Farrell-Wright 00:17:00 Yeah, spot on. Yeah, I agree completely, that the name gives you the indication of what you're going to get. Albeit, it was named for Florus, a Roman soldier.

Janina Doyle 00:17:09 Or maybe it wasn't?

Dan Farrell-Wright 00:17:13 Maybe it wasn't. So, we are here on very steep slopes in Fleurie. So, if you ever go there, it's really steep. This is hard work. We mentioned earlier about goblet training. You know, there's no mechanisation here, it's too steep for mechanisation.

So, it's all hand picked. All the Crus generally hand picked grapes, you know it's a real effort and love going into the harvest in all of the Crus. It's quite large. 840 hectares. It's quite large for the Crus. And you have 90% granite right here. So, quite a homogenous soil or geology formation.

And you have a beautiful church, the church of la Madone, which overlooks all of the vines in Fleurie. So, it's one you will quite often see of the church that overlooks the vines and picture that you often see of Beaujolais of the church overlooking the vines. It's very pretty. And what you get, as you say, very

fragrant, very floral, you still get the red fruit, bright red colour as well, from Fleurie. And it's one of those very typical Beaujolais wines. I think when people think of Beaujolais, this is what they think of.

Janina Doyle 00:18:15 That's so, so true. And also, very often when somebody pours me Beaujolais Cru, it's Fleurie.

Dan Farrell-Wright 00:18:24 Also, I was gonna say it is very easy to find in this country. So, if you go into, I would imagine, most supermarkets probably have a Fleurie on the shelf. Most wine merchants do. Obviously, if you want quality, independent wine merchants are the place to go looking.

Janina Doyle 00:18:40 Well, Wickhams Wines.

Dan Farrell-Wright 00:18:43 Wickhams would be one. Yeah.

Janina Doyle 00:18:45 Listen, I say this all the time, everyone, the wines are great. And you can get 10% off the first order using my code "EATSLEEP10."

Dan Farrell-Wright 00:18:53 EATSLEEP10.

Janina Doyle 00:18:55 There you go. Anyway, moving on, so we've got Chiroubles, probably if I pronounced it correctly. That's how I pronounce it.

Dan Farrell-Wright 00:19:02 Chiroubles is how I would pronounce it. But I'm not claiming to be any expert on French pronunciation.

Janina Doyle 00:19:08 You've been there more than me. But I mean, this is a pretty high elevation now, isn't it?

Dan Farrell-Wright 00:19:12 Yep. So, we are 450 metres above sea level, which is pretty much the highest point we're going to find of vineyards. So, one of the things about the whole region, you have the Saône river running down one side, and the Beaujolais mountain range running down the other which creates the sort of specific climates that you get here.

The vines are planted in the foothills, so up to about 450-500 metres above sea level is the highest you'll get. So, yeah, here in Chiroubles, we are pretty much at the highest point we can get to. We are 100% granite here. That's the only rock formation that we've gotten in Chiroubles. So, in terms of what you can expect from the wines, you know, they are going to be very... Can't think of a word...

Janina Doyle 00:20:00 Well for me I would describe them as like a little bit more lifted, lively, they're brighter as well. They're more elegant.

Dan Farrell-Wright 00:20:07 Yes, sorry, I was looking for consistence. It was the word that I wanted.

Janina Doyle 00:20:15 None of the words I used. Sorry. I tried to dig you out. I tried to dig you out.

Dan Farrell-Wright 00:20:20 Thank you! But yeah, because you have 100% granite all altitude, they're more consistent in presentation and what you get because of the altitude is, of course, more fresh, more elegance...

Janina Doyle 00:20:33 You're stealing my words now. Get your own words. Just say, yes, Janina. I concur.

Dan Farrell-Wright 00:20:37 Yes, Janina. I concur. Your tasting notes were spot on. They were absolutely right. Yeah, you've got very steep inclines here as well, so a bit like Fleurie. Very steep. Very hard work. Again, you don't see lots of these here and I think in part because it is such hard work, sort of very heroic, if you are harvesting grapes in this environment. Again, worth looking out.

Janina Doyle 00:21:02 Okay. So, what's it like when we go to Morgon, which is again, we said about Fleurie, everyone kind of identifies almost a typical Beaujolais as Fleurie, but actually almost Morgon like, "I got the really serious wine of Beaujolais. I've got a Morgon." Yeah, what's that? You've obviously come down in elevation now.

Dan Farrell-Wright 00:21:21 Yeah, so you are sort of 300 metres roughly in elevation in Morgon. This is the biggest Cru, sort of over 1000 hectares. Morgon, very dense as well. If you drive through the Villages of Morgon and Villie-Morgon, you know, it's incredibly dense, it's just vines, vines, vines, vines, vines. It's nothing else you know, it's incredibly dense.

And what you get with Morgon is incredible structure, incredible depth, incredible power, which you maybe don't find in the other Crus, so Kirsch, cherries, plums, even spices. And there is this verb in French 'to Morgon'.

Janina Doyle 00:21:59 Really? 'To Morgon'?

Dan Farrell-Wright 00:22:02 Yeah. And what it means is as the wines age they become closer and closer to Pinot Noir. And again, a bit like Moulin-à-Vent, these are very age worthy wines. So you can put these away for 10 years, you know, or more if you wanted to. And if you tried one that was that age, you know, they get closer in style to Pinot Noir, but they are excellent value.

So, I spoke earlier about this waxing and waning of trends through history. We buy wine from Dominique Piron. So, people might be familiar with the name, you can go into most supermarkets and you'll see Dominique Piron on the label.

Those are no longer his wines. We buy wines from his new project, Clos du Vieux Bourg. He sold the brand, Dominique Piron in 2020. But he didn't sell the historic family vineyards. He kept hold of those and he still uses those. So, when you buy Dominique Piron labelled wines in the supermarket now, those grapes are just bought in grapes from elsewhere. They're not from his vineyards. If you want Dominique's grapes, you have to buy Clos du Vieux Bourg.

And Dominique's history, in Morgon, goes back to 1582. He's the 14th generation winemaker. His family have got this incredible history in Morgon. He said to me once he said, "Dan, what you must remember is that when was a child, I was inoculated in Beaujolais. If you cut to my veins, I bleed Gamay." And it's so much a part of who he is.

But equally, so I say about the similarity between Burgundy and Morgon, in 1932, Dominique's great, great grandfather, Benoit, had the opportunity to buy some land. They had a little bit of money saved up, and they had the opportunity to buy some land. There was one plot they could buy in Burgundy. There was one plot they could buy in Morgon. 100,000 francs for either. Same size. And they had to decide which plot of land they would buy. And of course...

Janina Doyle 00:24:11 Wow!

Dan Farrell-Wright 00:24:12 Because of their history with Morgon, they bought this wonderful plot on the Côte du Py in Morgon. And they still own it and they make wines from it. The plot in Burgundy. What was it?

Janina Doyle 00:24:23 Well, I'm not even gonna guess, please don't tell me it was something insanely good.

Dan Farrell-Wright 00:24:26 Clos de Tart.

Janina Doyle 00:24:27 Ah! Well, good for them that they stuck with tradition because they'd be making a lot more money with Clos de Tart. What?

Dan Farrell-Wright 00:24:37 The point of the story is that in 1932, Clos de Tart and Morgon were deemed equal. They had the same value. Now, I don't know how much Clos de Tart is now? £400?

Janina Doyle 00:24:53 A couple of 100. Yeah, I was gonna say probably £400, maybe for the wine.

Dan Farrell-Wright 00:24:57 And you can buy Morgon from Dominique Piron, from those vineyards, for about £20. So, the value that you get when you buy good Morgon is phenomenal. You know, it is so undervalued at the moment, it is a wonderful wine to buy and drink now or to put in your cellar and to drink in a few years time.

Janina Doyle 00:25:17 And for anyone who's thinking what Côte du Py. When we say Py, it's spelled P-Y, and it is just literally one of those absolute tiny, perfect vineyard sites within Morgon which really, if you ever see it on a label, just grab the bottle don't doubt it. It will be brilliant. Yeah, absolutely.

Dan Farrell-Wright 00:25:34 What you have on the Côte du Py, so you have a number of Lieu-dits or climates as they'll be called in Burgundy. So, you see Côte du Py is on there, you see Javernieres, which is on there, which again is another one, and there's a number of different ones. So, if you look and it says Morgon and then underneath, there is another name, that will be a climates or a Lieu dit, which is this very specific parcel, which is a higher quality than anywhere else.

Janina Doyle 00:25:58 Well, now it's interesting that you started talking about the Vieux Bourg wines because, look what I have in front of me, not the Morgon, but I have the Régnié which is the next Cru, south of Morgon. So, have you got the same bottle?

Dan Farrell-Wright 00:26:16 I have got the same bottle. Yeah.

Janina Doyle 00:26:22 So, I've got the 2021 vintage for anybody who wants to know so they're obviously focused in Morgon. But they also do Chénas, don't they, and a Régnié. Yeah, right? I know they do those three because you have them. Do they do any other Cru?

Dan Farrell-Wright 00:26:32 Beaujolais Blanc as well.

Janina Doyle 00:26:32 Okay, fine. Yeah. Oh, my God, yes, which I've spoken about on my Instagram before. Everybody, my God, their Beaujolais Blanc is delicious. But anyway, we're giving Gamay it's moment. So, this is their Régnié. Now this is a fresher wine. This is not as structured as Morgon is it?

Dan Farrell-Wright 00:26:47 It's not. So, in general, Régnié tends to be sort of red fruit, soft fruit, strawberries, raspberries, that sort of flavour, you don't necessarily get the depth that you would get with Morgon.

And this wine that we're trying is 2021, which if anybody remembers 2021 was a wet year. For me, I find '21s more typically Beaujolais. So, I really liked the '21s. Speak to the winemakers and they hated it because it was really hard work.

They loved '20 and they lived to '22 because they didn't have to do much work because the grapes just ripened really nicely, really evenly. '21 was wet and damp. It was hard to work. '23 and I know we tried the Beaujolais Nouveau on the previous episode, which is our first chance to try '23. But '23, again, was another very, very difficult.

Yeah, so Dominique, who's one we're trying now. You know, he's a typically romantic Frenchman. I love chatting to him. And I asked him about the harvest for '23. And he told me, you know, they had hurricanes, they had tornadoes, they had wind, they had rain, and he said, "And then a little magic, a bit of luck, a few millimetres of rain and everyone was breathing again. Wines and people are alike." He describes these things, it's just like...

Janina Doyle 00:28:07 My God! I love him. How beautiful! The epitome of that beautiful Frenchman. So, funny enough, you said that, this is 2021, actually, this has got really crunchy fruit on the palate, the notes are really, really fresh. You get lots of, for me, like tart cherries, you get the red currants.

So, perhaps in a warmer year, you are going to get a little bit more structure, you know, hinting towards what you can kind of get from Morgon but definitely actually either way in this glass, it's quite explosive the fruit. It's got some sharpness, but brightness, it's excitable this wine, actually.

Dan Farrell-Wright 00:28:44 There's a lovely lift, isn't there? So, you've got the depth but there is that real sort of bright note that you get on the finish where you've got those slightly darker fruits but then I think on the finish you get that lift, that sort of very bright red fruit, red currant or strawberry or some you know, that sort of flavour that comes through with it.

Janina Doyle 00:29:01 But I also like that little hint there's a bit of almost for me like some white pepper which again, maybe it's coming because it's a cooler year. But then the finish, for me, is a little bit herbal.

You get some thyme, there's some like there's a slight mineral note to it as well, which is giving me that extra finesse. I really like it but it is really crunchy and really vibrant. I also think this would be great with piggies in a blanket. Okay, all right, if you want to take it there. I mean that's another really good pairing. You know where my mind is? It's like 50 days to... or 40 something days to Christmas.

Dan Farrell-Wright 00:29:32 IF you're having goose for Christmas day. How about that? Can we go with a goose for Christmas Day?

Janina Doyle 00:29:37 Hmm.

Dan Farrell-Wright 00:29:37 I want to have goose for Christmas day but my wife won't let me. So, we have to have turkey but I might just do a little goose for myself. Can you get a little goose? Is there such a thing as a little goose?

Janina Doyle 00:29:47 I think this will go with all of those because it's got this concentration. It's got this power. Obviously, this would go really nicely with anywhere you go. Actually, it's great with Christmas dinner. If you can have some cranberry sauce in there and stuff like that.

Dan Farrell-Wright 00:30:00 Yes. If you're having slightly fattier meats, like goose, you know, it's very fatty, because you got the acidity still you got the freshness that would cut through it, I think really nicely. So, you've got all of those fruit flavours that will go with the cranberry sauce and the bread sauce. But actually, it will also cut through the fatness of the meat, which I think would be quite nice.

Janina Doyle 00:30:20 So, how much is this bottle if everyone's buying a Mix Six?

Dan Farrell-Wright 00:30:22 £16.65.

Janina Doyle 00:30:25 Perfect. Thank you. And for that concentration of lovely red fruits. Fine. I'm very happy with that. So, we've just tasted this lovely wine. But would you say it's not as what people would expect from a Régnié just because it's a cooler year, it normally might have a bit more body.

Dan Farrell-Wright 00:30:40 I think it's more typical because it's a cooler year. This is more typically Beaujolais. You know, people think of what they expect from Beaujolais. Historically, this is closer. I think '20 and '22, which are the riper, bigger years, although that might be what we're gonna get more frequently going forward. Those aren't necessarily typical. This to me, is more typical.

Janina Doyle 00:31:04 Okay. Yeah. So, when we get to Brouilly, which is just south, how is that in comparison?

Dan Farrell-Wright 00:31:09 Just before we move on to Brouilly, can I just say something about Régnié?

Janina Doyle 00:31:13 That was so formal, like I'm not ready to move on yet. All right. Sorry, Dan. Yeah, go on. Carry on.

Dan Farrell-Wright 00:31:22 I just wanted to say it was the newest Cru. It was only formed in 1988. So, this is the most recent Cru to be added to the list of Crus, Régnié. And again, it's not something that you see very often in this country because there's two accents, this time one on each E. So, nobody...

Janina Doyle 00:31:38 No chance.

Dan Farrell-Wright 00:31:39 No chance.

Janina Doyle 00:31:40 No chance. Okay. Do you remain? Right? Okay, am I allowed to go on to the next Cru? Are we okay to go on to the next Cru?

Dan Farrell-Wright 00:31:48 You are allowed to go on to the next Crus.

Janina Doyle 00:31:50 Do you want to tell us about Brouilly?

Dan Farrell-Wright 00:31:53 Yeah, another very big Cru, Brouilly. And because of that, actually, it can be very different depending on where in Brouilly, you get the wines from. So, there's a real mixture of terroir.

And so, you can go from sort of very bright red fruits to very deep dark sort of purple fruits, depending on whether you're coming from granite or alluvial deposits. So, there's a real mix in Brouilly that you can find.

And again, in terms of the altitude, there's a real mix here again. So, it's anything from 200 metres up to about 500 metres. So, Brouilly has pretty much everything of Beaujolais. It has all the soil types, it has all the altitudes, it has all the flavours. It can be many many things.

Janina Doyle 00:32:40 And I guess exactly, for that reason, within Brouilly, you have the last Cru, which is Côte de Brouilly, which is the hill within. I guess it must be the hilliest part.

Dan Farrell-Wright 00:32:50 No, it's not. Fleurie and Chiroubles will be more hilly or steeper.

Janina Doyle 00:32:57 No, sorry, I didn't mean that. I mean Brouilly.

Dan Farrell-Wright 00:33:03 So, this is Mont Brouilly. It's the name of the hill. Brouilly Mountain. Or it's probably not high enough to really be a mountain. When you stand there, you can see Mont Blanc in the distance. That's a real mountain.

Janina Doyle 00:33:16 Yeah, kind of ruins it.

Dan Farrell-Wright 00:33:17 Mont Brouilly, number of years was all old doorman volcanoes. So, millions of years ago, it was a volcano. And that's sort of then created a lot of the geology that's around there.

So, you have lots of these blue stones as the real typical soil type or rock type, that you're get in Côte de Brouilly. And that gives a real minerality to the wines of Côte de Brouilly that you don't find in many of the places. It's really quite distinctive for this part of Beaujolais.

And Côte means, if people don't know, slope. So, basically, Côte de Brouilly, Slope of Brouilly, and it's the slope of Mont Brouilly, which is where the grapes are growing. And you get quite dense flavours, again, in Côte de Brouilly, so plums quite often, red fruit through sort of dark plums, floral notes, as you always do with Gamay, Peonies and Irises come through in the best examples, but then this real sort of mineral spicy quality that you find as well.

Janina Doyle 00:34:16 Now, so we've gone through all of these. We've got people really excited. People are now going "Great." Of course, but they're going to be like, "Right, I am just going to look out for the 10 Crus because these are the best wines of Beaujolais," which in general, they are, however, every exception to a rule.

I'm now going to bring in our last wine to try, which is Domaine de Mont Joly, who is this incredible... There's an incredible one man band basically, isn't it? And he is focused on showing people the terroirs of Beaujolais Villages and showing how good they can be.

Just to finish off, just to go to everyone known about all the Crus but don't forget about the Villages, can you just tell us a little bit because I'm gonna let you in on a secret already, I actually personally adore this wine so much that between the two, I love this one. This one, give me any I'll happily drink them.

But it seems weird, doesn't it? I'm going to say that actually this is Beaujolais Villages, which is from La Pointe, I'm assuming that's the name of his vineyard within the Beaujolais Villages. Is that correct? La Pointe?

Dan Farrell-Wright 00:35:30 La Pointe.

Janina Doyle 00:35:31 Alright. So, La Pointe, that's the name of the wine, but is that the name of his site within the Beaujolais Villages?

Dan Farrell-Wright 00:35:39 No. So, he's in the Village of Blasé.

Janina Doyle 00:35:44 Ah, this is why we're all about... Hey, guys, if you were listening earlier, this one might become a Cru at some point...

Dan Farrell-Wright 00:35:51 He has three wines in the range. So, La Croix Polage, La Pointe, and 85-45, which I should probably do in French, and it's basically the age of the vines. So, the very oldest vines go into the very best wine, which is 85-45. Then the next one is this one that we've got, La Pointe, where the vines are sort of 50 years old. And then you have La Croix Polage, which are sort of 40 year old vines. So, it's just the age of the vines that he's using.

And I'm sure you've talked about this on the podcast before, with age, what you get is more concentration because it naturally restricts the yields. You also seem to get more of the sense of place as they take up more from where they are.

So, here, like I say, there are 50 year old vines. And one of the things I love about Jean-Baptiste is the amount of information that he puts on the bottle. If you're a real wine geek, and you want to know more, like, Janina says, this about terroir, and he puts it from the elevation, he gives you the age of the vines, he gives the date that it was picked and bottled and everything goes on here. It's wonderful.

Janina Doyle 00:36:55 How much is the amount of filtration it has? What sugars are actually left in the bottle? I know this is a dry wine, it's less than two grams. But hey, it's amazing. It says it. It tells you exactly when the grapes were picked, which is the fourth of September 2018. So, everyone, this is a 2018 Vintage. On the 19/9 2018, it went through Pressurage. What is Pressurage?

Dan Farrell-Wright 00:37:24 No, I'm laughing at the fact that god, what, pressurage...! Well, I know what embouteillage is, which is obviously bottling.

Janina Doyle 00:37:34 Right. I do know. I did this in a post. I have it. Okay. And Pressurage is pressed. It was pressed on the 19th of the night. Of course, how obvious! Okay, then Embouteillage, anyway, thank you. Yeah, that is bottled, which, by the way also means traffic jam.

Dan Farrell-Wright 00:37:52 We call it a bottleneck, don't we?

Janina Doyle 00:36:54 The French word Embouteillage means traffic jam. Okay. I mean, it has Manuelle to say it's manual harvesting. It tells you about de-stemming, Egrappage. I'm sorry. I'm sorry, everyone with this awful French.

But anyway, it talks about Chêne, I don't know, that means wood and the exposition, it tells you, it's north east. I mean, it's phenomenal. I haven't seen a label with this amount of information. And I have to say it's brilliant.

But flavour wise, I've just poured this now, Dan, and oh my, God, I could smell it as I was pouring it. It's really concentrated. It's so powerful. It has this like red plums but there is this touch of dark cherries, it gets like licorice. It's baking spices. Obviously, he has put this in Oak, and you can smell that but it has sweetness. It's that sweet lick of oak.

Whereas we have tickler tannins with the Beaujolais Nouveau, this is a sweet lick of oak. Not just the lick of oak, a sweet lick. The power and the intensity on the notes, just already you fall in love with it.

Dan Farrell-Wright 00:39:01 Yeah, I mean, there's things that you don't expect to find in Gamay here. You know, there's almost that sort of tobacco note with it as well that you would never sort of think would be a quality that you'd find in Gamay. There's an earthiness to it.

Janina Doyle 00:39:16 Yeah, there's a touch of almost like that tea leaves on the finish. But still velvety tannins but the structure, the structure, Beaujolais Villages, it blows my mind when I taste this wine. I think if I remember, it's like £17 or something.

Dan Farrell-Wright 00:39:30 Yeah, 17.99 now. So, 17.99. Well worth every penny.

Janina Doyle 00:39:36 It absolutely is. I am so in love with this wine. And I love the fact that he just quite clearly loves the terroir of the Villages so much that it's all about pushing it.

Dan Farrell-Wright 00:39:48 So, the terroir of the Villages, I love this. So, Jean-Baptiste, a young man, eighth generation winemaker, when he was growing up, there was this huge expectation of him becoming the winemaker taking over the family business. And like all teenagers do, you want it to push against that a little bit.

So, if you're a French winemaker, how do you push against that? Well, what he did was he actually came and spent some time studying at Plumpton College in England. So, he got the English to help him learn how to make wine. That's the first thing that really upsets your French winemaking family.

He then also did some winemaking in California, and New Zealand, which again, you know, is anathema to the French. And then he came back, he actually then did some work in Burgundy, before finally making his way back to the family domaine.

And there was a harvest and he was in the winery, the pickers had gone home for the evening, he poured himself a glass of wine out of the tank, and went and stood outside and looked at the moon and the stars in the sky. And this is the picture that's on the front of the bottle, the man looking at the moon.

And it was this realisation having been to England, and America and New Zealand, that if he was going to make wines that were true to himself and to his family, that the only place he could do that would be in these three vineyards that they'd farmed for eight generations in Blasé. And he made a promise to himself at that point, his family had rented these fields up until this point, and he made a promise that he would buy those vineyards before the age of 30. And he has, he owns the three vineyards now, in Blasé, where these wines are made.

Janina Doyle 00:41:31 That is touching. That's so beautiful. I think that actually sums up this whole episode because it just goes to show there's so much... We always talk about the people behind the wine, the story behind the wine, the year, the challenges. And how beautiful? How beautiful he bought it and we get to enjoy that and he's keeping it in the family.

So, Dan, thank you very much. You have passed. I shall continue taking sponsorship from you, because you're amazing and knowledgeable. And honestly, you've aced that. Like, I didn't have to do any work here. Oh, there's so many little wine facts that I've learned. I will listen back to this episode deeply myself, so I can learn.

Anyway, Dan, thank you so much. And I'm sure I'll speak to you for another two hour conversation tomorrow, probably.

Dan Farrell-Wright 00:42:24 Cheerio!

Janina Doyle 00:42:25 Love it! See you later. Bye!

Janina Doyle 00:42:31 So, that is it for Beaujolais. But for next week, now we all know Christmas is fast approaching and hopefully you're indulging in the joy, the excitement, the lights, the festivities, the people, the giving and well, you know, the coldness, but the fire pits, everything. Now, this is a time to be a little bit more indulgent with yourself and that's where the stickies come out, the sweet wines.

And so, next week, I am talking with Zoltán Kovács, who is the winery director of Royal Tokaji. So, we are talking about the Royal Tokaji Wine Company, only the international market leader of Tokaji. But remember, it's not just sweet. There are stills as well. And so, actually, I lied, next week, we'll be talking about the still wines because you need to know about these. But the week after, I'm going to finish off with their gorgeous dessert wines.

And so, I shall end this episode with a wine quote. And so, inspired by the Cru Saint Amour, I thought I'd bring some love to the end of this podcast. And so, Benjamin Franklin said, "Wine is constant proof that God loves us and loves to see us happy."

Right. So, continue being happy. Continue with your wine journey. Pour yourself some tasty treats. And whilst you're filled with love, feel free to leave a quick rating on Spotify or a beautiful review on Apple podcasts to help this podcast become more discoverable. That's it my wine friends until next week, cheers to you!