



KERMIT LYNCH WINE MERCHANT

GUY BRETON

Country: France

Region: Beaujolais

Appellation(s): Morgon, Régnié

Producer: Guy Breton

Founded: 1935

Annual Production: 3,000 cases

Farming: Organic

Website: N/A

Guy Breton is known by his friends as Petit Max – though he is anything but petit, by the way. He took over the family domaine from his grandfather in 1986. Until that point, the family was selling their fruit to the large cooperative wineries which dominated the region and were gravitating towards a uniform style. The rise of imported yeast cultures to impart flavor and aroma, the use of high-tech carbonic maceration, and the widespread commercialization of Beaujolais Nouveau debased the region's reputation, and Beaujolais came to be seen as one-dimensional, lacking any expression of the native *terroir*. Following the example of traditionalist Jules Chauvet, Guy and three other local *vignerons*, Marcel Lapierre, Jean-Paul Thévenet, and Jean Foillard, soon hoisted the flag of this back-to-nature movement. Kermit dubbed this clan the Gang of Four, and the name has stuck ever since. The Gang called for a return to the old practices of viticulture and vinification: starting with old vines, never using synthetic herbicides or pesticides, harvesting late, rigorously sorting to remove all but the healthiest grapes, adding minimal doses of sulfur dioxide or none at all, and refusing both chaptalization and filtration. The end result allows Morgon to express itself naturally, without make-up or plastic surgery: rustic, spicy, loaded with schist minerals and at the same time, refreshing and deep-down delicious.

Breton's domaine is comprised of three hectares (only 7.2 acres), eighty percent of which lies in the appellation of Morgon, around the village of Villié-Morgon. The vines range in age from 8 to 80 years, with the 80-year-old vines dedicated to the "Vieilles Vignes" *cuvée*. Guy's property is located in the microclimates "Saint-Joseph" and "Grand Cras," where the naturally low pH of the soil creates favorable conditions for Breton's sulfur-free vinification.





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GUY BRETON (continued)

<u>Wine</u>	<u>Blend</u>	<u>Vine Age</u>	<u>Soil Type</u>	<u>Vineyard Area*</u>
Morgon “Vieilles Vignes”	Gamay	80 years	Granite, sand	2.5 ha
Morgon “P’tit Max”	Gamay	90-120 years	Sandy decomposed schist	1 ha
Régnié	Gamay	50% 100 years 50% 35 years	Granite, sand	1 ha
Beaujolais Villages “Marylou”	Gamay	45 years	Granite	0.5 ha

* “ha”=hectares; one hectare equals roughly two and a half acres

VITICULTURE / VINIFICATION

- Vineyards are farmed organically
- Vinification begins with carbonic maceration at low temperatures
- Only indigenous yeasts are used
- Fermentation lasts for a minimum of 15 days
- Grapes are crushed in an old wooden press.
- Malolactic fermentation takes place in barrel and rests for 6-8 months
- Wines are aged on fine lees in Burgundian barrels (of at least the third passage)
- Wines are bottled unfinned and unfiltered
- Breton’s wines open up beautifully with time, although that might not be evident when tasting them young. Breton loves wines that are easy to drink, and his are typically the lightest in color, the lowest in alcohol, and the least tannic of the Gang of Four Morgons.

Morgon “Vieilles Vignes”:

- Guy’s principal wine, the Morgon “Vieilles Vignes” is sourced from the Saint Joseph and Grand Cras subzones of the appellation, which give fine, stony wines. A high-lying sandy parcel contributes more complexity, structure, and acidity to the blend.

Morgon “P’tit Max”:

- Vinified like the Morgon “Vieilles Vignes” bottling but aged 12 months in barrel.
- Sourced from the Les Charmes *lieu dit* of Morgon



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GUY BRETON (continued)

Régnié:

- First produced in 2008, the Régnié is sourced from the hills between the Côte de Brouilly and the Côte du Py of Morgon, around the village of Régnié-Durette.
- Guy's grandfather handed down the two parcels that go into this wine: one with 100-year-old and the other with 35-year-old vines. The shallow soil of sand and decomposing stones gives the vines easy access to the bedrock, creating firm wines with more grip and acidity than in Morgon.

Beaujolais Villages “Marylou”:

- Guy's Beaujolais Villages “Marylou” is sourced from the Saint Joseph and Grand Cras subzones of the appellation, about 500 meters from his Morgon vines.
- The wine is named after Marylou, Guy Breton's daughter.

MISCELLANEA

Good unfiltered color. And the aroma? How about some pepper and spice? Aromas of pepper and spice are unusual in the Beaujolais, but Breton says the locals always spot his wines in blind tasting because his terroir typically gives such a perfume. The palate starts out lean and fine, and then you start to feel it penetrate and the flavors sink in.

Kermit Lynch