



KERMIT LYNCH WINE MERCHANT

GUY BRETON

Country: France

Region: Beaujolais

Appellation(s): Morgon, Régnié, Chiroubles,
Côte de Brouilly, Fleurie, Beaujolais Villages

Producer: Guy Breton

Founded: 1988

Annual Production: 4,500 cases

Farming: Organic

Website: N/A

Guy Breton is known by his friends as P'tit 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 just over four hectares (10.6 acres), most of which lies in the appellation of Morgon, above the village of Villié-Morgon. He supplements his own harvest with purchased fruit from surrounding appellations, enabling him to vinify a diverse portfolio of Beaujolais *crus*. His own vineyards, which exceed a century of age in some parcels, are located in the Morgon *climat* "Les Charmes", primarily in the high-altitude *lieu-dit* "Saint-Joseph," where slow ripening allows for low alcohol and great freshness in the wines. Max is among the first in the region to start picking each year, cooling down his harvest and pressing before the end of fermentation to craft wines he likes to drink: bright, aromatic, low in tannin, and dangerously easy to quaff down to the last drop.





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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>
Beaujolais Villages “Marylou”	Gamay	45 years	Granite	0.5 ha
Morgon “Vieilles Vignes”		80 years		2.5 ha
Morgon “P’tit Max”		90-120 years		1 ha
Régnié		40-50 years		1 ha
Côte de Brouilly		60 years		.65 ha
Chiroubles		60 years		1.2 ha
Fleurie		65 years		N/A

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

VITICULTURE / VINIFICATION

- Only indigenous yeasts are used
- Purchased fruit comes from organically or sustainably farmed vineyards
- Grapes are cooled to 5-6° C after harvest to begin fermentation at low temperature
- 100% whole-cluster fermentation for all wines
- Short macerations in tank; length of maceration is determined by tasting and varies per wine and per vintage
- Grapes are pressed and racked to aging vessels (tank or wood) before the end of fermentation
- Wines that see wood are aged in used barrels from Domaine de la Romanée-Conti
- Tiny doses of sulfur added during *élevage* and at bottling
- Wines are bottled unfinned and unfiltered
- 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
- Breton’s wines open up beautifully with time; the Morgon has a track record of long aging

Beaujolais Villages “Marylou”:

- Grapes are sourced from high-elevation vineyards in the commune of Quincié
- Includes domaine fruit (1/3 of blend) and purchased fruit (2/3 of blend)
- Named for Guy Breton’s daughter, Marylou



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GUY BRETON (continued)

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.
- 40% of bottling comes from purchased grapes from the lower part of the *climat* “Les Charmes”
- Aged 60% in used barrels, 40% in tank

Morgon “P’tit Max”:

- A selection of the domaine’s oldest vines in the *climat* Les Charmes
Similar vinification to the Morgon “Vieilles Vignes” bottling, but longer aging (12 months *élevage*) in slightly newer barrels

Régnié:

- First produced in 2008
- A blend of 40% domaine fruit with 60% purchased fruit=
- Aged in 50% used barrels, 50% tank

Côte de Brouilly:

- Sourced from the *lieu-dit* Chavanne on the lower slope of the Côte de Brouilly, between Cercié and Odenas
- Aged 75% in used barrels, 25% in tank

Chiroubles:

- Sourced from the *lieu-dit* Javernand at 430 meters elevation
- Aged in 8-9-year-old barrels

Fleurie:

- Sourced from the *lieu-dit* Poncié
- Aged in used barrels

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