

# Domaine de Boissieu

*Kerrie & her Beau(-jolais)*



Kerrie gazing out over the rows of vines at Domaine Boissieu.

On a recent Monday night in our restaurant, I congratulated a bride-to-be's parents as they waited for the rest of the engagement party to arrive. "I've only met him once," I told them, "but if his family's wine is any indication, your daughter is marrying a wonderful man."

In the fall of 1992, young Kerrie came to work at La Bruschetta as a busgirl while attending our nearby community college. It was immediately obvious that she brought with her a high energy level, equivalent

smarts, and a work ethic reminiscent of an earlier generation of Americans. Kerrie also has an especially generous heart. One busy summer night way back when, we worked a large private party together, she as a busgirl assisting me as I took the orders and more or less managed the whole event. But because she had done an equal share of the physical work, I split the tip 50-50 with her. So taken aback was she by this unexpected windfall that when we were next scheduled to work together, she handed me a bag of thoughtfully selected edu-

cational gifts for my two young children that she had purchased with some of her tips from that evening.

Talented as she was, however, Kerrie seemed unsure of her ultimate direction in life as she majored in biology while entertaining hopes of eventually studying medicine. But then, after some motherly encouragement from La Bruschetta's owner-chef Cathy, Kerrie developed an interest in wine. At some point, perhaps when Cathy arranged for her to visit a few winemakers in Italy's Piedmont region, Kerrie's interest became her passion. She would become a winemaker, she decided between sips of Barbaresco. People with such energy as Kerrie's keep this world spinning. Once focused on a goal, her relentless drive and powerful intellect would turn imposing mountains into mere speed bumps and rugged paths into smooth roads as she chased her dream. She has always been quite attractive, which never hurts, and one day she caught the eye of a soulmate, similarly destined for great accomplishment and yet, perhaps as a reminder of the Creator's sense of humor, born to vastly different circumstances.

After several years of toil and study in various Californian cellars, Kerrie had amassed enough knowledge and experience to teach a course for visiting winemakers. One of her students was a tall and handsome young Frenchman from the Beaujolais region. Sparks flew between teacher and student, and she followed him to France for an

## Last month I promised to discuss holiday wines.

Well, good Beaujolais can be the perfect Christmas season wine, and for several reasons. Because it is so light and fruity, Beaujolais is inherently festive; it can be enjoyed without food in a stand-up, cocktail party setting; it also pairs well with just about any dinner entrée—some of the 2003 Cru bottlings would be right at home amidst the family silver on that white linen tablecloth as you sit down to a Christmas goose or rib roast. And finally, it is a perfect under \$20 wine gift for your connoisseur co-worker.

Here are some suggested Beaujolais wines for this holiday season:

**GEORGE DUBOEUF BEAUJOLAIS NOUVEAU 2005.....\$10**

*Duboeuf is the benchmark by which all nouveau is measured, and it comes in a flashy-colored bottle. Look for the price to drop as New Year's Day approaches.*

**GEORGE DUBOEUF JULIENAS PRESTIGE 2003.....\$15**

*This Beaujolais specialist also produced one of the highest-rated Crus from the sweltering vintage of '03.*

And, of course,

**DOMAINE DE BOISSIEU BEAUJOLAIS LEYNES 2003.....\$19**

*I love this wine, but I find it hard to be impartial about it.*

extended visit. On Valentine's Day of this year, he proposed marriage to Kerrie over champagne at a restaurant appropriately situated in the Beaujolais town of St. Amour. However, it would be unthinkable for him to leave his family's domaine, he explained. If they were to marry, she would have to live there. Could she cut all of her ties to her native Lenox and adopted California in order to settle in a new country, there to raise children in another language and culture? Kerrie wasn't sure, and so, on a trial basis, she moved to his estate (after first insisting on taking an apartment in town) and they made their first wine together from the harvest of 2005.

Just as the Rhône River flows south from Lyons, so too flows a river of light and fruity red wine from the nearby vineyards of the Beaujolais region. Back when quality wine merchants focused mainly on French wine, Beaujolais was widely appreciated by oenophiles as a "quaffing" wine, delightful for gulping with sandwiches at a picnic but not quite serious enough for the white linen and silver-laden din-

ner table. Unlike the Pinot Noir-based red wine produced in neighboring Burgundy, Beaujolais is made solely from Gamay, a variety deemed so lowly by Burgundy's Duke Philip the Bold that in 1395 he banned the grape from Burgundian soil. However, when grown in the Beaujolais region's uniquely granite-rich soils, Gamay can be a star.

Beaujolais is unlike most other red wines. Under French law, Beaujolais producers are required to ferment whole (uncrushed) grapes, a process known as carbonic maceration that yields light and fruity wines with little of the rich skin extract that gives red wine structure and longevity. However, a little surreptitious crushing here and there to strengthen the wines is not unknown in the region, I'm reliably told. Beaujolais ranges in quality from thin, cherry soda-colored "Beaujolais Nouveau," intended for immediate consumption to darker and more serious "Beaujolais Crus," which can improve with a few years of bottle age. The Nouveau is released on the third Thursday of November every year, mere

weeks after the harvest. For many years, the wine-drinking public greeted the Nouveau release with great excitement and anticipation, but interest has steadily ebbed since its peak in 1992, probably because wine customers have so many quality alternatives in the under \$10 range.

Bottles labeled simply as "Beaujolais" come from the flat, southern portion of the region, while the label term "Beaujolais-Villages" denotes wines from the hillier north. Both are more leisurely vinified than the hastily-bottled Nouveau. More cellar attention yet is paid to the Cru wines, some of which are concentrated enough to merit a

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<p><b>La Bruschetta</b> FOOD &amp; WINE TO GO! • Salads &amp; Picnic Fare • House-made Soups &amp; Stews</p>	<p><b>œno</b> restaurant - wine cafe • Wine-Friendly Cuisine Served in a Relaxed Atmosphere</p>
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