

## What is a good Beaujolais today?

Until the 1980s, the aim in Beaujolais was to ensure production in quantity and generic quality in order to satisfy consumers all over the world. Thus, the oenological industry - as in many terroirs - developed chemical crutches to compensate for the vagaries of the climate or the fermentation process: chaptalisation, acidification, deacidification, nitrogen, selected dry yeasts, thermo-vinification to concentrate the wines... Crutches were all the more necessary as up to 50% of production (compared to 15% today) was sold as futures.

At the beginning of the 80s, a few winegrowers, with the support of the local wine merchant and chemist Jules Chauvet, rehabilitated wines without inputs, "natural" wines that are now enjoying increasing commercial success. At the same time, organic wines have gradually emerged, to the point where they now represent around 10% of the Beaujolais vineyards in organic or conversion.

Today, "natural" wines are victims of their success: to meet the growing demand, a significant proportion of the grapes purchased are non-organic. Some stowaways are also trying to take advantage of the legal void concerning "natural wines" (unauthorised denomination for a wine). A "Méthode Nature" label, as well as two associations (Association des Vins Nature and SAINS (Sans Aucun Inérant ni Sulfite Ajouté)) try to limit consumer deception, but today represent very low volumes.

Organic certification also has its limits: no real consideration of biodiversity (intensive tillage does not encourage grassing, for example), water management, no progress indicators...

HVE certification, on the other hand, partly responds to these latter issues, without however significantly calling into question the use of synthetic herbicides and other pesticides.

A TerraVitis certification, similar to the HVE, was born in the Beaujolais region but is struggling to develop due to a lack of visibility.

In this context, the ODGs, long co-managed by the FDSEA and still struggling to get rid of this proximity, have a problem of positioning: the wines refused for tasting are mostly those of winegrowers who do not accept the inputs, namely the "organic" and "natural" ones. Paradoxically, those who most respect the Terroir and its nuances are therefore today penalised by their ODG and are forced to cheat to stay within the ODG (handing over bottles from the neighbour, for example), or to leave them.

These same GDOs, in defending the interests of their majority members, position themselves in defence of a mode of production that guarantees high yields, i.e. the most destructive for the environment and biodiversity: active promotion of HVE sometimes to the detriment (in communication) of organic farming, the fight against ambitious No-Treatment Zones, the introduction of high-yield varieties without taking climate change into account, etc.

Inter Beaujolais, in its role of dynamising all the crus, carries out active promotional actions: support for the move upmarket, wine tourism, promotional actions to make people forget the "Beaujolais Villages" image, but also promotion of "Beaujolais Villages"... But no actions or even announcements (as some vintages have done, announcing the programmed end of chemical weed killers) in favour of the ODDs, whether at the level of the Inter Beaujolais or the ODGs, despite a real mobilisation on the ground.

Mobilisation in favour of organic farming and biodiversity is still in the minority, but it is very visible because it is carried by independent, active and rather young winegrowers, many of whom are connected to social networks.

### Main organizers

### Co-organizers

### Sponsors





[Renard Olivier]  
 [Vignerons-consultant], [France]  
 Forum Origin, Diversity and Territories  
 [Workshop n°3], [Session n°3]



So today we have a Beaujolais that faces serious short and medium-term challenges (outlets, prices, mass retirements of winegrowers), but continues to ignore market signals in favour of products and territories that really take ecological issues into account. The significant growth of HVE in Beaujolais is a partial but risky response. A real commitment to SDOs by the whole territory and its stakeholders would be desirable and necessary.

The approach of the Beaujolais Villages de Lantigné winegrowers for the recognition of a cru "without synthetic pesticides" is a local "laboratory" moving in this direction, a precursor of a greater consideration of environmental issues in the specifications of PDO and PGI in France.

Main organizers



Co-organizers

