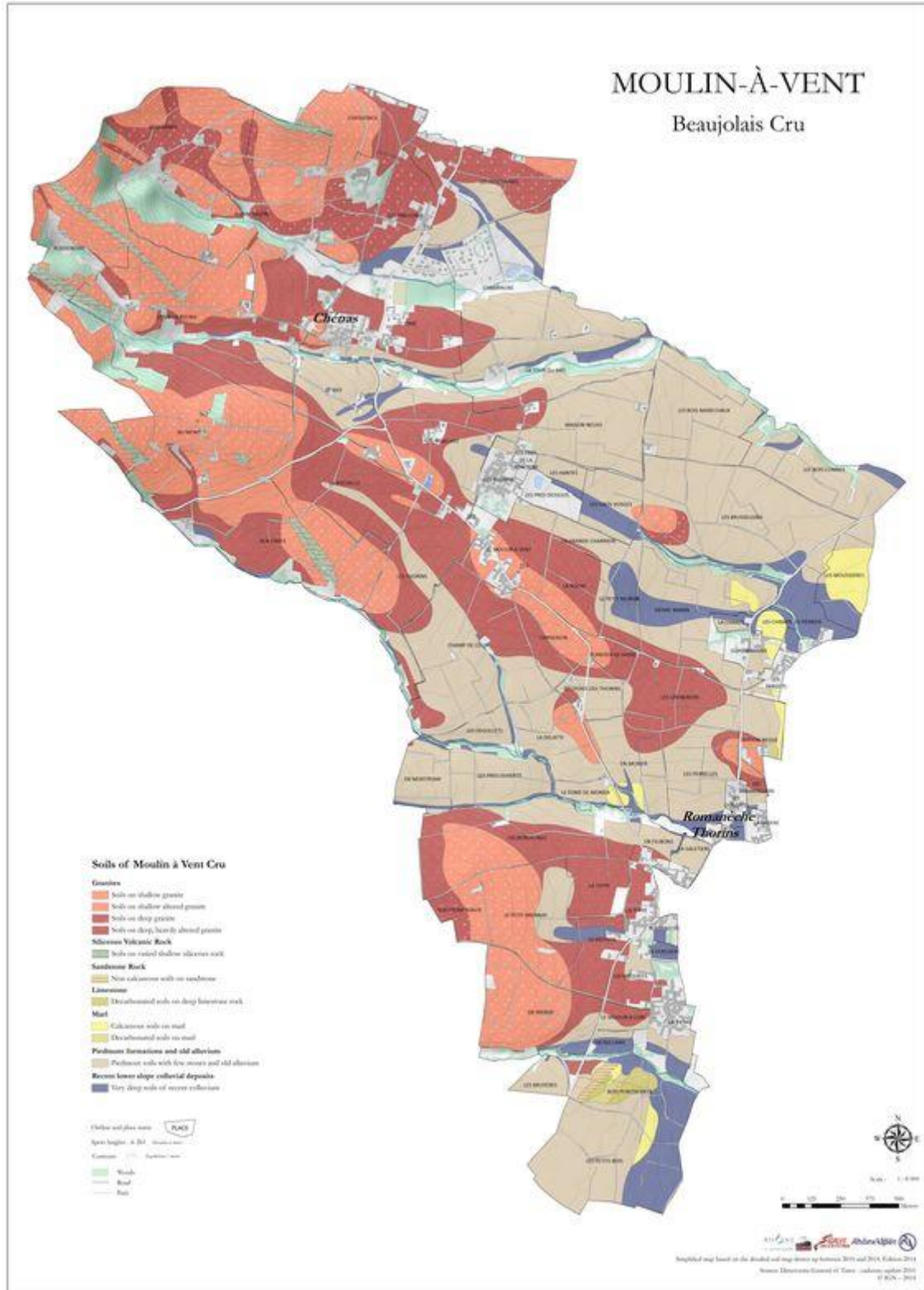


International Wine Review

Beaujolais Climat Wines from Moulin-à-Vent

New Releases Posted on November 20, 2017 by don



Moulin-à-Vent is the most famous wine growing region of Beaujolais. Last month we traveled to Beaujolais to participate in a tasting of the current releases, including wines made from specific geographic areas called climats in addition to Moulin-à-Vent blends. These climat-specific wines are the focus of this review article. Earlier vintages of many of these wines were also covered in our Report #58 Beaujolais in Transition.

Moulin-à-Vent is the largest (717 ha) of the Grand Crus, and it's home to the iconic 15 century windmill built to grind grain that overlooks Romanèche-Thorin. It's also home to the Gamay Noir grape, an offspring of Pinot Noir and Gouais Blanc. No place else in the world grows this grape so successfully, and 90 percent of global plantings are in Beaujolais.

While Beaujolais is famous for semi-carbonic maceration, most of the wines reviewed here are made using more traditional Burgundian winemaking methods, resulting in what the French call vins de garde—wines that are made to age.

Moulin-à-Vent has 15 climats, including some located near the famous windmill. While they vary in terms of altitude and topography, the most important difference is soil. The manganese-rich soils of Moulin-à-Vent are varied with a crumbly pink granite called grès on the hills and heavier clay on the plains. Producers generally prefer the grapes grown on the thin soils of the hillsides where the vigorous nature of the grape is tamed. Some of the best known climats are Champ de Cour, La Rochelle, Le Carquelin, Le Clos, Les Thorins, Les Vérillats, and Rochegrès. A map showing the location of the climats and the composition of their soils is given at the end of this article.

The wines reviewed below come from the 2014 and 2015 vintages. The 2014 vintage is widely regarded as normal, resulting in wines of excellent typicity that are mostly ready to drink early on. The hot, dry 2015 vintage, on the other hand, was outstanding with many vintners claiming it's the best since 1947. Many of the 2015s are recently bottled and should be given some additional cellar time. All of the wines reviewed here are bottled, but not all have been released.

Tasting Note

Maison Le Nid 2014 La Rochelle Moulin-à-Vent 91

This is a lovely, medium-weight red-fruited wine revealing Montmorency cherry and red berry character. It's clean and focused on the palate with lovely, pure fruit flavors and a lingering finish. From a 1 ha parcel of densely planted, 50 year old vines, harvested by hand, partially destemmed, and aged in used oak barrels for 12 months. The Lardet family owns 12 vineyards in Moulin-à-Vent.