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## Beaujolais in major appellation shake-up

Wednesday 5 October 2011 | by Jane Anson in Bordeaux | [Comments \(2\)](#)

Over 40 Beaujolais communes have lost the right to label their wine as Burgundy.



Morgon: not affected (image: [bowlerwine.com](#))

This follows a decision taken on 28 September by the INAO, the wine appellations governing body, after a three-year process in which the geographic zones governing Burgundy and Beaujolais appellations have been redrawn.

Although Beaujolais producers have had the right label their wines Burgundy since 1937, it has long been a source of dispute between the two regions. Burgundy winemakers have been campaigning for tighter restrictions, particularly with the production of white wine.

Forty-three communes have lost the right to call their white wines AOC

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**Blanc**, the most basic appellation used by only around 2% of wines.

**AOC Bourgogne Aligote** still exists as an appellation, and two new appellations have been created: **AOC Coteaux Bourguignon** and **AOC Bourgogne Gamay**.

INAO based decisions on which communes should be included on grounds of terroir and longevity. Renowned villages like **Fleurie** and **Morgon** have not been affected.

Beaujolais can claim a partial victory, as 42 communes have retained the right to label their wines **AOC Bourgogne Blanc**.

At the same time, nine Beaujolais Crus (all except **Regnié**, because it only became a Cru in 1988) will retain the right to use the label **AOC Bourgogne**, with restrictions.

If the wine contains anything over 30% of the Gamay grape, the label must be **AOC Bourgogne Gamay**.

Another change comes with the creation of the new **AOC Coteaux Bourguignon**, which will replace the existing **AOC Bourgogne Grande Ordinaire** over the next five years. This appellation will be open to both Burgundy and Beaujolais producers.

Communes affected by the changes include **Saint Lager**, an AOC Beaujolais north of Lyon. Chardonnay is planted here, but it has lost the right to use the appellation Bourgogne Blanc and so will become AOC Beaujolais Blanc. About 250 hectares of Chardonnay have been excluded in total.

Jean Bougarde, director of **Inter-Beaujolais**, told **Decanter.com** they welcomed the change - adding that Burgundy should not worry unduly about Beaujolais stealing their thunder.

'Macon producers have always worried that we in Beaujolais are going to plant heaps of chardonnay to sell as Burgundy white, but that is an unjustified concern.'

'We welcome the clarifications, and are particularly hopeful that the introduction of Coteaux Bourguignon will be positive for consumers, but our priority has always been to produce the best Beaujolais that we can. We have just had three fantastic vintages, which have been enormously important in bringing consumers back.'

All changes apply from the 2011 vintage.

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**Henry Hills**

October 05 14:25

Most people do not see Beaujolais as Burgundy so i think the change does not matter to the public .What Beaujolais needs to do is establish the different areas of Beaujolais and is different styles in the publics mind.

**Robert Joseph**

October 05 12:05

I'm sure these decisions have kept lots of people busy for a long time, probably including some salaried "fonctionnaires", so it's a good way to combat unemployment.

Calling Beaujolais Burgundy was illogical (different soil, grape and climate and most likely vinification), but there's no reason why a 6-month old Fleurie should still be called Bourgogne, even with the adjunct of "Gamay" - a word that means nothing to most normal mortals. And if it was worth making Regnié a Cru, why not make it subject to the same rules? Or is this a tacit admission that it was always a questionable addition to the Crus in the first place.

Stopping White Beaujolais from calling itself Burgundy is also illogical when you

### Latest poll

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- Yes. That's what the best Aussie reds are all about
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- I'll stick with the Rhône. I've never had an elegant Aussie Shiraz

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and usually pretty indistinguishable from many white Maconnais made nearby from the same grapes and eligible to call themselves Burgundy.

An ungenerous soul might suggest that all of this is fiddling while Rome burns...

According to a 2010 survey by FranceAgriMer/INRA, one in two French women now considers herself to be a non wine drinker. The figure for Frenchmen is 29%, a figure that has grown from 22% in 1990. Fewer than one Frenchmen and women in five - 17% - now say that they drink wine regularly - nearly every day - with around a quarter doing so less often than once or twice a week.

Obviously rearranging appellation rules and creating new ones will surely reverse this trend.

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