



KERMIT LYNCH WINE MERCHANT

## CHÂTEAU THIVIN

Country: France

Region: Beaujolais

Appellation(s): Beaujolais, Côte de Brouilly, Brouilly

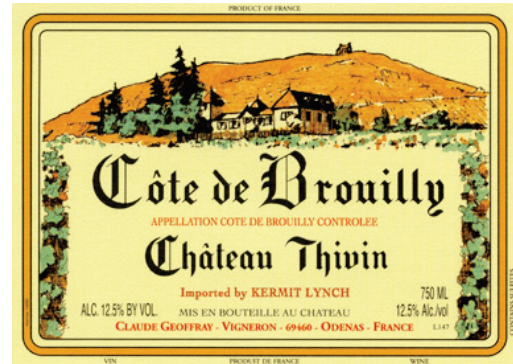
Producer: Claude Geoffray

Founded: 1877

Annual Production: N/A

Farming: Lutte Raisonnée (in conversion to Organic)

Website: [www.chateau-thivin.com](http://www.chateau-thivin.com)



It is no surprise that Château Thivin is the benchmark domaine of the Côte de Brouilly; everything about it is exceptional. Built in the fifteenth century on an ancient volcano which juts out steeply into the valley below, Thivin is the oldest estate on Mont Brouilly. Even more important, however, is its tremendous success since farmer Zaccharie Geoffray purchased the château with its two hectares of land at auction in 1877. His son Claude expanded the property over the next few decades, and his son, also named Claude, boosted the prestige of the zone in the face of the Great Depression when he played a pivotal role in the creation of the Côte de Brouilly appellation. With his wife Yvonne, he also helped to bring greater recognition to the entire region with the establishment of the Maison du Beaujolais in 1953. Over the years the family continued to promote the appellation, receiving many influential artists and journalists at the château. The French novelist, Colette, wrote admiringly of her visit to Thivin, for example. In 1979, Richard Olney took Kermit to visit on their first wine trip together. It was Olney's top recommendation in the whole of the Beaujolais region. The current generation of the Geoffray family continues their tradition. Today their grandnephew Claude, his wife Evelyne, and their son Claude-Edouard continue the tradition as staunch and proud defenders of the *terroir* of the Côte de Brouilly.

Thivin's Côte de Brouilly parcels are predominantly south-facing and are planted entirely with Gamay vines that average 50 years of age. The soil is plowed and composted regularly while cover crops are left between some rows to encourage microbiotic activity. Absolutely no insecticides are used. On a slope with a grade of 48% and crumbly surface, implementing these techniques is essential to safeguard the soil from erosion, but it isn't easy! Each section of the vineyard is harvested and vinified separately to preserve the unique characteristics afforded by variations in exposure and altitude. Even the estate's vineyards in the Brouilly appellation are planted on a moderately steep hillside of decomposed pink granite, while most of the appellation is planted on the flat valley floor. Traditional whole-cluster fermentation keeps the characteristic fruity qualities of Gamay, after which the grapes are transferred to *caves* by gravity without being crushed. Each vintage spends a few months in large oak *foudres* before bottling. The resulting wines, according to Kermit, resemble "...a country squire who is not afraid to get his boots muddy. Handsome, virile, earthy, *and* an aristocrat."

1605 San Pablo Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94702

[www.kermitlynch.com](http://www.kermitlynch.com) | [info@kermitlynch.com](mailto:info@kermitlynch.com)

Berkeley Retail: 510.524.1524 | California Wholesale: 510.903.0440 | National Distribution: 707.963.8293



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## CHÂTEAU THIVIN (continued)

<u>Wine</u>	<u>Blend</u>	<u>Vine Age</u>	<u>Soil Type</u>	<u>Vineyard Area*</u>
Beaujolais Villages <i>Blanc</i> “Cuvée Marguerite”	Chardonnay	N/A	Clay, limestone	N/A
Beaujolais Rosé	100% Gamay Noir à jus blanc	N/A	N/A	N/A
Brouilly	Gamay Noir	45 years	Pink granite, sand	7 ha
Côte de Brouilly	Gamay Noir	Average 50 years	Blue volcanic rock comprised of plagioclase and biotite	8.3 ha
Côte de Brouilly “Cuvée Zaccharie”	Gamay Noir	40-90 years	Clay and volcanic rock (composed of Diorite and Porphyry)	N/A

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

## VITICULTURE / VINIFICATION

- In 2008, the domaine began a conversion to organic viticulture that will be finished around 2020
- Biodiversity is achieved by placing hay around the edges of the vineyards and herbs and flowers are planted between rows
- Natural composts serve as a natural fertilizer
- Regular plowing aerates the soils
- All grapes are harvested by hand, in mid-September
- All parcels undergo separate vinifications
- Gravity-fed fermentation *cuvées*
- Traditional whole-cluster vinifications
- Partial de-stemming

### Beaujolais Villages *Blanc* “Cuvée Marguerite” :

- Vineyards planted on a slope with eastern sun exposure and good drainage
- Half of the cuvée is aged in stainless steel, the other half in oak barrels
- Cuvée is bottled in the springtime following the harvest

### Beaujolais Rosé :

- Direct press, skins macerate with the juice for one day
- Vinified in cool, temperature-controlled stainless steel *cuvées*

### Brouilly :

- Eastern sun exposure on a moderate slope, facing Mont Brouilly



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### CHÂTEAU THIVIN (continued)

- Fermentation lasts from 7-9 days
- Raised in stainless steel *cuves* before bottling

#### **Côte de Brouilly:**

- Vineyards situated on steep slopes with a 48% grade
- Exposed to the South, East, and Southeast
- Fermentation lasts from 6-12 days
- Ages in oak *foudres* for six months before bottling
- Drinks well in its youth and develops beautifully 3-8 years after the vintage

#### **Côte de Brouilly “Cuvée Zaccharie”:**

- A blend of their oldest vines from the two parcels “La Chapelle” (South) and “Godeffroy” (East), excellent sun exposure
- Vinification lasts from 13-15 days
- Ages for 1-5 years in 228-L oak barrels, of which only 10% is new oak