



KERMIT LYNCH WINE MERCHANT

JEAN-PAUL THÉVENET

Country: **France**

Region: **Beaujolais**

Appellation(s): **Morgon**

Producer: **Jean-Paul Thévenet**

Founded: **1870**

Annual Production: **2,000 cases**

Farming: **Biodynamic (starting with 2008 vintage)**



Jean-Paul Thévenet is the third generation to produce wine at his family estate in Morgon, but as a young man he took the domaine in an unexpected direction. In the early 1980s Beaujolais was flooded with mass-produced, over-commercialized wine, pushing winemaker and viticultural prophet Jules Chauvet to invoke a return to more traditional practices. Jean-Paul and three other local *vignerons*, Marcel Lapierre, Guy Breton, and Jean Foillard, soon took up the torch of this “natural wine” movement. Kermit dubbed this clan the Gang of Four, and the name has stuck ever since. These rebels called for a return to the old practices of viticulture and vinification: starting with old vines, never using synthetic herbicides or pesticides, harvesting late, rigorously sorting to remove all but the healthiest grapes, adding minimal doses of sulfur dioxide or none at all, and refusing both chaptalization and filtration. These techniques allow the character of Morgon to express itself naturally, without any cosmetic surgery: rustic and spicy yet also refreshing and loaded with the minerality of the granitic vineyards.

Known as “Paul-Po” among friends, Jean-Paul is reserved yet fun-loving. He farms his small five-hectare domaine with his son, Charly, who also makes his own wine from the neighboring *Grand Cru* Régnié. Charly is a staunch advocate of natural wine just like his father, and since 2008 the two have taken the domaine to the next level by adopting organic and biodynamic viticultural practices. While the rest of the Gang works the Parisian market, hand-selling their wines, Jean-Paul maintains a low profile. Producing only 2,000 cases per year, he simply focuses on creating the best wines possible, and we are always eager to buy as many cases as he can spare!

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JEAN-PAUL THÉVENET (continued)

<u>Wine</u>	<u>Blend</u>	<u>Vine Age</u>	<u>Soil Type</u>	<u>Vineyard Area</u>
Morgon “Vieilles Vignes”	100% Gamay	Average of 70 years	Decomposed Granite, Sand	4.85 ha

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

VITICULTURE / VINIFICATION

- Old-vines with naturally low yields
- Made from two parcels of vines, one 45 years old and the other 110 years old (planted before World War I)
- Biodynamic methodology (aeration of the soil, herbal infusions, natural composts, cover crops, planting in accordance with the lunar calendar) used to stimulate the natural immune system of the vine
- Manually harvested, as late as possible to achieve maximum ripeness
- Rigorous sorting of the grapes
- Indigenous yeasts only to start fermentation
- Long fermentations in cement *cuve*, with whole clusters, for 15-25 days at low temperatures to allow for longest skin contact possible
- Wines aged on fine lees in 5-7 year-old oak Burgundian barrels for 6-8 months
- Punchdowns occur only at the end of the vinification process
- No fining or filtration