



December 2007

With Us



Back to Basics

Many of us are changing our eating habits to live a more natural lifestyle; instead of going down the frozen food aisle and the endless aisles of packaged goods, we are opting to check out that elusive organic section.

Even more elusive is the world of organic wine. We've heard the terms Biodynamic, 100% Organic, Organic, and Made with Organic Grapes, but what do these terms mean. To add another variable to the equation, some wineries may farm organically, but because of the cost involved in the certification process, they may be more inclined to spend that money to further improve their vineyard.

Biodynamic wineries utilize the farms natural resources, using more of a holistic approach to farming – considered “the mother of organic farming”. The wine produced in this manner is said to greater impart the unique flavours of the soil, environment, and climate, producing a more complex and flavourful wine.

Wines labeled 100% organic, harvest 100% organic grapes and is bottled in a certified organic facility. Organic wine, like biodynamic wine restrict the addition of sulphites and other additives, naturally reflecting the unique characteristics of the land, the environment and the plethora of grape varieties – therefore enhancing the aromas and flavours of the wine.

It's interesting, as you progressively go down the ladder, even though wines may be labeled organic, you may not necessarily receive what you are expecting. If it simply says, “Organic”, a minimum of 95% organic ingredients are present and there is a minimum of sulphur dioxide added to the wine. Further, “Made with Organic Grapes”, refers to wines with a minimum of 70 % organic grapes and sulphur dioxide is added in varying amounts.

Regardless of the varying degrees of “Organic” wines, if you enjoy wine, organic and biodynamic wines are definitely worth the effort to try. Unlike their non-organic counterparts, they are slightly more volatile; so do not expect a wine to taste the same year after year. In addition, it gives you a chance to have a little bit more fun with your wine and provides you with the satisfaction of knowing that you are contributing to the sustainability of our planet.

Interesting Information on Organic Wines

- Organic wine runs a higher risk of turning unless it is kept at cellar temperature than wines that contain added sulfites.
- A great resource to learn more about organic wines is <http://www.organicwinejournal.com/>
- Organic wines are made for grapes that are void of chemical fertilizers, fungicides, pesticides and herbicides.
- If a label says ‘Organic’ it means that the winery has met certain standards set by a government agency of that particular country. There are differences between one country’s standards and another.
- The increased amount of attention to the vineyard’s grapes, do not translate into more expensive wines.
- Bonterra & Frey Vineyards from California; Chateau de Bastet from France; Casal Dos Jordoos from Portugal are a few wineries that produce organic wines.
- Sulphites preserve wine and naturally occur in wine, so there is no such thing as a sulphite free wine.

Christine’s Pick

2003 Bonterra Cabernet Sauvignon

I had the opportunity to taste this wine at Taste Matters, an event supporting Reena Foundation. The pepper pops right out of the glass the second you take a sniff, followed by ripe berries and the smell of your grandma’s cedar trunk.

Email me your favourite organic wine and I will post it in my blog so that other visitors can enjoy the wine.

Enjoy!

May the coming year bring you prosperity, good health and many great bottles of wine!