

CONVENTIONAL AGRICULTURE

In conventional agriculture, chemical fertilizers are used to promote larger yields and protect against disease.

These same chemicals are absorbed through the roots into the vine's sap and are then passed through leaves, and stems into the fruit.

As a result, residues of these chemicals find their way into the finished wine and has a significant impact on soil and water quality.

Wine growers farming with chemicals have to wear 'hazmat' style clothing and breathing apparatus to protect themselves while crop spraying.

ORGANIC WINE

Organic wines are made from organically grown grapes cultivated without the application of any synthetic fertilizer, fungicide, pesticide or herbicide. Certified organic wine making follows strict standards.

Using natural composts, manure and mineral compounds to build up the health of the soil. The result is that the vines growing in this fortified soil are healthy and resistant to disease and outside aggressions from parasites and other predatory insects.

Organic growers use companion planting techniques (interspersing the vines with plants that naturally repel certain pests).

To avoid the use of insecticides to control cutworms (a caterpillar!) organic practices include grazing chickens and ducks under the vines or picking cutworms off the leaves one by one.

Wine production comprises two main phases - that which takes place in the vineyard (i.e. Grape growing) and that which takes place in the winery (i.e. fermentation of the grapes into wine, bottling etc.).

The baseline definition of organic wine as "wine made with grapes farmed organically".

Only pure natural sulphur dioxide (sulphite) is used as an anti-oxidant and amounts allowed are far less than common unregulated usage. is sulphur dioxide.

Consumers receive a product that is far more natural than other non-organic wines, it is less likely to trigger allergies and is healthier for the environment. Many people find organic wines to be more easily drinkable and more flavourful than wines made by more industrial standards.

BIODYNAMIC WINES

A certified biodynamic vineyard exceeds the standards and regulations for organic-certified farming. In addition to organic practices, they follow the rhythms of the cosmos – seasons, tides, cycles of the moon and sun – to produce clean and lively quality wines.

Biodynamic refers to both the agricultural methods and the handling and processing of the fruit post-harvest.

Winegrowers drawn to this philosophy tend to be inventive types, always experimenting and refining their practices to see what works best. As a result, there are many different flavours and variations around this common theme, and it's hard to define biodynamics in any sort of rigid way.

In biodynamic farming, no chemical fertilizers or pesticides are ever used. Instead, the earth is renewed by sowing vegetarian mulch which enriches the nutritional content.

Rather than pesticides, key herbs are planted which are attractive to "good" insects, which take care of the "bad" insects naturally.

BIODYNAMIC CALENDAR

Biodynamics occur primarily in the vineyard before winemaking even happens. All the various tasks, from planting, pruning, to harvesting, are regulated by a special biodynamic calendar where certain tasks are assigned to certain days.

As the moon waxes (moves toward the full-moon phase) the sap rises. This is then the prescribed period for harvesting crops. As the moon wanes (moving from full moon to half) the sap falls, which is then the time for fertilization, trimming, etc.

The calendar divides days into four categories: root, fruit, flower and leaf days and they coincide with one of the four classical elements of earth, fire, air and water.

Fruit days: best days for harvesting grapes

Root days: ideal days for pruning

Flower days: leave the vineyard alone on these days

Leaf days: ideal days for watering plants

You would never, for example, want to harvest on a leaf day because leaf days' correlate with the element water and you'd end up picking rotten, waterlogged grapes!

Besides the biodynamic calendar, no chemicals or 'manufactured' additions (like commercial yeast) are allowed in biodynamic wine. Instead, wine growers make special compost preparations with natural ingredients to bolster their vineyards. This is where things start to get controversial.

BIODYNAMIC COMPOSTING

Biodynamic composting is bizarre!!!

The animal horn is a symbol of abundance. For example, the Vikings believed that water drunk from a horn contained life enhancing properties.

Today, this belief is used in Chinese traditional medicine (e.g. Rhino horn).

True biodynamic farming will actually make vegetarians cringe. Biodynamic viticulture requires special compost preparations that are stuffed into cow horns and buried in the soil. Later, the cow horns are dug up and reused and the 'stuffing' is diluted and distributed throughout the vineyard.



Check out You Tube - <https://youtu.be/EWLFLdhhNks>

RESULTS

Some grape growers who have adopted biodynamic methods claim to have achieved improvements in the health of their vineyards, specifically in the, soil fertility, crop nutrition, and pest, weed, and disease management.

Biodynamic winemakers claim to have noted stronger, clearer, more vibrant tastes, as well as wines that remain drinkable longer. Biodynamic wines are more "floral"

Critics acknowledge the high quality of biodynamic wines and other critics attribute the success of biodynamic viticulture to the winemakers' higher craftsmanship and meticulous attention to detail.

The difference between biodynamic compost and organic compost is simply the range of special preparations added to the heap. After about a year, the compost is then ready to be added to the vineyard.

Biodynamic soils have been tested against non-organic soils and they showed greater disease suppression, a decrease in compaction and added organic material.

In a blind tasting of 10 pairs of biodynamic and conventionally made wines, they were judged by seven wine experts. Nine of the biodynamic wines were judged superior to their conventional counterpart. The biodynamic wines "were found to have better expressions of terroir, the way in which a wine can represent its specific place of origin in its aroma, flavour, and texture.

For obvious reasons, Biodynamic wines are much more expensive to produce than those on a traditional, non-organic farms. Biodynamic wines are even more difficult and time consuming than most organic wines. But, the results speak for themselves.

