

Boise Co-op Uncorked!

BOISE CO-OP WINE SHOP
NEWSLETTER

CORNER OF 8TH & FORT
BOISE, ID 83702

JULY CLUB PICKS

About Organic Wines

by Bobby Rowett

When a customer asks, "Is this wine organic?" it seems like a pretty straight forward question. So why does it take so long to answer? After all there are certifications and rules about what it means.



Why can't we just point out the wines with the 'Certified Organic' seal of approval?

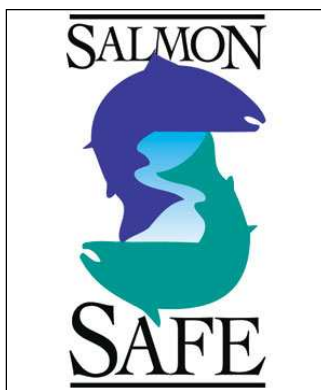
One of the primary reasons is that there is often a difference between what people have in mind when they ask for organic, and what it means to be Certified Organic. How many wine buyers really understand everything that organic certification requires? Different states follow different rules, and the USDA has their own guidelines, as do most other wine producing countries. My guess is that most look for the 'Certified Organic' seal as a way to play it safe, which is fine as long as you don't mind limiting your choices to relatively few wines.

Wine production is a tough business in which to turn a profit and organic production makes it even tougher. The estate producer incurs additional costs due to lower crop yields and increased labor. Negotiants have to pay higher prices for organic fruit or juice. Because of the thin margins many producers choose not to pay for organic certification, seeing it as an unnecessary expense.

Here is a brief explanation of what the heck all of those terms mean:

Salmon-Safe

- Salmon-Safe works with leading farmers throughout the Northwest to help restore salmon habitat on farmland by planting trees, growing cover crops, improving irrigation systems, and applying natural methods to control weeds and pests.
- Management practices are addressed in six primary areas: riparian area management, water use management, erosion and sediment control, chemical use management, animal management, and biodiversity conservation.
- This system was developed over a two-year period with biologists, agronomists, and farmers, and has been tested in the field at more than 300 farms in Oregon, Washington, California, and Idaho across a variety of crops.



Organic

- At its most basic level, organic wine is made from grapes that have been grown without the use of chemical fertilizers, pesticides, fungicides and herbicides. Winemaking techniques should be organic as well: little or no manipulation of wines by reverse osmosis, excessive filtration, or flavor additives (such as oak chips). Many

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2009 Crios Torrontes

2005 Lan Crianza

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Côtes-du-Rhône

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organic winemakers also prefer wild yeasts for fermentation.

The Role of Certification

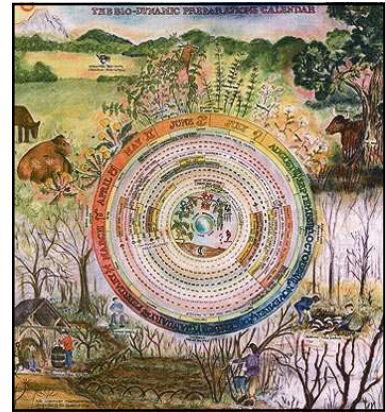
- When a label says “organic,” it means the wine has met certain standards that are set by a government agency. Different nations have their own certification criteria, so what’s organic in one country may not be so in another.
- Many wineries that are technically organic still choose not to be certified. There are many reasons for this. Some do not want the added costs and bureaucracy of registering. Others may disagree with their government’s standards. It can also be a marketing decision. Whatever the case, they are not allowed to use “organic” on their labels.
- The use of added sulfites is debated heavily within the organic winemaking community. Many vintners favor their use, in extremely small quantities, to help stabilize wines, while others frown on them completely. *In the United States, wines labeled “organic” cannot contain added sulfites. Wines that have added sulfites, but are otherwise organic, are labeled “wine made from organic grapes.”*

Biodynamic

- It is helpful to think of biodynamics not primarily as an agricultural system, but rather as an altered philosophy or worldview that then impacts on the practice of agriculture in various ways. In other words, to farm biodynamically, first you have to think biodynamically. The practice has its roots in a series of lectures delivered by Austrian philosopher–scientist Rudolf Steiner in 1924. His eight lectures, entitled *Spiritual Foundations for the Renewal of Agriculture* remain the foundation of biodynamic farming.
- Key to biodynamics is considering the farm in its entirety as a living system. The idea of using synthetic fertilizers or pesticides is thus an anathema to biodynamic practitioners. Instead, they use a series of special preparations to enhance the life of the soil, which are applied at appropriate times in keeping with the rhythms of nature. And disease is seen not as a problem to be tackled head-

on, but rather as a symptom of a deeper malaise within the farm organism: correct the problem in the system and the disease will right itself.

- Each winegrower has developed their biodynamic methods to suit their own particular situation. Winegrowers drawn to this philosophy tend to be inventive types, always experimenting and refining their practices to see what works best.
- One of the most common emphases of biodynamic practitioners is the importance of soil health, and, in particular, the development of a healthy soil microbial population. Composting



helps achieve this, and all biodynamic growers will have big compost heaps. Indeed, if anything is going to be added to the soil, such as lime, it is usual to do this via the compost heap. The difference between biodynamic compost and organic compost is simply the range of special preparations added to the heap.

Another important aspect of biodynamics is working the soil by manual plowing. Of course, the usual viticultural practice of keeping rows clear of weeds by means of herbicides such as glyphosate (Roundup) is not permitted in biodynamics or organics. Some growers even use horses to plough with rather than tractors.

In order to help you find wines that are healthy for both your body and the environment the Co-op Wine Shop has put together a list of all certified AND practicing organic producers that we carry, as well as producers that are Salmon-Safe or biodynamic. It is available in the store and online.

Notable Wine Quotes

“What is the definition of a good wine? It should start and end with a smile.”
~ William Sokolin

“Wine makes a man more pleased with himself; I do not say it makes him more pleasing to others.” ~ Samuel Johnson

“I made wine out of raisins so I wouldn't have to wait for it to age.” ~ Stephen Wright

July Wine Club Selections

R & R Club

2009 Crios Torrontes

This month the white selection hails from Argentina and is the value label crafted by Susana Balbo. She is an extraordinarily gifted winemaker and something of an anomaly in a country dominated by male winemakers. Her talents are so well recognized that she consults with wineries in Australia, California, Chile, France, Italy and South Africa.

After almost 30 years of winemaking, Susana Balbo has a strong sense of what she wants from her wines. From every harvest, she creates the grandest possible wines under her Susana Balbo label. To achieve this, she makes a rigorous selection of the finest barrels prior to making her final blends, dividing them into the parents (reserve level wines) and offspring or "crios". Wines under her Crios label display ripe fruit flavors, excellent balance and concentration, and are meant to be enjoyed in their vibrant youth. They are also an incredibly good value. And like Susana's own crios (a boy & a girl), they are extremely lovable and fun to be around.

Torrontes is Argentina's most widely planted white wine grape. This bottling has aromas that remind one of Viognier with peach and honeyed melon punctuated by floral citrus. Surprisingly intense on the palate, its ripe stone fruit is nicely balanced by vibrant acidity. Pair it with most cheeses, it goes great with cured meats, and it is especially at home with sea food.

2005 Lan Crianza

In the world of Spanish Bodegas, Lan is a fairly new operation, founded in 1972. It is named after the initials of the three provinces in the Rioja region—Lagroño, Álava and Navarra. This is a unique property. Their Viña Lanciano vineyard is one of the most spectacular in the Rioja Alta, situated in a breathtaking meander of the River Ebro. Even the most jaded wine tourist (please don't make me see another stemmer/crusher) will doubtless be floored by a visit to the Lan winery—a state-of-the-art affair that is truly amazing. Tracks run along the floor of the barrel room with a monorail running overhead. The barrels (25,000 of them) are stacked high in ascending pyramids. Go to the computer terminal and type in a number and the selection starts. A robot arm on the monorail lifts and stacks until the correct barrel is found. It then delivers it to an automated car waiting on the track below. Within a few minutes the designated barrel is delivered—the whole thing seems like something out of Star Wars.

As a Crianza Rioja this wine is made 100 percent from Tempranillo grapes, and spends 12 months in oak and another 12 in the bottle. Being a 2005, it has obviously received more extensive cellar aging. The result is an elegantly balanced wine with smooth plum and dark cherry fruit flavors, along with soft nuances of anise and chocolate. The finish is smooth and silky and goes on and on. Pair it with grilled lamb or a potato tortilla. Would also go great with a tapas of aged Manchego cheese and thin slices of Jamon on crusty bread slices.

Passport Club

2008 Valmiñor Abariño

Adegas Valmiñor was founded in 1997 and is based in Spain's Rias Baixas where it boasts a new, ultramodern winery that makes some 15,000 to 17,000 case of wine. (Note: "Adegas" means "bodegas" [winery] in the local Galician dialect). The winery produces only one wine, a 100 percent Albarino, the grape for which this region is best known.

Valmiñor translates as "minor valley," and the estate's vineyards are located in one that offers a mild climate without dramatic changes in the weather, a soil rich in minerals and excellent conditions that make it the perfect place for growing Albariño. The estate owns some 85 acres there in the Rosal, and use purchased fruit from two other prime growing regions: Cambados and Arbo. Cambados is located on the coast and provides acidity and freshness to the wine. The Arbo has a unique micro-climate that is a touch warmer than other areas. Together these fruit sources make a superb blend.

This 2008 offers enticing aromas of ripe apple, citrus and pear backed by herb and fresh spring flowers. It's a nicely focused wine with an impressive richness to the bright fruit flavors, highlighted by creamy peach and melon. The lively finish offers smooth acidity and a touch of lemon zest. Pair it with ripe cheeses, roasted chicken or most any sea food dish.

2007 Chateau des Tours Côtes-du-Rhône

Chateau des Tours is one of the three properties owned by the Reynaud family. In the heart of the southern Rhône Valley appellation vineyards, Emmanuel Reynaud offers up his Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée wines. The family's history here started in 1880 when a notary from the Avignon area, Albert Reynaud, became deaf at the age of 45. He had to change professions as a result and bought Chateau Rayas. His son Louis inherited that property. For his older son Bernard, he bought another estate, Chateau des Tours in Sarrians in 1935. Situated in the Vacqueyras area a few miles north of Sarrians, today Emmanuel Reynaud runs the estate (as well as Chateau Rayas), and owns 100 acres of vineyards planted to both red and white varieties.

This selection is imported by Martine's Wines, founded by Martine Saunier, the first woman to establish a wine importing company in the United States back in 1979. Ten years earlier, she was on a buying trip in France working for a San Francisco distributor. At a lunch in the Rhône Valley she tasted a white produced by a Reynaud estate. She left the restaurant and headed straight for Rayas where she fell in love with their wines, buying fifty cases at the equivalent of about \$1.25 a bottle. With wine of this type then retailing for only \$2.50, her distributor had a fit. Undaunted Martine established a mailing list and rapidly sold out of the wine. Her relation with the Reynaud family continues to this day.

This Côtes du Rhône is a blend of 65 percent Grenache, 20 percent Syrah and 15 percent Cinsault from the outstanding 2007 vintage. Rich and round in the mouth with flavors of ripe cherry and dark berry, the emphasis is on the beautifully ripe fruit flavors that linger nicely on the finish. It wants to join your next barbecue to be paired with grilled beef, poultry or pork.



July 2010



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This newsletter was printed with
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Wine Shop Hours!

10 am to 8 pm
Monday
through
Saturday

10 am to 6 pm
Sunday



Wine Deal of the Month

2007 Merryvale Starmont Chardonnay, Napa Valley

At the regular price of \$15.99, the Starmont is definitely a great buy, especially when you consider that it is 100% Napa Valley fruit. Sourced from select vineyards including Stanly Ranch Estate and Silverado Oak Knoll this barrel aged Chard scored an impressive 91 points from the *Wine Enthusiast*. It's a fruit driven wine with layers of pineapple, orange, green apple, kiwi, lime and pear. Notes of vanilla and crème brûlée and vanilla come through on the expansive finish. It's a steal of a deal at the \$11.99 sale price.

2007 Merryvale Starmont

Sale Price \$11.99, reg. \$15.99

Summer Sipper 6-pack Sale

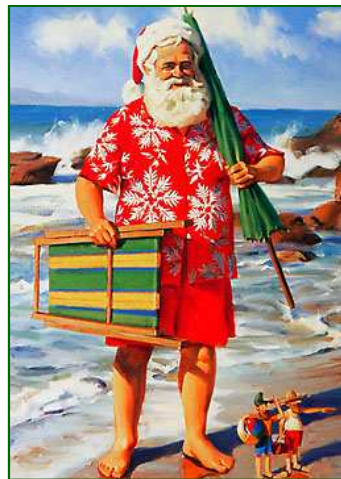
Save on Selected Summer Wines

15% Off

When you buy 6 or more

Mix & Match

*And get a free Boise Co-op Wine Shop Tote
with purchase*



It's like Christmas in July!