

U3A Castlemaine Wine Appreciation Group
1 August 2019
wines and food presented by Trish P and Michael R

ORGANIC vs NON-ORGANIC COMPARISON

This session compares organic with non-organic wines from our local region.

There are several terms used to define 'organic'

Biodynamic - Wine made with grapes grown under a set of holistic biodynamic principles and practices that regard the whole vineyard as one big living organism. Chemical pesticides are strictly banned.

Natural - Broadly, wine fermented without commercial yeast and chemical additives which natural wine advocates say can dull a grape's true character. Often, but not always, made with grapes from sustainable, organic or biodynamic vineyards.

Sustainable - Wine made by a range of vineyard and winery practices that are ecologically responsible and economically viable. Sustainable wine doesn't prohibit the use of man-made chemicals, but urges their use in moderation.

Organic - Wine made from grapes grown without the use of synthetic or artificial chemicals and in accordance with the principles of organic farming.

Vegan - For a wine to be labelled vegan it must not come into contact with any animal products during production, such as gelatin or egg white sometimes used in the fining process. Many wines are vegan but may not advertise the fact.

(From The Age, Saturday April 6, 2019)

Comparison No. 1 – Sparkling Chardonnay

Bress N.V. Sparkling Blanc

The fruit for this sparkling wine was grown in three different, but complimentary Victorian viticultural regions; Macedon, Yarra Valley and the southern end of the Bendigo appellation. The assemblage is a blend of five vineyards and the average age of the vines is over 24 years old.

The blend is Chardonnay dominant which gives the wine persistence and length while the Pinot Gris provides generosity and richness. A small component of Riesling has been used to give fruit definition and vibrancy.

Food friends: Salmon Gravlax, freshly shucked Oysters.

Barfold Estate, Heathcote, N.V. Sparkling Brut

This wine has lifted floral and lemon citrus scents with fragrant French pear bouquet.

It has a fine persistent bead and lively mousse, a delicate fruit driven style of wine.

Lemon citrus flavours and subtle yeast characters teamed with firm acid give the wine overall balance, length and freshness.

Made from predominately chardonnay fruit with a small amount of pinot it is a delightful wine on its own or paired with food.

Comparison No. 2 - Chardonnay

Mother Nature Vineyard, Irimple, Victoria 2007 Chardonnay

**** wine of the night ****

Don't Mess With Mother Nature is an organic vineyard located in Mildura, in the Murray Darling wine region of the Murray River area in north west Victoria.

(No further information available at the time this was printed.)

Quinn Vineyard. 2014 Chardonnay

Winery: Quinn

Grapes: Shiraz/Syrah

Region: Bendigo, Central Victoria

Food pairing: Beef, Lamb, Game (deer, venison), Poultry

Comparison No. 3 - Shiraz

Bress 2017 Silver Heathcote & Bendigo Shiraz

This winery/cider farm is set on 66 acres at the base of Mt. Alexander in Harcourt. Winemaker Adam Marks grows four varieties – cabernet sauvignon, riesling, cabernet franc and shiraz.

Biodynamic philosophies inform Bress's growing practices. Grapes are picked at opportune ripeness (and in accordance with moon phases) and the team uses natural yeasts and gentle handling in the winery.

We work with two Heathcote vineyards – one is Deadhorse Vineyard, situated at Toolleen, the other, Ruperts Ridge, situated in Redesdale. The Bendigo component is sourced from our own Harcourt vineyard.

The Bress 2017 Heathcote and Bendigo Silver Shiraz was treated gently and with minimal intervention. A combination of whole bunch and gently crushed fruit fermentations occurred in open fermenters. Fermentation was slow and was initiated by indigenous yeast strains. Post pressing the wine was transferred to French oak hogsheads for malolactic fermentation. The wine was then racked and returned to oak for 10 months maturation. The wine was gently filtered prior to bottling.

Colour – an intense and vibrant pungent crimson, almost inky blue. Aroma – the wine offers a complex array of fruit aromas of black fruit, spice, cloves and olive. The oak aromas are of char and vanillin spice.

Palate – an elegant wine given the vintage and is tightly packed full of black, fruit, spice, cloves and olive. The oak characters are beautifully integrated into the wine, giving the wine structure and adding power, balance and a savoury richness.

Ageing – Whilst enjoyable now, this wine will reward careful cellaring for up to 6 years. The terrior of the Heathcote Appellation, including its Cambrian soils produce wines with great structure, power and length. Shiraz grown in the Bendigo region brings plushness and generosity. Vintage 2017 was very cool and long vintage. The resultant wines are elegant and understated.

Food friends – The 2017 is superb with slow roasted lamb shoulder and veal ragu tossed through freshly made pasta.

Glenwillow Bendigo Shiraz, 2016

Glenwillow Wines is a family-owned, boutique winery producing handcrafted, super-premium wines at affordable prices. Our focus is on producing a limited number of high quality red wines which reflect the cool-climate style of the Bendigo/Castlemaine region. We produce shiraz, cabernet sauvignon, sparkling shiraz, rose and two Italian varieties, nebbiolo and barbera.

Our vineyard is located in the Yandoit Valley, in the Bendigo wine region of central Victoria, between historical Castlemaine and cosmopolitan Daylesford. This area was settled by Swiss-Italian farmers during the 1850's gold rush period who produced wine for the local gold diggers. We focus on quality and minimal intervention which produces low yielding pes and award-winning wines.

Our wines are a reflection of exceptional regional character and grape quality. As such, our wines are medium bodied, rich, with complex and elegant flavours with a long and lingering finish. Our wines have been awarded several trophies and gold medals over recent years as well as receiving consistently high ratings from James Halliday. Our winery is rated 4 ½ stars by Mr Halliday.

Our shiraz is grown to produce a rich, soft type of wine with smooth, velvet finish. This style of wine is ready to drink in 3 – 5 years showing delicious primary fruit flavours of black fruits and pepper, but this wine will also age very well up to 15 years softening even more and developing secondary characters of cedar and rich fruit cake flavours.

This is a delightful wine with clarity of fruit flavour, elegant style and a wonderful balance of fresh, ripe fruit and a hint of cassis. A beautifully crafted wine with a long palate. Great with a fillet of aged angus beef.

Comparison No. 4 - Lagrein

Kangaroo Hills Bendigo, 2015 Lagrein

Kangaroo Hills Organic Farm is a small mixed organic farm at Blampied near Daylesford in Victoria. The property lies at the foot of Kangaroo Hills and is a fourth generation family farm. It is managed using sustainable farming practices and has been certified organic since 1989. The grapes used to produce our wines are hand picked from our one hectare vineyard planted in 2005. The farm is operated by Marg and Greg May with assistance at busy times from our son Tristan, his wife Meg, our daughter Andrea, her husband Drew and hopefully in future years our grandchildren Archie, Ruby and Wilbur. We are also fortunate to have a number of good friends who help us pick our grapes regardless of the weather conditions. The vineyard is planted to three different grape varieties namely pinot gris, tempranillo and lagrein.

Lagrein is an alternative red grape variety which hails from the cool climate Alto Adige region of northern Italy. Our lagrein is a medium bodied red wine and is a beautiful dark purple colour. It has aromas of raspberries, plums and cinnamon and is a great wine for a winter night's dinner table.

Hofer Family Langhorne Creek, SA – Lagrein 2016

Silver Medal - Australian Small Winemakers Show

5 Star - Wine Showcase Magazine

This edition is ripe with deep dark colour and flavour to match, deep plums and dark fruit.

Textured oak from barrels adding complexity. Soft smooth tannins. Great with lamb meals or a steak.