

ASI MAGAZINE

MAY 2022
ISSUE #2



SOMMELIERS INSPIRING CHANGE: Natural, Orange & Vegan Wines



**RAJAT PARR, MICHELLE BOUFFARD
& BILLY WAGNER:**
Sustainability & Sommellerie

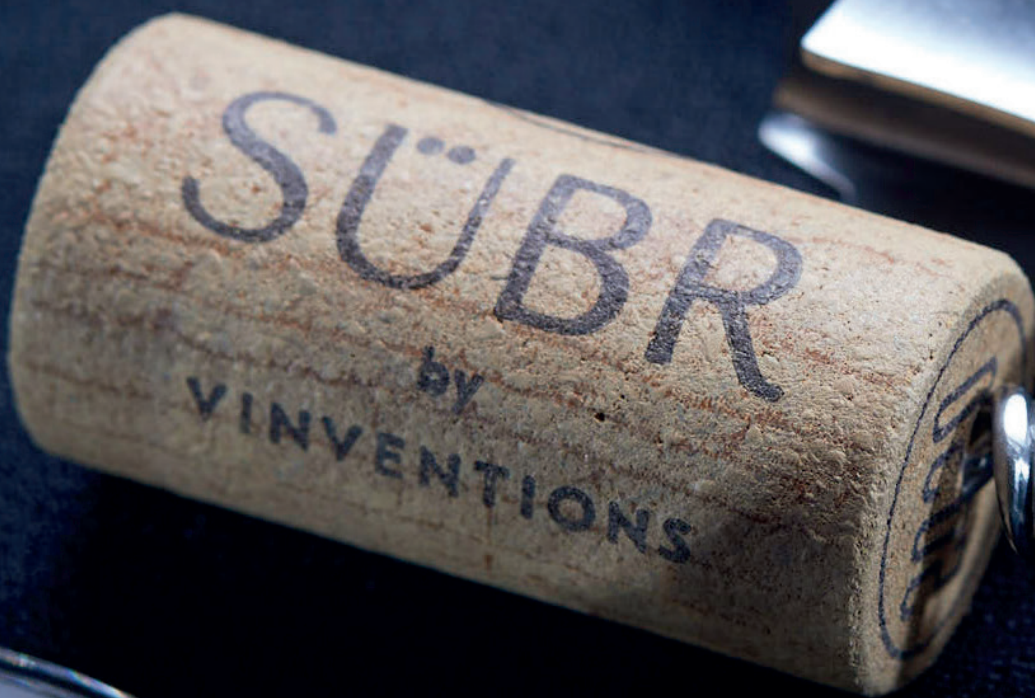
**SÖREN POLONIUS
& TIM VOLLERSLEV:**
ASI Guidelines: bible of sommellerie





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Welcome!



Sommeliers Inspiring Change

There is no denying it. Our world has forever been changed by the impacts of self-induced climate change. Our collective quest, through the industrial age, to govern nature has failed in epic proportions. We can no longer try and be the controllers of our environment but must respect and nurture it for the survival of our industry and our very being. As consumers around the world change their habits, and lifestyles, as they become more sensitive to their own personal impact on nature, the wine industry is evolving, embracing more sustainable methods in their vineyards and in their wineries. What is the role of the sommelier? In this edition of ASI Magazine, our guest editors Rajat Parr, Michelle Bouffard (Tasting Climate Change), along with restaurateur Billy Wagner and sommelier Alexander Seiser share their opinions on the next step forwards.

As we've become more sensitive to our climate, there has also been a growing global awareness of the provenance of our food and drink, and a collateral rise in consumers buying local, sustainable, and increasingly plant-based food and drink. The 'natural' wine movement, orange wines and vegan-friendly wines have all become increasingly important to our customers, who are seeking out authenticity. As such, they are becoming increasingly conscious of how their wine selections are made and what has been used to make them.

The natural movement is at the center of this. It has been both embraced by our global sommelier community, and at times taken to task, as the very unregulated, undefinable elements of natural open cracks in the door for some producers to use it as marketing term and not its intended purpose. The leaders of the movement are some of our most influential sommeliers.


We asked Pascaline Lepeltier MOF (Meilleur Ouvrier de France), Piotr Pietras, Alvin Gho and Chris Groenwald, along with other notable sommeliers from around the globe not only why they are leading this movement in their countries, but how sommeliers can be part of it. And in doing so how to ensure the wines they list deliver on the principles of natural wine. In this edition, you'll be able to be able to read about orange wines, pairing vegan food and vegan wines and much more thanks to an amazing list of contributors.

Closer to home, ASI continues to build on its promise of delivering tools that will help sommeliers around the world become better, and more recognized for their accomplishments. One of the highlights of my term so far was the launch of the ASI Guidelines. In this edition we asked Tim Volderslev and Sören Polonius to share their insights on how the grids came together and their meaning for our profession. Finally, with the imminent launch of the ASI Tutorials, a visual demonstration of the Guidelines, we asked Marc Almert (2019 ASI Best Sommelier of the World) to discuss their importance as a training tool for educators around the globe.

I encourage you to take the time to read the publication, share it with your colleagues and contemporaries, and think about how you can be part of changing the landscape of sommellerie. Individuals may inspire change; communities make it happen!

Cheers

William Wouters, ASI President



The extension and renovation of Château de Beaucastel began a few months ago

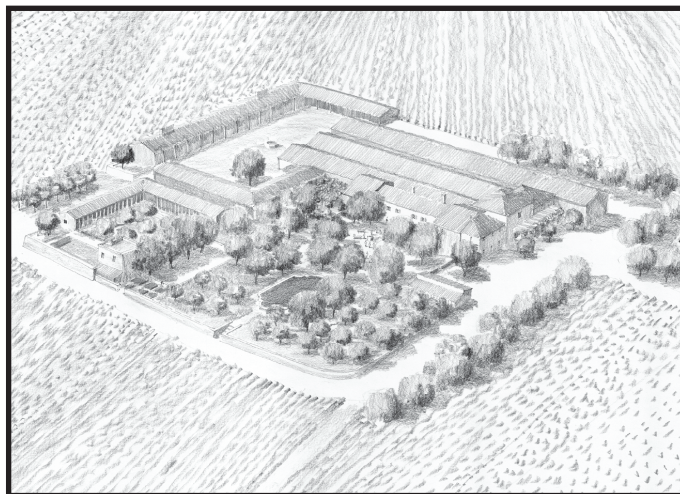
With this great project, Famille Perrin wants to reconfigure Château de Beaucastel for the next century with an avant-garde architectural and environmental project respecting its “terroir” and its history. The major challenge was to integrate an innovative wine cellar into this natural environment whilst barely disturbing anything.

The architects Studio Mumbai were chosen among several inventive projects for their profoundly ecological design. They also stood out for their both vernacular and contemporary architectural vision with an approach that is innovative and forward looking, but with construction processes that are inspired by ancestral know-hows.

Although the principal estate buildings will be conserved, new cellars will be excavated as part of the project, which was designed as a continuation. The excavated earth will be used in the construction of the new buildings. Underground sections of the extension will be constructed in site concrete made from a mix of lime, local aggregates and sand, whilst the surface building will be made in pisé (compacted earth) using clay also from the site.

This project, not only for the materials and the techniques used, but also for its system of air-conditioning and rainwater recuperation, could be qualified as “frugal” architecture covering 4 major aspects: limit recourse to air-conditioning, limit water consumption, use natural ventilation and choose natural source of energy.

By proposing traditional methods whose source of innovation is rooted in ever greater respect for nature, this architectural approach embraces the fundamental values of Famille Perrin: respect and nurture the terroir.



FAMILLE PERRIN

Natural, Orange & Vegan

In this edition of ASI Magazine, we are focusing on natural, orange and vegan wines. We asked four prominent personalities, all of whom have a deep commitment to environmental sustainability to give their insights on these styles of wine and how they apply to their working life. Michelle Bouffard interviews Rajat Parr, Billy Wagner and Alexander Seiser.

Montréal-based **Michelle Bouffard**, is the founder of Tasting Climate Change, a Master of Wine candidate, journalist, speaker, educator, former president and founder of the British Columbia chapter of the Canadian Association of Professional Sommeliers and co-author of the recently published, *Quel vin pour demain? Le vin face aux défis climatiques*.

Calcutta, India born **Rajat Parr**, rose to prominence as a sommelier in the mid and late 1990s working at Fifth Floor in San Francisco, and subsequently as Wine Director of the Mina Group of restaurants. Later he parlayed his deep knowledge of California wines by launching his own label, Sandhi Wines, focused on the production of elegant, well-balanced wines. These days, you will often find Rajat on his farm and working in his vineyards in Cambria, San Luis Obispo County, California.

Billy Wagner (owner) and sommelier **Alexander Seiser** (sommelier) lead the front of house, of the often-political minded, Michelin-starred, and Number 45 on San Pellegrino's list of The World's Best 50 Restaurants, Nobelhart & Schmutzig in Berlin, Germany. The restaurant is known for its alternative attitude and deep commitment to local agriculture.

A Conversation With ...

Natural, Orange and Vegan

Photo: Kate Hliznitsova / Unsplash.com



Michelle Bouffard Photo: Contributed

Michelle Bouffard (MB): In this edition of ASI Magazine, a quote from Isabelle Legeron MW describing natural wines as being like where a stone is dropped in the center of a pond is the guiding statement for a discussion on the subject. Legeron's quote suggests as you get closer to the edge of pond where the ripples creating by the stone have faded, you have conventional wine. Rajat, when you are making wines, what is guiding your approach? Is it a desire to be in the center of the pond, so to speak, or are other factors weighing into your calculus.

Rajat Parr (RP): Great question! This used to be an easy answer when all wine was made this way. Looking back in history, wine has always been part of the dining experience. We can say it is an alcoholic beverage, but it really it is food. Therefore, it is meant to be natural. When wine became commercial, people started to make it to sell and make money off it, but this wasn't the original idea of wine. Wine was like anything else. It was a product to be shared and exchanged using a barter system. When then that changed, and people started making wine in mass quantities, people start adding some garbage to it. The natural wine movement is basically a revolution against that commercial style of wine that is made with everything added to it. When we produce wine, the whole idea is to make a wine from the place respecting its region and varietal, and we make it as true as possible without manipulating it in any way.

That said, it is fallacy when people say there was no human intervention in their wine. We grow it. As a vigneron you are trellising vines, thinning shoots, pruning etc. And a human is also involved in making the wine. Grapes are put into the destemmer, then the tank. It's all done by someone. When people say I don't touch the wine, I say 'that's crazy' because you have to touch the wine. You have to pick the grapes. That's not



Rajat Parr Photo: Contributed

magic. Grapes don't fly off the vine and end up in a vat. What you really have to do is not change the direction of the wine, and let it go the way it wants. If it wants to ferment for one year or one day that's fine. Let it be.

MB: How do you incorporate 'natural' and environmental conservation into your beverage program?

Billy Wagner & Alexander Seiser (BWAS):

Our restaurant from the beginning has been agriculturally focused. We don't focus on the customer in the same way most restaurants do. We focus on the farmer who provides us the produce that we are using in the restaurant. We focus on finding a good product and then creating a dish around it. On the drinks side, our beverage menu is also agriculturally focused. This means our beverage pairings are not just wine pairings. We pair using beverages made from grain, grapes and other fruits, such as apples, pear, quince, rhubarb and cherries. For example, we have a great sweet sparkling cherry wine from Styria. We also focus on having a good selection of ciders and beers. In the end we focus on the produce of good winemakers, brewers' etcetera who work authentically.

It is important to mention that as sommeliers in the restaurant we also act as ambassadors between the winemaker and the guest. Natural wines are not always the same bitter, undrinkable, not fruity, tannin suppliers. Natural wines are the expression of pure origin and taste without compromise. Many guests are afraid to be served a natural wine that does not meet their expectations or even enjoy it. For us it is important to sensitize the guests and to give them the possibility to feel safe, comfortable, and understood when enjoying a natural wine. Because without us as a mouthpiece between origin and glass, this dialogue is not possible. When it comes to selecting wines,



Billy Wagner Photo: Yim Nimrod



Alexander Seiser Photo: Caroline Prange

we look for this elegance, a certain laid-back nature, that is neither offensive nor loud. Even if there is a certain 'funk', there must be elegance.

MB: What about environmental stewardship? How does this play a role in your decision making?

BWAS: The only beverages we purchase are from farms, and wineries that way we can drive to by. We are not buying wine from the US, for example. That said, when I am in the US, I drink US wines. If I am in Peru, I drink reds from Peru and maybe Chile. Since we are based in Berlin, some 6 to 7 hours drive from classic Germany wine regions like the Mosel, we focus on food, wines and beer made closer to home. We believe beer, cider, wine made from different fruits can also be a valuable part of the dining experience.

MB: With the rise of natural, we've also seen the rise of Brett, VA, and other "imperfections" that some see as fault, while others are more willing to embrace them to a certain extent, even going so far as to suggest that at the right amounts they add complexity and interest.

RP: I started my career in the mid-90s as a sommelier. At that point, even what we would call now natural wine was simply known as wine. I drank and served a lot of wines such as LaPierre from Beaujolais, which at that time you could buy as much as you want. So now my acceptance level of Brett, VA is relatively high. If you make wine without additives, a little Brett and VA, are par for the course. That said, I think there's a lot of people cutting corners. If you have a one or two vintages with some problems it's okay, if every wine is full of Brett, for example, that's different.

MB: Another interesting article in this edition is the rise of orange/skin-contact wines. It's a style

dominated by small-scale producers, many of which are natural winemakers. Do you appreciate this style?

RP: First, let's remember this isn't a new style. Looking back in history, when wine was first made, there were no destemmers or others way of separating anything. When you made wine, whether it was from white grapes, or red grapes, they were all made the same way. The skin contact wines of Georgia are a great example. They are just white wines that were never pressed off. This idea of skin contact isn't a modern one. I think this old way of making white wine is delicious because when you do some skin contact, you get so much fleshiness and texture.

From a pairing perspective, I have an Indian restaurant in Santa Barbara, and we only serve natural wine. We have this classic Indian chickpea dish that would be nice with an orange wine that's not too high in alcohol. I'd suggest Matthieu Deiss Pinot Gris and Riesling. Skin contact wines provide a flavour that do you have to educate people about, but if you have the right dish with, I think it's a great complement.

BWAS: We are not the classic Michelin restaurant with their fight over which protein is featured in the first, second, third, fourth courses etc. We are completely different. As such, we have a lot of vegetables on our menu, each with a completely different range of flavours and aromas, so we need a completely different range of different styles of wine, including skin contact wines.

In terms of specifics of pairing different dishes, we meet with our head chef and then we just talk together, taste some samples and try to work it out together based on the dishes what we are serving in the restaurant. Unconventionally, we're not looking for harmony on the plate and then on the palate. We are looking more for a contrast.



86 Candidates

20 Citizenships

62 **NEW ASI SOMMELIERS IN 2022**

27 Gold

25 Silver

10 Bronze



Photo: Contributed

THE BIBLE OF SOMMELLERIE: The ASI Guidelines

When the Association de la Sommellerie (ASI) launched the ASI Guidelines last year it represented a major step forward towards a global standard, figurative bible of sommellerie. The effort, described by ASI President William Wouters as ‘herculean’ required the input and collaboration of ASI’s Education, Exam and Competition Committees. According to ASI Liaison Officer Tim Vollerslev “these committees are made up of many of the most skilled sommeliers and wine experts in the world, all of whom work on a voluntary basis for ASI. The committee leads and their members do incredible work as volunteers within their respective committees. That said, the new ASI Board has a mandate to work more collaboratively, transparently, and cooperatively, with the goal of using the world’s best sommelier incredible knowledge, to build documents to educate all their ASI colleagues around the world. For this project, and other projects, it’s increasingly becoming important that we all pull in the same direction. Both the 2021 ASI Sommelier Guidelines and ASI Jury Guidelines are both great examples of what the committees can achieve, when they are working together.”

ASI interviewed Tim and Sören Polonius, ASI Education Committee Director, about the ASI Guidelines and what they mean now and in the future.

Association de la Sommellerie Internationale (ASI):

Let’s begin with the obvious question. Why were the ASI guidelines important to create?



Sören Polonius (SP): It was important to create the document for numerous reasons. Our world is under constant change, and we need to change and evolve along with it, in order not to be left behind.

As for the competition part, we felt it was unfair that a few competing nations had the advantage of “cracking the code” of competitions, having specialized trainers pushing them forward; my home country of Sweden being one of those nations. This is a tool that ensures no one has an advantage over anyone else. Bearing in mind that a competition that is dominated by a couple of nations would be very boring, and in the end die out by itself, if the result is the same every time.

For the examination part, it is a valuable tool used in the preparation, making everything so much more transparent, and for those taking the exam eliminating the “scary” part of not knowing what’s expected from them. If you’re “upping your game” as a professional, this is a very useful tool.

ASI: What were some of the logistical challenges of making this document?



Tim Volderslev (TV): Besides the challenges of coordinating three committees, representing a worldwide network of sommeliers and wine experts, we had the practical challenges of merging many ideas into a singular document. This meant double and triple checking the information, and translating everything into three languages (English, French, and Spanish). Not just anyone can translate these documents. We needed to have not only translators, but translators with a high level of wine knowledge so the language made sense for the trade and sommeliers that will be ultimately using them. Finally, this all must be designed, laid out into a document, and finally protected via global copyright.

ASI: When you have so many people involved in a project it typically requires the successful navigation of potential conflicts. How did you achieve this?

SP: As you can imagine, throwing a lot of personalities with strong minds into the same pot, and then stirring it around, you have both a lot of knowledge, but also the potential for some friction. However, if worked in a proper manner, this can act as a catalyst, helping the process move forward. We all had to understand that we didn't own the document. The document is not made for highlighting our own excellence, it's created to help others excel.

ASI: Are these guidelines intended to be static documents or do you envision adapting them over time?

SP: If this is to be a good and relevant tool in the future, it needs to evolve. A tool like this needs to change over time and adapt to the future. Tools and guidelines that are static and don't change for the better are very quickly becoming obsolete. As an example, my own private training material and methods are under constant change to stay ahead. If we stop moving ahead, the moss will start to grow very quickly.

ASI: How will use by using the guidelines in your work life?

SP: Since these guidelines are becoming a global ASI standard. I will be using them as a trainer, coach, and advisor. Of course, I will always twist things a bit in order to adjust the training and adapt it to the needs, depending on whom I'm training. We are all individuals with individual needs. However, the guidelines will always be the backbone of my job.

ASI: With the ASI Best Sommelier of the World Contest coming less than a year away, should competitors be using the ASI Guidelines as part of their preparation?

TV: In short, yes. The Guidelines are exactly as the name implies, a unique tool for sommelier training. The information contained in the Guidelines has all been approved by the same people who work on the ASI Education, Exam and Competitions committees. My personal recommendation is for all ASI member countries to organize their national competitions in the same style as mentioned in the ASI Sommelier Guidelines and utilize the ASI Jury Guidelines. This will be a great opportunity for them to train their candidates. However, candidates and member associations need to also remember that the specific questions, and tasks used in competition or for the ASI Diploma for example are created confidentially to ensure the fairness of the process. The Guidelines support the efforts of candidates, member associations and more broadly sommeliers around the globe, but they are not an answer key.

I also, sincerely believe these guidelines will not just help our contest candidates but be recognized as one of the best tools ever given to the global sommelier trade. I'm sure it will be of great assistance and an inspiration for new and experienced sommeliers alike. We can all learn all the time. As we know, this incredible world of sommellerie is constantly adapting and evolving. It was such a great pleasure and honour to support the development of this project with our three expert committees and the ASI Board.

If you would like a copy of the guidelines, ASI encourages you to reach out to the ASI member association in your country.

Our Team

Tim Volderslev and Sören Polonius: ASI Guidelines

INTERNATIONAL WINERIES GREAT FAMILIES WORLD UNITE



Photo: Contributed

Feature Article

International Wineries for Climate Action

With Earth Day (April 22) behind us, we can't leave thoughts of the earth, and climate change, behind us. The question now, for most winemakers around the world, is not if climate change exists but how can we slow down, neutralize, its effects? It's an unfortunate, but very real, situation Miguel A. Torres saw coming in the early 2000s. In 2008 the company launched their Torres & Earth program, set up to mitigate their company's impact on the environment by reducing their carbon footprint. With more than 15 million Euro, and 10 per cent of its annual profits channelled towards research and actions to reduce carbon emissions, Torres has put its money where its mouth is on the climate change battlefield.

In terms of their ongoing efforts Miguel A. Torres, 4th generation and President of Familia Torres says "we must decarbonize our worldwide economy in order to contain the global temperature increase at 1.5 degrees between 2030 and 2040, and this requires the involvement of everyone. We must reduce our emissions drastically and doing a "little" better is not enough. So please don't get used to climate change; together we can manage to put a stop to this madness which makes our earth almost uninhabitable at the end of this century."

The company placed high standards on itself to reduce carbon emissions by 34 per cent by 2019, a goal that have exceeded and are working to towards being a carbon 'Net Zero' winery by 2040.

Yet, for all the good work done by Torres, they know they can't fight this battle alone.

Along came the thought of a partnership to raise awareness, developing research programs and other tools in these efforts. According to Torres "the idea behind IWCA (International Wineries for Climate Action) was very ambitious from the beginning. To set up a high standard international association is something you want to do with the right partner. We met Jackson Family when my niece Cristina Torres was working as a trainee in their winery, and she transmitted us how aligned their sustainability efforts were with ours. For a long time, we had been seeking how to rise effective awareness about climate change and make a call for action. First in Spain where we didn't get much support, and then we thought it made sense to try it on a global scale. From the day we agreed to start this adventure, we've always had the biggest mutual support between Jackson (Jackson Family Wines) and us, and this allowed IWCA to be born, to be spread into 8 different countries and to grow in number (we've reached 30 wineries recently and expect to be 50 by the end of the year)."

On their desire to work with Familia Torres, Katie Jackson, second-generation proprietor and Senior Vice-President of Corporate Social Responsibility at Jackson Family Wines, says "our family has always valued partnerships and collaboration that can

FOR CLIMATE ACTION: OF THE WINE

improve the environment, our communities, and the greater global wine industry. We are especially proud of our efforts to bring the global wine community together through co-founding IWCA with Familia Torres of Spain in 2019.” Jackson elaborates “the mission and goal of IWCA from the very start has been to galvanize the global wine industry and take collective action to decarbonize, and for all our members to commit to be net zero by 2050 across Scopes 1 to 3, ensuring constant reductions to meet intermediate targets by 2030....In addition, IWCA released a Greenhouse Gas Emissions Calculator to help wineries measure their carbon footprint and create a standardized approach.”

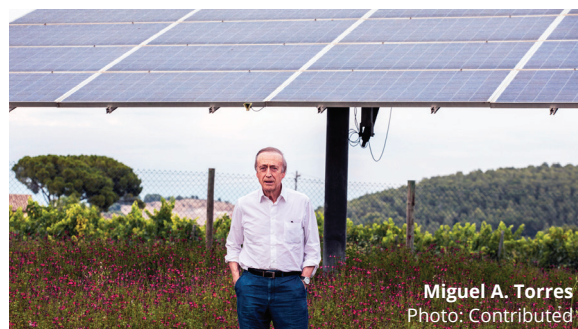
Torres concurs, elaborating “the association as an entity and the member wineries work collaboratively to push forward new ideas, initiatives, share best practices and make their voices sound louder in order to effectively achieve a reduction on the greenhouse gas emissions of the wine industry. IWCA was thought as a space for large, medium and small wineries, and as a facilitator to streamline the greenhouse gas emissions accountability for the entire sector. The latter, always keeping a science-based approach, this is why we have the ISO14064 (international standard on greenhouse gas inventories verification) as the main membership requirement and we do not accept carbon emission’s external offsets.”

Upon entrance to IWCA the wineries also gain the right to bear an official IWCA certificate on their packaging, allowing for consumers to recognize these companies’ commitment to the environment. To assess the greenhouse emissions levels of its members, IWCA has partnered with LRQA (formerly known as Lloyd’s Register), to audit and validate each wineries carbon footprint.

Although the creation of the ICWA is a solid foundation, Torres reminds “we are still in a phase in which we need to grow more so that this effort really has an impact worldwide, but I believe we’ll achieve this point. In the meantime, we are already setting a collaborative environment inside and outside IWCA. In our website, any winery can download our first soil health report, or even the IWCA greenhouse gas calculator which is a free tool developed by IWCA and is now available for the US,

Australia and New Zealand (and expecting to have a Spanish version very soon).”

One very clear point Torres and Jackson agree on is the need for more active participants in the fight against climate change. Torres says “undoubtedly, the more IWCA will grow the more we’ll be able to support non-IWCA wineries, since the ultimate purpose of IWCA is not reducing IWCA member’s emissions but to decarbonise the entire sector, and to so we need all wineries to have a part in this challenge. We need to make wine a symbol of climate action and become an example for other economic sectors.”

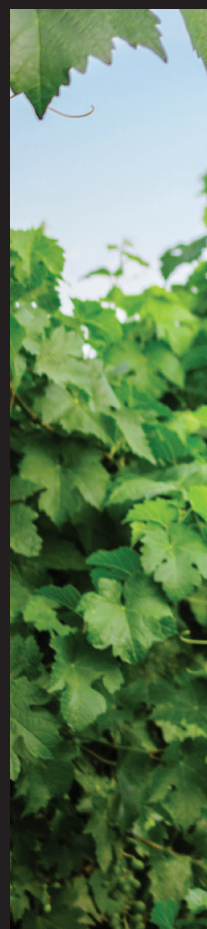


It’s not just wineries as Jackson concludes “we hope our trade partners, key wine buyers, sommeliers and others will join us in these efforts by supporting those wineries who are making a difference and leading through action.”

Member wineries are: Alma Carraovejas (Spain), Cullen Wines (Australia), Bodega Emina Ribera (Spain), Château Troplong Mondot (France), Familia Torres (Spain), Herència Altés (Spain), Jackson Family Wines (USA), Miguel A. Torres Chile (Chile), Silver Oak & Twomey Cellars (USA), Spottswode Estate Vineyard & Winery (USA), Symington Family Estates (Portugal), VSPT Wine Group (Chile), Yealands Estate Wines (New Zealand).

Applicant members are: A to Z Wineworks (USA), Cakebread Cellars (USA), Champagne Lanson (France), Constellation Brands Fine Wine Portfolio (USA), Crimson Wine Group (USA), Famille Perrin (France), Gloria Ferrer (USA), Hunt Country Vineyards (USA), Medlock Ames (USA), Ridge Vineyards (USA), Sula Vineyards (India), Viña Undurraga (Chile), Voyager Estate (Australia), Yalumba Family Winemakers (Australia).

N



Au Naturel: sommeliers bare all about natural wines



The natural wine movement is complicated, nuanced, thought provoking, and at times confounding, not dissimilar to the wines themselves. The style is wild, uncontrollable, free from the confines of a legislative vessel, with new interpretations and ideas always fermenting. Yet with freedom can come deception as the lack of authoritarian definition opens the doors to unscrupulous vintners willing to use the term for marketing purposes while not embracing the same demands those that embrace the style adhere to. ASI asked four notable leading sommeliers of the natural wine movement to give their definition of 'natural' and speak to their experience with the wines.

Meet Our Featured Sommeliers



PASCALINE LEPELTIER,

France, USA

Growing up in the Loire Valley and detouring from a career as a philosophy teacher, Pascaline Lepeltier is a sommelier based in Manhattan, NY. After working in Michelin-star restaurants in France, she moved to New York City to open and run the Michelin-star Rouge Tomate beverage program for 10 years. Her wine list was quickly recognized and in 2017 was named "Best Wine List in World" by The World of Fine Wine. In 2018 she joined as a partner Racines NY, one of the top wine destinations of NYC. She is currently working on the opening of a new wine restaurant on 94 Chambers in Manhattan with wine guru David Lillie. She passed the Master Sommelier in 2014 and became the first woman to win the Best French Sommelier competition in 2018 in its modern form. This year she also became a MOF, "Un des Meilleurs Ouvriers de France" in sommellerie. Recently she passed the ASI Diploma certification. She teaches with the Wine Scholar Guild and is a regular guest speaker for international congresses and seminars. Pascaline writes a monthly tribune for the most important French wine publication, La Revue du Vin de France, and is preparing her first solo book, to be published in 2022. She makes a little bit of natural wines from organic historical hybrids with her partner Nathan Kendall in the Finger Lakes, NY, under the label chëpika.



PIOTR PIETRAS,

ASI Gold Diploma, Poland

Piotr Pietras is a Warsaw-based ASI Gold Diploma recipient and Master Sommelier, restaurant co-owner (kontakt wino & bistro) and founder of Terroirysci, wine import focusing on organic and natural wines. Before returning to Poland in 2019, Piotr worked as a sommelier for renowned chefs such as Gordon Ramsay (Maze), Richard Corrigan (Corrigan's Mayfair) and Tim Allen (Launceston Place). He was also a director of wine at Michelin-starred HIDE where he managed UK's largest wine list and a team of 18 sommeliers. Piotr has also successfully competed internationally including runnerup at ASI Best Sommelier of Europe 2017 and Chaîne des Rôtisseurs World's Best Young Sommelier 2017.



CHRIS GROENWALD,

South Africa

Chris Groenwald is a self-proclaimed wine geek. He studied theology at Stellenbosch University and then fell in love with wine to such an extent that he completed his WSET Level 3 while finishing up a master's degree in theology. After graduation he immediately made the transition into the wine industry and was fortunate to work for an import company, Great Domaines, as his first job in the industry. Here Chris was exposed to an incredible amount of international wine. At this time, he also started his WSET Diploma studies. After working for Great Domaines Chris opened and managed Publik Wine Bar for owner David Cope, worked for Mullineux and Leeu Family Wines, and opened and managed Culture Wine Bar for owner Matt Manning. In 2020 he started his own import company (Pounding Grape Imported Wines) focussing on naturally made organic and biodynamically farmed wines.



ALVIN GHO,

Singapore

Co-founder and one half of RVLT, Alvin is arguably one of Singapore's most highly awarded sommeliers. He represented Singapore in the 2013 ASI Best Sommelier of the World in Japan and has competed in the ASI Best Sommelier of Asia & Oceania contests (South Korea, 2012 and Hong Kong, 2015). He was the Champion of South-East Asia Best Sommelier in 2017 and was then selected yet again for the ASI Best Sommelier of Asia & Oceania content held in Japan in 2018. To him, the accolades and certifications record his journey and passion in wines, while serving as a reminder that his journey in wine is one that must continue to grow and progress. His time working at renowned establishments such as Raffles Hotel Singapore, Daniel Boulud's db Bistro & Oyster Bar at Marina Bay Sands Singapore, American Club Singapore and Jean-Georges Vongerichten's JG Shanghai opened his eyes and palate to top classic wines of best terroirs, top vintages and rare collections, and it was this experience that brought him to discover real, living wines made by vigneron and farmers. Alvin is also the Singapore ambassador of Star Wine List.

Association de la Sommellerie Internationale (ASI): Let's start with perhaps the hardest question. What is your definition of natural wine?

Pascaline Lepeltier (PL): Ahh. This is a complicated and a very easy question at the same time! Complicated if one starts to argue that natural wine can't exist, because per se wine is cultural and artificial, and would not be without man intervention. Which is true, but implies that we see humanity, its knowledge, its craft, its power, etc. as something superior and detached, above nature. We are touching here on an anthropological question, asking to move away from our self-centered, very occidental point of view. This is a very specific vision of the world, and a lot of anthropologists including the extraordinary Philippe Descola in France, have shown it is only one vision of the world amongst others. There is no such a thing in reality like a disconnection, a fundamental gap (they call it the "Grand Partage" in French), between us and nature around us, but an interwoven, constant intimacy. So the apparent paradox of 'natural wine' is just a false issue, ("un faux problème"), as soon as you understand there is no such a thing between a separation between what we are doing, and following what nature rules.

So natural wine becomes this idea that the vigneronnes are following natural dynamics and synergies and are making wines just with the raw materials of the grape must and the spontaneous fermentation, as it is more than enough to make a stable wine. It is a new (or another, more original ie from the origins) relationship to nature. The wine can be made with "nothing added, nothing taken away" to quote Alice Feiring.

A lot of the heated debates are pointless ... nature versus culture, sulfur, etcetera ... because they are missing the point behind it all. What vision of the world do we have? Which relationship to what is not human, the non-human (living organism, environment, the earth, etc.)? Just a domination relationship (we can use what surrounds us as we wish, without caring for the well-being, their preservation, etc.) or do we have to learn to live with all of them, in a win-win, symbiotic relationship? That's the real stake, as it will lead to rethinking about the relationship between human communities with more fair labour practices, sharing the wealth etcetera.

Piotr Pietras (PP): Wine made from organic/ biodynamic vineyards which is spontaneously fermented, unfiltered, unfinned, with no or little SO₂ added; wine, which is expressive, full of life, the one that doesn't pretend to be perfect or 'better' than others. Made by conscious and skillful people (who — in fact — have lots of work to do contrary to the misleading term "low/no-intervention wine"). When it comes to naming: "real wine" resonates with me much more than "natural".

Chris Groenwald (CG): Natural wine first and foremost starts in the vineyard. If you are not farming organically or biodynamically, you are not producing natural wine. Moving from the vineyard towards the cellar the same philosophy should be applied. Fermentations need to take place with indigenous yeast, no additions are to be made (excepts for a minimal amount of sulphur in my opinion), and of course no fining or (intense) filtration. In reality, things are more complex than this though. If you practice organic farming you are allowed to spray quite large amounts of sulphur and copper in your vineyards. Is this not intervention itself?

Alvin Gho (AG): Personally, I think that there's no such thing as a natural wine per se. I think "natural wine" is all just a concept and philosophy which is rather fluid. My usual conversations with people curious about this term or category of wine is to steer them towards minimal human intervention or more nature and less human. Just like how it used to be before the green revolution. The usual explanation that I'd give with regards to the often-used definition of natural wines needing to be at least organic viticulture, but what if a farmer is illiterate or producing too little to have themselves certified but have been farming in the organic way. So would we define him as organic farming or not?



Photo: Zachary Brown/Unsplash.com

“Natural wine is a continuum, like ripples on a pond. At the epicentre of these ripples, are growers who produce wines absolutely naturally — nothing added and nothing removed. As you move away from this centre, the additions and manipulations begin, making the wine less and less natural, the further out you go. Eventually, the ripples disappear entirely, blending into the waters of the rest of the pond. At this point the term ‘natural wine’ no longer applies. You have moved into the realm of the conventional.”

Isabelle Legeron MW



ASI: If we use Isabelle's analogy of natural wine being like ripples in the pond, is there a point at which you won't list a wine because the ripple has moved to close to the edge?
Can you define where that is or is it fallacy to even attempt?

PL: Natural wine indeed, because of its success, has become a marketing expression used by a number of industrial wineries, surfing also on the lack of international regulations, but in the end if the farming should be driven by these points.

● Respect for the Environment

A natural winemaker should preserve and enhance the biodiversity of their environment, with no use of synthetic products and working with regeneration in mind with the use of organic, biodynamic, permaculture practices.

● Consideration of Human Factors

There should be respect for work conditions, providing staff appropriate salaries, ensuring there is no exposure to toxic products, and they are supporting employee's growth in the business.

● Transparency in the Winery

There should be little to no sulfur, of course, but also no other tricks like added yeast and bacteria or using technical agents such as lysozyme or other anti-bacterial agents, for example, as a lot of oenological tools are used without being disclosed.

● Consideration of the Vineyard

A vineyard should not be treated like a tool of production but a shared environment with the natural population in order to make it thrive. What is taken is compensated by something given back. For example, the crop is compensated by the ability for the vine to regenerate through compost, no till, etc.

● New Business Viewpoints

There should probably be a perspective on alternative ways to achieve capitalist growth. Wine is made thanks to nature's resources, which is a shared patrimony and heritage. How can we think about alternative economical ways regarding this crop? It is an invitation to think about moderation, and a production limited by what nature can offer, not asking for from nature than it can give in order to reach artificial numbers, profit and loss goals, anticipated revenues, etc. An endless, and unrealistic, eternal financial growth model is detrimental to everything.



Photo: Dan Cristian Padure/Unsplash.com

Feature Article

Au Naturel: sommeliers bare all about natural wines



Feature Article

Au Naturel: sommeliers bare all about natural wines

PP: I am really open to any wine or producer. I am not dogmatic. The devil is in the detail though. It really helps to get to know a person behind the label, their approach and philosophy, visit their vineyards and winery. There is lots of people who say one thing and do another behind closed doors. Yet, without the context, when I just taste a random wine and I am asked for an opinion, I prefer wines with purity, energy, low alcohol; the ones which are not 'showy' or tailor-made for competitions.

CG: In South Africa we unfortunately do not have many options when it comes to natural wines, seeing as there are so few farmers practicing organic or biodynamic farming. Personally, I try to stay as close as possible to what I believe in. If we take the RAW Wine Fair as an example, if memory serves the wines considered can have a total sulphur of up to 70 ppm (parts per million). How close to the edge is that number? For me I want the wines to be as natural as possible but still have the ability to travel around the world, and this is where a touch of sulphur ensures that journey can take place. Without that it would be difficult to introduce natural wines to the South African market.

AG: I would like to think that I am an advocate of great tasting wines. I think for most consumers and myself included, 'what's in the glass' is the most important ... At the end of the day it's more important to discover what we enjoy most on our palates. A sommelier once said to me "I don't like a wine just because it's natural. It just happened that all the wines I like are natural." The most important is to keep an open mind, to taste, and then decide what you like and do not like, and this includes conventional wines as well!

Personally, I know that many producers are producing "natural wines" with non-organic, purchased grapes. And to investigate every single producer could be an unrealistic thing to do so I'd prefer to list based on taste and trust.

ASI: When formulating your wine list(s), is a wine's 'natural-ness' an absolute requirement or will you list more "conventional" wines that you feel are still made responsibly but not necessarily adhering to all the principles of natural wines such as sulphur additions?

PL: Nothing is black and white. It is a scale of grey. What matters for us at the restaurant is the intention, and the work carried on by the producer in their specific regions. It is so complicated and challenging to work with nature, respecting it, and managing to produce a wine in a sustainable way. So there so many unknowns. Agriculture, in general, is an extremely difficult field, and viticulture specifically challenging. We want to showcase the work of these 'vigneron.nes' that chose to follow that path, and we just try to understand for each of them their challenges and help support them. Sulfur, for example, should not be the focal point. There are so much more important points at stake!

PP: In my wine bar (kontakt wino & bistro) I list around 400 different labels, the majority of which are "natural" by the general definition. However, I still offer wines from several producers that I know personally that are certified organic, but don't make "natural wines". I have a very diverse customer group and each of them will find something they love. Sometimes I get comments or even complaints I don't have big, bold, '100-pointers.'



Photo: Lucas George Wendt/Unsplash.com

CG: Unfortunately, we do not have a lot of farmers working organically or biodynamically here in South Africa. Land is expensive here, so the majority of smaller producers who want to work naturally do not own vineyards and are left to buy grapes from farmers. Fortunately, many farmers have started farming sustainably. In terms of winemaking, I keep things as naturally as possible. All of the producers that I would list are making their wines responsibly.

AG: Yes I would. The philosophy or essence of the place is what we (my partner Ian and I) believe in. But at the end of the day, we remain open to our guest's ideas. Their satisfaction is the most important thing.

ASI: The very non-interventionist, biological natural wines means that certain unknowns are possible. How do you explain natural wine to a customer that may be unfamiliar? Do you have to provide specific training for staff?

PL: These types of wines are for sure not “ready-to-drink” wines (like ready-to-wear), stabilized and controlled to a point they will taste the same everywhere on Earth for a specific amount of time, with a dictated profile of taste fitting for a specific market. They are not processed wines made by the food and wine industry.

So their ranges of expression are wider, and more complex because the chemistry allowed by less additives and stabilization lead to more oxidoreductive phenomena that are very, very complex, synergetic, phenomena that are extremely complex to understand even for a chemist. So we need to learn how to taste them, understand how have they evolved in the barrel, in the bottle, in the

glass. I am not a chemist, so I am also on my own learning path about all these points, as it was never really taught in all its complexity.

A very good book to learn from is Jamie Goode's *Flawless* where he describes a lot of what can be considered “flaws” for some people and are just a gradation of taste for others. It is the same thing as medication. When does it become poison? The answer might be when certain compounds become so strong that it affects the quality of the wine to a point you can't recognize the place, the grape, or the style.

For my guests and my staff, I really try to adapt to their level of knowledge to find the right words, and I also try to understand how much they have been exposed, tasted certain wines, certain aspects such as Brett (Brettanomyces), VA (volatile acidity), and other compounds. An Islay scotch drinker will have a better understanding of the aromatic spectrum of Brett as they are already familiar with some phenols such as cresols and guaiacol. A drinker of sour beer, for example, would also be similarly familiar with VA.

So, we always have a large spectrum of wines open. I pour some tastes to be able to compare and to talk about them with guests ... Everything is a question of balance though, and my goal is to serve wines in the best conditions to represent the work of the vigneron. We have A LOT to learn about how to properly serve these types of wines.

PP: The best comparison — a borrowed analogy, to be honest, from a wine writer — might be mass-produced, industrial apple juice, which is transparent, pasteurized, and without character versus fresh apple juice made by growers which is hazy, unfiltered, full of life, and sometimes really raw, and sour. I then ask the question, ‘which would you prefer?’ As for the staff training, we



Photo: Contributed

Feature Article

Au Naturel: sommeliers bare all about natural wines

try to focus on everything but technical: simple, referable aromas and flavours, short stories about the region, or the winemaker's background, anecdotes, and philosophy. The staff I train, as both a restaurant owner and a wine importer, don't need to know all the details about lees and barrel aging, clones, impact compounds, and the list goes on as this information is too much for their customers and doesn't bring anything valuable or entertaining to their table.

CG: To begin with, working naturally means you must work in an exceptionally clean cellar. This will already go a long way in ensuring you have healthy ferments and a healthy wine. In my opinion, making natural wine is not an excuse for making faulted wines. A certain amount of Brett can add interest to a wine; a small amount of VA can certainly lift a wine and make it seem alive. However, at the end of the day a faulted wine is a faulted wine. Would you eat a rotten tomato just because it was farmed organically? With regards to your staff, it is very important to train them on this side of natural wine, especially because the flavour profile can be so different (especially in a country with consumers not familiar with natural wines).

AG: We have four sommeliers on our team. Our work experiences were mostly classic and traditional places and so we fortunately have a lot of experience with classic, conventional wines. As such we have conversations about wine faults and share information instead of needing specific training, per se.

Much of our information comes from winemakers directly, and yes, we do have to spend time explaining VA, mouse, ropiness, reductive notes etc. to our guests. We often do so in a layman's terms unless it is thoroughly necessary to be

super technical, which we sometimes do as some of our regulars are super wine geeks who enrolled themselves in courses that I haven't even thought of trying, like Jamie Goode's wine fault course. Personally, I am still unable to detect Brett.

ASI: If you were speaking to a sommelier/bar or restaurant manager looking to be more proactive in their natural wine programs, what advice would you give them?

PL: First and foremost, you must give yourself the right equipment, especially temperature control storage. Then you need to build the program with the ability to wait for a wine — if it is in a phase that does not pay justice to the work, you must wait, and not serve it because you are pressured by the cash flow. As a result, you must be very serious with how you handle your inventory. You really pay attention to how the wine lives and behaves. More than other categories, natural wines are an invitation for patience, observation, and humility. Those are endless tasks!

PP: Open your mind, don't think only about your personal preferences, don't be dogmatic (zero/zero wines versus more traditional wines), taste often with your team, ask your customers for feedback, and speak to your sommelier peers from other restaurants.

CG: Do it for the right reasons. Don't climb on to the natural wine train because it is cool, or because you think it is what people want. If this is your reasons, then you are completely missing the point of the natural wine movement.

AG: I wouldn't usually give an advice unless asked. I would though ask them "why?"



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ORANGE is the NEW WHITE

?

Feature Article

Orange is the New White?



Let's start with the name. Is the orange wine moniker even appropriate for the style? The wines themselves come in a broad spectrum of colours, including amber, orange, copper, and salmon. Is that any different than the colour variance we find within whites, rosés or reds? In lieu, that skin-contact is an unattractive term for a style of wine and a clear departure from the evocative, visual nature of other styles named after colours, orange-wine has stuck with a new generation of sommeliers and consumers gravitating to the style.

While trendy, or perhaps better said 'trending,' there is nothing new about orange, amber or skin-contact wines; or whatever you prefer to call them. Regardless of the terminology, this style in its most basic form is white wine produced using methods, namely extended maceration, normally reserved for red wine production. It is a modern movement that just happens to be thousands of years in the making. Over the last 20 years, led by the likes of Italy's Josko Gravner and Saša Radikon, Slovenia's Alex Klinic and Valter Mlečnik, and many change resistant Georgian producers who never stopped making the wines, orange has become a small, but legitimate and recognized style. The rise of orange wine has been parallel if not akin to the recent rise of Provençale rosé. Where the latter has been embraced by behemoth and pint-sized wineries alike opening a wealth of opportunities for red wine producers to create lighter, fresher alternatives from their dark-skinned grapes, the orange wine movement to date largely remains small scale.



Feature Article

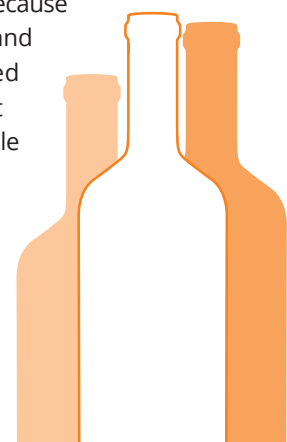
Orange is the New White?



Radikon Family Photo: Fabio Rinaldi

Perhaps one reason is who is making orange wines. While orange wines, by their nature, are process driven, and are not required to be natural in any way, it is true that most orange wines are made by natural winemakers. Is it these winemakers very drive to make wines that speak to nature, dare we say are more primitive and devoid of commercialization or reliant on modern inventions, that keeps orange within this subsection of the winemaking world? According to Saša Radikon “even in Slovenia and Friuli making orange wine is not as common as seems. It’s still a new style because the big cellars still decide the rules for the DOC and they don’t have interest in orange wines.” Of the commercial wineries that are making orange wines Radikon says “(having) large commercial wineries trying to make it (orange wine) is a good thing because to make it well requires having better grapes, and this means less chemicals in their vineyards, less chemicals in their wine. With better, healthier products on the shelves of the supermarkets, more and more people will appreciate natural, organic food and it’s always the final consumer that decides what to drink and eat.”

While many sommeliers have now embraced orange, in particular the natural versions, it hasn’t always been that way. As Radikon says “we started to make skin-contact wines in the nineties (the first vintage was 1995), at a time when the ‘best’ white wine for the market should be ‘paper white’, without lots of flavours and very light, usually made in stainless steel. They are wines without body, full of sulphites, trying to preserve themselves for a year or more. In this way, the latest vintage was always considered the best. After this period these kinds of wines can change from their “paper white” colour to a darker one, sometimes similar to the colour of a skin contact wine.” This made it difficult for producers like Radikon to sell their wines. As Radikon explains “so, (at first) when we started to propose these wines, the sommeliers thought they were faulty (also because it was not “the latest vintage”) and the colour sometimes freighted them so much that they didn’t even taste them. Then, the people who did taste them, discovered tannins on the palate, which was unbelievable for a white wine, at the time.”





The style has been lauded and criticized in much the same way that natural has. Orange wines open up new possibilities, but as with many new styles new entrants have at times been experimental. There are great orange wines, and bad ones. The worst, flawed by oxidation, oft resulting in aromatically vacant, sometimes volatile wines. The best open new aromatic sensations and delivering texture not within the white wine spectrum, as well as new possibilities for food and wine pairing. Radikon says “it’s the sommelier that should help the client in finding the appropriate wine for them, at the right price for them. A sommelier asking questions may seem trivial but it’s not. These questions allow the sommelier to understand the person. It’s psychology.”

Orange wines are also a lens on our winemaking past. Arguably, orange wine is not only an ancient style, but quite likely the first wines ever produced. The Georgian tradition of using qvevri, in which whole bunches of grapes are crushed and then left to naturally ferment in egg shaped clay pots (similar to amphorae) is a tradition with thousands of years of history. With the rise of orange wines, there has been a surge in demand for amphorae and qvevri by winemakers around the globe, but not all producers rely on clay as their fermentation vessel.

Feature Article

Orange is the New White?

Photo: Contributed



Tazo Tamazashvili Photo: Contributed

Tazo Tamazashvili, winner of the title of Best Sommelier of Georgia 2018 who acts as a manager and consultant to a number of fine dining restaurants in Georgia says of his country's long history of making this style of wine "it is a known fact that Georgia is a cradle of wine having 8,000 years of continuous winemaking culture and tradition. Throughout this period Georgian wines have been produced using these two main methods, techniques. There is the Eastern Georgian style, called Qvevri. To produce this style clay vessels known as qvevri are buried below the earth. Fermentation and further maturing of the wine happens using 100 per cent crushed grape skin (without stems) for a period of 6 months. In the Western Georgian style, called Churi, the same method is used but 30 per cent of crushed grape skins are used in the process. As a result of these different approaches Kakhetian (Eastern) Qvevri wines are fuller-bodied and have more aromatics while Imeretian (Western) Churi wines are lighter and fresher. For the centuries up to the date there were basically these two wines producing methods practiced in Georgia. For Georgians this is the tradition that is followed and to be continued in order to keep and retain that unique, Georgian characteristic of the wine."



Georgii (Gio) Chezha Photo: Contributed

Georgii (Gio) Chezha, a native of Georgia, who grew up making skin-contact wines with his father for their family's home consumption, first serious steps on his wine journey came with the completion of The International Master on Wine Tourism Innovation (WINTOUR) program, which included time spent in Porto. After spending a harvest working for famed Portuguese winemaker Luis Seabra, he began the project Portuguese Wine Revolution, explore the passion and philosophical approaches of Portugal's best winemakers. This led the next year to producing a Georgian-style wine with Luis Cerdeira (Soalheiro). To "From a single container, Georgii now has 24 tinajas (similar to amphora), all sourced from the legendary artisanal tinaja producer Juan Padilla, and as is working with producers in four regions of Portugal to make Georgian-style wine.





As Tamazashvili says even within Georgia, production methods differ. There is little homogenous about making this style of wine. Some producers macerate on both the skins and stems, while others feel like stems add a raw, unripe tone to the wines. Some have relatively short maceration times at warm temperatures, while others prefer extended macerations at lower temperatures, and everything in between. Even the symbol of orange wine, clay pots, are not embraced by all producers. Notably Radikon's preference is extended maceration in barrels as opposed to amphora or qvevri, and does not seek organic certification, although practicing it both in their vineyards and winery. However, their equally famous neighbour Gravner, on the other hand, uses qvevri that sit below the ground, and practices both organic and biodynamic viticulture.

Of the benefits of the style Chezha says "I believe the majority of white grapes can express themselves beautifully if made via maceration. The method can sometimes even help grapes from younger vines to express character that they might not otherwise be possible if made as a classic white wine. Maceration can also change the aromatic profile of particularly aromatic grapes, making their aromas more delicate and elegant."

For sommeliers, one of the most contentious questions is the ability of orange wine to express terroir. The very process of making orange wine, producing new flavour profiles, textures and a level of tannic astringency that is contrary to conventional, textbook definitions of varietal and regional styles. Yet, defenders argue that varietal expression, albeit different than traditional white wines, is perceptible and the terroir of place equally or more apparent in these wines.



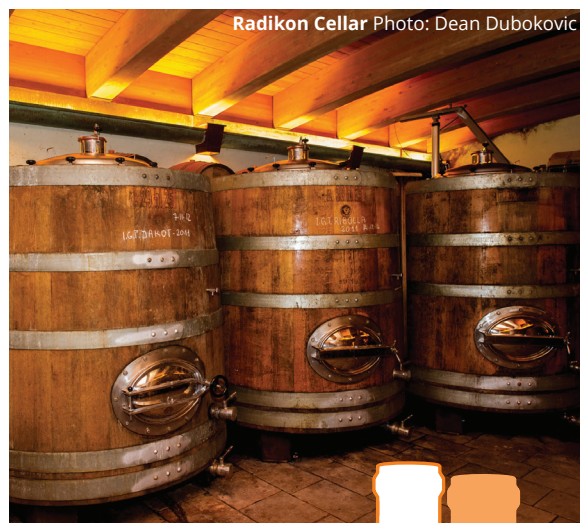
Qvevri Photo: Contributed



Radikon Punch Down Photo: Mauro Fermariello

In the context of Georgian wine Tamazashvili says "in traditional winemaking, classic practices are necessary for finding perfect terroir. In the case of Georgian wine, there is definable regional typicity depending on which part of Georgia the wine is made. This applies to winemaking techniques and maturation employed but also the grape varieties used."

The concept of terroir of orange wines has also intrigued Chezha who has experimented by making wines from the same plot using different vinification methods, namely using various amount of skins relative to juice. The result according to Chezha "I could, in the end, see different expressions of the same grape, and came to understand how the grape expresses itself in different conditions."



Radikon Cellar Photo: Dean Dubokovic



Photo: Contributed

When it comes to bringing orange wine to the table Radikon says “we love to pair our wines with pork, chicken, sushi, sashimi, in fact all East Asian cuisine, as well as winter vegetables, as when cooked, they usually have a stronger flavour that pairs with the fuller flavours of these wines. In reality though we drink them with all sorts of food, from the appetizer to dessert. It’s one of the great benefits of the style as their versatility allows them to last from the start to the finish of a meal.” A great advantage for a sommelier, especially when serving a small party.

Chezia concurs saying “orange wines are super gastronomic wines. Sometimes a really bold orange wine is not that easy to drink without food, in fact. A good pairing will bring some balance to the wine. Orange wine really hits it stride with curry and other spicy dishes, that are normally a challenge to pair. An orange wine with good acidity can make a really great pairing. But we have to be careful not to overgeneralize. A skin contact wine doesn’t have to be a full-bodied wine with a lot of tannins. Think of them the same way as red wines. Some are super light and elegant, some are big and extracted. Winemakers can draw out a range of different dimensions of the same varietal depending on the vinification methods they use. This for me, its the beauty of skins-contact wines. And with all the great winemakers starting to experiment with skin maceration over the last few years, we can be assured that wines made in this style will only get better.”

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Feature Article

Orange is the New White?



Photo: Mihaela Majerhold

Sommeliers, 4 Orange Wines



Feature Article

Orange is the New White?

We asked for four sommeliers to select four orange wines they think our readers should know about.

Feature Article



Anouck Fransolet Photo: Contributed

Anouck Fransolet,
Comptoir de L'Eau Vive,
Namur, Belgium

Wine: Domaine Danjou-Banessy Supernova
Vin de France

My favourite orange wine is Domaine Danjou-Banessy Supernova Vin de France as it was the first orange wine I have tried that truly reflects its grape varietal. It has a wonderful Muscat nose that is both beautifully aromatic and complex, full of orange peel, orange blossom and bergamot. If it wasn't a wine, it could easily be a perfume. On the palate it has a dense texture, tender chalky tannins, and fine acidity. I would gladly pair it with a tuna tataki topped with grilled peaches and herby mayonnaise.



Matias Prezioso Photo: Contributed

Matias Prezioso,
President, Argentina Sommelier
Association (Asociación Argentina
Sommeliers), Buenos Aires,
Argentina

Wine: 2019 Escala Humana Wines Liveera Malvasia

Germán Masera is tireless in his efforts of seeking out forgotten vineyards and unknown varietals. He belongs to a generation of young winemakers who have changed the course of Argentinean wine. He makes rich wines, but he has also great sensitivity, and this wine exemplifies his innovation and originality. It's an atypical Malvasia from Tupungato (the heart of the Uco Valley in Mendoza) made from old vines with whole bunches fermented in concrete. It has a flavour profile of fresh flowers, herbs and citrus fruit.

Orange is the New White?

Valentin Bufolin,

Vice President, Slovenian
Sommelier Association
(Sommelier Slovenije), Slovenia

Wine: 2016 Movia Lunar

This wine is totally out of this world! It's so unconventional it will shake your ground and rock your feet thoroughly. Kidding aside, it's made from 30-year-old Rebula (Ribolla Gialla) vines grown on south-west facing vineyards, set on a mix of marl and limestone soils, close to the village of Fojana. As with all of the wines from Movia, these vines are farmed using organic and biodynamic principles. After 8 months of maceration in barrels, the wine is bottled without filtration. It then is aged in bottle for a minimum of 24 months before release. As the wine is unfiltered, it should be decanted, and depending on your decantation could be anywhere from clear to hazy in your glass. As for the aromas, expect ripe apricot, peach, baked apples, yellow plum, grapes, berries soaked in alcohol, mango and diced pineapple, followed by candied orange, dried chamomile, black tea, lemongrass, nettle and thyme. If that is not enough, after swirling it in the glass there are notes of white pepper, toffee, caramel, dried leaves, and finally, a flinty note. On the palate it is full-bodied, youthful, soft, yet also fresh, with a mineral-like salinity and pleasant but perceptible tannins derived from the vinification process. The finish is long and persistent.



Valentin Bufolin Photo: Contributed

Tazo Tamazashvili,

Best Sommelier of Georgia (2018)

Wine: 2014 Elia Khetsuriani Manavi Kakheti

This is a pale amber hued wine, produced from the Kakhuri Mtsvane varietal, by Shalva Khetsuriani (President of the Georgian Sommelier Association), and is from the Manavi appellation in the region of Kakheti. The nose is complex with distinct aromas of quince, pear, orange blossom, sweet tobacco, dried leaves, hay, bay leaves (laurel). On the palate it is full-bodied and boasts fresh acidity and silky tannins creating a complex palate. The long finish of the wine brings out all those flavours on the palate.



Tazo Tamazashvili Photo: Contributed

Feature Article

Orange is the New White?



Feature Article

11 Countries, 11 Orange Wine Icons

While the roots of skin-contact, orange wines are in Georgia, Slovenia and Northern Italy, committed winemakers around the world have embraced the style.

Orange is the New White?



Australia: Ruggabellus 'Solumod,' Eden Valley



Austria: Bernard Ott Qvevre Grüner Veltliner, Wagram



France: Jean-Yves Péron Côtillon Des Dames Jacquère, Savoie



Germany: Ökologisches Weingut Schmitt Orpheus Weißburgunder, Rheinhessen



Italy: Josko Gravner Ribolla Gialla, Friuli



Slovenia: Mlečnik Rebula, Vepava Valley



South Africa: Testalonga El Bandito Cortez Chenin Blanc, Swartland



Spain: Escoda-Sanhahuj, Els Bassots, Catalonia



Georgia: Lago Chinuri, Mtskheta



Portugal: Aphros Phaunus Amphora Loureiro, Vinho Verde, Minho



United States: Donkey & Goat 2018 Ramato Filigreen Farm Pinot Gris

Make Me A Match

M

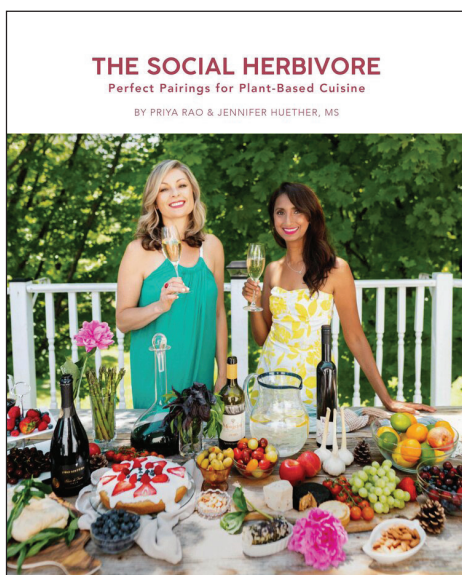
Herbivore Libations: plant-based food and wine pairings

MAKE ME A MATCH

Herbivore Libations:
Plant-based food and wine pairings



Make Me A Match



Jen Huether, MS @socialherbivore

We have all noticed the rise of plant-based cuisine and it's impressive to see chefs taking heed in our world's top restaurants. As a Master Sommelier, I personally started making the shift to a more plant-based diet about four years ago. Soon after, I realized that there was no book on vegan food and wine. I was able to solve that by bringing my own personal passion together with vegan hostess Priya Rao. We joined forces and created The Social Herbivore and our book 'Perfect Pairings for Plant-Based Cuisine' which was released in the fall of 2021. Here are a few of my top pro tips on creating matches made in heaven. It has also never been easier to find vegan-certified wines so if you want to delight the guests in your restaurant or your friends at your dinner table, go all out and find wines that qualify.

Herbivore Libations: plant-based food and wine pairings

5 TIPS FOR

Plant-based Food Pairings

1

Green On Green

Yes, this is colour matching at its best! We discovered so many colours and flavors of green in plant-based dishes. From spicy arugula to artichokes to rapini, the possibilities are endless. If green is the main flavor in your meal, think about using ‘green wines’ such as Grüner Veltliner from Austria or Alvarinho from Portugal. Malbec, Syrah and Viognier.

Umami-laden Dishes

Plant-based sources of umami are found in tomato sauce, dried mushrooms, miso paste, seaweed, broccoli and braised tofu among others. Umami acts like a flavour enhancer and can accelerate the main component of the dish. When dealing with an umami rich dish I often go to fruity and off-dry wines. Alsatian Muscat and off-dry German Riesling are great options, as the umami in the dish will amplify the fruitiness of the wine.

2

3

Working with High Tannic Wines

Does your vegetarian client wish to enjoy a tannic Barolo or Napa Cabernet Sauvignon for dinner? Tannins can be tricky when you don’t have animal protein to work around. I have found cooking techniques can be really helpful such as smoking, grilling and marinating to add depth to your plant-based protein. Think about serving marinated mushrooms, smoked tofu, or grilled eggplant. Another suggestion is to suggest aged versions of these bold reds, when the tannins have settled. Lastly, I would suggest an extra dose of salt, which can help cut the tannins.

Keep Your Reds Fresh

After tasting several hundred wines with vegan dishes in preparation for our book, one wine style kept coming back as a winner with a variety of flavours and dishes. Wines with lower tannins and higher acid such as Pinot Noir, Gamay and Barbera. What is great about these reds is that they can be served slightly chilled and work well with both cold and hot dishes.

4

5

Spices and Spicy Dishes

We leave butter and meat behind and pull out the full spice drawer in vegan food to add depth of flavour. Zatar, curry and smoked paprika are staples in my pantry and really help elevate a dish however not all wines work with them. For intense spices like this I have found wines that have a spicy element themselves such as Cotes du Rhone, Syrah and Dolcetto can work extremely well. If you’re dealing with spicy ‘heat’ the classic matches work by avoiding high alcohol wines and bringing in fruity wines and off-dry wines.

Make Me A Match

Herbivore Libations: plant-based food and wine pairings



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Carine Patricio
Ruinart Challenge Germany - Winner 2018
Best Sommelier of Portugal 2020
Candidate for the ASI Best Sommelier of the World 2023 Contest



chefsommelier.com

GRAND CRU VEGETARIAN PAIRINGS

Famed Paris-based Chef Alain Passard, chef, owner of L'Arpège says "I want to elevate the humble vegetable to grand cru." We asked three sommeliers from across the globe to provide insight on how they elevate vegan and vegetarian food and wine pairings.

The Sommeliers:

VINCENT COCHARD

is the Head Sommelier at L'Arpège, Chef Alain Passard's 3-star Michelin restaurant.



ANGELA ALLAN

was the runner-up at the 2021 Best Sommelier of New Zealand contest, and is the general manager and sommelier at CULPRIT Dining Room & Bar, in Auckland, New Zealand.



FABRIZIO SARTORATO

is the Head Sommelier at the 3-star Michelin Da Vittorio located in Bergamo, Italy.



Photos: Contributed

Somm Perspectives

Grand Cru: Vegetarian Pairings

Association de la Sommellerie Internationale

(ASI): When presented with a customer that is vegan or vegetarian do you see this as an opportunity or a challenge?

Vincent Cochard (VC): I see it more as a challenge, which I was aware of when I joined L'Arpège restaurant, which is also what motivated me to work here. Since I began studying wine, we've been taught to create pairings based on the fish or the meat, then the sauce. and finally, the garnish in the background. I realized that the relationship with vegetables and wine is just as complex for me. If the vegetable is raw or cooked the pairing will be different. A tomato, for example, at the beginning of the season and at the end of the season will not have the same flavour profile and the recommended pairing will be different.

Angela Allan (AA): At CULPRIT we strive to ensure that everyone that enters our doors is well looked after and has a great time. Whether our guest is vegan, gluten free, or full-on carnivore, we take this as another opportunity to show who we are and what we do best. The goal is to provide a memorable experience filled with bold, seasonal dishes, complimented by fun and creative beverage offerings.

Fabrizio Sartorato (FS): I see this an opportunity to provide my guest taste something different, perhaps even a little bit unexpected. I would suggest they enjoy a light and aromatic style of wine.

ASI: When crafting your wine list, do you make indicate if the list wines are vegan on your wine list so you can be sure to offer vegan customers an appropriate selection?

VC: I prefer not to indicate it on the wine list because I believe that we, the sommelier, are there to exchange with the customers. I see my wine list as more of a support than a sales tool.

AA: I prefer to have these conversations at the table. To me this is all part of the experience with us, lots of things happening, sounds, smells and tastes; and I feel that this is what sets us apart. We have quite a few unique wines that are familiar and yet unexpected, and a large amount of glass pours so we can taste and talk through which wine will work best for each guest.

FS: We don't notate wines on the list as being vegan, as we prefer to explain this to our customers at the table.

ASI: Are there particular styles, varietals, regions you use as "go to" pairings for plant-based cuisine?

VC: For my part, when I look for vegetable and wine pairings, I seek out wines with minerality in the wines, that like the vegetables in our gardens are drawing flavour from their soils. I think that this work of the winemaker is more important than the region or the grape variety. Today we can find, in any region, wines with freshness.

AA: The chefs at CULPRIT are masters when it comes to balancing dishes. If the dish has fat and acid, I will find a wine to pair with it. As far as wine in New Zealand we are spoiled for choice. Winemakers here have an adventurous spirit, and there are plenty of exciting and delicious discoveries. For those hard to pair items like brussels sprouts, and asparagus, I often find an off-dry white compliments them well, or even a white wine that has spent some time on their skins which really punches up the texture. Pairing vegetable-based dishes is never a challenge and always an opportunity to learn and be creative!

FS: The texture of plant-based cuisine can be challenging so I tend to recommend light-bodied aromatic styles of wine such as dry Moscato, Sauvignon Blanc, some Gewürztraminer and others.

Our Sommeliers Favourite Pairings:

ANGELA ALLAN

DISH: Spaghetti Squash
with Curried Burnt Butter

PAIRING: Stonecroft Viognier,
Hawkes Bay, New Zealand

With autumn coming upon us in the Southern Hemisphere we serve a lovely vegetarian dish of 'Spaghetti' Squash with curried burnt butter, pickled golden raisin, smoked yoghurt, that can be adjusted for vegans as well. I like to pair this with Stonecroft Viognier, a vegan friendly wine, from Hawkes Bay. The warm spices of the squash pair well with the luscious ripe apricot and stone fruit characteristics of this organic white wine from the Gimblett Gravels subregion. The length and finish really accentuates the subtle sweetness and texture of the dish.

VINCENT COCHARD**DISH:** Beet tart**PAIRING:** Thibaud Capellaro 'Terra'
Vin de France

This exceptional Syrah is juicy, has supple and elegant tannins and is enhanced by beautiful spices in the nose that we also find in the chef's dish. The interaction of textures between the dish and the wine also makes this a very interesting pairing.



Photo: Contributed

FABRIZIO SARTORATO

DISH: Sottosopra

PAIRING: Azienda Agricola Vallarom
Chardonnay Filippo Scienza, Trentino, Italy

At home I love simple pasta tossed with fresh vegetables and enjoyed with a fresh aromatic white wine such as Azienda Agricola Vallarom Moscato Giallo. At the restaurant a great combination is our Sottosopra, a dish consisting of a mixture of potatoes, cream and Emmental served with sautéed mushrooms, blanched chard, steamed chestnuts, celeriac, and grapes paired with Azienda Agricola Vallarom Chardonnay Filippo Scienza.

Photo: Contributed



Graham's 2020 Bicentenary Edition Vintage Port

The Symington family announces an exceptional bottling and limited release of Graham's 2020 Bicentenary Edition Vintage Port

Produced in its 200th anniversary year, Graham's 2020 Bicentenary Edition Vintage Port is a unique blend of co-fermented grapes from high altitude and north-west facing vines across three of its four estates.

2020 was an especially challenging year in the Douro. The region saw record heatwaves through the summer months, which substantially reduced yields to 21% below the 10-year average. At Graham's principal estate, Quinta dos Malvedos, the vines averaged just 580g — making it the smallest harvest of the 21st century.

The harvest itself was unlike any other in recent memory. Grape varieties that usually ripen sequentially needed to be picked at the same time. Drawing on his family's multi-generational knowledge of Graham's estates and their micro-climates, Head Winemaker Charles Symington and

his teams adapted to the conditions and harvested the grapes with precision. They picked parcels by their altitude and co-fermented select varieties together, producing incredibly complex and concentrated wines.

After reviewing the best wines from their finest properties, Charles Symington concluded that the Cima Corgo sub-region of the Douro produced the most outstanding wines. The family have therefore chosen to do an exceptional bottling of Graham's 2020 Vintage Port, drawn from the best performing parcels at Graham's estates in the Cima Corgo.

This Vintage Port is a unique blend of co-fermented Touriga Nacional & Touriga Franca, co-fermented Sousão & Touriga Nacional (from the prized Stone Terraces at Malvedos), Old mixed vines (field blend), and Alicante Bouschet. The result is an extraordinarily opulent, intense, and fresh Vintage Port. While it has the classic Graham's hallmarks, the wine is marked by a unique aromatic complexity and beautifully layered fruit. It is destined mature beautifully over decades.



SOMM PERSPECTIVES

THE QUESTION OF NATURAL

The natural wine movement has been embraced by sommeliers, but still in its infancy of broader understanding amongst restaurant goers. ASI asked two sommeliers, Charles Carron Brown and Dejan Živkoski, to give their perspectives on the movement and their place on wine lists.

Somm Perspectives



CHARLES CARRON BROWN, ASI Diploma, thenaturalsommelier.com

Charles Carron Brown is currently employed within the Simon Rogan restaurant group, where he runs the wine program at Henrock in the Lake District. He is hugely passionate about sustainability within the wine world, and many of the wines listed at Henrock follow Simon Rogan's ethos of sustainability, many of which are listed as either an organic or biodynamic and using natural techniques. Charles passed the ASI Diploma in 2019 and is currently studying for the Advanced Exam with the Court of Master Sommeliers.



DEJAN ŽIVKOSKI

Dejan Živkoski has enjoyed a 35 year career in the hospitality industry working through the ranks as bartender, waiter, sommelier and hotel manager. He was one of the founders of the Serbian Sommelier Association (SERSA) in 2003 and has been the President of SERSA since 2014, twice being re-elected to the position. Also since 2014, he has been a co-owner of Steak & Wine Bar in Belgrade. Dejan has consulted on projects in numerous countries in Europe, the Americas. In 2022 he published a book dedicated to his wine lover "Wine School" which he began 8 years ago.

Association de la Sommellerie Internationale (ASI): What is your definition of natural wine?

Charles Carron Brown (CCB): Any wine that has had as minimal interference as possible, both within the vineyard and the wine making process. I would also expect a minimum level of Organic or Biodynamic viticulture to be in place within the vineyard, although the vineyard doesn't have to be certified.

Dejan Živkoski (DZ): I prefer not to divide wine into natural and what else? not natural? But if we talk about grapes and wines that are made by using absolutely all natural ingredients, ingredients that we find in nature, and not from laboratories or some agricultural shops, then that is a completely different topic. Today that is extremely rare. If the winemaker opts for 100 per cent natural wine production, how many harvests will there be in one decade? What happens to the years when there are no grapes to produce wine? What's the loss? Will the winery survive?

Natural wine... I believe we're using the wrong name for these wines. These wines have the names: organic, biodynamic, pet-nat, orange, amphora wines etcetera. I call these wines simply and briefly, "craft wines."

The Question of Natural

ASI: Is there any obligation for a sommelier to feature natural, non-interventionist wines on a wine list?

CCB: In a word, no. A sommelier should be not forced to showcase any wine on their list that they don't believe in. Whilst there is a growing movement to more environmentally friendly styles of wine making, I would certainly never press on a sommelier to have a wine on their list that they felt wasn't for them or wouldn't sell well. The sommelier and their team need to get behind it and needs to be in 100 per cent agreement with the wines. This is all part of the experience that you're offering the guests within your restaurant.

So, whilst I'd certainly love to see more natural wines on lists up and down the UK (United Kingdom), I certainly don't feel that it's a requirement for all establishments to follow what many are doing now.

DZ: Of course, there is no requirement. However, there are more and more sommeliers who include wines of different production on the wine lists of their restaurants, such as: organic, biodynamic, pet-nat, orange, and those made in amphora.

ASI: As sommeliers we use the word terroir as a symbol of authenticity of a wine. Do you believe natural wines deliver better insight on terroir than commercial alternatives?

CCB: It's an interesting question. One of the first things we are often taught as sommeliers is that terroir imparts all the flavours to a given wine that we're drinking. That the area in which vine is grown and thus a wine made from is responsible to the overall flavour of the given wine. When you think about it in that case, surely it would be a reasonable argument to say that natural wines do give a better insight on terroir, seeing as that and winemaker who follows a minimalist principle in their vineyard isn't going to spray "heaven-knows-what" onto their vines and allows the vines to speak for themselves.

DZ: Even though the winemakers of the natural wines start the fermentation by using the native vineyard yeasts, the dominant yeasts that complete the fermentation are not necessarily from the vineyard. The hardier yeasts that populate the winery

and winery equipment can often take over the fermentation, they may be a different strain from the yeasts in the vineyard and can sometimes profoundly impact the flavours and textures of the wine. It is difficult to talk about the terroir for absolute "natural wines" because yeast can take wine in a different direction from what the winemaker wants.

ASI: Given the "grey-ness" or lack of firm definition of natural wine, do you feel a sommelier when listing a natural wine should dig a little deeper into the authenticity of the wine listed to ensure the wine is in fact not only non-interventionist in the winery but practicing sustainable, organic practices in the vineyard?

CCB: Yes, but they should be treated in the same way as any other wine. If you're listing top end Bordeaux from a specific Chateau, vintage, then you'd look up that specific vintage." I'd say that it would be reasonable to do your research before a wine goes onto a list. We've got some incredible producers who make superb wines in a way that is non-interventionist etc. ... it's time to give them the limelight they deserve.

DZ: In my personal opinion, the sommelier should host the guest, provide food, drinks and good impressions. Presentation of the wine and food should be very simple for the guest. I meet more and more sommelier who fantastically describe wines, but in direct contact with the guest some of them cannot compose a simple sentence. The sommelier has to recognize the desire and need of his guest, and then recommend the appropriate wine.

When recommending theses "craft wines," the sommelier must emphasize the method of production, and if the guest is interested, he can then go into details. If a sommelier works in a restaurant with guests, there is no need to go into too deep an analysis ... instead give a simple explanation and recommendation.

ASI: When selecting a natural wine to feature on the wine list, is there an enhanced responsibility for a sommelier to taste the wine analytically to ensure the wine is free from fault? Should there be a broader acceptance of slight amounts of volatility, Brettanomyces and oxidative notes sometimes present in certain natural wines?

		<p>CCB: I guess you must ask, what do you expect an acceptable level of fault to be within a wine? Whenever I taste a potential new wine for the list at Henrock, I look for several things, mostly I look for whether the guest will enjoy it. There's no point in having a list filled with wines that you may love, but that won't sell. You have a business to run after all. These are wines that are unique yes unique but are full of character and have a story to tell.</p> <p>DZ: Certainly. That is the sommelier's responsibility ... the sommelier is responsible for the guest but also to the restaurant owner. By choosing a wine that will not be to the taste of the guest or a faulty wine, this carries an increased responsibility. The sommelier must try all the wines from his wine list, that is completely clear, just like the head chef who tries all the dishes.</p> <p>In terms of VA, Brett etc. Yes, that's what we get from completely "natural" production. On this journey, we must be ready for many surprises, most of them will be good and great, but some of them not. We must be prepared to accept deviations like a volatility, Brettanomyces and oxidative notes, from the everyday wines that surround us.</p> <p>ASI: Should we judge natural wines by the same standards we judge more conventionally made wines?</p> <p>CCB: Yes, definitely. Why should we judge natural wines in a way that is different to those made in a more conventional way? These are wines that humanity have been drinking for generations and are (in my opinion) are more authentic than those made in a conventional way. Although there are many conventional wines that are good. I certainly don't see why we should have to judge natural wines in a different way. We should actually be asking ourselves — why don't we judge conventional wines in a different way to natural wines?</p> <p>DZ: I am not a supporter of wine evaluation. I am a great opponent. It is very simple to have two cars racing on the track, a lot depends on the engine but also on the human being, one will be faster, if he wins yes, he is a winner.</p>
Somm Perspectives		<p>Who are the people who determine the destiny of the wine? Who gave them that right? Do they know what was the goal of the winemaker? It is very difficult to evaluate someone's work in the vineyard, work in the winery and work in the cellar, their struggle with natural influences such as temperature, rain, sun, frost, hail and so on.</p> <p>All this is very difficult because now we are talking about a different approach to wine production, these are "craft wines".</p> <p>I repeat, the sommelier should dedicate himself to the guest.</p> <p>ASI: When listing a natural wine should it be clearly identified as 'natural' on the list?</p> <p>CCB: I personally believe that it shouldn't have to be. I can clearly understand that (in some establishments) why you'd want to have a "short bio" or asterixis next to a given wine to assist the consumer. I also feel that a certain lack of education has meant that many people are not willing to try the natural wine scene, due to the uncertainty of what the wines will taste like etc. ... Training of your team — whether you have a big team of somms or not — is key to engaging with the customers and getting the team involved with the selling of natural wines. Organising regular tastings for your teams and helping them to understand the reasoning behind a particular wine choice is vital to the success of a natural wine program.</p> <p>DZ: It should be noted that the wine is from a different production: organic, biodynamic, pet-nat, orange, from amphora. Guests love the novelties in the restaurant's offer, and I love them because they can be a great introduction to a small talk with a guest.</p>
	The Question of Natural	
	54	

**TRAPICHE has been recognized once again among
the “Top 50 Most Admired Wine Brands”
by the renowned English publication
Drinks International.**



Placed in **#48 position**, Trapiche is the only Argentine winery that holds 7 nominations in total (2014, 2015, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2022)

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TRAPICHE
ARGENTINA



VEGAN WINE

FROM SOIL TO GLASS

With Bruce Ewert,
Professor Bubbly
@professor_bubbly



With an ever-increasing consumer base eating plant-based and vegan diets, and a world more conscious of the impacts of agricultural and winemaking practices on the environment it is important for sommeliers to be aware of the various definitions of vegan wine. Many view 'vegan' wines as those made without the addition of animal-based products in the winemaking process, such as gelatin, isinglass, casein and egg whites traditionally used as fining agents, but many are not aware of animal inputs in the vineyard. With limited or no requirements in many parts of the world to indicate the use of animal products in production, how can sommeliers, and ultimately their customers, make fully informed decisions? While the European Vegetarian Union's well-known 'V-Label' affirms wines made without animal inputs in the production process, does this interpretation of 'vegan' wine go far enough? The Association de la Sommellerie Internationale (ASI) asked Bruce Ewert, the owner and winemaker at L'Acadie Vineyards in Nova Scotia (Canada) to dig a little deeper into the subject. L'Acadie Vineyards is certified Biocyclic Vegan Standard, and the first farm and winery in North America to be qualified to use the Biocyclic Vegan Quality Seal.

Association de la Sommellerie Internationale

(ASI): Please explain what is Biocyclic Vegan agriculture?

Bruce Ewert (BE): Biocyclic Vegan agriculture is purely plant-based organic farming. This form of cultivation excludes all commercial livestock farming of animals and does not use any inputs of animal origin in viticulture and winemaking — from soil to glass. Special emphasis is placed on the promotion of biodiversity, healthy soil life, the closure of organic cycles with cover crops and on humus build-up with compost and compost teas from grape pomace and other plant residue.

ASI: Many sommeliers view bio-dynamic, organic, natural and even vegan through the same lens. Can you elaborate on differences?

BE: Perhaps for more understanding it is a good exercise to have a look at the different approaches of Biodynamic, Biocyclic Vegan and organic agriculture in general. Biodynamic and Biocyclic vegan are both based on the principles of organic farming with its positive impacts on the environment, climate, soil life, biodiversity, human health — and finally quality and taste. Both cover organic certification but at the same time they exceed the requirements of official organic certification schemes in many aspects, so both can be considered to be even more sustainable.

Biocyclic Vegan practices, however, diverge when it comes to animal use. Biodynamic farming, has animal husbandry as its foundation using manures, slaughterhouse waste as fertilizers and other preparations based on animal parts. It is optional for organic agriculture, not as foundational. Biocyclic Vegan agriculture, however, strictly refrains from keeping farmed animals and prohibits all animal inputs. This helps to avoid the largely documented negative impacts of the livestock industry with respect to climate, land use, water quality (nitrification), health (antibiotics and multi-resistant germs), global food security (cultivated plants being used for animal feed and not for human consumption) etc.

Learn more at: www.biocyclic-vegan.org/benefits

ASI: How do you read labels?

BE: Organic winemaking is the logical final step to shepherd organic grapes to the bottle, and both Biocyclic Vegan and Biodynamic wines have to be organic to use their additional logos on the bottle. USDA Organic, EU Organic and Canada Organic Standard all have a limited list of natural and non-GMO additives that are allowed. The resulting organic logo on the bottle signifies traceability and third-party inspections to give consumers confidence, but if the wine is not certified organic with the logo on the label, the grapes can be from conventional sources, even if the winery estate vineyard is certified organic. Both Biocyclic Vegan wine and Biodynamic wine have their own additional logo and the same disconnect in traceability happens if they are not on the label. The major difference for Biocyclic Vegan wine compared to Biodynamic is that it prohibits all animal inputs in winemaking, which can include gelatin and egg whites.

ASI: How does 'natural' fit into this equation? Or can it with its lack of definition?

BE: Certified logos with standards and inspections are the best way to wade through marketing jargon. Individuals that follow a vegan diet want to know ingredients and practices — they are intent label readers.



Photo: Bertrand Bouchez/Unsplash.com



Photos: Contributed

ASI TUTORIAL VIDEOS

Educating sommelier students around the world

Following the launch of the ASI Guidelines in 2021, the Association de la Sommellerie Internationale (ASI) has produced a video series to enhance their ground-breaking work. Of the initiative, ASI President William Wouters says “these video tutorials bring all the invaluable information found in the ASI Guidelines to life. This effort, produced on behalf of all sommeliers, will also be free to all sommeliers. As our association grows and continues to nurture sommeliers around the world, we’ve been privileged to work with donors such as California Wines, Graham’s Port, Château Laguiole and Famille Perrin that understand the benefits of having informed, well-educated sommeliers working in restaurants and in wine shops around the world.”

The tutorials are narrated by Marc Almert (2019 ASI Best Sommelier of the World). Julie Dupouy-Young, ASI Deputy Secretary General, former president of the Irish Sommelier Association and finalist at the

2016 Best Sommelier of the World, demonstrating the tasks. On his role Almert says “it is a great honour to be part of the ASI tutorials, narrating the voice over. My greatest motivation was to help sommeliers from all around the world to get access to information that improves their service skills, irrespective of where they are and whether they have an association to support them or not.”

Of the importance of tutorials to the sommelier community, Wouters adds “these tutorials will not only help motivate people around the world to become sommeliers but creating a free platform like this ensures all sommeliers aim for the same high standard of service.”

The tutorials are made free to everyone via ASI’s Youtube channel. As a free educational platform, ASI is encouraging all sommelier educating institutions, and hospitality schools to use of these complimentary tutorial videos.



WATCH THE TUTORIALS



Photo: Contributed

ASI SPARKLING WINE SERVICE

MISE-EN-PLACE:

3 coasters - for the bottle, one coaster for the cork, and one larger coaster (or plate) for the ice bucket.

3 napkins - one to be placed over the bucket to dry the bottle, one under the bucket to absorb condensation water (whether on the gueridon or the pedestal) and one for pouring the sparkling wine properly.

1 tasting glass.

1 ice bucket containing sufficient iced water, placed on a plate or a pedestal.

STEP 1: SELECTING THE BOTTLE

Ensure the bottle is properly chilled and keep it chilled. If there are several bottles to choose from, the sommelier should ensure they're selecting the coolest one. The bottle should be kept within the bucket as often, as possible.

Tips: Sommeliers should be familiar with all types of closures used for sparkling wine.

STEP 2: PRESENTING THE BOTTLE

When pulling the wine from the bucket, dry it off with a napkin when needed. When presenting to the host state the wine's vintage, producer, appellation, and country name where applicable. The host needs to confirm. This action should be done from the side that causes the least disturbance to the guests. Remember to always hold the bottle gently.



Photo: Contributed



Photo: Contributed

STEP 3: GLASSWARE

It is important to choose the correct glassware and ensure that they are clean, not chipped. Be aware, sometimes the guest may choose bigger and wider glass rather than a classic flute glass of sparkling wine, which enables the fruity aromas to become more expressive. Make sure to communicate with the guests regarding your personal preference of the glassware. Always use a tray when transporting glasses. Place the glasses on the table with the logo (if present on the glass) facing the guests and in a consistent manner for all the guests around the table.

STEP 4: REMOVING THE FOIL

Always dry the bottle with a napkin, if needed. Always use a coaster when opening the bottle, making sure that the tablecloth remains dry, clean and tidy. Cut the foil in a tidy manner below the cage while the bottle is standing on a coaster. Place the foil in your pocket. The bottle should always be standing upright whilst unwinding the wire off the cage. Keep one hand on the top of the easily having full control of the cork, ensuring it does not pop out of the bottle.



STEP 5: OPENING THE BOTTLE

Announce the wine repeating the details. When opening the bottle ensure that it is held with two hands, one under the bottom and one around the cork, whilst the cage is still on for safety measures. The bottle must be always pointing away from the guests. The sommelier needs to always keep a firm grip on the bottle.

To open, turn the bottle, not the cork. If necessary, she or he may turn the bottle back and forth for safety. The bottle should be inclined at about 45 degrees whilst opening. Two hands must be always on the bottle to control it safely. The use of a napkin is optional, but ASI recommends napkins not to be used when handling the cork, separate the plaque de muselet easily from the cork if possible, and place them on a coaster, the foil and the cage put away in the sommelier's pocket. Always make sure to use napkins when wiping off surfaces.

STEP 6: THE SOMMELIER'S SAMPLE

Ask the host's permission before sampling. The tasting sample should be no more than 20 to 30 milliliters. If the wine is faulted ask the host if she or he would like new. Put the tasting glass in a position where it is not in your way when working at the station.

STEP 7: SERVING SPARKLING WINE

In general service should be conducted in a clockwise manner from the right of the guest if applicable to the situation, although local service customs can apply but clear instructions (in a contest) will be given to the sommelier. For

example, ladies before gentleman at the start of the service.

When serving, the sommelier should serve using an open-handed service method. This means that if the somebody is pouring from the left side of the guest, they should also use the left hand.

Provide a tasting sample of 20 to 30 milliliters of wine for the host to assess the condition. Ensure that napkins are used on every pour. Wait for the hosts approval before serving the other guests. Pour the guests an even and in a consistent manner without any spills. Each glass should contain a consistent amount close to regular pouring size, approximately 80 to 150 milliliters based on the size of the glassware and the number of guests. Pour a maximum of two pours per glass ensuring no liquid or mousse spills over the glass.

The host is the last one to be poured. Ask if the host would like to keep the bottle chilled on ice if wine is left in it. If not, ask the host if he or she wants the empty bottle on the table. If so, place the bottle on a coaster on the table with the label facing the guest. If the host declined the author of having the bottle on the table, make sure to put the bottle within the sight of the guests.

STEP 8: CONCLUSION

Tidy the workstation. Always use a tray. Put back all the details where they belong at the mis-en-place. Ask if the guests would like to have food recommendations. If not wish them a pleasant evening and advise the sommelier will always be at service if needed.



WATCH THE VIDEO

MEMBER NEWS



Photo: Contributed

BRIGHT YOUNG STARS ▲ OF BELGIUM

This March, the Belgium Sommelier Association hosted the 2022 Best Junior & Junior Commis Sommelier of Belgium contest at De Koninck Brewery in Antwerp. After a competition that included both written examinations and practical tests Elizio Masson from Hotelschool Ter Duinen came away with the title of Famille Perrin Best Commis Junior Sommelier of Belgium 2022 and Ralph Danneels from Hotelschool Ter Duinen the title of Famille Perrin Best Junior Sommelier of Belgium 2022.

ASI SUPPORTS UKRAINE

In March, the board of the Association de la Sommellerie (ASI) announced initiatives to support Ukrainian refugees, including the development of a platform, hosted on ASI's website, which allows restaurateurs, vineyard owners, retailers, wine agencies and wine training and educational institutions from across Europe to post job offers exclusively for Ukrainian citizens. According to ASI President William Wouters "we are all concerned about the fate of our Ukrainian friends, their families and loved ones. The unprovoked war has

forced the people of Ukraine to defend themselves against their Russian invaders. Many people have become homeless and millions, mostly women and children, have been forced to leave the country. ASI has prepared this initiative with the hope it will help many Ukrainians find work in the hospitality, winery and wine retail sectors in Europe."

GREEK SOMMELIERS' ASSOCIATION ANNOUNCES NEW BOARD ▼

On March 13, 2022, the Greek Sommeliers' Association, the Nominations held their election for a new Board of Directors took

place. Matthidis Andreas, Wine Spirits & Coffee Education and Development Consultant with WS Karoulis SA and Vice Head of Education at WSPC returns to his role as President of the Greek Sommeliers' Association. Vice President elect is Psafidis Evangelos, Wine Manager of Hotesl Grande Bretagne & King George in Athens. Also elected to the board are Tsokos Efsthathios, Giannopoulos Nikolas, Loukakis Nikos and Hanialidis Eleftherios.



Photo: Contributed

EMMA ZIEMANN IS THE BEST SOMMELIER OF SWEDEN 2022 ▲

Emma Ziemann has won the coveted title of Best of Sommelier of Sweden 2022. Ziemann took home the title after a spirited contest, competing in front a live audience at the Sergel Hub in Stockholm. Runner-up was Martin Mortensen, while Elliot Björkman finished in third place.



Photo: Contributed



Photo: Contributed

NORWAY'S LIORA LEVI ▲ STARS IN WINE FIRST

Norwegian sommelier Liora Levi stars in Tellus Works' 'Wine First', a show that combines wine, travel and cuisine. The show is distributed through PBS in the United States and has millions of monthly viewers according to Director Johannes Brun. Recently the show won a prestigious 'Taste Award' known by many as the Oscars of the life-style TV shows in the United States. Levi, along with co-hosts Yolanda Ano and Maya Samuelson are currently filming Season 2.

DEJAN ŽIVKOSKI ELECTED AS PRESIDENT OF SERSA

This past month, Dejan Živkoski, member of the ASI Sommelier Contest Committee was once again elected as President of SERSA, the Serbian Sommelier Association. Upon winning the election Živkoski says "I don't have time to think about the election results, nor to celebrate. All the elected colleagues and I are aware that we have to continue with hard work in order to achieve everything planned."

On the priorities of the association Živkoski says "considering that there is no formal education for sommeliers in schools or colleges in our country, since our inception in 2003, the main activity of SERSA is providing the education for sommeliers in Serbia. Therefore, we have to invest a lot of work, time and our knowledge in order to organize the best sommelier training for our students."

This September, SERSA will organize the jubilee 60th training "Sommelier SERSA LEVEL 3," of which Živkoski says "we are especially proud because it means that every time, we host this training there are more and more young people are interested in becoming sommelier."

SERSA additionally plans to organize the 2nd Balkan Sommelier Challenge this year, bringing together competitors from at least 14 countries. The association is also continuing with their preparations to host the 2024 ASI Best Sommelier Competition of Europe and Africa contest, in 2024.

ASI ANNOUNCES NEW DIPLOMA RECIPIENTS

On March 14, 86 candidates representing 20 nationalities participated in the most ASI Diploma examination. The ASI Diploma represents the pinnacle of sommellerie. The sommeliers who recently attempted the Diploma examination had to complete an advanced level test and were asked to perform complicated service skills. 62 candidates passed the examination of which 27 earned the title of ASI Gold Diploma, 25 receiving ASI Silver Diploma and 10 ASI Bronze Diploma. Just over 400 sommeliers worldwide have now achieved this designation making it one of the most exclusive titles amongst the global sommelier community.

INDUSTRY NEWS



Photo: louis-hansel / Unsplash

HOW FINE DINING IS CHANGING AND WHAT IT MEANS FOR FINE WINE

Wine industry think group Areni Global asks the question what effect will the changing restaurant landscape of 'fine dining', accelerated by the global pandemic, mean for fine wines? How will a move from the hyper intellectualism of cuisine to a more convivial approach to fine dining, one centered less on formality and more on sustainability, personal service and service with personality, affect fine wine sales? The team at Areni Global interviewed restaurateurs and sommeliers, about the changing landscape of fine dining and its impact on wine.

<https://areni.global/analysis-how-fine-dining-is-changing-and-what-it-means-for-fine-wine>

FINE WINE GOES HIGH TECH IN BATTLE AGAINST FORGERY

In an article recently posted by Meininger's Wine Business International, the VDP, Germany's prestigious association of top winegrowing estates, are protecting their wines from forgery using NFT, blockchain technology. In the case of VDP producers, digital twins with NFC tag are created for individual bottles of wines. Purchasers of the wine can get its NFT information by scanning the bottle.

www.wine-business-international.com/wine/news/blockchain-based-tech-meets-fine-wine

SPRING FROST HITS FRANCE AGAIN

Climate change has once again taken its toll on the French wine industry. For the second year in a row, French vineyards have been struck by early spring frosts. Following a warmer than average March, similar to 2021, leading once again to early budding, were some of the lowest April temperatures ever recorded in France. Northern vineyards, such as those in Chablis, took much of the brunt, once again. The scale of damage is still to be determined but is sure to place additional challenge issues for an industry still dealing with reduced supply as a result of last year's reduced crop.

www.foodandwine.com/news/france-vineyards-late-frost-spring-2022

Somm Day Challenge

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