

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY ORGANIC WINE?

John Schumacher
President and Winemaker
Hallcrest Vineyards: The Organic Wine Works
Felton, Santa Cruz County, California

Americans have become increasingly sophisticated and discriminating about how they live, eat and play within an ever changing world. One of the most pressing concerns regarding our health and environment is the use of chemicals and pesticides in the food we eat and drink. Wine is, of course, an agricultural product in which the use of chemicals, pesticides and added preservatives have increasingly become an issue to the consumer.

Over the years, many wines have been released claiming that they are “Organic” but confusion still exists about just what constitutes an organic wine. While some organic wines are produced from grapes that are organically grown, most still have added sulfites or preservatives that may cause allergic reactions or other health problems for sensitive people. The Organic Wine Works wines are not only produced from organically grown grapes, but are organically processed as well. We are one of two vintners that produce an organic, unsulfited wine that is nationally distributed. And the first winery to release 100% Certified Organic wines in the country.

We at Hallcrest saw a need for untreated wines and established the Organic Wine Works label, so our customers would not be confused from our wines that are organically grown but traditionally processed. The Organic Wine Works has taken on a challenge that the rest of the wine industry has virtually ignored: producing quality wines that can be enjoyed by wine lovers who are sensitive to sulfites.

Growing grapes without the use of chemicals is an environmentally conscious step. We feel that it is just as important for the winemaker to make

the same efforts to maintain the integrity of the Organic concept.

There are now eight varietals of the Organic Wine Works wines; three white and five red. All have been grown and processed in accordance with the California Organic Foods Act of 1990. Now, four of these wines are 100% certified by the California Certified Organic Farmers (CCOF). Our eight releases are currently among a select few non-sulfited wines available in the United States.

THE MOST COMMON QUESTIONS ASKED ABOUT OUR WINES

How long is the shelf life?

Our white wines show very well within a year and a half. Most white wines are consumed within a week after purchase. Our reds should age like other red wines; we’ve tasted many unsulfited reds that have aged for six to eight years and they have held together beautifully. We do recommend, as with any fine wine, to ship and store your wines at less than 60 degrees and keep out of sunlight.

Aren’t sulfites a natural by-product of fermentation?

Yes and No. Our research has shown that most of our wines have little or no sulfites. Although some wines do produce over 10 parts per million, this is very uncommon. Most wines do not produce sulfites as a by-product.

Is the sulfite issue with consumers just hype?

We don't think so. Food allergies are very complex, therefore, a customer's concern cannot be taken for granted. If they are having problems with other wines, suggest they try a bottle of The Organic Wine Works wine. If they do not have the same reaction, then their concerns about sulfites may be legitimate. If they do have a similar reaction as with other wines, then there might be a common component in wine for which they have an adverse reaction.

THE ORGANIC WINE WORKS

The Organic Wine Works has just become the first 100% Certified Organic Wine to be grown and processed and available in the United States. The California Certified Organic Farmers (CCOF) have certified Hallcrest Vineyards, Inc., the producers of The Organic Wine Works, as an organic wine processor. The release of the 1992 vintage marks the first time that a wine can display the CCOF seal certifying that the wine has been "Organically grown and processed in accordance with the California Organic Foods Act of 1990." (This means wine with no added sulfites), and is the first wine approved by the Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (BATF) as organically grown and processed.

Consumers can purchase the wine with confidence that the grapes are grown without any pesticides or synthetic chemical additives and that the wine is produced without any chemical additives, including no added sulfites. The California law states that a product labeled as "organic" must contain 100% organic ingredients. The requirements of the California law provide a great deal of protection for consumers buying produce and processed foods labeled as "organic." The CCOF is funded through membership fees, not tax dollars, so the costs of certification are shared by the producers and consumers of organic products.

Many wineries, like Hallcrest Vineyards, are currently using organically grown grapes in their wines and are actively converting their vineyards and growers to organic farming but they are not organically processing their wines, hence these wines are produced from organically grown grapes, but are not organic wines.

The Organic Wine Works is releasing six wines certified as organically grown and processed in accordance with the California Organic Foods Act of 1990. They include three white wines; Chardonnay, Fume Blanc, and Semillon, and three reds; Pinot Noir, Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot.

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