

Forbes

Let me start with full disclosure: I'm predisposed to liking biodynamic wine.

(My rationale for this assertion is spectacularly unscientific. See footnote *** below.)

Yet I haven't written much about it, and when I have, it's been less about the wine itself and more to understand the context around the people and the places that create wine in that style.

I haven't, in other words, jumped full on into an evaluation of the biodynamic wine scene. When I try to understand why not — when I start listing all the reasons why I've steered clear so far — the list turns out to be a series of things that I'm probably not supposed to say. Such as:

Few topics or themes within wine seem to arouse as much contention or divisiveness as the conversation (polemics?) regarding natural, organic, and biodynamic wines. Jumping into that judgmental fray feels like a no-win situation.

"Maybe we should stop spraying our children with chemicals." Sending their children indoors because he was spraying ("treating") the vineyards was the tipping point, 20 years ago, for Eric and Christine Saurel of MonTirius winery in Sarrians (in the southern Rhône Valley) to transition to biodynamic production. There's something obvious about this, something we know ought to be acted upon. Yet so few of us actually do. It gets all woogie woogie. Talking about vibrations of energy isn't normally the first thing you say to a person. Neither is the idea that our body (not our mind) is running the show, or that you sync up the major events of your life with the phases of the moon. These things may not jive with your cerebral understanding of the world. But there, in the moment, you get it. You're drinking the Kool-Aid. You're along for the ride. The feeling may not last, but when you're in the mode of it, things sing, and the harmony of it never quite goes away. You want to find it again, and keep going back for more. Biodynamic wine is like that for me.

There's exactly one reason why I'm jumping into the fray (so to speak) of biodynamic wines with this post: these wines are good. Not every single one, of course, but those that are good, are good because they deliver much of what I want from a glass of wine: vibrancy, vitality, narrative. The conviction required to produce wine biodynamically underscores (and probably helped to generate) each of those characteristics.

They're like the exclamation points in my tasting journal.

Here are three wines and producers from the southern Rhône Valley that have punctuated my biodynamic wine experience recently.

2014 Garrigues, from MonTirius

"Garrigue" refers both to the herbal mix (thyme, rosemary, lavender) that is so typical of this region, and to the clay soil that is the first layer of MonTirius' terroir. The quality of that clay directly impacts the aroma of the wine, and it also illustrates the thorough cause-and-effect, life cycle awareness of this domain. A blend of 70% Grenache and 30% Syrah, the palate is full of red fruits, dark plums, and a hint of chocolate.

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