

EcoVine EcoEsprit™



Amity Wine – A Tradition of Excellence

Myron Redford is co-owner and winemaker at Amity Vineyards. He has been putting out some of the best wines in Oregon for more than 30 years and has been producing one of the most successful truly “organic” wines since 1990.

In 1974 Redford purchased a small, existing vineyard in, Oregon. His dream was to make world-class Pinot Noir using grapes from dry-farmed, hillside vineyards in Oregon’s Northern Willamette Valley. At that time, Redford was one of a handful of pioneers to realize that the Northern



Willamette Valley’s maritime climate, long growing season and Northern latitude were perfect for cultivating cool-climate wine grapes. The next two years were spent learning farming and making preparations for his first vintage of wine. Along with his on-the-job training, he took courses and seminars at both the University of California at Davis and Oregon State

University. He built the winery himself in 1974 and has been making wine ever since.

Soon people around the world were tasting Redford’s Pinots and moving to Oregon to try growing and bottling Pinot Noirs for themselves. Today, the Northern Willamette Valley is home to over 200 wineries. Oregon is universally recognized as one of the world’s great cool-climate wine growing regions

and Amity Vineyards continues to be recognized as one of Oregon’s best. Since those early days, Amity wines have won many national and international awards. Redford’s tradition of excellence continues. Amity Vineyard’s continue to wine premier wine competitions, garnering numerous awards.



What is ECO-WINE?

ECO-WINE® is Amity’s trade-marked name for their sulfite-free organic wines. Amity released Oregon’s first organically grown, sulfite-free Pinot Noir in 1991. For Redford, his goal was to make a wine about which people say, “This is good wine”, not “This is good, for an organic sulfite free wine.” He was convinced that with good grapes and careful cellar practices he could make good wine and bottle it without sulfites and they did! In 2006, the T.T.B., the federal agency regulating wine labels, made them change “Sulfite Free” to “No Detectable Sulfites”. The wine is still “sulfite free” as it had been for the past 16 years. In 2006 they expanded their Eco-Wine to include Gamay Noir, Marechal Foch and a Chardonnay/ Pinot Blanc blend.



ECO-WINE® “Sulfite Free”

Sulfites have been used for centuries to stabilize wines and purify barrels. They also occur naturally during fermentation. Because a small percentage of people have adverse reactions to the substance, a warning label of “contains sulfites” has been required on wines containing more than 10 parts per million (PPM). Less than that amount and no label is required. There are many wines made from organic grapes as more grape growers embrace those methods, but a truly “organic” wine can’t have sulfites added during processing, and there are precious few of those.

“Why, if sulfites are naturally produced by the yeast during fermentation, are there none in your wine?” This is perhaps the most asked question that Redford receives about his Eco-Wine. According to Redford, he has seen many other organic wines labeled “contains naturally occurring sulfites, no sulfites added,” but few that have “no detectable sulfites” like his. Other wines have no reference to sulfites on the label which means, according to federal law, that they contain less than 10 ppm SO₂ naturally occurring or not. To say “no sulfites added”, a winemaker must submit a sample to a federally approved laboratory and get results that show there are no sulfites. But again the question is, why aren’t there any? This question continued to stay with Redford.

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Redford attended a seminar at Oregon State University where a professor from Oregon Health Sciences University was doing a study of sulfite production by yeast in wine as part of a larger study of why some asthmatics are hypersensitive to SO₂. He said that some yeast produces more SO₂ than needed to complete fermentation. Others produce and consume the same amount. Still others seem



to scavenge it from over-producers. Fermentations are not carried out by just one type of yeast. This is particularly true of fermentations where no SO₂ is added to the crushed fruit. This is because SO₂ tends to kill or inhibit "wild" yeast while allowing the SO₂ tolerant commercial yeast to grow fast and dominate the fermentation. Redford's

Eco-Wine with no sulfites added to the crushed fruit seems to be fermented by natural yeasts that don't produce more SO₂ than they need, or the winery is home to lots of scavenger yeasts.

Redford and his winemaking team did an interesting experiment that supported that hypothesis. They added 50 ppm of SO₂ to a batch of grapes and then fermented them with no other sulfite additions. When the wine was finished fermenting, they sent a sample of it and their Eco-Wine to the laboratory that tests to verify sulfite free status. The laboratory found no sulfites in the Eco-Wine and only 5 ppm SO₂ in the other wine. Thus they could see that, in Amity Winery, the normal fermentation process consumes most of the added SO₂ as well as any that is naturally produced. Redford's Eco-Wine is so low in sulfites that none can be found during tests. So not only is he not required to place a warning label on his wines, but he also can boast on the bottle that there are "no detectable sulfites" in the wine.



WINE TERMS

Cold Stabilization: a common winemaking technique whereby harmless tartrate crystals and small protein molecules are intentionally precipitated out of the wine. This is done by quickly chilling it. Unstabilized wines sometimes become hazy or form snowflake-like crystals which are odorless and tasteless but look a bit unnerving.



Malolactic Fermentation: a process that has nothing to do with the regular fermentation since it does not involve yeasts or the production of alcohol. Malolactic fermentation is a natural chemical conversion of acid instigated by beneficial bacteria. During the process, the strident, sharp malic acid in grapes is converted to softer lactic acid.



This has the effect of softening the overall impression of acid when the wine is drunk. Malolactic fermentation may also contribute a buttery character to the wine and may add complexity. All red wines go through malolactic fermentation. White wines may or may not. If the winemaker wants to achieve a soft "mouthfeel" in the white wine then malolactic fermentation is induced. If he or she prefers to retain dramatic, snappy acidity, then malolactic fermentation is prevented, usually by the use of sulfur (but not in the case of unsulfited wines).

Mouthfeel: the tactile impression of a wine in your mouth. Like clothing, wine can feel soft, rough, velvety and so on.



Tannin: a kind of compound (phenol) derived from the skins, seeds, and stems of grapes and from barrels. The presence of tannin is beneficial, for it gives certain red wines a firm structure as well as the potential for long aging. Tannin is not tasted as much as it is felt. Highly tannic wines can have a slight puckery quality when young. If the wine has been made from mature, ripe grapes, however, this puckery quality will mellow and soften over time. Excessively dry, harsh, scratchy tannin is a negative and may never ameliorate. Harsh tannin, often called green or unripe tannin, most often results when grapes have been picked before they are completely physiologically mature. Most white wines have only tiny amounts of tannin because they are not fermented on their skins nor are they barrel aged for long periods.

