

# EcoVine EcoEsprit™



## Badger Mountain Evolves

As a young man, Bill Powers came to Washington State from Oklahoma. After approximately 20 years as an orchardist, he sold his apple orchards in 1982 and moved to Washington. He found the perfect piece of ground and began planting grape vines. Bill and his son, Greg, worked together as they established Badger Mountain Vineyards in 1982. The estate vineyard is situated on a south-facing slope of Badger Mountain in the Columbia Valley, Washington State's finest viticultural area.

In 1983 they partnered with Tim DeCook. Once their vines matured, they began selling their produce to another winery. Then in 1988, they made a few paramount changes and bottled their own wine under the Badger Mountain label.

After a trip to California where he met vineyard owners who were growing organically, he made some firm decisions. During 1988 Bill's farming philosophy changed as he began pursuing organic viticulture. With the transition to organic techniques underway, the winery was built in 1989. By 1990 Badger Mountain had converted to 100% organic viticulture and earned the distinction of becoming the first vineyard to be Certified Organic by the Washington State Department of Agriculture. Bill doesn't consider himself a trendsetter; he's just a farmer who raised apples in the early 1950's when DDT was the pesticide of choice and realized he wanted to farm without a lot of chemicals.

Bill takes an active role overseeing all aspects of the vineyard and the winery. He was named 1996 Washington Wine Grape Grower of the Year, an award which was bestowed by his colleagues for his progressive techniques and excellent recovery of the vineyard after the devastating freeze in the winter of 1996.

## Greg Powers – “Rising Star” Winemaker

Greg has been involved with Badger Mountain Vineyard since its inception. As Vineyard Manager from 1982 to 1990, Greg took an active role in the development of the vineyard and the production of the grapes. In 1990 his role moved him into the winery to oversee the expansion. Under Greg's leadership, the winemaking has been recognized by such notables as the Wine Spectator, which has referred to the winery as a “rising star”. Greg states, “We're trying to put the best possible product in people's hands. And hopefully you're putting something into your body that is grown right.” Greg continues his education with courses from the University of California at Davis. His eye is towards constantly improving quality both in the vineyard and the winery.



## Badger Mountain Goes Solar

Badger Mountain Vineyard has added solar power to their Kennewick tasting room. Solar power complements Badger Mountain's commitment to the environment through two decades of organic growing. The 30% federal tax credit and Washington State incentives help put the whole package together.

Bill Powers has always been ahead of his time. Now in his 80's, he is putting an environmentally-friendly foot forward to save energy. For Powers, it's just common sense, environmentally and economically.

Solar isn't the only alternative energy being used at Badger Mountain. A few years ago, after reading about homegrown biodiesel, Powers decided to start collecting used cooking oil from local restaurants and make biodiesel for the tractors. The winery also recycles all its garbage.



High fuel and energy prices and concerns about global warming have created a trend toward more eco-friendly living. Tax incentives in some states have spurred an interest in solar power.

# EcoVine EcoEsprit™



## Organic Viticulture

At Badger Mountain all-natural methods of controlling insects, fungus and weeds are used.

Progressive, natural farming techniques are at the heart of all of the wines. No herbicides, insecticides, pesticides, or chemical fertilizers are used. Only certified approved, naturally occurring substances are applied to the vineyard.

Badger Mountain's commitment to organic viticulture begins with a basic concern for the environment and extends to a healthier end product for the customers. The production of premium fruit is virtually assured by advantageous use of their favorable location, climate, volcanic soil, and organic techniques.

Insect control in the vineyard is monitored weekly. The goal is to create a good habitat for predatory (good guys) insects, and a poor habitat for the bad guys that damage the grapes. If the bad guys are overwhelming the good guys, corrective action is taken to balance the battle, such as applying natural soap compounds and other all-natural materials instead of pesticides.

Badger Mountain uses a European made in-row cultivator (hoe plowing) to control weeds in the grape rows and to mow the grass cover in the center. This replaces the use of herbicides. The Winery has partnered with local restaurant customers to collect waste oil, which they convert to biodiesel at the facility. They use the recovered fuel to power their tractors and trucks.

All pomace (grape skins and seeds) is composted and returned to the vineyards to promote fertility. Cover crops of vetch and rye are grown between the vine rows for nitrogen and humus. Additionally, all-natural blood meal and fish meal are added as needed for nitrogen and other trace elements. These natural, organic fertilizers are used instead of synthetic fertilizers to produce premium fruit.

The vines are trellised upright which improves sun penetration and air movement, developing character and balance in the grapes. Crop and shoot thinning controls vigor and limits yields, increasing the intensity of the flavors and aromas in the finished wines. Bill is always interested in improving the quality of the vineyard and 1996 saw the move towards re-trellising using the innovative Scott-Henry system.

The climate is well suited for world-class vinifera grapes, with weeks of 85-95 degree Fahrenheit daytime temperatures during the summer, and winters cold enough to eliminate vineyard pests. Badger Mountain soils are of volcanic origin. The average rainfall of less than eight inches, combined with deep, well-drained volcanic soil, allows for precisely controlled application of water through irrigation, another natural tool in controlling vine vigor and crop yields.



## No Sulfites Added Wines

Badger Mountain balances tradition and technology to produce bottlings of wines with no added sulfites. They are committed to producing organic wines which are recognized for their consistent high quality.

## ANOTHER WINE TERM

*Vinifera Grapes:* From a vine species of European origin, as almost all the well-known wine producing varieties are.

