



The Frey Family Vineyard

Frey Organic and Biodynamic Vineyards



Frey Vineyards are in Mendocino County, California, on the gentle slopes of Tomki Canyon in Redwood Valley. Above the vineyards is the origin of the Russian River watershed. The vineyards are surrounded by venerable Douglas fir, redwood, oak, and madrone forests that are home to fox, bear, pileated woodpecker, and owls. The Frey family's respect for the diversity and beauty of their property led directly to their deep commitment to organic and Biodynamic

farming. Founded in 1980 by Paul and Beba Frey and their twelve children, Frey Vineyards pioneered organic winemaking in the United States.

An ideal wine-growing microclimate in Redwood Valley is key to the quality of their grapes. Cooling afternoon coastal breezes, with plenty of summer sunshine ensure perfect ripeness. The foundation lies on healthy soil; the prerequisite for healthy plants. Insects and weeds are controlled with carefully-timed farm practices, including beneficial predators, natural sprays, scientific soil analysis, and organic composting.

Family owned and operated, members of the extended Frey family assist in every phase of production, from pruning to labeling. Today one can see three generation of Freys working together to produce award-winning ultra-premium organic wines.

Frey Vineyards Goes Biodynamic

Frey Vineyards took the organic philosophy one step further as it pioneered wine production by using certified biodynamical grown grapes. Founded in 1980, the family owned and operated winery is the oldest and largest organic winery in the United States. The 12 Frey children, their spouses and an upcoming flock of grandchildren handle all areas of the business from winemaking to sales. The grapes are grown organically and the wine is pure with no sulfites or any other common wine making chemicals added.



The vineyards are nestled in Redwood Valley in the heart of Mendocino County, California. A micro-climate of hot dry summers and cool coastal breezes with a surrounding mix of native vegetation makes this verdant valley an ideal "terrior" for growing premium wine grapes organically, as well as, Biodynamically.

Frey Vineyards was certified by the Demeter organization as a biodynamic farm in 1996. A biodynamic farm uses organic practices as well as the farm's own resources to create a modern, ecologically sound farm adapted to local conditions. The farm is viewed as a self-contained sustainable organism. Procedures such as making specialized compost with elements from all the kingdoms of nature, and carefully timed applications of humus building biodynamic preparations, undertake to restore vitality and life energy to the soil.



Frey Vineyards is now releasing a small line of estate bottled wines from their harvests of biodynamic grapes. The wines are completely free of additives and were fermented on wild yeast. A new label printed on tree-free bamboo paper features a watercolor of the biodynamic vineyards.

BEYOND ORGANIC TO BIODYNAMIC

Organically grown wines are made entirely from grapes grown in vineyards that follow strict organic farming principles. Synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, fungicides, and herbicides are prohibited. Biodynamic agriculture takes "organic" a step further to restore vitality and life energy to the soil. Biodynamic farming strives to strengthen its own unique closed ecosystem by creating a self-sufficient environment for the plants that result in more flavorful grapes with increased nutritional value. Biodynamics is a form of viticulture in which all the farming in the vineyard and the making of the wine is in accordance with the cycles of the moon and the alignment of the planets. Everything is timed to coincide with the earth's natural rhythms and energies so that the vine is optimally responsive to what the grower is asking it to do.

While organic has become a household word and commonly understood, biodynamic is a new term for most Americans. Widely practiced in Europe, Australia and New Zealand, biodynamic agriculture is the oldest system of organic farming. The Biodynamic agricultural method was originated in 1924 by Rudolf Steiner in his "Agriculture Course" and developed further in practice and research. Steiner (1861-1925) was an Austrian philosopher and educator. He developed a method of investigating spiritual realities in scientific ways, bringing a unique perspective to many fields including natural science, history, the arts, architecture, medicine, agriculture, curative work with those with disabilities, and education. He is best known in the U.S. as the founder of Waldorf schools.

Wines made from Biodynamically grown grapes are certified by regulatory organizations, recognized internationally as holding the highest standard of organic certification. Certification of Biodynamic farms and processed products by Demeter International, a non-profit ecological association, began in the late 1920's in Europe and has continued on in Austria, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, Egypt, England, France, Germany, Holland, Italy, Ireland, Luxembourg, Mexico, New Guinea, New Zealand, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, the United States and other countries.

Biodynamics may sound like "hocus pocus" to some, but highly esteemed vintners and winemakers claim

it works and are inspired by the results. Previous disbelieving winemakers are beginning to take notice and are even getting on the bandwagon. The proof, they report, is evidenced by the healthy, flavorful grapes and the award-winning wines.



Make Mine Organic!

By Barbara Ensrud

From the famous weekend

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Early organic wines ranged from weak and weird to downright awful. Today, happily, good organic wines not only are increasingly available—some of them are exceedingly good. There are two categories to note:

Organic. To be called "organic," a wine must be made from organically grown grapes: No pesticides, herbicides, chemical fertilizers or other synthetic products are used in the vineyard, and no sulfites are added to the wine. Minute quantities of sulfur dioxide (SO₂), a natural form of sulfur released during fermentation, exist in all wines and may sometimes exceed the tiny legal maximum of 10 parts per million (ppm). If none are added, however, the label may say "No Sulfite Added" or "NSA."

Organically grown. Wines simply made from organically grown grapes have smaller amounts of sulfites (40-100ppm) than are permitted for conventional wines (350ppm). Their labels must state "Contains Sulfites," as do organic wines from Europe, which are allowed up to 50ppm—so labels on imports cannot say "Organic."

Though today's winemakers use smaller amounts of SO₂, its antioxidant properties allow the wine to last longer, be more stable for travel and develop more character and flavor, as good wines should. Organic wines are best consumed very young—within two or three years—since the fruit may not hold up as long as in wines with a little added sulfur.

The recommended Frey wines not only taste good but also give new meaning to the time-honored toasts "To your health!" "Salud!" and "A votre santé!"