

EcoVine EcoEsprit™



**THE ORGANIC WINE WORKS' TASTING ROOM
LIVING AN ECO LIFESTYLE - EVERYDAY**

THE ORGANIC WINE WORKS: FEATURED WINERY OF THE MONTH.



Hallcrest Vineyards was founded in 1941 by Chafee Hall, who was widely recognized as a small winery pioneer in post-prohibition times. Hall produced wines made from his estate planted White Riesling and Cabernet Sauvignon grapes. The last vintage under the Hallcrest label was in 1964. Hall then retired due to a death in his family. In 1987, after a change in ownership, John Schumacher, his wife Lorraine, and sister Shirin purchased the Hallcrest site and restored the original name. A family operation once again, Hallcrest Vineyards is dedicated to perpetuating the estate's history and reputation for great wines. The Schumacher family have committed themselves to producing wines made in small lots from hand picked vineyards.



John Schumacher, though only 27 when he began operating Hallcrest, already had a long history of winemaking. His first attempt at producing wine came at the age of 13 when his parents left for vacation and left the plums on the tree. Before his mother could return to can her plums, John piled a bunch in a vat and waited for the magic to happen. Already interested in science and biology, Schumacker had read that naturally occurring yeasts on fruit skins would ferment juice into wine.

He admits that it "got pretty spoiled" but the next year they ended up with some good plum wine. By the end of high school, Schumacher already knew what vocation he would pursue and thus entered the University of California at Davis' enology program.

Hallcrest became the most award-winning winery in the Santa Cruz Mountains within two years. While the awards are largely a testament to John's winemaking proficiency, he claims, the success of the winery is a team effort.



Hallcrest Vineyards produces wine under a second label known as The Organic Wine Works. With the introduction of organically grown grapes and organically processed wine, Hallcrest Vineyards' brand, "The Organic Wine Works", became a pioneer in the ecological movement, establishing the first California Certified Organic Farmers (CCOF) vineyard on the Central Coast and the first Organic Processor to be recognized by the Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (BATF). Made with 100% certified organically grown fruit, and processed in accordance with the California Organic Foods Act of 1990, these wines are all produced without added sulfites. The Organic Wine Works is recognized by the BATF as being the first certified organic winery in the United States and the first to produce organic wines.

The Organic Wine Works has now been nationally recognized. Their Organic Wine Works has become the nation's first certified organic wine without the use of sulfites, receiving positive reviews by prominent wine writers in national publications and consistently winning awards at wine competitions.

Certified California Organic Farmers



California Certified Organic Farmers (CCOF) certification ensures that no pesticides, herbicides, fungicides or synthetic fertilizers are ever used. This certification process takes four years of testing. To learn more about the CCOF, visit www.ccof.org

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WHAT DO WE MEAN BY ORGANIC WINE?

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 products we consume. Grape growing is historically organic by origin, but most vineyards today are not organic. Wine is an agricultural product, considered a “living food”, in which the use of chemicals, pesticides, and added preservatives have increasingly become an issue to the consumer.

There is a lot of interest and much confusion about organic wine these days. The interest stems from wine consumers who want organic alternatives to conventional wines. Over the years, many wines have been released claiming that they are “organic”, but questions still exist about just what constitutes an organic wine. Most of the confusion has to do with the labeling of these organic wines. According to the National Organic Program (NOP) and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (BATF) who recognize four categories that organic wines can claim: 100% Organic, Made with Organic Ingredients, and Some Organic Ingredients.

100% Organic: For a wine to be labeled “100% Organic” and bear the USDA organic seal, it must be made from 100% organically produced ingredients (in other words, the grapes must be grown organically), have an ingredient statement on the label, and give information about who the certifying agency is. A wine in this category cannot have any added sulfites. It may have naturally occurring sulfites, but the total sulfite level must be less than 100 parts per million (ppm).

Organic: For a wine to be labeled “Organic” and bear the USDA organic seal, the wine must be made from at least 95% organic ingredients, have an ingredient statement on the label where organic ingredients are identified as being organic, and give information about who the certifying agency is. Again, a wine in this category cannot have any added sulfites, but it is allowed to have naturally occurring sulfites below 100 ppm. The non-organic 5% must either be a non-organically produced agricultural ingredient that is not organically available or another substance like added yeast.

Made with Organic Ingredients/Made with Organic Grapes/Organically Grown: To claim any of these statements, a wine must be made with at least 70% organic ingredients, have an ingredient statement on the label where organic ingredients are identified as being organic, and give information about who the certifying agency. A wine in this category may not bear the USDA seal. It may contain added and naturally occurring sulfites and the total must still be under

100 ppm. The 30% of non-organic ingredients must be non-organically produced agricultural ingredients that are not available in an organic form or another substance.

Some Organic Ingredients: This category is for products that have less than 70% organic ingredients. It cannot bear the USDA seal nor have information about a certifying agency or any other reference to organic content.

The Confusion about Sulfites: What seems to further complicate the subject of organic wine is the subject of sulfites. Sulfite or sulfur dioxide is used as a preservative in most wines. It has strong antimicrobial properties and some antioxidant properties. The health effects or consequences of sulfites are debatable though a small percent of the population does suffer a sensitivity reaction to them. A wine can make the claim, “No Added Sulfites – Contains Naturally Occurring Sulfites” or “Sulfite Free”. If sulfites are added or the total sulfites in the wine are above 10 ppm, it must make the statement, “Contains Sulfites”, “No Added Sulfites” means that the winery did not add sulfites to the wine but there may be naturally occurring sulfites in the wine that occur as a by-product of fermentation. A wine that makes the claim “Sulfite Free” must have no detectable sulfites. According to the NOP labeling laws, any of the NOP categories could claim to be Sulfite Free or have No Added Sulfites, but the 100% Organic and Organic categories must meet one of these criteria. The Made with Organic Ingredients and Some Organic Ingredients categories may or may not have added sulfites.

Most Common Questions About Non-sulfited Wine

How long is the shelf life?

The white wines show well within a year and a half. Studies show that most white wines are consumed within a week after purchase, so the shelf life rarely poses any limitations. The red wines generally can be kept for two to three years without any problems. Some non-sulfited reds have aged for six to eight years and have held together beautifully. It is recommended, as with any fine wine, to store the wines at less than 60° F and to keep out of direct sunlight.

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

Yes and No. Research has shown that most of non-sulfited wines have little or no naturally occurring sulfites. Although some wines do produce over 10ppm (the legal threshold where labels must state that wines contain sulfites), this is very uncommon.

Vicky Lorelli Founder 