

EcoVine EcoEsprit™



ORGANIC ESTATE VINEYARDS IN OJAI

CASA BARRANCA'S CERTIFIED WINERY



At Casa Barranca, owners Bill Moses and his family's life goal was to find a synthesis of the finest Old World traditions with appropriate contemporary tools and techniques to handcraft extraordinary wine. They believe in natural, sustainable practices and strive for an optimal balance in their approach to making their organic wine.

Student Turned Vintner

Bill Moses learned about making wine in the 1980's. He was a student living with a family at their small farm and vineyard in the South France. It was there that he found his passion. His values as a winegrower were further developed as he steeped himself in the philosophy and lifestyle of the American Arts and Crafts Movement.

Moses started making wine for himself using a communal winemaking space in Santa Maria, California. About 11 years ago Moses, a former New York investment banker, moved to Ojai, California, which lies in Ventura County south of the major wine producing regions of Santa Barbara

County. He bought the Pratt House, an Ojai landmark built in 1909 by Charles and Henry Greene, highly respected brothers known for their Craftsman-era architecture. Moses planted an organic, 2-acre vineyard on his new estate. The winery facility is the first certified organic winery on the Central Coast. It was converted from a century-old subterranean stone, water cistern into a cellar. He used local craftsmen who employed Old World skills to make a custom oak hopper – a giant funnel to transfer grapes from picking bins into a barrel shaped stemmer-crusher. Both the estate and winery draw their water from an artesian spring and are powered by solar power.



Consistent with the standards of the American Arts and Crafts Movement, Moses focuses on handling organic grapes with an environmental discipline as rigorous as the vineyard care. He is devoted to environmentally sustainable practices as a method to grow the highest quality wine grapes and weave all of those influences together into his grape growing, wine making and land stewarding. Earth



friendly practices are used, from hand-picking organic grapes and using gravity for a gentle racking of the wine to cleaning with organic solutions.

Nutrient-rich squeezed grape matter left over after pressing goes into fertilizing the vineyards to make the ultimate in organic wine. "I fashion the wine with same deep respect and love as I have for this beautiful earth we call home", says Moses.

Why Go Organic?

- **Protect future generations** from the harmful chemicals they will be fed with conventionally grown food and food-based beverages.
- **Prevent soil erosion** caused by the chemicals sprayed on it.
- **Protect the water quality** from contaminating chemicals.
- **Save energy** by the use of human labor instead of farming machinery.
- **Protect farm worker health** : over one million workers suffer from poisoning each year.
- **Promote biodiversity** : plants need to be rotated because every plant needs a different kind of nutrient variety. This means that crops need to be switched so the land isn't being drained of all its nutrients at once. Commercial farming doesn't always do this.

Natural Wines – Not a Fad

Astor Wines and Spirits in New York City is renown for arranging popular in-house tastings around the country. Last year they rented 500 glasses for a three-hour event. Based on their past experience, that should have been more than enough. But within an hour, all the glasses had been used. You would think that someone was giving away the best and most expensive wines of the year. But, no, they were pouring reasonably priced “natural wines”.

Until recently, wines grown without chemicals and fermented with natural yeast, were a specialty mostly appreciated by a small following. Vintners who make conventional wines use a variety of techniques and ingredients to manipulate the flavor and texture of their end product, whether it is a \$10 or a \$100 bottle. Natural wines, alternatively, are created by winemakers who take an artisan's approach to what they produce, allowing their wine to develop in the purest way possible.

There is nothing “faddish” about these natural wines. Joe Dressner, a New York City-based importer, specializing in natural wines, says people buy “real wines” because “it's a sensory preference, which prefers nature to technology. This is not about being a purist.” These people just believe the wines taste better.

Natural wines are usually subtler and more complex than conventional wines, although some are edgy until aged awhile. Wine lovers who expect a Pinot Noir that smells like cherry-vanilla may find it an adjustment to savor one with an earthier bouquet. Once you develop a taste for “artisanal wine”, it may be difficult to return to old favorites.

Quotes of the Month

“Wine is a living thing. It is made, not only of grapes and yeasts, but of skill and patience. When drinking it remember that to the making of that wine has gone, not only the labor and care of years, but the experience of centuries.” Allan Sichel

Wine Terminology

FINING - “Fining” is a process in wine making which removes floating particles present in wine barrels. It is one of the wine processing stages, which uses proteins obtained from animal products to remove unwanted color, haze, astringency, flavors, etc. The fining agents are obtained from animals which when put in wines coagulates with the particles and settles on the base as sediment. Egg white (a pure protein), casein (a protein obtained from milk) and gelatin (obtained from bones and cartilage) are common fining agents. Usually, the fining agent itself is eliminated before the wine is bottled.

VEGAN – Vegan wines are the wines made without the use of any sort of animal products.

Vicky Lorelli Founder 