



LA ESPONTÁNEA
brinda por lo natural

THE COMPLETE GUIDE

what is natural wine and
how to appreciate it



**NATURAL WINE IS
RECENTLY TRENDY, IT IS
NOT NEW. PEOPLE HAVE
BEEN MAKING FERMENTED
GRAPE JUICE WITHOUT
ADDITIVES FOR THOUSANDS
OF YEARS.**

**IT'S CONVENTIONAL WINE
THAT'S ACTUALLY NEW
WITH ALL THE MODERN
TECHNOLOGY AND THE
ADDED CHEMICAL
ADDITIVES. YOU'RE READY
TO EXPERIENCE WINE AS
REAL AS IT IS. ENJOY!**

What is Natural Wine?

No set definition of natural wine exists, however, there are a few widely agreed upon viticulture and vinification practices that must be followed for a wine / producer to be dubbed as such.

Let's say that **natural wine is more of a concept than a well-defined category** with agreed-upon characteristics.



Natural wine, then, **is made from grapes not sprayed with pesticides or herbicides**. Natural winemakers **handpick their grapes** instead of relying on machines to harvest them.

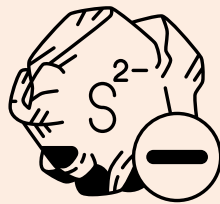
When it comes to turning those hand picked grapes into juice, natural winemakers rely on **native yeast**, the stuff that's whizzing around in the air and will land on grapes if you put them in a vat for long enough, to set off **spontaneous fermentation**.

And unlike most conventional winemakers, **they don't use any additives** (like fake oak flavor, sugar, acid, egg white, etc.) in the winemaking process.

What's sulfites? Why are they used?

Sulfites prevent browning or discoloration in food like baked goods, condiments, potatoes and shrimp. The chemicals are particularly prevalent in dried fruit like apricots, to preserve the light coloring after drying.

Winemakers also use sulfites to maintain freshness and prevent oxidation. In the '70s and '80s, the use of sulfites as food preservatives drastically increased, as did the number of people who began experiencing reactions.



The presence of sulfites doesn't necessarily disqualify a bottle from the natural wine category, though. **Small amounts of sulfites — around 10 to 40 mg/l — are in natural wine circles generally considered an acceptable amount of preservative to add in the bottling stage.**

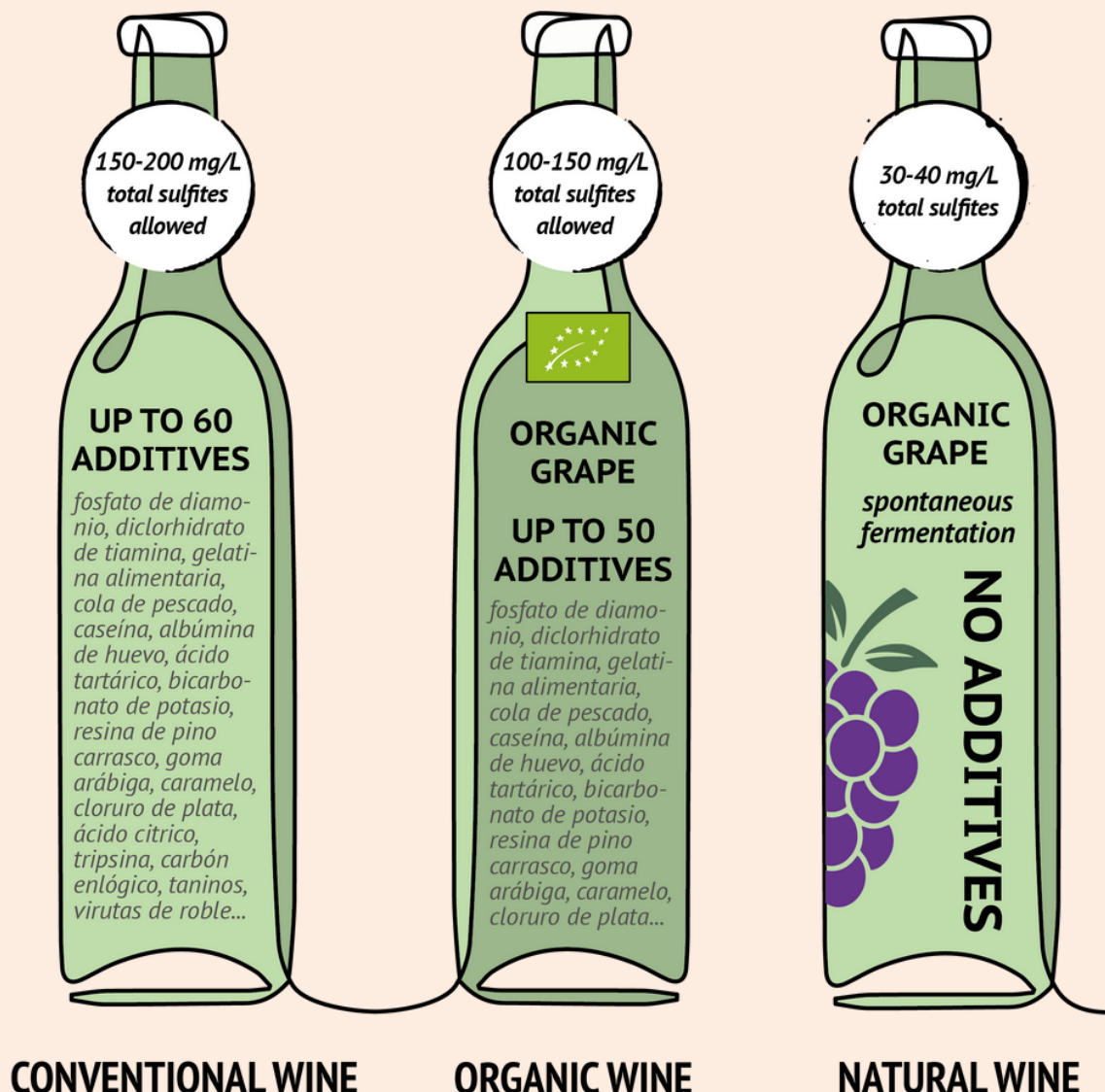
Conventional wine, on the other hand, often uses much higher amounts of the stuff, which some natural wine supporters think “deadens” the flavor of the finished product.

The purest of the pure — naturally fermented grape juice with no added sulfites — **is often called “zero-zero,”** referring to the lack of added anything.

Are Natural Wines and Organic Wines the same thing?

Not exactly. **Organic wines simply define the way in which the grapes has been farmed**, organically, with no use of synthetic chemical products. Then in the cellar the wine-maker is actually allowed to use additives and sulfites with no much restriction.

On the other hand, **natural wines are made with organic grapes and see low-intervention in the cellar** (only a very small amount of sulfites are allowed if needed)



I heard about “Biodynamic wines”.

What are they?

The official definition of biodynamic farming according to the Biodynamic Farming and Gardening Association is **“a spiritual-ethical-ecological approach to agriculture, gardens, food production and nutrition.”** Biodynamic wine is made with a set of farming practices that views the farm or vineyard as one solid organism.

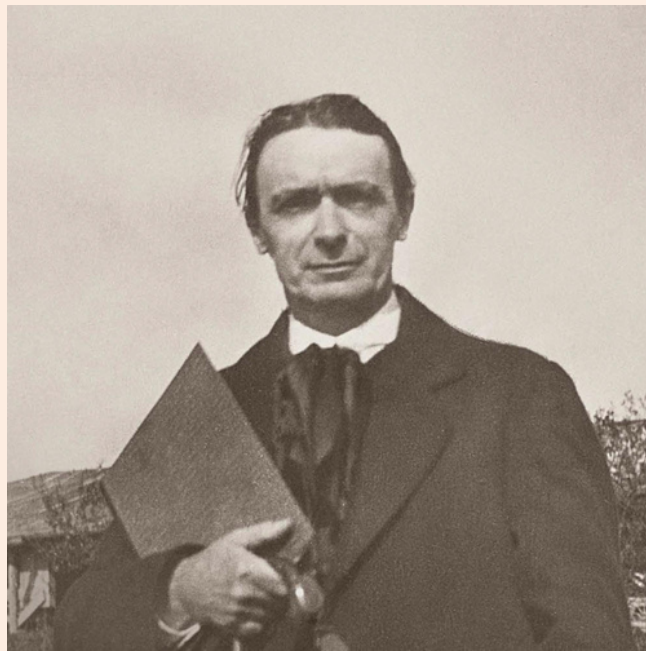
The ecosystem functions as a whole, with each portion of the farm or vineyard contributing to the next. **The idea is to create a self-sustaining system. Natural materials, soils, and composts are used to sustain the vineyard.**

Chemical fertilizers and pesticides are forbidden for the sake of soil fertility. **A range of animals from ducks to horses to sheep live on the soil and fertilize it, creating a rich, fertile environment for the vines to grow in.**



cow horn manure or preparation 500

Biodynamic farming calls for specific and sometimes strange compost and field preparations. One of these is known as cow horn manure or preparation 500. **Cow horns are stuffed with manure compost and buried into the ground all through the winter, then later excavated.** Upon excavation, the stuffed material is spread throughout the vineyard.



Rudolf Steiner was an Austrian scientist, philosopher and artist who lived from 1861-1925. His interests were not only in education, but also in a wide range of fields such as medicine, agriculture, nutrition, social renewal, the environment. He's the father of Biodynamic agriculture

Organic and Biodynamic wines are not the same. Both are similar in the sense that both incorporate practices without the use of chemicals. However, to keep it as simple as possible, **organic wine is produced with organic grapes. Biodynamic farming takes other factors into account when farming, such as the lunar calendar and astrology.** The farming is more about the entire lifeblood of a vineyard – other plants, insects, animals – not just the grapes.

What's the origin of natural wines?

Most people agree that the **modern natural wine movement began in rural France**, between the late 70's and early 80's, where a handful of low-intervention winemakers who had been toiling (and tilling) in their own organic bubbles found out about each other and began growing a community.

These were natural winemakers who were isolated in their appellations [regions], maybe **the only ones there working organically in the vines with little to no additives in the cellar.**



Are there other ways to call “natural wine”?

Yes, there are. Many people – winemakers, distributors, writers, sommeliers – take issue with the term “natural wine.” Some prefer the phrase **“low-intervention”** wine, or **“naked”** wine, or **“raw”** wine.

But **“natural wine”** is the term that is most widely used, and anyone at a natural-inclined wine store, wine bar, or restaurant will know what you mean when you use it.

What's the misconception about natural wine?

Given that natural wine is often described as “cloudy,” “funky,” and/or “barnyard-y,” **many people assume that it's always loudly, inherently weird.**

While natural wine is often unfiltered (that leads to cloudiness) and can veer sharply into funky territory, there's also lots of natural wine that won't feel like an acquired taste if you're used to buying yours at the supermarket or local shop.



There's a misconception that natural wine is one thing — that it's 'funky' or 'not clean'. This is not fair. Because natural wine can still honor your palate if you've been drinking wine from the grocery store, but the cool thing is that it's chemical-free, and that's awesome.

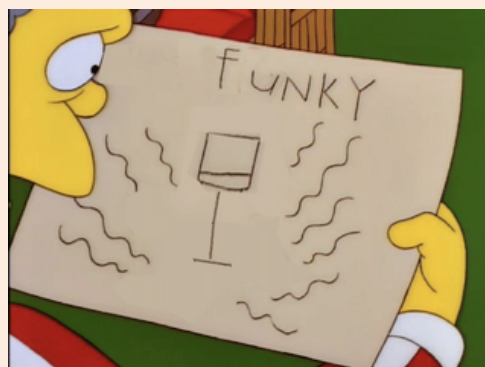
So, the next time you hear about faults, ask yourself: Have I enjoyed the wine? Did I like it? **The best test of whether the wine is faulty is to decide if you like drinking it. If the answer is “yes”, then go ahead.**

What are the “cool terms” of the natural wine world?

Besides the “conventional terms” to describe a wine such as light-medium-full bodied, fruity, floral, earthy etc there are few terms strictly within the natural wine world.

Funky: When people say they want something funky, that means they’re adventurous and they want to **explore**. The wine can smell a bit like horses (technical term: brett), barnyard or polish nails (technical term: volatile acidity)

They may not have a lot of knowledge or experience with natural wines, but **they have an open mind**. Traditionally, funky meant that something was off. While some still use “funky” to describe a wine that has obvious or unpleasant flaws, **many now employ it as a synonym for “unconventional,”** or as a sort of catch-all adjective for those hard-to-pin-down qualities that make **natural wines unique and appealing**. For fans of these wines, the right type of funk is an indicator of authenticity and low-intervention.



Glou-glou: a popular type of natural wine made to be drunk without having to think about it too much. (The French term is onomatopoeic, their version of “glug-glug.”)

It does generally taste like delicious electrified juice.

These are lighter red wines, often served chilled, and downed quickly.



Freaky by Progetto Sete is a glou glou wine



Brutal by Bodegas Cueva is a pet-nat wine



Les Copines des Copains by Hubert et Heidi is an orange wine

Pet-Nats: Pétillant-Naturel (**natural sparkling**) is a catch-all term for practically any sparkling wine made in the **méthode ancestrale**, meaning the wine is bottled before primary fermentation is finished, **without the addition of secondary yeasts or sugars.**

Orange: Orange wine is a bit of a misnomer. **It is not a wine made with oranges.** Orange wine is something entirely different. It's a **type of white wine made by leaving the grape skins and seeds in contact with the juice**, creating a deep orange-hued finished product. They are also called **“white-macerated wine”, “skin-contact wine”** and **“amber wine”**.

When you taste wines, what do you look for?

Tasting wine, rather than just drinking it, **requires your full focus to assess its quality**, and to respect the hard work the vigneron put into making it. Here we look at a few things to consider

- **Appearance** (visual): is it clear, is it cloudy, is it red/white light or intense?
- **Aroma and Flavour** (nose and palate): what does it remind you of? Is it fresh, floral, stony and fruity, or does it smell old and musty?
- **Taste** (palate): think about its sweetness, bitterness, sourness, freshness and fruit ripeness
- **Finish** (palate): lastly, focus on the intensity of flavours, and their length on the 'finish' - the time that taste stays in your mouth after the wine is swallowed. Does it build and develop?

One of the most important to think to remember when drinking wine: If just after opening the bottle and pouring the first glass, the wine doesn't smell and taste brilliant, don't give it up. It's normal. Swirl the wine to expose it to more oxygen and mobilise its aroma. Sink your nose in for a sniff and consider the perfume.

If it's still not brilliant, consider letting the bottle open for 30 minutes or so. **Most of the time just a bit of oxygen makes a huge difference.**

The Lexicon of usefulness

Although putting wine into words is still frequently frustrating, we've settled on a lexicon to try to describe it without eye-rolling.

Energy: Whether young white wine or aged red wine, good wine has energy. Like the feeling you get in the diaphragm from sub-bass when next to a nightclub sound system...other words: **vitality, exuberance, life.**

Texture: Aside from its aroma and flavour, a wine can also be defined by its texture and shape in your mouth. Wine can be described as being oily, direct, blocky or tannins that are dry or velvety. Other words: **lean, opulent, sinewy, linear, round** - to name but a few.

Harmony: Alongside energy and texture, harmony is wine's other most important trait. **Harmoniousness means that all elements are perfectly aligned** and the wine feels effortless.

Freshness: A wine's acidity has most to do with how fresh it feels, alongside other considerations such as **salinity, precision, elegance, tension and purity.** Without freshness a wine is clumsy and dead.

Layers: You find something fresh in a different bandwidth each time you put your nose back in the glass. **Aromatic complexity** is something that usually **develops with age.**



Carbonic, no sulphur, totally reduced,
fizzy as fuck, VA, mousy, bretty,
you're going to love it!



www.laespontanea.wine