

# Study: Biodynamic, organic vineyards produce better wine

By Thomas Ulrich, Sierra

For decades, vineyard managers and wine aficionados have wondered whether growing organic and biodynamic grapes is worth the trouble. Last summer, the *Journal of Wine Economics* may have unveiled the answer via a report from researchers out of UCLA's Institute of the Environment and Sustainability. For the study, environmental economists evaluated the results of 74,148 wines reviewed by Wine Spectator, Wine Advocate, or Wine Enthusiast, accounting for the variation in region, vintage, and variety. They discovered that wine made from biodynamic and organic grapes on average scored four points higher on a 100-point scale than wine made from conventionally grown grapes.

"We found that organic or biodynamic farming made a significant difference in wine quality," says lead author Magali Delmas, an environmental economist and professor at the UCLA Anderson School of Management.

Dozens of eco-certified California vineyards are embracing dry, no-till, and biodynamic farming. Vignerons cultivate the land organically, tend farm animals across a varied landscape, blend their own compost, mix and apply their own soil preparations, and harvest grapes according to a celestial calendar. To find out exactly how regenerative vineyard practices are enhancing the quality of grapes, enriching the soil, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions, I ventured onto two such leading vignerons' vineyards—one of whom farms biodynamically and the other organically.

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