LA PRODUCTERIA

Almacén de Vinos Naturales

AREN´T ALL WINES, NATURAL WINES?

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What is a natural wine?

Finding a good wine from our criteria of natural and healthy foods that they do not have any toxicity is not so easy. There are thousands of different wines on the market, with different seals, labels, and certifications, but what we are looking for a product that still preserve and respect the quality of the grape, and that they provide us with their healthy ingredients, without adding toxic substances.

Natural wine is what we all believe wine should be: made with **100% GRAPE, ONLY GRAPE AND WITHOUT ADDITIVES** of any kind, respecting the natural process of fermentation.

Different types of wine

Conventional wines

- In the vineyard, conventional cultivation is carried out, being able to use herbicides, pesticides, synthetic fertilizers ... and everything allowed in the cultivation of conventional vineyards.

- In the winery the transformation of must into wine is carried out, being able to use all the chemistry and oenological processes authorized by the EU.

Certified organic wines

- The organic cultivation of grapes has been regulated by the EU for many years, **but not its transformation into wine**: that is why the bottles used to say, "wine from organic farming grapes".

- Since 2012 the EU has already regulated the production of organic wine and that is why we can already find labels that certify it. Now, it turns out that this regulation allows practically all the additives found in conventional wines to be added. In the list of additives, they say that these must be of ecological origin "if they are available", but ... what if they are not available?

According to the Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 203/2012 (March 8, 2012), these are the products and substances authorized for use or addition in organic products in the wine sector: Air, oxygen gaseous, cellulose, diatomaceous earth, nitrogen, carbon dioxide, argon, yeast, diammonium phosphate, sulfur dioxide, thiamine dihydrochloride, potassium bisulfide or potassium metabisulfite, oenological carbons, food gelatin Protein materials of vegetable origin from wheat or peas, fishtail, egg albumin, tannins, casein, potassium caseinates, silicon dioxide, bentonite, pectolytic enzymes, lactic acid, tartaric acid, calcium carbonate, neutral potassium tartrate, potassium bicarbonate, Aleppo pine resin, lactic bacteria, l-ascorbic acid, nitrogen, acid citric, metatartaric acid, acacia, potassium bitartrate, copper citrate, copper sulfate, oak wood chips, potassium alginate, calcium sulfate.

If this list is extensive in the case of organic wines, imagine how much additives will contain a conventional wine. In this segment we find several macro wineries with millions of bottles that make "organic wines" certified as such. **This is what we call “the industrialization of the ecological”.**

Biodynamic wines (certified by Demeter)

- It is a little bit complex and controversial, but in summary, it could be said that there are wines made following the biodynamic principles of Rudolf Steiner, which takes in consideration that agriculture is part of a whole, that includes all the elements of the cosmos between which energies flow and between there must be a full balance. These wines may be certified as organic (they can include all the additives allowed in these wines) or they may be natural (and not include any).

NATURAL WINES

- Natural wine is the wine obtained with the minimum intervention in all processes (cultivation, harvesting, elaboration, transformation). There are wines made by small producers and without additives of any kind and in any phase of the process. only and exceptionally, they may contain sulfites in limited quantities, it is normally held that it should have a level below 20 mg/l.

- Of course, the cultivation must be organic by conscience, either with or without a certificate. And in the elaboration, there should not be additives, nor any oenological process that distorts its nature (without micro-oxygenations, nor reverse osmosis, nor aggressive filtration, nor clarification, etc.…). Without adding or removing anything. The term "natural" is used to distinguish it from organic wines, which may contain additives and make use of certain oenological processes as explained before.

How are natural wines regulated?

There is no regulatory organization for natural wines, and the real producers of natural wines wish to continue like this, since that would open the door to the industrialization of natural wine and would suffer the same fate as organic wine.

We must be careful because there is a tendency to associate "natural wine" with "wine without sulfites" and it is much more than that. In fact, it is already happening that some macro wineries are putting out small runs of what they call "natural wine". They may not contain sulfites, but they can contain other substitutes, or even other additives, or use equally denaturing oenological methods.

In Europe there are various associations of natural wine producers that defend these principles, although each one has its own nuances, and for this reason they should not be used as a 100% guarantee seal, but we can do it as a simple guide or starting point.

- Spain: PVN, http://www.vinosnaturales.org
- Italy: Vin Natur, Vini Veri...
- France: AVN, Vins SAINS, ...

Therefore, the chain of trust must be the guarantee. The option is to go to a trusted winery / store that we can trust or at least request information or documents about products.

Sulfites

Sulfur Anhydride or Sulfur Dioxide (SO^2) is a chemical preservative that is added to many foods and beverages. We can see them with other names like "sulfites", "SO^2", or the famous "E220 to E228" but they all refer to the same thing.

It is obtained in various ways, burning sulfur in powder or tablets, from metabisulphite or directly in gas that dissolves in water. Modern oenology justifies its usefulness because it is antioxidant, fungicidal, bactericidal, it is used to prevent oxidation in wine and to industrially control the different processes that occur from the time the grape enters the winery until it becomes wine.

But that "utility" only makes sense because modern oenology starts from an idea of industrial winemaking and disrespectful with the environment. For example, if the grapes used to make wine come from a vineyard treated with pesticides, herbicides and synthetic fertilizers, it will most likely not have the wild yeasts necessary for the subsequent fermentation, therefore, the winemaker will plant selected yeasts in the laboratory and Given this, it will choose those yeasts that give the most commercial flavor and aroma profile and will neutralize (with the addition of sulfur) the few yeasts that the grape had naturally.

Additionally, in modern oenology it is common to control the malolactic fermentation of wines by inoculating lactic acid bacteria, and to have it under control it will use sulfur again. It is also common to carry out racking or other oxygenation methods to

accelerate the evolution of the wines and make them suitable for consumption more quickly, for which it will use sulfurous again so that the wines are not spoiled by this oxygenation.

This would be a summary of the most common practices, but there are many other forms of intervention / manipulation in winemaking.

In summary, the overproduction and the performance of various oenological processes aimed at obtaining a certain aromatic profile, color, and flavor, force the use of these sulfurous in this type of wine.

The consequences of using sulfurous are that it alters the nature of the wine; from certain quantities it is already appreciable in its flavor and aroma; **and they can also cause adverse reactions in asthmatics, headaches, gastrointestinal irritation, or even skin reactions.**

https://www.aditivos-alimentarios.com/2016/01/E220.html
http://www.food-info.net/es/e/e220.htm

Now, if we start from a healthy grape full of life (wild yeasts), with the necessary quality for winemaking (acidity, potential alcohol, etc.) and which is not going to undergo any process that alters its nature, then there is no need to dip into the sulfurous. A wine made in this way and with a healthy grape will have its natural preservatives, **mainly: alcohol, tannins, and acidity**. When we talk about natural wines, we understand that they do not have added sulfites.

Sometimes, when a natural wine is analyzed, it may be that, although they have not been added sulfites in the elaboration, their presence is detected, in insignificant quantities.

¿Why is it detected if it has not been added in the elaboration?

But why is it detected if it has not been added in the elaboration? It must be taken into consideration that there are methods of analysis with margins of error of 5, 10 and up to 15 milligrams / liter. And it must also be borne in mind that in these cases what will be detected is Total or combined SO2 (not Free or active SO2), and therefore the "not active" and less harmful is detected. In any case, the causes of its presence could be:

- The sulfur used in the vineyard as a fungicide, if there are few treatments, the amount could be negligible and harmless (<10 mg / l).

- The environmental conditions or characteristics of the soil, the amount would be more or less high depending on each case.

- The use of sulfur in the cleaning and disinfection of barrels. Here, if the concentrations were very high, it would be almost like talking about added SO2.

To get an idea of the permitted levels of Sulfites (Total SO2):

- In conventional white or rosé wines: max 200 mg / liter
- In conventional red wines: max 150 mg / liter (EC

(Regulation No. 606/2009 of the Commission of July 10, 2009 that establishes the authorized oenological practices).

Total SO2 allowed in certified organic white wines: maximum 150 mg / liter.

(Implementing Regulation (EU) No. 203/2012 of the Commission of March 8, 2012 on practices in organic wine).

Total SO2 allowed in natural wines: 20 mg / liter. This amount is not regulated, it is a commonly accepted maximum and the most common is that sulfites are NOT added in natural wines as we explained before.

Wine labels

European regulations require that wines containing more than 10 mg / liter indicate the expression "**Contains sulfites**" on their label.

We believe that this is an unfair rule, because more than 90% of the wines produced in Spain have sulfites added in generous quantities. Perhaps the fair thing should be that the EU requires to indicate the complete list of ingredients and to inform about the exact number of sulfites, **it is not the same 11 mg/lt than 200 mg/lt.**

The entire selection of La Producteria wines does not contain any added sulfites, we have wines from several wineries that the SO2 reading in the chemical reports that they have presented to us, show an insignificant value that practically cannot be read.

Laboratories have such an assumption that wines carry sulfites in large quantities that it is difficult to find a laboratory that measures accurately. Most are not prepared to measure them in the exact amount, but calculate, for example, from 10 to 10, or even more margin. For this reason, in some analyzes, the result shown is indicated in tens, it is "less than" <10 mg / l, or <70 mg / l, or <150 mg / l, etc. ...

For a winemaker, the important thing will be to know:

- If it has more than 10 mg / liter, because then, it must say "contains sulfites" and,
- That it does not exceed the legal limits, that is, it is below 200 mg / l (white wines) or 150 mg / l (red wines)

Why doesn't the wine label have an ingredient list?

It is interesting but wine, despite being considered a food, is excluded by the EU from the obligation to indicate the list of ingredients on its label (according to DIRECTIVE 2000/13 / EC OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of March 20, 2000 (Art. 6.3)).

The only thing that is required of wines is that they indicate the presence of certain ingredients that can cause allergies or intolerances:

- Sulfites:
  - "Contains sulfites" (sulfur dioxide / sulfites / SO^2, provided it is present in concentrations greater than 10 mg / liter).

- Eggs and dairy:
  - Mention the presence of "eggs and egg-based products" or "milk and its derivatives." This is mentioned in wines made after 2012.

Helpful Links:

https://www.soloelamorsalvaraelmundo.com
http://www.barrancooscuro.com
http://lesmauvaisgarcons.es
https://www.natural-wines.com/
https://www.raisin.digital/en/