



**ALLIANCE WINE**



**SUSTAINABILITY  
STORIES**

# THE PRODUCERS

**Iona, South Africa**

**Bodegas y Viñedos Tinedo, La Mancha**

**Paul Hobbs, California**

**Ricca Terra, Riverlands**

**Ch. de l'Escarelle, Provence**

**Bodegas AltoLandon, La Mancha**

**San Polino, Tuscany**

**Celler de Capçanes, Monstant**

# INTRODUCTION

The term sustainability is a broad and complex concept that incorporates not only environmental, but also social and economic consequences. At its heart, being sustainable is about durability... But in the long term the execution of sustainability should be seen the path to follow to generate positive impact while taking into consideration the triple balance between people, planet, and profit.

By 2050 we will need a planet that is 30% bigger in order to support the human race (if we continue growing at the present rate) ... which means that by 2100 we will need two planets! It's clear that growth and development, as we know it today, cannot continue without some changes.

## **What does sustainability mean for the wine trade?**

Let's start with the area we most commonly think about when speaking of sustainability: the **environment**. Organic, biodynamic, regenerative, and Integrated Pest Management (IPM) practices overlap and are part of sustainable agriculture, but not the whole picture ...

In the vineyard, resource management, with careful use of water and chemicals are obvious ways to minimize environmental damage, preserve the soil quality, and protect biodiversity. Some of the practices being adopted are regeneration of the organic matter bringing biodiversity, the use of natural enemies against pests, and drip irrigation systems.

In the winery, renewable energy, waste management

practices, circular economy initiatives, digital and new technologies, and eco design standards can ensure that the glass, corks and all materials required for the winemaking process to meet sustainability standards. The wine industry has a **social** responsibility, to its employees, their families and wider communities, particularly in countries where health care, education, housing and the erosion of culture due to industrial expansion are all issues. Other problems included gender inequality, which is strongly related to the long standing traditional status of the wine industry, and the fact that small wineries and growers struggle to survive due to the increasing amount of consolidation in the wine industry.

In addition, the challenges of Covid have seen some wineries being forced to guarantee employment and income for their workers, where government support is lacking.

**Lastly, economic** viability balances profit with investment for the future and in order to run the economy and ensure the economic development of the wine industry, investment in social and environmental aspects are essential, as without healthy soils, vines and people, their businesses would have no longevity.

**Alliance Wine**, as a business, is aiming to contribute to the creation of a positive impact in the wine industry with our products and services, and we are also helping our suppliers to become more and more resilient and sustainable, and encouraging them to create a more positive impact over time.

*Marta Juega Rivera,  
Alliance Wine Sustainability Manger & Winemaker*



# Iona | Elgin | South Africa

*Actions speak louder than words, so it was with keen interest that we spoke with **Andrew Gunn**, about how the Iona estate has come to be the social and cultural hub for just over 30 employees and their families.*

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Most farmers secure their workers from surrounding villages and townships, however due to land tenure rights in South Africa, whereby anyone living on a farm for more than 10 years are entitled to permanent residence, we have a collection of 20 homes on the farm which house all our permanent workers and their families. It is a significant responsibility in that the farm acts as a small closely knit community, all interdependent on each other for social harmony and happiness. We provide additional support by way of infrastructure and maintenance, water, sewage, electricity and transport as we're 20km for the nearest town.

Our workers get 15 days paid holiday, a heavily subsidised retirement plan, annual bonuses and are paid almost double the minimum wage. On retirement our staff can return to their ancestral homes where many use the income to build homes for themselves and their families. Should any worker choose to continue living on the farm they can. Education is vital, so their children have the opportunity to attend either the local private school or the nearest government schools.

When I purchased the farm in 1997 I introduced a worker equity scheme where the workers acquired a share-holding in the farm which they had the right to sell back on retirement or resignation, giving them some ownership and commitment to the success and capital growth of the business.

At Iona, staff turnover is almost non-existent and most workers have in excess of 15 years' service with quite a number in excess of 25 years. Thys Windvogel, who retired recently at the age of 70 had been working on the farm for 35 years and has chosen to continue living here with his children and grandchildren, who also work for us.

Training is something we encourage; we have a very flat operating structure and the emphasis is on multi-tasking, with workers being trained in all aspects of the farming and winemaking activities.

“Respect for the soil and the vines is paramount, and I will continue to employ more hands and use organic and biodynamic products in favour of cheaper hard chemicals.”





# Iona | Elgin | South Africa

*"I don't know what sustainability means anymore, in the agricultural world anyway. It's become a tired and dirty word that is bandied about recklessly by companies and individuals who are usually still putting most of the emphasis on financial sustainability with far less attention paid to the other two legs of the chair which are social and environmental." - Rozy Gunn*

The reason for this is primarily because you can get away with neglecting the social and environmental impact far longer than the financial impact in the world we operate in today.

The million-dollar question of course is 'how much is enough?' which is as useful as asking 'how long is a piece of string?' Some of us just seem to need so much more than is naturally available to us, and the obvious way of overcoming this inconvenience is to take advantage of something or someone. In agriculture this plays itself out in the use of superficial cost-effective methods of dealing with disease and weeds and nutrition, which usually means using systemic chemicals, synthetic fertilizers and herbicides. I don't know how sustainable that is for soil, water or air or the humans that are required to apply them in terms of long-term health, never mind the end consumer. In an age where the expectation of "get more for less" is more or less taught,

it requires a bit of a leap to "pay more for less" and support honestly grown produce from conscious producers.

I have found provenance to be a useful tool and compass in an increasingly cut-throat agricultural mine field. This basically translates as knowing or at least being acutely aware of where the products you use come from, who made them, what do they do, what impact do they have on soil, humans and animals and atmosphere. Where do your people come from, what are their thoughts, hopes and needs? Where does the paper come from we use on labels, the glass the corks? What suppliers are you supporting and what do you stand for? At heart I sincerely believe we all want to do the right thing, but ignorance often blurs our vision. At least it's a starting point in an otherwise vast and confusing and contradictory universe where waste and famine are both to found in abundance".



*For us, sustainability is an essential part of our winery model. Therefore, from the beginning, we have made significant efforts to ensure that the development of our activity is in line with environmental and social sustainability objectives.*

*We have had Finca Tinedo for 175 years, so preserving the farm integrity for future generations is part of our understanding of managing. My concern in sustainability principles is also supported by my background as an environmental consultant for over 20 years before taking over the family business.*

# Bodegas y Viñedos Tinedo

## La Mancha | Spain

We are fundamentally concerned about three aspects: sustainable farm management, moving towards zero-emission production and the fixation of rural population through employment. We are a small winery, and we know how modest our contribution to these objectives is, but we are sincere in our efforts. In addition to organic viticulture, we focus on three other aspects that we consider essential:

1. Rigorous water management through strict irrigation control: We divided Tinedo into 21 independent irrigation sectors that allow us to adapt to the needs of each plot, improving the quality of the vineyard and achieving a significant saving in water consumption. In addition, we collect and use rainwater in the winery.
2. Reutilization of vineyard waste as fertilizer.
3. We are taking steps to implement a permanent vegetative cover in the vineyard to improve the biodiversity of the vineyard ecosystem and reduce tillage practices. In La Mancha, due to its climatic conditions, the adoption of these plant covers is very problematic. However, we have been working on it for years, with significant progress towards a complete and definitive installation of a permanent plant cover.

In 2017, we made a significant investment to achieve that virtually all of the energy used in the winery came from renewable energy sources. To this end, we installed a solar power plant that currently produces 95% of the energy used in the winery.

We are currently estimating the carbon footprint of our business. Knowing our carbon footprint will help us to set new targets that will help us to progressively reduce our carbon footprint and improve our current efforts.

The loss of the rural population is one of the most worrying aspects in Spain. The lack of stable and quality employment is the leading cause of this, mainly due to the temporary nature of the agricultural job. Our objective is to offer permanent employment across the year by alternating field and winery activity. Participation in the whole cycle increases our workers' connection with Tinedo and improves their understanding of the relationship between grape production and winemaking. This more profound involvement of workers helps us to improve our wines.

*Manuel Álvarez-Arenas*



*“Failing to embrace the environment’s seasonal rhythms, soils, and inimitable microclimates would be a disservice to Mother Nature and the final wine”.*

Being raised on a farm, my family knew that if you wanted to bear quality fruit from the orchard, you must maintain a healthy environment and respect and care for its resources. At the time, no one talked about sustainability; it was a means of supporting the needs of our family without compromising the land for future generations. Thirty years ago when I started Paul Hobbs Winery, the discourse

around sustainability was still in its infancy, however, it was always at the core of what we did.

Today, only 142 wineries are certified sustainable by the California Sustainable Winegrowing Alliance and each one approaches their initiatives differently. Though we are fortunate

# Paul Hobbs | California

to be recognized for our commitment from this esteemed group, the idea of sustainability is not a fixed construct for us; it is holistic and not mutually exclusive. Continuously refining our practices for the land we have the privilege to farm, which will in turn benefit our community and the wine you enjoy, is paramount in order to protect and enhance precious resources.

We prioritize spending ample time walking the vineyards and interacting with the natural elements where our grapes are grown. Without being immersed in it, we wouldn't be able to gather key learnings provided from the site and apply it to our approach: this is at the foundation of our philosophy of sustainability.

Of course we will employ state-of-the-art technology – such as weather stations, evapotranspiration sensors, drone multispectral imaging, soil and petiole analysis – to gather data and advance our mission, but we will never truly automate our farming. Planting cover crops, composting, controlling pests with non-invasive strategies like building owl boxes, and reducing tractor passes are personal acts that engage instead of extricating ourselves with the challenges of farming.

Tailoring the rootstock and clonal selections to the soil in each block reinforces this goal, better minimizing the dependency on resources, and naturally defending against soil-born pests. Meticulous vineyard management, including diligent pruning and

leaf thinning, assists in ensuring that our crops mature and ripen fully. To return balance to the soil, roots, vines, these pruned canes and leaves are integrated into the soil through composting. With these techniques and others, we are able to produce precise expressions of the diverse sites.

Here it is all about farming: when I founded the winery, I pursued the most distinctive sites within the appellation. Today, our viticultural methods reflect the knowledge and experience of cultivating fruit from Sonoma County and Napa Valley for nearly 30 years.

Farming is personal. Failing to embrace the environment's seasonal rhythms, soils, and inimitable microclimates would be a disservice to Mother Nature and the final wine. There is an innate affinity with nature in most people and it helps us form a bond between our relationship with our community, vineyards, and future generations to come.

*Paul Hobbs*

# Ricca Terra | Riverlands | Australia

*Our mission is to continue to find ways to improve how we farm and make wine. The truest definition of sustainability in our minds is: 'Ensuring Ricca Terra is handed onto the next generation of caretakers in a condition that is better than it was received and in a position where it can continue to contribute to the wellbeing of the environment, society and the stakeholders who rely on its existence.'*

## IT'S NOT ONE DIMENSIONAL -

The term sustainable in the world of farming is somewhat challenging to precisely describe. It is a complex topic, and so it should be! Our views regarding sustainability have come from years of observing, investigating, learning, experimenting and finally considering! Our philosophy on this matter may not sit easy with everyone. Living in utopia we do not, our approach we feel is balanced and realistic. Most importantly, our beliefs and path forward on this subject will continue to evolve. We still have much to learn.

## BLAME IT ON MARKETING! -

Many people think organic farming is sustainable, compared to the conservative, conventional and industrial approaches many mainstream farmers employ. Organic farming implies that no synthetic chemicals are used in the growing of their produce (nothing is applied to organically certified crops that can cause harm to the consumer). For grape growers,

sulphur and copper are the main chemicals allowed to be used to manage diseases.

To start a conversation around what sustainability stands for, we need to immediately understand that it has little relationship to organic management practices. Organic production is a subject on its own. Bundling organics into conversations surrounding sustainability dilutes the importance of both ideologies. Organic principles are heavily governed by authorised bodies such as NASSA and Australian Certified Organics, whereas sustainability is very loose and uncontrolled, although this is changing via a new program being rolled out by The Australian Wine Research Institute.





Marketing either by supermarkets, wine businesses and, even growers, has blurred the lines between organic, biodynamic and sustainable farming. Ricca Terra's mission is to be responsible in our farming practices and do it in a sustainable manner.

**YOU CAN'T BE SUSTAINABLE IF YOU ARE BROKE!** No business can contribute to improving the wellbeing of the climate, society and the intangible and tangible assets of an organisation if it is broke! A business needs to be profitable to be in a position to make change.

## WHAT DOES SUSTAINABILITY LOOK LIKE TO RICCA TERRA – THE STORY

When purchased nearly twenty years ago, our farms were run in a conventional manner. The grape varieties grown were all from a French heritage (Shiraz, Cabernet Sauvignon and Chardonnay). Management of water was completely scheduled, meaning a prescribed amount of water, more than the vines needed, was applied every week with no consideration for the soil moisture or climate variations. Soil organic levels were low, and the use of synthetic fertilisers and sprays were common practice. Basically, our vineyard was run like most other vineyards in the region!

Adding to these woes was the value the corporate wineries placed on the grapes we grew. We were seen as a commodity grape grower, price takers and one of a thousand plus growers who produced the same offering. We had no voice, and no one would listen!

The first step in our sustainability journey was to find customers who were going to value our investment, hard work and passion. This was not going to happen if we looked like every other grower in the Riverland. So, in 2003 we started the removal of our French friends and replaced them with exotic alternative grape varieties. We basically jumped off a jetty without a life jacket, seeking a wave to carry us to new shores. As we looked back, we saw a jetty full of bystanders (our neighbouring growers). This was our sink-or-swim moment!

Reflecting back at that moment in time, our biggest risk was not to jump and be one of those souls left standing on the jetty just watching! Today we have a vast array of customers who value, encourage and celebrate all that is different about Ricca Terra. This was the first and most important step of our sustainability journey, that being embracing the courage to make change.

## OUR SUSTAINABILITY TOOL CHEST

Diversity is essential to achieve sustainability. Our first alternative grape variety that we planted was Nero d'Avola. Through trial and error, we quickly discovered that some of these new varieties behaved very differently to varieties like Shiraz and Cabernet Sauvignon! Nero d'Avola (originating

from Sicily, a warm and dry region similar to the Riverland) is somewhat a wild child! When irrigated and fertilised under a traditional regime, the vegetative growth of this variety becomes uncontrollable and the berries resemble giant marbles which can be prone to bunch rots if rain is experienced during the harvest period. Our learning, irrigate and fertilise less and rein in this wild child. This approach has been significantly beneficial to the environment (less water used), wine quality (intense wines) and our financial performance, through fewer inputs and great wines. The forty plus grape varieties we grow at Ricca Terra give us the diversity that supports our sustainability goals (less inputs, reducing our environmental footprint and increasing profit).

Quality is the foundation that supports sustainability. While our customers applaud Ricca Terra's approach to changing grape varieties that are of benefit to the environment, it is all superficial and short lived if the wines made from the grapes grown are of inferior quality. To change the consumers appreciation of a region known for bulk wine production, then quality needs to take front and centre! Thinking wine quality rather than tonnes per hectare not only lifts the concentration of flavours and ultimately the taste of wine, it is also beneficial to the environment. Why? A general rule-of-thumb is a grape vine that is balanced, that being enough vegetative growth to support a crop level that is not excessive, will produce grapes that can be made into premium wine. Over-cropped grapes vines,

generally caused by excessive amounts of irrigation and fertiliser, will produce diluted and inferior wine. So, growing grapes for quality rather than quantity leads to reduced inputs such as irrigation, which reduces Ricca Terra's environmental footprint and heightens its sustainability status.

These are the small but important tools. There are a number of small activities that when pooled together have a significant impact on sustainability. These are small activities that Ricca Terra implements:

- Sulphur is the key agent used to manage fungal diseases, which has low impact on beneficial insects and has no residual carryover into wines.
- Utilisation of multi-row equipment to reduce fuel use and limit soil compaction.
- Utilisation of modern/fuel efficient tractors.
- Annual applications of organically certified composed cow manure to fertilise vines and increase the organic matter in the soil.
- Soil probes are used to measure the water content of the soil. This allows for the precise application of water to match the vines' needs (limiting wastage of water).
- Recycling of old vineyard posts to limit landfill. Posts are bundled and provided to farmers who need them for fence posts.
- Planting cover crops to suppress weeds, provide ground cover and increase soil organics.
- Utilisation of an in-field grape de-stemmer

during harvest. This ensures only grapes are exported from the vineyard. Stalks and other non-grape matter remain in the vineyard, meaning the exportation of valuable organic matter from the vineyard is significantly reduced.

- Recycled old oak barrels are used for the maturation of wines.
- No animal products are used in the winemaking process.
- The use of heavy glass bottles are prohibited which helps reduce food miles.

*Ricca Terra is certified by Australian Wine Industry Standard of Sustainable Program (Freshcare).*



# Ch. de l'Escarelle | Provence | France

WITH A SUBSTANTIAL ESTATE IN THE HEART OF PROVENCE, VALÉRIE MAQUET-VERGELONI, MANAGING DIRECTOR OF CHATEAU DE L'ESCARELLE TALKED TO US ABOUT WHAT SUSTAINABILITY MEANS FOR THEM

WHAT DOES SUSTAINABILITY MEAN TO YOU?

Sustainability and organic viticulture was obvious for us. It is actually an obligation towards Mother Nature which is shared by all the team here at L'Escarelle. Everyone working on the estate are deeply committed to combining business development and the protection of our environment, and this for several reasons: quality, health, harmony between nature and human and a respect for nature. Haute Valeur Environnementale (HVE) is becoming a more recognisable certification for consumers internationally.

AND WHAT DOES THIS HVE ACCREDITATION MEAN FOR CHATEAU DE L'ESCARELLE?

This environmental certification which was created by the French state in 2011 had the objectives

to motivate, increase and promote sustainable farming practices, not only in the wine industry but also in every agricultural business.

The organic rules are very focused on sustainable practices in the vineyard and during winemaking, however the HVE rules draws on a number of environmental performance criteria, applied to every aspect of the vineyard. HVE-certification bears testimony to the estate's biodiversity (demonstrated by the presence of hedgerows, trees, flowers, insect life...) and the use of very low-intensity farming practices, meaning that the impact on the environment (air quality, greenhouse gas emissions, water, soil, flora and fauna, landscape) is kept to a minimum. For example, the



winery's roof had solar panels installed in 2016, they currently generate 50% of the electricity we use each year; the new cellar makes it possible to move entirely to night harvesting in order to make the most of the cooler temperatures, which in turn reduce the energy used in keeping the harvest cool; winery sewage and waste water is treated on site and re-used.

YOUR VINEYARDS ARE BASED IN THE HEART OF PROVENCE, SET IN 1000 HECTARES OF UNTOUCHED WOODLAND. HOW DO YOU PROMOTE BIODIVERSITY?

Since Yann Pineau bought the estate in 2014, a hugely ambitious programme to protect and encourage biodiversity has been implemented. This is driven not just by the estate owner's personal environmental beliefs but also to educate and raise awareness amongst as many people as possible regarding the vulnerability of the ecosystems which we live alongside and to show that the good of the environment and good business practices are in no way mutually exclusive.

Over the last few years, several initiatives have been launched to develop and support biodiversity on the estate such as cover planting: all of our plots boast either temporary or permanent cover planting with cereals or legumes. Also, an orchard of more than 100 fruit trees was planted in 2016 (fig, pear, apple, and almond trees) with the benefit to attract numerous pollinating insects. In turn, this helps flowering plants to reproduce, thus increasing the diversity of these kinds of plant species. Another 1000 olive trees have been planted since 2017.

This search of developing and protecting biodiversity

is actually promoted through our Butterfly Garden created in 2016, to encourage butterflies into the garden and to boost their numbers; the garden recreates a number of habitats suited to butterflies, offering the chance to see them close up. Guided tours of the garden are held during the summer to help as many as possible – especially those of a young age – to grasp the fragility of the ecosystems around us.

WHAT DOES THIS BIODIVERSITY MEAN FOR THE HEALTH AND LONGEVITY OF YOUR SOILS?

Cover planting our plots promotes mycorrhiza in the soil, the development of a beneficial symbiosis between fungi and plants. In our case, our vines receive nutrients thanks to this relationship. The presence of plant matter also helps enrich the soil, acting as a kind of natural fertilizer that contributes to the development of soil-beneficial bacteria. We have also invested in technologies to analyse our soils on an annual basis in order to catalogue their characteristics, water holding capacities and better inform us on which preparations, cover-plants and ploughing may be needed.

HOW DO YOU PLAN TO PROTECT YOUR VINEYARDS FOR GENERATIONS?

Our commitment is to preserve the biodiversity of the entire estate and its flora and fauna and respect the cycle of nature ... this is a real legacy for the future generations, and we must protect it.

# Bodegas AltoLandon | La Mancha | Spain

AN INTERVIEW WITH ROSALIA MOLINA, WINEMAKER FOR ALTO LANDON

Wineries may have adapted to the challenges of the global pandemic, but now they face the far greater problems caused by climate change. Rising greenhouse gas concentrations generated by human activity continues to rise, resulting in higher global temperatures. Without significant intervention, temperatures will rise by 3 degrees by the end of the century and the impact will be felt by everyone.

As an industry, the wine trade produces almost 6 million tons of CO2 emissions per year, a relatively low proportion of the total compared to many industries, however this doesn't mean we should be in any way complacent. In fact, as an agricultural product with deep connections with the land and communities, we're in a privileged position to make an impact. Only then will we stand a chance of reaching climate neutrality by 2050, a goal set by The European Union.

We interviewed Rosalia Molina, winemaker and owner of AltoLandon, about the ongoing work she is doing in her winery and vineyards in DO Manchuela, Spain.

WHAT DOES SUSTAINABILITY MEAN TO YOU?

Sustainability is our philosophy, the most important



part of the wine growing if we want to preserve the environment and quality of our grapes.

YOU HAVE ONE OF THE LATEST HARVESTS IN SPAIN, WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE WINES YOU MAKE?

Our grapes are really slow maturing due to the long growing period which provides the perfect balance between alcohol, acidity and pH; grapes have intense colour and aromas as the diurnal temperature variation preserves acidity but also allows the flavour compounds to really develop.

WHAT STEPS HAVE YOU TAKEN TO MAKE YOUR VINEYARDS LESS RELIANT ON CHEMICALS?

We're located in a privileged place for this, a plateau 1,100 metres above sea level, surrounded by the cooling influence of the mountains with a micro-climate which means we have no disease, insects or pests. It's important to work with nature and in turn it helps us.

HOW DO YOU PROMOTE BIODIVERSITY IN YOUR VINEYARDS?

We try to respect the environment using the more practical elements of biodynamics, pruning clippings, dry grapes and stems are returned to the soils as natural compost, which helps to fix nitrogen in the soils and protects against erosion. We also have hens and bees to help with the pollination, lavender fields,

pine forest and indigenous trees to enhance the biodiversity.

HOW DO YOU PROMOTE SUSTAINABILITY IN MANCHUELA?

It had only been in the last 20 years that we've managed to convince other growers to be organic, but they now respect all of the techniques we practise and they have become increasingly conscientious about their environment.

HOW DO YOU PLAN TO PROTECT YOUR VINEYARDS FOR GENERATIONS TO COME?

Since the start in 2002 we're 100% organic but we're also working towards becoming 100% carbon natural, changing to renewable energy in all of our buildings ... and we'll continue to make small changes wherever possible.



# San Polino | Tuscany | Italy

*Fascinating pioneer of Montalcino, Katia Nussbaum talks about the creation of San Polino as the first organic certified vineyard in the region and how she and her husband Gigi have created a self-sustaining winery, which leaves as little negative impact as possible on the local environment and the outside world, whilst producing world class, terroir driven wines.*

“The beginning ... When we purchased San Polino and its lands in 1990, we found a place that had not been affected by modernisation. The soils had never witnessed any kind of industrial agriculture, and the forests surrounding the property were untouched and pristine. Luigi Fabbro, the co-owner and co-founder of San Polino winery, was working at the time on sustainability projects in the Amazon forest, where he became acquainted with the local indigenous permaculture practices, whereby soils were continually renewed through ancient and completely sustainable composting techniques. This philosophy was applied from the get-go to our agricultural principles. We wanted to create a self-sustaining winery, which had as little negative impact as possible on the local environment and the outside world, whilst producing world class, terroir driven wines. As such, San Polino was the first farm in Montalcino to obtain Organic certification, in 1994, and pioneered a number of techniques that have now been adopted by a large number of wineries.

The first and most crucial steps were taken in the vineyards. All agricultural waste (cuttings, prunings, grape pomace, seeds and more) is turned back

to compost, and is returned to the soils. Rather than fertilise, we use nitrogen fixing plants, and manage the nutritional components of the soil through careful sowing of autochthonous annuals in the field, and the spreading of the compost.

A second equally important aspect of our agriculture is the preservation and encouragement of local biodiversity. We strongly believe that a rich and healthy biodiversity is a key foundation to making good and sustainable wines: good, because biodiverse and healthy ecosystems will make more complex wines, and sustainable because biodiversity helps sustain ecosystems, granting them adaptability.

The use of friendly bacteria and plant communication through mycorrhizal fungi networks to protect against pests and disease ... The pristine nature of the San Polino estate when we purchased meant that rather than restoring wildlife, our job was to minimise the impact we had upon it, and allow it to thrive. For this purpose we regularly sow autochthonous insect-attracting plants, keep bees, and do not fence our fields (other than in critical periods close to the harvest).

We never use synthetic pesticides, and rather than depend on the sulphur/copper staples of organic agriculture, we prefer to inoculate the vineyards with friendly bacteria, fungi and insects, to outcompete or naturally predate on vine pathogens. A number of these techniques have been hugely successful, and since our pioneering use of them, they have been adopted by many organic wineries in the area.

Current projects for increased sustainability include the adoption of agroforestry (in this case vitiforestry), or in other words, the inclusion of trees within the vineyard. We believe that this new exciting technique - which was once common practice in pre-industrial agriculture - may increase soil biodiversity, increase mycelial (fungal) networks between plants, and contrast rising temperatures through the use of the natural shading afforded by the plants. This is all cutting-edge and very exciting stuff!



Carbon Zero status, sustainable energy and lighter bottles ... The winery at San Polino aims at carbon neutrality, with the forests surrounding the estate acting as strong carbon sinks, and we use electricity provided exclusively from sustainable sources. We have taken steps towards reducing our environmental impact by electing to use lighter bottles, undyed and sustainably sourced cardboards boxes, reduced-length capsules for the bottles, and the avoidance of polystyrene packaging. Lastly, but definitely not least, we are firm believers in social sustainability.

We try to source everything, from food to consumables to labour, locally, believing that our local reality is an extension of the San Polino sphere. In this we include our staff, our customers and clients, our providers and our families.

The ultimate aim is to create a win-win relationships with everyone and everything, be it ourselves, our clients, our community and our environment.

# Celler de Capçanes | Montsant | Spain



*The well-respected co-operative of Celler de Capçanes in Montsant, has sustainability built into its very fabric.*

By its very nature, they strive to concentrate efforts into supporting local growers and the wider community in a way that respects and honestly expresses their terroir. Since Jürgen Wagner came to co-op in the early 90s, this is something they have excelled at and today they are respected as one of the most pioneering, engaging and outward looking wineries in the area.

Jürgen explains a little about their philosophy on social responsibility, their guarantee of traceability and how it ensures the sustainability and environmentally friendly status of what they do and the importance of certifications:

“We believe social sustainability is vital to the ongoing success of our business, we believe all our growers should be treated fairly and equally. In the difficult 2021 vintage with unfavourable conditions late in the harvest, we used our profits to pay a fair price for grapes, including those which had to be discarded to maintain quality. It seems only fair ... as a cooperative it’s our obligation to support our farmers, even more with everything that has happened in the past

two years”.

“We have our own waste water treatment plant, which was renovated in 2021. Here we treat all winery waste water and the treated water is returned to the primary sector and members of the co-operative requesting it”.

“We aim to recycle all our packaging and cardboard, plus all packaging from the products we use in viticulture and winemaking is recycled by a specialist chemical waste management company. Biological waste, such as the stems, skins, seeds and lees left over after vinification are converted into fertiliser and returned to the fields”.

“The Celler already produces clean, renewable energy from solar panels that cover half the roof of the warehouse. We’re not yet totally self-sufficient, however we do produce sufficient energy to power the winery’s machinery”.

“It’s not always easy to communicate all the efforts that go into making our wines sustainable and the best they can be, which is why for us certifications are important. They guarantee origin, quality and the integrity of our product across all stages in the winemaking process:

- PEFC (forests / wood sustainability) - All

wood and barrels purchased by the winery must have a certificate of responsible forests management.

- CCPAE 20% of our agricultural production is 100% organic and another 20% is in the process of conversion to organic. Strict controls and annual audits certify this process.
- VEGAN All our wines are Vegan certified
- IFS annual audits ensure we comply with international standards”.







# SUSTAINABILITY STORIES

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