

FOOD & WINE

AUGUST 2008

best of local flavors

50 delicious
fresh recipes

amazing Italian
wine party

plus great
summer
desserts

*Honey-tomato
bruschetta with
ricotta & a crisp
Sauvignon Blanc*

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WINE-TASTING ROOM

7 good causes,
15 top wines

by ray isle

NEW GREEN WINERIES Vineyards around the country have found a multitude of ways to go green—not just by switching to sustainable or organic grape-growing, but by taking advantage of every other green initiative around as well. This includes everything from familiar ideas, like solar power and recycling, to oddball (but effective) ones, like using recycled blue jeans as winery insulation.

A PRACTICAL CHOICE Aside from the philosophical reasons for going green, wineries can also save money—always a strong incentive. For instance, when Sonoma's Rodney Strong installed more than 80,000 square feet of solar panels in 2003, the winery—which produces about 800,000 cases of wine per year—cut its electricity bill by more than 40 percent. To lower the cost of cooling and heating its winery buildings while it helps the environment, Napa's Frog's Leap reduces its reliance on fossil fuels with geothermal energy from "wells" dug 250 feet beneath the winery's parking lot. Water circulates in a closed loop up and down through the wells, absorbing heat from the earth during the cold winter months and reversing the process during the hot days of summer.

GREEN WINE FOR SALE More and more wines that follow eco-friendly production practices—many of which are organically or biodynamically farmed, too—are appearing on wine-shop, and even supermarket, shelves. Expect to pay high prices for some of these bottles, though. This isn't because these practices are necessarily more expensive, especially since in the long run they often save money. Rather, with a few notable exceptions (Fetzer, for instance), boutique, small-production wineries have been at the forefront of this trend. Here are 15 terrific "green" wines, along with descriptions of each winery's strategy for helping the environment.



Oregon's WillaKenzie preserves forestlands around its vineyards.

the cause

GREEN BUILDINGS

Gargiulo Vineyards

Green Initiative: Gargiulo Vineyards' new tasting room in Napa Valley is made almost exclusively from recycled materials, such as roof beams from a decommissioned bridge, flooring from a high school gym, a reworked barrel as a chandelier and walls made from vineyard stones.

Wine to Buy: 2004 Money Road Ranch Merlot (\$40)

A richly textured red, Gargiulo's '04 Merlot has lush cocoa and black cherry notes.

Stoller

Green Initiative: This Oregon producer built the first LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) gold-certified winery in the U.S.; it uses solar power, waste-water reclamation and energy-efficient heating and cooling.

Wine to Buy: 2007 JV Estate Chardonnay (\$20)

This unoaked Chardonnay from Stoller is clean, crisp and fresh.

the cause

INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT

WillaKenzie Estate

Green Initiative: This Oregon winery keeps pastures and forestlands around its vineyards untouched to provide homes for natural predators like hawks and owls, helping eliminate the need for chemical pest control.

Wine to Buy: 2006

Willamette Valley Pinot Noir (\$25) WillaKenzie's most affordable Pinot bottling reveals soft, ripe raspberry fruit and hints of anise and rosemary.

Lolonis

Green Initiative: Lolonis releases millions of ladybugs every June, July and August to control insect pests in their organically farmed vineyards—a practice they started more than 50 years ago.

Wine to Buy: NV Lolonis Ladybug White Cuvée III (\$12) A blend of Colombard, Semillon, Chenin Blanc and Chardonnay, this white has juicy pear-melon flavors.