



# Press Kit

## *Association of Natural Wine Producers – VinNatur*

VinNatur was established in 2006 in order to reunite small producers of natural wines, both Italian and European, and provide them with a proper tool of promotion and personal growth. The Association aims at promoting natural wines from a commercial point of view and at the same time developing the specific knowledge of natural viticulture and natural wine making amongst both producers themselves and consumers.

"Natural wine" is the name given to a product derived from a healthy agriculture which rejects the use of pesticides, herbicides, chemical soil and foliar fertilizers. Great attention is given to soil and soil natural balance. VinNatur is carrying out researches in order to get rid of copper and sulphur, traditionally used for treating vines diseases, and replace them with natural extracts which help the vine building up resistance.

Natural approach is not limited to the vineyard, but extends also to the cellar. Selected yeasts are not allowed, neither are additives (of any kind) or invasive techniques which do not respect the raw material.

The aim is that of reducing and, if possible, eliminating the use of sulphur dioxide, whose side effects on human health are well known worldwide. This is possible thanks to a constant improvement of spontaneous fermentation, along with selection of the most suitable yeasts, which are already available in nature and which give a distinctive value to wine as far as personality and uniqueness.

Over the years, VinNatur has steeply increased the number of associates, from 65 wineries up to present-day 187 members belonging to nine different countries: Italy, France, Spain, Portugal, Austria, Germany, Czech Republic, Slovakia and Slovenia. Each wine producer willing to become a VinNatur member agrees to have his/her wines analysed in order to check for residual pesticides. Researches are carried out on 88 different pesticides so that it is possible to attest wines authenticity and coherence with VinNatur's principles.

### **Collaborations and research:**

Over the years, VinNatur has carried out several projects with Universities and Research Centres, creating projects which involve directly VinNatur's wineries. In this way, it is possible to implement laboratory results.

At the moment, VinNatur is carrying out the following projects:

- "Fertility and soil vitality" Project - Vitenova Vine wellness and Udine University, Microbiology Department
- "Entomological and botanical biodiversity of vineyards" Project - Vitenova Vine Wellness and Trieste University, Entomology Department
- "Copper and sulphur reduction" Project – Experimental station for sustainable viticulture – Panzano in Chianti
- wine-making collaboration (for 2017 harvest) with FoodMicroTeam s.r.l. Academic Spin-Off of Florence University.

## **Villa Favorita**

The event that allows a wide disclosure of VinNatur main principles is Villa Favorita, nowadays a well-know wine fair amongst the most important ones regarding natural wines.

In addition to being a fair dedicated to an audience which gets every year more and more international, Villa Favorita is the event allowing VinNatur to reach year after year new goals.

The growing success of the event allows to collect funds which are used for the organization of seminars dedicated to associates and events intended to spread knowledge about natural wines amongst consumers.

## **Board of Directors**

Present-day members of Board of Directors are:

Angiolino Maule, President

Daniele Piccinin, Vicepresident

Alessandro Ferrareto, treasurer-secretary

Alessandro Maule, advisor

Mario Plazio, advisor

## *Introduction to natural wine*

There have been – and still there are – many discussions concerning the definition of “natural wines” and the identification of which wines are natural and which are not. Conventional wine, made with modern wine-making technologies, represents 95% of wine produced world-wide.

Usually, conventional wine is a product with high quality but a standard profile and little territorial identity.

For conventional wine, terroir and grape variety differences have a minor impact when it comes to assess quality, since both these features are undermined by conventional viticulture and invasive wine-making. Modern technologies have increased yield, made grape growers and wine-makers' work easier, but on the other way they have standardized wines.

On the contrary, natural wine gives voice to grape and grape variety, and, consequently, the area they come from.

## **What is natural wine**

Natural wine derives from working methods fostering the smallest amount possible of intervention in the vineyard and in the cellar and the absence of chemical additives and human manipulation.

These methods lead wine-makers to take on several risks, because natural wine making is difficult and unpredictable and carrying it out needs a high level of awareness and a wide knowledge both in the vineyards and in the cellar.

Natural wine refers to a wine produced:

- in small non-industrial quantities
- by an independent producer
- from vineyards with low yield per vine and from healthy and pesticide-free grapes
- from quality-oriented land
- from manual harvested grapes with special attention committed to grape integrity
- from organic grapes (no synthesis treatment, insecticides or herbicides allowed)
- no added sugar, enzymes or additives
- with spontaneous fermentation without adding selected yeasts but only yeasts that have naturally developed in the vineyard
- no acidity adjustment
- without micro-oxygenation or reverse osmosis treatment, clarification and micro-filtration, with a minimum use of sulphites allowed only in adverse weather conditions
- without other additives

In conventional viticulture it is possible to use up to 180 active principles of pesticides. As for winemaking, the number of products that can be used in wine production – and which is not

necessary to declare on the label – is 140. In natural viticulture and winemaking nothing of this is allowed, except for use of sulphur dioxide.

## **Natural wine advantages**

Natural wines advantages for the consumer are manifest. Natural wines respect health and environment. Natural winemaking allows to get maximum expressivity from vineyards, whatever the potential. Natural wine is definitely less dangerous for health, thanks to the absence of chemical substances and the small amount of sulphur dioxide. Sulphur dioxide is responsible for migraine, which is usually linked to wine consumption and whose effects are not yet well known. From a sustainable point of view, respect and attention for the land and the environment are maximum, since vineyards are not weeded, neither chemically dunned nor treated with synthetic products, but soil balance and ecosystem are safeguarded.

The Association carries out regular checks on the wines of all producers, in order to guarantee consumers the highest healthiness and accuracy.

## *VinNatur Procedural Guideline*

VinNatur's purpose is that of promoting "activities regarding viticulture and high quality wine production, according to natural methods suited to the territory, without technological forcing". Coherently with this purpose, the wine produced by VinNatur has a distinctive feature: it does not contain any kind of pesticide, this being granted by residual analysis which are mandatory for every producer, every year.

All wines produced by VinNatur are wines:

- produced using only grapes grown in vineyards run directly by the winemaker and handled according indications expressed in point 1 regarding vineyard management
- produced using indications expressed in point 2 regarding wine-making

### **1. In the vineyard**

The purpose of viticulture is to have healthy vines and built up their resistance (against diseases, drought, shortages). Therefore, it is fundamental to pay particular attention to biological soil fertility, biodiversity safeguard and balance of the vineyard ecosystem.

#### Methods allowed are:

- organic topdressing (mature manure, vegetal or mixed compost)

- green topdressing (green manure or cover crop)
- autochthonous under-sowing
- oxygenation and autumn soil treatment in order to improve permeability and soil structure
- management of grass growing between vines with mechanical tools (mowing)
- use of sulphur-based products to contrast mildew (maximum 60 kg/ha of sulphur per year)
- use of copper-based products to contrast downy mildew and excoiiose (maximum 3 kg/ha of copper per year) but with the aim of reducing also copper. The maximum amount have to be calculated on the average of copper used in the last three years
- use of product of natural origin, bracing, with a zero residual value, such as vegetal extracts, seaweed, propolis, mushrooms or micro-organism able to limit the amount of coper and sulphur-based products, in order to get rid of them completely when in good weather condition
- drop irrigation only in emergency situations
- manual harvest

Methods not allowed are:

- mineral, organic-mineral and chemical topdressing
- weeding or chemical desiccation
- antiparasitics of synthetic origin, systemic antiparasitics or citothropic antiparasitics, not allowed in organic agriculture
- use of phospites
- use of chemical insecticide
- mechanic harvest
- cultivation of cisgenic and GMO vines or GMO-deriving products

## **2. In the cellar**

Methods allowed are:

- spontaneous fermentation using only native yeasts, that is to say only those yeasts which can be found on the grapes and in wine-making environments
- possibility to modify must ad wine temperature in order to grant a correct fermentation
- the only additive allowed is sulphur dioxide (both pure or as potassium metabisulfite). The wine in the bottle has to contain a total amount of sulphur dioxide no higher than 50 mg/litre for white wines, sparkling wines and sweet wines and no higher than 50 mg/litre for red and rosé

wines. The final aim is to constantly reduce the amount of sulphur dioxide and finally getting rid of it.

- use of air and oxygen to oxygenate musts and wines
- use of sulphur dioxide, nitrogen or argon only with the purpose of keeping the wine repaired from air and, therefore, only to saturate containers or equipment
- filtrations with inert equipment with holes no smaller than 5 micrometre (micron) for white and rosé wines and 10 micrometre (micron) for red wines

Methods not allowed are:

- clarifications with products deriving from albumin, casein, bentonite and vegetable carbon or with pectic enzymes
- use of industrial selected yeasts (no matter if of organic origin), enzymes, lysozyme and lactic bacteria
- use of whatever additive except for sulphur dioxide, within the limited amount mentioned in the paragraph above
- invasive techniques aimed at modify the typical wine profile and modify wine-making processes such as dealcoholisation, thermic treatments above 30° C, concentration through reverse osmosis, acidification or deacidification, electrodialysis and the use of cation exchanger, elimination of sulphur dioxide through physical processes, micro-filtrations.

Check Plan

In order to make sure VinNatur members have abided by the Procedural Guideline, VinNatur has created a proper Check Plan, which is applied by a proper Certification Institution approved by MIPAAF – Minister of Agriculture and forestry.

## **Identification and labelling**

The main aim of the present Procedural Guideline is to communicate, with transparency, our work in the vineyard and in the cellar to all consumers who will buy a VinNatur natural wine bottle. In order to reach this aim, it is necessary to represent with a simple and recognizable symbol those productive rules that all VinNatur members abide by.

For this reason, we believe it is very helpful for every producer who wants to, to label – after they have registered themselves to VinNatur – his/her wines, giving the following information:

- total amount of sulphur dioxide (in mg/litre) when bottling, determined by the official analysis for export (obtained with the distillation method) or, as an alternative, from the official analysis for the approval of wine as a DOC or DOCG
- Association symbol

Those wine producers who do not want or cannot make commitments to VinNatur rules specified in this Procedural Guideline, will not be allowed to become VinNatur members.

To be a natural wine producer is a choice, not an obligation.

## **Photo Gallery**