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Organic Wine Commutes To The Suburbs – Vinology Wine & Spirits

Posted by [Ashley Mason](#) on Oct 12, 2013 in [Features](#)



Vinology Wine & Spirits

The popularity of organic wines is spreading from the cities to the suburbs. Scarsdale, New York is home to Vinology Wine & Spirits, and after a recent remodeling they added almost an additional 100 organic and biodynamic selections to their store. Are they on a mission, or are they just responding to customer demand? We spoke with Manager Elizabeth Miller to find out.

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People in Scarsdale are more aware these are wines of quality rather than just being a fad. Over the past few months we've been working with our importers and distributors to research what's out there in organic, biodynamic, and natural wines. It's definitely an area of interest in the community and in our customer base.

Before we had 288 wines and now we have 400, so it's a small, purposeful selection. We were limited by not having enough space, but now the literal ceiling has been raised a bit, and we can expand into a number of different areas that we're interested in.

How are the wines displayed in the store?

Our organic wines are integrated into their regional areas, with a slightly different notation on their description so someone can identify them. We have always organized the store in that manner. It's worked for our customers in terms of understanding the layout and being educated as they go along, so we decided to keep it the same way.

And you're also introducing the wines to the local culinary community.

We began doing organic, culinary events eight or nine months ago with a local food educator, who also happens to be a great customer. The advertisements for these events adds to the conversation going on in the store. It's a catalyst for their interest.

People's knowledge of food is a step or two beyond where it is with wine right now. They're comfortable with these issues where food is related, and they get it when they go to *Whole Foods*, but there's still curiosity and misunderstanding with wines. It's been a lot of fun dispelling the myths with our customers.

How do you educate your customers about organic wine?

Out of the five of us work at the store, three of the gentlemen have 20+ plus years in the industry. We meet once a week and we share the bottles' stories. Even with 400, it's plenty to keep one's head wrapped around, but these weekly conversations allow us to spotlight the new wines coming in. If someone hasn't tasted it, we share what the palate is like and share production issues, which include organic production. We would like to be known as a place with great wines, and not only do we have them, but our staff has also tasted them and can tell a customer it's good with the correct terms for communicating that.

What brands are your customers responding well to?

We've brought in several wines from Marcel Deiss, from some entry level Alsatian blends to their Rotenberg and Schonenberg, which are two Grand Cru Rieslings. Our customers seem to be very excited about the selection and then, with that added label of *Biodynamic*, it's sort of been a great selection for us. One of the producers that we work with a lot is Benziger from Sonoma County – a New York transplant family from the White Plains area. A lot of people in our area remember them and were childhood friends. We've worked with their Chardonnays, Sauvignon Blancs and Merlots. For a store that is otherwise very small, it's unusual for us to bring in that many wines from one producer, but that family has a special place in this area.