



Natural Merchants Featured in Fast Company Article about Women Leading Natural Wine Sector

We are delighted to have our company featured in the recent Fast Company article “Why Women Are Leading the Growing Natural Wine Movement.” The article also features a wine from one of our female winemaker [Elodie Gilles](#), the award-winning [Elodie Cuvée Florale Côtes de Provence Rosé](#).

Following are a few excerpts from the article, written by Rina Raphael (re-posted with permission). [Please see the complete article on the Fast Company website.](#)

The Case For Natural Wines

Wine deemed organic, biodynamic, sustainable, or natural—terms often used interchangeably—isn’t anything new. It’s basically the original way of making wine. The definitions involve both the environment (how the grapes are tended to, without artificial chemical fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides) and the winemaking process (with limited or no added chemicals/sulfates).



Some might subscribe to all intervention-free limitations, or just a few, which makes the category often hard to certify. There is no single unified certification program, with wineries often slapping vague self-proclaimed labels on bottles, or subscribing to numerous accreditation programs.

Still, the notion of “healthier wine” has gained popularity with consumers looking to improve their intake, be it organic vegetables, supplements, or kombucha. [A Mintel study](#) found that 60% of millennials and 55% of Gen-Xers are concerned about harmful ingredients in their food and groceries.

“People are becoming very globally conscious,” explains Coly Den Haan (certified sommelier and owner of [Vinovore](#) in Silver Lake, CA), who sees customers interested in both health and environmental issues. “Pesticides are not good for the environment and not good for our bodies.”



David Falchek, executive director of the [American Wine Society](#), says consumers increasingly expect purchases to reflect their values, “and wine is no exception.” Much like supporters of the craft beer scene, they want to know how their beverages are made, and often feel more drawn to small-batch producers with a feel-good narrative.

While organic represents less than 5% of the U.S. wine industry, [it grew at rates](#) between 10% and 20% per year in volume from 2013-2016, according to Nielsen. In the last decade, the number of organic vineyards [tripled worldwide](#). Female consumers are believed to be a strong component of its success, though the public might sooner associate wine with its founding fathers...

At L.A.’s [Botanica restaurant and wine shop](#) in Silver Lake, co-owner Heather Sperling only sells natural wines, of which 30% are female-founded. The restaurateur says she sees a tendency with female clientele to pursue healthier ingredients. ([Several studies](#) suggest women eat more nutritiously than their male counterparts).

“It’s the same qualities you look for in your vegetables,” she says.

Some, however, simply prefer the taste. Natural wine is generally lighter and tends towards a funkier, less manipulated consistency. [A recent study](#) conducted in conjunction with UCLA found that organic labels yielded higher taste ratings from wine critics. And at the [2017 International Women’s Wine Competition](#), the organic [Elodie Cuvée Florale](#) was named [Best of Class Overall](#), beating its more chemically treated competitors...

EUROPEAN OFFICE:

Cartagena, SPAIN
pilar@naturalmerchants.com

Tel: +34.968.32.15.11
Fax: +34.902.90.89.61

NORTH AMERICAN OFFICE:

Oregon USA
ed@naturalmerchants.com

Tel: 1.530.554.2333
Fax: 1.866.784.0422

The Future Is Female-Founded

Women are leading organic wine into the mainstream, with more winemakers, bar owners, and estate founders, among other positions. They're not just closing the gender gap, but adding their own take on a market that has been mostly dominated by male tastes and sensibilities.

Den Haan notices a difference in women's winemaking, reflecting that it's often more subtle, restrained, and elegant than its predecessors. "Women's wine tends to use less of the winemakers' bag of tricks as far as oak is concerned and different methods to manipulate the flavors of wine," says Den Haan...

"They're geared to the female consumer," adds Ed Field, owner of [Natural Merchants, Inc.](#), one of North America's leading importers of organic wines, which counts Whole Foods as client. "There's not necessarily heavy tannins—it's more refined."...

Many, like Vinovore's Coly Den Haan, endeavor to create their own spaces within the category. In 2013, Ann Rabin Arnold founded the [Organic Wine Exchange](#), an organic wine club that's now available in 13 states with a clientele that is 80% female...

"There's a lot of buzz about it but not just because it's trendy," says Sperling, noting its driven foremost by the industry, with consumers slower to catch up. "This has been a growing movement for decades— and it's only getting stronger."

Field agrees, believing organic wine is "at the tip of the iceberg" as more and more consumers, especially millennials, actively look for not only healthier solutions, but more distinct dining options. And seeing how women hold the power in the shopping aisle, they're bound to hold the power on the creation side of it as well.

As Field says, "If the organic sector purchases are predominantly being decided by women, and the wine purchases being done are made by women, it doesn't make sense to not have women lead the way."

[Please read the entire article on the Fast Company website.](#)



Natural Merchants Owner Ed Field and Team

EUROPEAN OFFICE:

Cartagena, SPAIN
pilar@naturalmerchants.com

Tel: +34.968.32.15.11
Fax: +34.902.90.89.61

NORTH AMERICAN OFFICE:

Oregon USA
ed@naturalmerchants.com

Tel: 1.530.554.2333
Fax: 1.866.784.0422