

XTRAVAGANCE



IT'S HOPED that wines made from organically grown grapes will catch on in Thailand.



FROM LEFT, Jan Ganser and Benjawan Wisootsat of Fin and the Pullman Hotel's team



THERE WERE 13 organic and 'biodynamic' wines for the tasting.

THE BIODYNAMICS OF WINE

Grapes free of pesticide sound reasonable enough. A cow horn full of cow poop, maybe not.

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THE NATION

The Pullman Hotel's Wine Pub hosted a "Fabulous Organic Wine and Dine Night" recently, introducing a burgeoning trend in the tippling scene. Organic wine is made from organically grown grapes.

And, to make sure we're all up to speed, there were "biodynamic" wines as well. These come from vineyards whose owners view them as an ecological whole – not just rows of grapevines, but native fauna, other flora and the soil beneath them, an organism in its own right.

"Biodynamics" suggests an attuning with the spiritual forces of the cosmos, not just the phases of the moon but the positions of the planets. It might even involved – are you ready? – burying cattle manure in a cow's horn over the winter, then digging it up, diluting it in water, stirring it by hand in alternating directions and spraying it over the vineyard.

Let's stick with the plain old organic wines for the moment, which at the Pullman were supplied by speciality distributor Fin (Fabulous is Needed).

Fin's Benjawan Wisootsat and Jan Ganser were there to push the environmental-friendliness aspects: no chemicals, no pesticides, no synthetic weed control or plant enhancement.

Few wineries have gone organic because the cultivation is labour-intensive and less productive. The result is that grapes remain among of the most heavily sprayed of crops, but those pesticides soak into the fruit and the vine roots used in grape pulp, and inevitably end up in the wine.

Wineries must meet stringent government standards to be certified as organic or biodynamic. Along with the usual suspects like insecticides, there can be no artificial yeast and no added sulfites – even though sulfites help stabilise a wine and prevent it from going bad.



AN ORGANIC wine is paired with a dish at the Pullman Hotel's Wine Pub.

» GET A TASTE

The Wine Pub is at the Pullman Bangkok King Power and open daily from 6pm to 2am. Call (02) 680 9999.



A SELECTION of dishes to pair with organic wines



13 great organics

2009 Rosé Zweigelt from Austria is mature and quite fruity, with notes of red berries and fresh green apples.

2008 Fred Zweigelt, also from Kamptal, Austria, along the Danube, has freshness in place of power. You catch the fruit and spices rather than tannin and wood.

Cremant de Limoux AC from Bernard Delmas in France's Languedoc-Roussillon region is top-of-the-range organic, with intense apple accents, fresh bite and a stylish finish.

2004 Beaulieu from Chateau de la Selve in Ardèche, France, is toasty with charred mesquite, mulled plum and blackberry flavours, finishing with fig paste.

2008 Santenay "La Comme" 1er Cru from Rene Lequin-Colin in Burgundy is deep-coloured and rich, with black fruit galore and supple, well-integrated tannins.

2009 Gutswein Scheurebe QbA Trocken from Wittmann in Rheinhessen, Germany, has a fine fragrance of meadow blossoms, fresh grass and herbs and fruity notes of apple, currant and grapefruit.

2007 Vinho Verde Loureiro from Quinta do Ameal in Portugal is fruity and piercing, with a burst of acidity that melds beautifully into its fruity mid-palate.

2008 El Transistor from Rueda Blanco DO in Spain is made from 100 per cent Verdejo grapes from old-bush vines. It's peachy, creamy and zingy.

2009 "g" Dehesa Gago DO Toro from Spain has lively blackberry, cherry, smoke and earth aromas. It's bottled early to preserve its freshness.

2007 Rocky Gully Shiraz from Australia's Frankland Estate is a deep ruby hue and offers a flamboyant bouquet of flowers, litchi nuts and cassis.

2007 Riff Rosso IGT from Alois Lageder in Italy is fruit-driven in aroma and flavour, balanced with ripe, well-integrated tannins and mild acidity.

2007 Dolcetto d'Alba DOC "Tre Vigne" from Vietti in Italy has lively raspberry and blackberry flavouring. It's jammy yet delicious.

2005 Barolo DOCG Castiglione from Vietti in Italy intermingles its floral notes with dark red fruit, spices and new leather.