

A Wine Taster's Guide to Environmental Wines- A Look at Lageder Reds

With today's global attention focused on environmental health, entrepreneurs, citizen groups, and national governments attempt cooperation to improve air, water, and soil quality, to safeguard oceans and forests and especially to control climate change. You can join the effort at your next wine tasting party by choosing wines from an eco-friendly winery like Alois Lageder. As you pour your guests a glass of these planet conscious wines, you can pass on knowledge that shows this historic Italian winery is no newcomer to environmentalism. This article looks at the aspects of eco-friendly winemaking including how winemakers create a natural balance to increase the vitality and pest and disease resistance of vines with a focus on one of the long time advocates of environmentalism in wine.

Alois Lageder

Winemaker Alois Lageder is one of many with environmental concerns, but for him, they are not recent. Born in 1950, Alois Lageder owns family vineyards located on steep Alpine slopes far from any beaten path in Alto Adige. The region borders Austria where residents speak both Italian and German and the past still dominates viticulture and winemaking. However, Alois Lageder's visionary plan has always embraced modern technology. Instead of operating at cross-purposes, he sees nature, humans, and technology as cooperative forces with art as an expression of nature that informs people, an outlook that sends him to the top of any eco-friendly red wine club list. Alois Lageder was named after his great grandfather who founded a winery in Bolzano in 1855. In 1934, the family acquired the Lowengang estate in Magre' now planted with 77 acres of grapes and subsequently acquired other vineyards in prime locations in Alto Adige including the Cason' Hirschprunn estate in 1991 planted with 79 acres.

Aspects Of Biodynamic Winemaking

Lageder grows vineyards on steep slopes from 750 to 3,250 elevations above the Adige Valley. All have been organically farmed, and the Lowengang estate is now farmed biodynamically, an even more rigorous and sustainable farming method than organic. Rather than unnatural single crop planting, Lageder cultivates multiple varieties in any given vineyard together with other plants, uses compost instead of artificial fertilizers, and fights parasites with natural predators. Lageder's goal is to imitate the balance in nature and increase the health and vitality of the vines so they are resistant to parasites and disease. Completed in 1996, the winery at the Tor Lowengang estate is a marvel of new technology, entirely eliminating the consumption of non-renewable fossil fuels. The winery employs solar energy, geo-thermic warmth, and natural convection currents. The building leans into a cliff that cools and warms fresh air for ventilation. A photoelectric system makes use of solar energy, delivering most of the winery's electrical needs. And solar collectors heat water. The 50 feet tall vinification tower harnesses the force of gravity in such a way that pumps or other mechanical means for moving the grapes and must are unnecessary. The grapes and must flow down from one vinification phase to the next and end in fermentation vats arranged in a circle around this central axis. After fermentation, the wines rest in vaulted cellars until picked up by red wine club associations and distributors. By sharing this information at your next eco-friendly wine tasting party, you can help Lageder's wines and other environmental wines taste a little sweeter to your guests.