

# organics in wine goes mainstream

## SAM'S CLUB® CREATES ITS OWN ORGANIC LABEL

This summer, we're bringing in wine made from organic grapes from two of the world's great wine-producing regions. From Chile, a Viognier and a Cabernet Sauvignon by Tormenta®, and a red wine from the Languedoc region of France by Greener Planet™.

As the world becomes increasingly concerned about the environment and issues of sustainability, enthusiasm for organic foods and healthy lifestyles is growing. Reflecting this awareness, winemakers from around the world have begun to establish vineyards that adhere to organic standards. These standards are complex, but essentially they ensure that no chemicals may be used to kill pests and no artificial fertilizers are used.

There have definitely been some challenges in this pursuit. I talked with both Mireia Torres, director for the Torres family wineries of the Tormenta company in Chile, and Hugh Ryman, the winemaker who I worked with in the development of the Greener Planet wines.

It takes years to transform fields tainted by chemicals into soil that is clean enough to pass international organic quality inspection. Winemakers also discovered that, initially, the yield on the vines dropped by 10-20 percent. This was worrisome when considered along with the more labor-intensive requirements of nurturing tender vines without the protection of pesticides.

However, as we have had time to observe the evolution of the organic vineyards, it turns out that the money saved by not purchasing chemicals has balanced out the slightly lower yield (and more improvement is anticipated as organic methods are refined). Hugh has been working on organic vineyard conversions for more than 12 years and is excited to share his belief that it will soon be possible to employ organic farming methods on a larger, more industrial growing level, which will both bring prices down and exponentially decrease pollution levels in these parts of the world.

Hugh is a passionate advocate of wines made from organic grapes. He believes that compared with ordinary grapes, an organic grape will yield a better tasting wine. "The healthier the vine, the better the fruit, the better the wine," he said, then added with a big smile: "Plus, the psychological benefit of knowing that the way you're growing your grapes is good for the animals, land and people who share the planet with you may just make it taste even better."

Some organic farming strategies reflect ancient agricultural wisdom. Natural infusions are used for both pest control and soil enhancement: Tobacco is used for pest control, and nettle infusions are used to make the vines thicker and more vigorous. (Citrus oil and eucalyptus are also popular as natural insecticides.)

While I was in France last year, I met with Hugh and the whole team in the Languedoc to select the final blending that would be bottled as Greener Planet. For this initial release, we crafted an unusual blend of Merlot, Shiraz and Cabernet Sauvignon. Bringing these three grape varieties together is far from traditional, but it created a harmonious wine that blends peppery spice with a wild berry flavor, making it an ideal partner for grilled meats or vegetarian dishes.

The Greener Planet line of wines, which we will be expanding over the next few years (with bottlings from Italy and Spain), will be available exclusively at Sam's Club. Greener Planet will be our unique contribution to this burgeoning market (and will be priced at less than \$12 per bottle in most Clubs).

The Torres family, one of the greats in the history of Spanish wine, is making the most of Chile's ideal climate for producing wine made from organic grapes. Tormenta Viognier (priced less than \$10 per bottle in most Clubs) is a crisp, dry charmer with lots of delicate pineapple and citrus notes. This wine is perfect for summer quaffing or to enjoy with a creamy pasta dish or grilled shrimp or lobster. The Cabernet Sauvignon (also less than \$10 per bottle in most Clubs) has a very deep color with lots of black fruit, minerality and medium tannins. You could cellar this for 3-4 years with good results. Enjoy this Cabernet with a steak or an aged cheese. **S**



## bob paulinski

Master of Wine (M.W.), is the Chief Wine Merchant of the Sam's Club® Wine Department. Bob is one of only 24 Americans to have been awarded the prestigious Institute of Masters of Wine certification in its 50 plus-year history.

# off the beaten path

### SUPPLIER PROFILE

Miguel Torres  
Chile  
torreschile.dreyfusashby.com

### SUPPLIER PROFILE

Greener Planet  
France  
www.greenerplanetwine.com



A. Torres® Tormenta® Viognier  
Made from organic grapes.

B. Torres® Tormenta® Cabernet Sauvignon  
Made from organic grapes.

C. Greener Planet™ Shiraz-Merlot Cabernet Sauvignon  
Made from organic grapes.

Visit [samsclub.com/wine](http://samsclub.com/wine) for more news from Bob Paulinski.

Wine brands may vary by Club. Wine is available in select Clubs. Please drink responsibly.

Only foods certified as at least 95 percent organic (i.e., produced almost entirely free of pesticides, toxic fertilizers, growth hormones and antibiotics) are allowed to carry the official "USDA ORGANIC" seal. Organic items are available in select Clubs. Continue to check back as we are adding new items regularly.