

MEDIA RELEASE

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Moon phases and planet positions make for a great wine

Pertaringa Wines in McLaren Vale is leading the way in vineyard biodynamics, looking at the physical, cosmic and spiritual aspects of the vineyard to help produce the best wine possible.

Biodynamics is a holistic system of organic farming based on Austrian philosopher Rudolf Steiner's 1924 lectures on practical, energetic and spiritual approaches to improving crop fertility and health of livestock.

Biodynamic farming focuses on the interrelationship of soil, plants and animals and balancing this with a holistic development of the vineyard.

Pertaringa's vineyard manager and viticulturist Richard Leask was inspired by a trip to Burgundy in 2005 and has been applying biodynamic principles since autumn 2006.

"Biodynamics is a more intensive method of farming and you really begin to understand the complex relationships that are part of a healthy, balanced ecosystem – I'm looking forward to seeing how this is expressed in the wine," Richard said

The practical aspect of biodynamics involves sustainable techniques such as composting to improve and build soil fertility and avoiding the use of artificial chemicals, while the two other aspects might be harder for people with a sound scientific and practical background to accept.

The energetic or cosmic aspect involves an idea that everything is interconnected and that the phases of the moon and positions of the planets affect what happens on our planet.

Finally, the third aspect is a spiritual one, working together with the two previous aspects to significantly reduce the environmental footprint of the vineyard practices.

"Recognising the importance of environmental health, we're hoping to not only leave the soil in a better condition than what we found it in but also to bring out the true terroir of the vineyard through these biodynamic principles," Richard said.

"Since 2006, we have been using vineyard specific compost preparations to help refresh and stimulate the soil microbial numbers and the soils are now looking healthier with more organic matter and a more friable structure that allows more air and water to find its way in.

"Once this microbial system is healthy, active and balanced, this translates into the vines and grapes."

As Pertaringa move away from herbicides to mowing and timed cultivation for under-vine weed control, Richard and the vineyard team expect the soil microbe numbers and soil health to keep improving.

Pertaringa will continue to implement and extend biodynamic principles in the vineyard and the winery, focusing on making great wine with minimal environmental interference.

Owned and operated by well-known and respected viticulturists Geoff Hardy and Ian Leask, Pertaringa is an award-winning boutique winery located in the foothills of McLaren Vale.

For more information contact: Hanne Norvag Thomas at Pertaringa on (08) 8323 8125 / 0439 846 981 or hanne.norvag@pertaringa.com.au