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## *Organic?*

Settlers Ridge Organic Wines remain proactive in our organic process and production by continuing to exceed minimalist accreditation standards, we choose the quality of our wine as a benchmark, our organic credentials providing consumers with true value adding.

Settlers Ridge is the first IFOAM accredited winery in Australia (IFOAM being the highest organic status accepted world-wide). Only a minimal quantity of a naturally occurring sulphur, taken from the air, is used in the winemaking process. No synthetically compounded fertilisers, pesticides or herbicides are used in the vineyard. Instead natural biological systems are encouraged by the use of organic wastes, manures and biological pest controls.

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**ORGANIC wine** is currently available in two forms, the first being wine PRODUCED from organic grapes and the second is wine which not only contains organic grapes but which is also PROCESSED using organic methods (i.e. the vats are washed without chemicals). International and national standards vary to minor degrees in respect of definition of organic PRODUCTION, however vary to significant degrees in terms of wine PROCESSING. However in all cases, for a vineyard to be certified as organic, the owner must be able to prove which vineyard the grapes came from, which officially recognised body certified the vineyard as organic and from what date certified organic practices began. The fundamental idea behind organic wines is that making wines from grapes grown without chemical fertilisers, weed killers, insecticides and other synthetic chemicals is better both for the planet and the wine drinker because all of these damage the soil, the plant, the planet and the consumer.

### Sulphur

An organic wine is first and foremost a wine made out of grapes that were grown organically.

Organic wines are produced using organically grown grapes. No pesticides, herbicides, fungicides, chemical fertilisers or synthetic chemicals of any kind are allowed on the vines or in the soil. Strict rules govern the winemaking process and storage conditions of all imported and domestic wines that acquire certification. Moreover, organic winemakers often avoid many of the chemical substances used to stabilise conventional wines.

There is no such thing as sulphur-free grapes.

Sulphur-free wines do not exist, but wines low in sulphur or free from added sulphur do. Sulphur is a natural by-product of the fermentation process. Fermenting yeasts present on all grape skins generate naturally occurring sulphur in amounts ranging from 6 ppm to 40 ppm (parts per million).

### Why do winemakers add sulphur to wines?

Sulphur has been used as a preservative in winemaking for a thousand years. To prevent wine spoilage, European winemakers pioneered the use of sulphur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>). Unfortunately, freshly pressed grape juice has a tendency to spoil due to contamination from bacteria and wild yeasts present on the grape skins. Not only does SO<sub>2</sub> inhibit the growth of moulds and bacteria, it also stops oxidation and preserves the wine's natural flavour and colour.

### What about added sulphur?

Although technical advances permit the industry to add much less sulphur, most serious winemakers and ecology professors concur that to make a consistently stable wine, sulphur must be added to those naturally present but their use can be minimised by careful hand-picking, small basket pressing and allowing natural yeasts to preserve. Sulphur agents, when properly handled, are not intrinsically toxic to humans or the environment and many feel they are essential in order to prevent oxidation or bacterial spoilage. Settlers Ridge add small amounts of SO<sub>2</sub> in its natural, gaseous form to wines, rather than the powdered **Potassium Metabisulphate (PMS)**, a salt which is widely used in conventional winemaking and contains unacceptable levels of lead and arsenic. Although under all organic standards PMS can be used, Settlers Ridge has never used it. There's a good chance that if grapes have been machine harvested PMS has been used.

In Australia, conventional wines can contain up to 400 ppm sulphide. International and national organic winemaking standards limit the use of sulphur to a total of 90 ppm in red wines and 100 ppm in white and sparkling wines. **Settlers Ridge wines contain on average 30ppm.**

### Who is at risk?

About 0.4% of the population is considered highly allergic to sulphur. According to Dr Vincent Marinkovich, an allergist and clinical immunologist who has extensively researched SO<sub>2</sub>, sulphur poses no danger to 99.75% of the population, the highest risk group are asthmatics (about 10% of the population) and only a small percentage of this group are allergic to sulphur. Concern for chemicals used in food and beverage production should be of more concern to asthmatics and people with cancer or at high risk.

Many people, however, have little tolerance for sulphur. Even for moderate wine drinkers, the average level of sulphur found in many commercial wines can cause side effects. Unpleasant reactions include migraines, hives, cramps and skin flushes. For them, organic wines are an especially good choice as they contain minimal amounts of sulphur.

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### Settlers Ridge Organics

Settlers Ridge Wines remain proactive in our organic PROCESS and PRODUCTION by continuing to exceed minimalist accreditation standards. Conventional versus Organic Viticulture. Recently adopted conventional agricultural practices have stripped the minerals essential for healthy crops from the soil, necessitating the increasing use of artificial help to replace what has been lost. In fact, according to conservative estimates, seventeen pesticides, fumigants and herbicides are currently used in conventional wine grape production. Recent US-EPA studies conclude chlorpyrifos, as extensively used in conventional viticulture methods, attacks the central nervous system.



Many consumers are not aware that grapes are one of the most heavily sprayed crops and when chemicals are sprayed on the grape skins to protect them from pests and disease, they finish up as residue in the wine. There are also many systemic chemicals which are sprayed on the ground to be absorbed by the vine roots, ending up in the grape pulp and eventually as wine residue. Many other chemicals are of great concern as potential carcinogenic agent, however remain widely used in conventional viticulture.

**Settlers Ridge Wines are Nationally (Australia) and Internationally certified both in PRODUCTION and PROCESSING, the only Australian Wine Producers to be so accredited.**

The cornerstone of organic farming is the soil. Maintaining a healthy, biologically active soil is the main objective for an organic farmer. In the vineyard it means planting cover crops instead of applying herbicides, using natural fertiliser versus chemical fertilisers. Organic growers use no synthetic growth promoters. As for pesticides, the organic alternative is to encourage natural predators of insect pests instead of spraying poisonous insecticides.

Organic farmers promote "biodiversity" and allow plants other than vines to grow in and around the vineyard. Biodiversity helps regulate the vineyard soil by attracting beneficial insects, spiders and predatory mites, as well as providing shelter and food and replaces the need for chemicals. What can't be fully controlled through biodiversity can still be managed organically, through the use of naturally occurring plant or mineral extracts which leave no residues in the soil.

Conventional farmers use chemical herbicides for weed control. The organic alternative is to allow the weeds to grow and mow them periodically so that the cut weeds act as mulch, retaining ground moisture and eventually rotting back into the ground as nature's fertiliser.

There is no doubt that growing under organic conditions protects the environment and the people who work in vineyards from the adverse effects of pesticides, herbicides and insecticides. Organic is more than simply a way of farming, it is also a philosophy. As Ralph Waldo Emerson once said, "We did not inherit the Earth from our forefathers, we are borrowing it from our descendants."

### **Conventional versus Organic Winemaking**

In the cellar, 'organic' suggests minimal processing and no use of chemical additives. Organic winemakers pay particular attention to three factors: the use of yeasts, filtration/fining methods and use of sulphur. The need for cultured yeasts in organic winemaking is reduced by the farming practice itself, for wild yeasts remain present, not having been eliminated by weed killers or insecticides. The physical treatment of the wine is kept to a minimum by selectively hand-picking and tender handling of fruit.

Minimising the use of sulphur needed as an antioxidant is stringently observed. It is extremely difficult to make wine that will keep well without adding at least some additional sulphur to those naturally produced. This is particularly true of white wines, which ferment apart from grape skins. Red wines ferment with juice and skins together, providing them not only with their colour but with tannin, a natural preservative.

### **Conventional Wines compared to Organic Wines**

Settlers Ridge Wines compare favourably with conventional wines, as defined by peer group granted awards, thus acknowledging our focus on quality. Our awards, achieved in international and domestic open competitions against conventional wines (since our first vintage in 1997), attest to our focus on quality.

Settlers Ridge choose the quality of our wine as a benchmark, our organic credentials providing consumers with true value adding.

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### **Why are we unique?**

Settlers Ridge is the **ONLY** Internationally Certified Organic Winery in Australia.

Settlers Ridge PREMIUM wines are chemical free.



Settlers Ridge has won numerous awards at conventional wine shows nationally and internationally, even though the 1st vintage was as recent as 1997.

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#### **Preservative Free?**

Our PREMIUM wines do contain preservatives, but there are two differences:

- Our organic wines contain about 80% less preservatives than conventional wines.
- The preservative is a naturally occurring gas, not a powdered form which contains chemical residue.