

INSIDE SAN FRANCISCO Shopping,
great gifts, ethnic eats P. 44A

Sunset

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SUNSET WINE AWARDS 2009



The Green Award

Randall Graham

COMMITMENT WE SUPPORT Man of conviction (and wit), Randall Graham of Bonny Doon fame has downsized from a half-million-case business in favor of smaller, biodynamic farming. (As of the 2008 vintage, all of his white wines and about half of his reds are certified biodynamic.) We asked him to sort out the bottom line for us.

Q: HOW CAN WE BE MORE EARTH-FRIENDLY DRINKERS?

A: Look for wines produced from biodynamically or organically grown grapes. This is an indication that the wine will not contain any pesticide residues and is generally produced in a wholesome, straightforward way. And stay away from heavy bottles.

Q: WHAT EXACTLY IS BIODYNAMIC FARMING?



1. The farm is respected as a self-contained organism, with unique qualities (terroir) that can be discerned. Livestock rather than chemical fertilizer is used to enhance soil fertility.



2. Biodynamic preparations (a form of agricultural homeopathy) are used to "wake up" plants, stimulating their natural abilities to meet environmental challenges.



3. The biodynamic calendar respects the rhythms created by the other bodies in the universe—to irrigate, prune, and harvest, for instance, on the most effective days.

Q: DO BIODYNAMIC WINES TASTE BETTER?

A: Biodynamics isn't in itself a guarantor of quality, but over time, as you consume natural wines, you begin to appreciate their subtle qualities. It becomes harder and harder to drink wines that are grossly manipulated or otherwise produced by more conventional means.



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