

Weinakademiker Thesis 2012

What will be the future of biodynamic viticulture?

Peter Duijn
The Netherlands

Motivation

During my years of studying for WSET Diploma Course I became very curious about organic and biodynamic wines.

This is one of the reasons why I have written this thesis about the future of biodynamic viticulture.

Another reason is that I noticed that lots of people, consumers and wine trade, often do not understand biodynamic wines and viticulture.

The goal of this thesis is to capture the essence of biodynamic viticulture and answer some key questions. The advantages and disadvantages of BD viticulture will be showed as well as some changes and dangers of this way of winemaking.

Methods of research

A SWOT analysis have helped me capturing the future possibilities and the main issues of biodynamic viticulture.

The SWOT analysis was completed and 'checked' by information received from (the insights of) interviewed persons and other sources in my section of Fieldresearch.

Key questions were answered:

What are the strengths?

Answer: biodiversity, special taste, no need for additives, longevity of the vines and biodynamics can be used as a unique selling point.

What are the weaknesses?

Answer: hocus pocus, because of the special or strange preparations and moonphases, higher costs, like extra workforce and the dependence on the surroundings due to the chemicals which are used by the neighboring wineries/companies.

What are the opportunities?

Answer: Climate change can be a problem for winegrowers. Due to this climate change, wines with a higher alcohol content may arise.

Biodynamic viticulture can lower the sugar levels and therefor also the alcohol levels in wine.

The increasing focus on sustainability is very much an issue nowadays.

What are the threats?

Answer: the power of the multinational chemical companies and the focus on conventional way of viticulture by wine universities.

Fieldresearch

In my section of Fieldresearch these answers were 'checked' by the answers of the interviewees and other sources like different researches done by different specialists in this field.

The 'green' movement is going strong nowadays. Lots of shops, supermarkets and wine shops are selling organic products. It is more difficult to find biodynamic products or wines. It is for sale, but in a lower quantity than organic.

The special preparations and other biodynamic methods which are used can create skepticism by consumers and wine trade. It is declining, but it will take years when biodynamic viticulture is seen as a normal way of wine making by consumers and wine trade.

Organic viticulture, but especially conventional viticulture will be the most important ways of wine making due to for example the power of chemical industry and the demand for cheap wines, which are difficult to make via organic or biodynamic viticulture.

Conventional viticulture is becoming more green nowadays due to the focus on sustainability in the whole world. So organic and biodynamic viticulture can be a stimulus for conventional viticulture to improve their methods of wine making.

Organic viticulture can be the step before going for biodynamics. Biodynamic viticulture has a steady growth, but remain a small percentage of the whole wine world.

Biodynamie is not often used as a marketing tool. A lot of biodynamic wineries use it as a way of life or philosophy to work by.

Conclusions & Recommendations

My conclusions and recommendations are a result of the confrontation between the literature and the interviewees and the other sources.

- Biodynamics will profit a bit from the organic movement
- Biodynamic viticulture will be more important in the (near) future, but stay a small percentage of the whole
- Organic and especially conventional viticulture will keep the lead
- BD viticulture will raise the bar for conventional viticulture
- BD needs niche marketing

To me this subject of biodynamics is a never ending 'story', which will bring me more knowledge about this type of viticulture, more exciting people to talk to, more articles to read, more wineries to visit, more special wines to taste, more mind breaking moments when I think of certain aspects of biodynamics and a more healthy life style.

Personally, I think we have to live more in line with nature instead of fighting it. In that way biodynamic viticulture can have a thriving future!