

Wine

Resident wine expert Sandra Silfven on all things vino

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Good wines, good buys: Bonterra organic varietals

BY SANDRA SILFVEN 0 COMMENTS



Sandra Silfven

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Bonterra, which means good earth, has been growing grapes organically in Northern California's Mendocino County since 1987 and has more than 900 acres planted. It seems like Robert Blue has been making the wine forever — and he has: He was founding winemaker and produced the first vintage in 1990. Bonterra's wines are certified organic and their Biodynamic wines have passed the Demeter certification requirements.

If you are looking for all-natural wines raised in a way to protect and nurture the earth you only have to look to Bonterra. The wines are in wide distribution in Michigan and are priced under \$20 — the winery's suggested retail price for the wines below is \$16; you'll probably find them for \$14 or \$15.

Bonterra Cabernet Sauvignon Mendocino and Lake Counties 2012, \$16: Polished, supple tannins, a backbone of acidity and flavors that light up the palate — cherry, raspberry, plum, dark currant — make this a super Cab for the price.

Throw in notes of toasted oak and vanilla, and a nice hit of alcohol for more body — and you have a very nice package.

Bonterra Viognier Mendocino County 2013, \$16: The Bonterra whites including this Viognier display a lot of minerality and are fermented in a combination of stainless steel and neutral oak. This Viognier has the trademark floral, herbal, citrus tones of Viognier spiked with the orange blossom of Muscat and a blast of stonefruit — peaches, apricot — on the midpalate.



Bonterra Zinfandel Mendocino County 2012, \$16: Mendocino is Zinfandel country, thanks to the Italians who settled there and strived for big, rustic reds. And as winemaker Bob Blue says, Bonterra's Zin is more elegant in style. It has silky tannins, a punch of spice, dark berries and dark chocolate. Blue adds Petite Sirah for added complexity.

Bonterra Chardonnay Mendocino County 2013, \$16: Bonterra's Chardonnay is crisp, refreshing, dry but not austere. Its aromas are intense orange zest, lime, floral and minerality followed by zesty flavors of citrus and a kiss of Gala apple infused with minerality.

You can reach Sandra Silfven at ssilfven@Hotmail.com.

<http://blogs.detroitnews.com/wine/2015/01/06/bonterra-2/>