



BRAVIUM

Ingredients Labeling

Starting with the 2022 vintage, the back labels of all of my Bravium wines have included ingredient lists.

My thinking is that a traditionally produced wine should always contain no more than five ingredients, otherwise it's more of a wine cocktail. But there are myriad additives - including colorants, flavorings that add sweetness or fruitiness to wine, oak chips or powder and oak tannin that change the structure and mouthfeel, and finishing products that add vanilla, smoke or other notes - that can legally be added to wine with no mention anywhere required.

I am proud of my minimalist winemaking and want to be transparent, so consumers are fully aware of what is in their glasses. The ingredient list also provides a wonderful opportunity to educate about how simply this historic artisan beverage is often crafted.

Making wines with minimal additives typically requires small-scale production and meticulous winemaking, and an ingredient list is one way consumers can see and understand this. It can also give them critical information: some wines have high residual or added sugar, and consumers for whom that is a concern - such as diabetics - are often left without the information they need to make informed choices.

For years I've admired how Ridge Vineyards has included ingredients on its wine labels. After conversations with my team, we deemed it important enough to give up some of the very limited space on the back label to add our own. Using Ridge as a guidepost we agreed that for full transparency, we would list not only what we add but also the naturally occurring byproducts.

For our red wines, that means hand-harvested grapes, native and indigenous yeast, naturally occurring malolactic bacteria, oak from barrel aging, and SO₂. I chose to include the oak from barrel aging because although it may not be considered a traditional ingredient, it does impart aromatic and flavor compounds to the finished wine. And although I don't add SO₂ during crush or fermentation because the wild yeast knocks out any bad bacteria, I do use the smallest effective amount after malolactic conversion and before bottling because my wines tend to be low pH which means they are less prone to oxidation and spoilage, so SO₂ appears last on the label.

The ingredient list on Bravium wine labels reveals not only what's in my wine, but perhaps more importantly, what's not. And hopefully I am setting a good example for other neo-classical wine producers who I hope will be inspired to voluntarily add ingredients to their wine labels too.

Derek Rohlffs, Founder & Winegrower

Bravium

Linguistic origin: Latin / Meaning: prize, reward, gift