



WÖLFFER ESTATE
VINEYARD

SUSTAINABLE VITICULTURE AT WÖLFFER ESTATE VINEYARD

RICH PISACANO, VINEYARD MANAGER

To earn sustainable farming certification, Wölffer Estate Vineyard successfully implemented a comprehensive checklist of nearly 200 sustainable grape-growing practices that included thoughtful vineyard planning, encouraging and prohibiting materials and practices, and numerous ecological management options.

The goal of technical farming standards is to aim for and maintain healthy farmland soils, conserve Long Island's delicate maritime and estuary ecosystems, and protect ground and surface waters from leaching and runoff, according to a release sent out by Long Island Sustainable Winemaking (LISW), an nonprofit trade organization of which Wölffer is a proud founding member. The LISW provides education and certification for Long Island vineyards and is the first sustainable vineyard certification program in the eastern United States.

In addition to implementing a comprehensive technical checklist, certified sustainable vineyards signed a vow to abide by 15 important sustainability guidelines that were created to foster stewardship of Long Island's historic farmlands for future generations.

A hallmark of the LISW certification program is the use of an independent, third-party inspector: Allan Connell, former District Conservationist for the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resource Conservation Service, was chosen for the task.

We are also guided by a self-assessment workbook/guidebook of best practices that helps monitor our progress and enact measures to continually improve our commitment to sustainability.

The practices that we apply include:

- Soil management to reduce erosion, run-off and leaching
- Use of integrated pest management practices for insect, disease and weed control
- Nutrient management with a particular focus on nitrogen
- Pest and spray technology
- Cultural practices—natural ways like hand leaf-removal

Wölffer Estate Vineyard has been at the forefront of sustainable viticultural practices, including:

- We use (and were one of the first to use on Long Island) a recycling sprayer which not only reduces pesticide use by more than 25%, but is also the best way to apply the materials to the target and eliminates drift. (This machine has curtains that captures over-spray and repumps this surplus back into the tank!)
- When deciding on the materials to spray, we always choose either the organic forms or reduced-risk materials that are the safest (even though not always the most effective) choices. These materials are often more expensive.
- We use low rates of pesticides—and those that we use are low-risk—and we spray as little as possible.

Page 1 of 2

A SUSTAINABLE VINEYARD IN THE HEART OF THE HAMPTONS

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- We have a high tolerance to pests and disease and only get concerned when the quality or quantity of our crop is at stake. We do not overreact to the presence of pests or fungus.
- We have eliminated the use of pre-emergent herbicides designed to keep weeds from growing.
- We use organic Stylet oil for European red mites and powdery mildew, organic phosphorus acid for downy mildew, and sulfur for powdery mildew. These are the main materials we use season long. We have eliminated the use of synthetic nitrogen.
- We encourage wildflower and weed diversity in the vineyard.
- We do not till or disturb the soil in any way.
- We do not discourage the presence of wildlife in the vineyard. When birds are in the area we make an effort not to disturb them, and support their efforts to feed on insects undesirable to the vineyard.
- We encourage and maintain the surrounding natural vegetation.
- We have a nest box program to encourage more bluebirds and tree swallows to make their homes on our vineyard and eat insects that are harmful to our fruit.
- We only irrigate when absolutely necessary. Water that is pumped to the surface can have contaminants—the water table underground drifts, so that it might be contaminated with street run-off, etc., from other sources, which can resurface with harmful effects.
- We are aggressive in implementing cultural practices that reduce the need to use pesticides. Our obsession with thorough leaf-removal by hand has allowed us to reduce the rates and intervals of spraying. We practice multiple hedging of the vineyard, which is aesthetically pleasing but driven by sustainability to promote airflow and reduce disease pressure.
- We are in the process of developing a composting project where we will reuse manure, grass clipping, brush, winery pomace and other farm products.
- We are in the process of researching the use of reusable energies and also converting our usage entirely to natural gas.

For more information about sustainable viticulture at Wölffer, please contact Donnell Brown, Senior Marketing Manager, 631-537-5106, ext. 31 or dbrown@wolffer.com.