

executive director, Oregon Wine Board



TED
FARTHING

Creating a consumer connection

Oregon programme hopes to make sustainable purchases easier with a new logo that guarantees responsible winemaking

HERE IN the US, consumer interest in purchasing green does not appear to be waning. A recent Nielsen presentation highlighted a November 2008 report from the Natural Marketing Institute suggesting 80% of the US population shows some kind of green motivation, and that 34% are dedicated to it.

Oregon Certified Sustainable Wine (OCSW) is an educational programme that focuses on the shared principles of Low Input Viticulture and Enology (LIVE); Food Alliance; the United States National Organic Programme (NOP) and its certifying agencies (eg Oregon Tilth, Stellar Certification Services, and others); and Demeter Certified Biodynamic.

The OCSW logo guarantees that the Oregon wine in that bottle was made using responsible agriculture and winemaking practices; and that both of those processes were certified by an independent third party.

Now 17 Oregon wineries have achieved OCSW certification to date, totalling

1.4 million bottles. Participating wineries in the UK market include: A to Z Wineworks, Amity Vineyards, Argyle Winery, Bethel Heights Vineyard, Cristom Vineyards, Ponzi Vineyards, Sokol Blosser Winery, WillaKenzie Estate and Willamette Valley Vineyards.

Wineries receive approval for OCSW certified wines only after they achieve independent third-party certification in the vineyard and in the winery. This is a key distinction from similar programmes based on voluntary enrollment and oversight based on the honour system. We believe this rigor is key to earning consumer trust and ensuring long-term loyalty with the trade who advocate for our wines, and with the consumers who enjoy them. As consumer interest grows, so will the expectations for programmes like OCSW and others in the wine industry to be transparent, accountable, and rooted in independent, auditable certification.

At the Oregon Wine Board, we have the unique ability to elevate this discussion with

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the trade and consumers on behalf of our more than 400 wineries. Sustainability transcends a row of vines or a pallet of wine. Together, as a global industry, we will need to collaborate to combat climate change; seek ways to reduce our collective carbon footprint; brainstorm innovative ways to package and transport our goods; and pool our minds and resources to develop new, long-term solutions if we are to make good on our commitment for continuous improvement and a truly sustainable industry.

I'm constantly inspired by the commitment of growers and winemakers like Pat Dudley of Bethel Heights Vineyard, who reminds us that: "Our direct relationships with consumers allow us to have the conversations that change minds. We're sending a clear message to the people who promote, distribute, sell and consume our wine that our practices are helping to achieve their goals. We're telling them that we support their values and asking them to support ours."

Will you come aboard? **db**