



DE BORTOLI WINES

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De Bortoli Wine's Environmental Initiatives

- Focus on the environment and reducing carbon footprint is key to the future success and sustainability of De Bortoli Wines
- De Bortoli Wines is leading the way with biological farming practices in the Yarra Valley with the use of compost and biological teas to improve soil microbial activity and water holding capacity
- Composting and mulching in Yarra Valley, Hunter Valley, King Valley and Riverina vineyards has reduced water requirements by up to 50%

De Bortoli Wines

"As a family wine company we also look to the future, taking a long term view and we are determined to pass on a sustainable business to the next generation"

Darren De Bortoli, Managing Director

De Bortoli Wines is a family owned, Australian company established by Italian immigrants, Vittorio and Giuseppina De Bortoli in Griffith, NSW in 1928. Today De Bortoli Wines is managed by third generation family. De Bortoli produces wine at all price points and have four wine making facilities located in Riverina, Hunter Valley, King Valley and Yarra Valley.

De Bortoli embodies a strong family wine growing culture intent on creating a sustainable business for future generations. Managing Director, Darren De Bortoli believes a fundamental part of this philosophy is to operate in a manner that is respectful to the environment, which in turn will allow the creation of better wine from healthy vines and soils for generations to come. It is for this reason that De Bortoli is taking a leading approach to addressing many environmental and sustainability issues including water recycling, waste management and carbon emissions.

Biological / Organic Farming Practices

"We believe that looking after the health of the soil will contribute to vine health which in turn will produce better fruit. By enhancing the soil without the use of inorganic chemicals and taking a hands off approach once the fruit enters the winery, we have ended up with wine of beauty and detail". Steve Webber, Chief Winemaker

De Bortoli cultivates over 700Ha of vineyards in Victoria and New South Wales and is now focused on biological farming as a viable farming practice to enhance healthy soils producing high quality grapes without the use of inorganic chemicals.

De Bortoli's Yarra Valley winery is leading the way in biological viticulture, and programs are in place that will transition certain sites to certified biological and organic over the next five years. Specific vineyards in the Hunter Valley, King Valley and Riverina will also be converted over the same time frame. Viticultural practices throughout the company's 300 plus grower base are also subject to a strict program and audit compliance.

At De Bortoli Yarra Valley, over 250Ha are being converted to biological farming techniques, making it one of the largest biological vineyard areas in Australia. Chief Winemaker, Steve Webber explains that "biological farming is more suitable for De Bortoli than organics...While organics have many good aspects, it is our concern that when natural fungicides such as copper and sulphur are used, they are non-selective and kill beneficial fungi and bacteria as well. The use of biological techniques such as biological teas to combat fungal disease, and compost tea to improve soil biology, soil health, root activity and moisture retention are an increasingly better solution".



As well as composting and mulching techniques to improve soil microbial activity and water holding capacity, De Bortoli is also using biological principles such as cover crop planting for weed suppression, mulching and providing habitat for beneficial insects, mechanical weed removal instead of herbicide use and alternating vineyard traffic to reduce soil compaction.

Steve Webber says that while “conversion costs to biological farming practices are high, ongoing costs should be in line with those used for conventional farming. More importantly, the quality of fruit coming from vineyards under biological and organic practice is proof that great wine does not come from winemaking wizardry but understanding and looking after the piece of dirt where it is grown”.

Water and Waste Management

“The ultimate aim is to be a zero waste Wine Company. This involves management of waste streams – water, grape marc, paper and packaging materials so they lessen the impact on the environment and become useful to other parts of the business”

Rob Glastonbury, Operations Manager, De Bortoli Bilbul

Australia is the driest continent on the planet and water is a precious commodity. A record breaking drought, changing weather patterns attributed to global warming, serious problems with salinity and river degradation and a growing population have made the efficient use and management of water resources imperative to the ensuring the sustainability of De Bortoli Wines for future generations.

Since De Bortoli completed its Environmental Impact Statement in 2005, Rob Glastonbury, Operations Manager at the De Bortoli Bilbul winery in New South Wales has been trialling and implementing a wide range of water saving and recycling initiatives. Rob says that one of the major environment success stories is an upgrade of a waste water treatment facility which has seen a dramatic reduction of 90% in the amount of energy used. In addition, elimination of all sodium based cleaning products has meant that all winery wastewater is plant usable, as well as reducing salinity issues.

De Bortoli also purchased a neighbouring 65 hectare farm and has integrated this into the new waste water plan. Rob Glastonbury explains that this green farm has been set up so it is suitable for reuse of winery waste water for growing millet and grain crops which now generates around \$200,000 per year for the company. “The ultimate goal is to achieve waste free wineries with managed streams that turn a profit”, said Rob.

At De Bortoli Yarra Valley, an aerobic biological water treatment plant has allowed the winery to use the majority of waste water for irrigation, and evaporation savers on dams has reduced water loss from evaporation by between 30-50 per cent. Composting and mulching has also reduced water consumption by up to 40%, equivalent to the yearly use of water by 680 households.

As an early signatory to the National Packaging Covenant, De Bortoli is committed to reducing the environmental impacts of packaging by 65% by 2010. Lighter weight bottles, the elimination of cardboard dividers and recycling of packaging materials are some of the initiatives being trialled.

Carbon Footprint and Offset Initiatives

“For a family owned company looking to create a sustainable business for future generations, reducing our carbon footprint has become an integral part of De Bortoli’s wine vision and philosophy” - Darren De Bortoli, Managing Director

De Bortoli Wines is a signatory to Australia’s Greenhouse Challenge Plus to improve energy efficiency and reduce greenhouse gas emissions and has also implemented a 17 Trees program whereby 17 trees are planted for every company vehicle to offset emissions.

While De Bortoli’s environment initiatives stem from a desire to safeguard a future where good wine and a healthy environment can be enjoyed for future generations, changes to biological farming practices, recycling, bottling and water and waste minimisation have also contributed to improved efficiency and cost savings. “We have saved 50 tonnes of waste going to landfill, reduced energy consumption from 400 to 8 kilowatt hours per year saving \$160,000 in power and avoided capital spending of \$350,000 for larger power supplies” says Rob Glastonbury. “It is a wine-win situation because it has also taken a huge chunk out of our carbon footprint”.

For detailed information on De Bortoli’s viticultural practices and environmental initiatives, please refer to www.debortoli.com.au, or contact Annelie Mitchell at annelie_mitchell@debortoli.com.au