

A Comparison of Prices and Ratings of Conventionally, Organically and Biodynamically Produced Austrian Wines

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Abstract

◦*Purpose* – This study investigates the “fine wine market” of Austria from a leading international wine guide’s point of view by comparing differences of ratings and cellar-door prices of biodynamic, organic and conventional wines featured in the 2015-2018 editions of the guide.

◦*Design* – A content analysis of the Austrian Gault&Millau wine guides 2015 to 2018 was performed. The analysed data – 8,667 different wines featured in the four mentioned editions – included the names of the wineries, the size of each company (vineyard surface in hectares), the designated region of origin, the wines rated and the points / ratings they received as well as the corresponding cellar-door prices.

◦*Findings* – Results show that the biodynamic wines featured in the Austrian Gault&Millau wine guides 2015 to 2018 (928 in total) are significantly better (higher) rated and have higher cellar-door prices than organic (1,180 positions) and conventional wines (the vast majority – 6,559 wines). No significant evidence was found concerning differences in the cellar-door prices of wines made from organically and conventionally produced grapes.

◦*Practical implications* - Results do not necessarily indicate that Austrian wines made from biodynamically produced grapes are better and more expensive than others. Rather than that, our findings imply that a sufficiently high number of leading Austrian wine producers apply biodynamic farming methods and, thus, average ratings and average prices of their wines are statistically higher. Outcomes of this study might mitigate certain prejudices of industry players and/or consumers towards organic and biodynamic wines and could also support winemakers and vintners in their decision-making processes concerning a possible conversion to an “alternative” production method.

Key words: biodynamic, organic, conventional, wine, wine guides, cellar-door price, quality, ratings.