

WWW whatwomenwant

Polish off your glass and say halo

by Elaine Singleton

As consumers we're all more savvy about what we buy and the impact it has on our health, the environment and other people. But just doing the weekly shop can throw up so many moral dilemmas from food miles to Fairtrade that it's exhausting!



Thank goodness we can have a glass of wine and still feel virtuous. If we choose carefully. Preston wine expert Emma Bailie (left) has been combing the supermarket shelves seeking out tipples that taste good and are good for the environment and their producers and workers too. Here are some wine options with a feelgood factor:

Going one step further than organic, biodynamic wines are planted, harvested and even tasted according to the Earth's natural cycles, like the position of the moon and stars. Herbal mixtures and homeopathic treatments are used to boost the vines. Some say it's rubbish and others swear by it, but less chemicals and more harmony with nature can't be a bad thing. Wine Relief is part of Comic Relief, and many wine retailers donated 10% of the price of certain bottles to the charity.

Booths raised more than £7,000 this year through Wine Relief. Wine is still just wine and shouldn't be taken too seriously, but it does feel good to polish your wine glasses AND your halo too!

bottle it



Lighter bottles

It's hard not to judge a wine by its bottle says Emma. "A heavy duty wine bottle, with thick walls and a huge dimple in the bottom, gives the impression that it holds a high quality wine, too precious to be bottled in everyday glass. Not true. Imagine the natural resources used on that bottle - more glass to produce it, more fuel to transport it because it's heavier, more energy to recycle it. Thankfully new lighter weight bottles are coming onto the market and guess what? The wine tastes just as good." Try Casillero del Diablo, Carmenère, Chile, Sainsbury's £7.29 (Red). Full bodied and fruity, a lovely juicy red.



Reduced food miles

The UK is one of the largest importers of wine in the world. But great wines are now being produced in this country too and homegrown English wines are picking up prestigious awards. Our sparkling wines are going head to head with French Champagne in blind tastings and winning. Try Nyetimber, Classic Cuvée, England (sparkling white), Booths, £25.69 (sparkling). Awarding winning English fizz, dry and decadent.



Fairtrade

The concept of Fairtrade is simple. Workers are paid a fair wage for their work and no-one is exploited just so we can enjoy a glass of wine. Emma says: "Many Fairtrade wineries pump money back into the local community, raising living standards for all. Luckily buying Fairtrade wine doesn't mean compromising on cost or quality and the distinctive Fairtrade logo makes it easy to choose a Fairtrade wine." Try Viñedos de la Posada, Torrontés, Argentina, Booths, £6.99 (white). A dry, floral white that's deliciously zesty.



Organic

Organic vineyards don't use chemical fungicides, pesticides or fertilizers. Organically produced wine relies on the skill of the winemaker to use natural techniques to get the best wine possible. The jury's out as to whether organic wine tastes better, but if you've switched to organic carrots and milk then organic wine is for you says Emma. Try Fairtrade Malbec from organically grown grapes, Argentina, The Co-operative, £6.99 (red). Double brownie points with this Fairtrade and organic red.