

THE EDITOR
WINE MAGAZINE
PINELANDS

Whither *Brettanomyces*

In some quarters it has become fashionable to be a "neogreen". "Do you know your carbon foot-print?" Our organic diets are heady with grains and nuts. Our salads are bathed in canola oil, and stuffed green olives are redolent with goat's cheese. We eat free-range eggs from emancipated chickens and are urged to eat reputedly low cholesterol ostrich meat. We wear scratchy organic cotton clothes and in-your-face *eco-cred* shoes. No inorganic fertilisers for us. Rather, we surround ourselves with the reassuring barnyard smell of pelleted compost and apply bark-chips from some poor disarticulated tree to our water-wise gardens. Contemplating these things has shifted from the playground of the mentally eccentric and socially avant-garde to being very *essence ordinaire* of daily living for many folk.

Every man to his last, I say. Live and let live, I say. It is probably a good thing, I say. But I do draw the line when it comes to my wine.

Opening an expensive bottle of syrah (please note, not shiraz) the other night, I was grabbed at the throat by an exuberantly antisocial effluvia. The wine boffins amongst you will immediately finger the culprit and mutter into their glasses knowingly "that's [sanguinary] *brettonamyces*". Better known to its few admirers as that phenol amongst phenols 4-ethylphenol and 4-ethylgaiacol, its presence has been variously attributed to poor cellar hygiene, to rotten quality corkage and to residual sugar, I'm told. Well, jolly good show, I say. Three cheers for intellectualising it, I say. None-the-less, to the ordinary wine-quaffing public the smell is obnoxious.

My bank manager has advised me not to share the name of the wine with your readers. This bottle should have carried the injunction "best drunk yesterday" together with a prominently printed gas chromatographic titre. The experience was repugnant. I can only hope that, in the future, "bouquet *brettonamyces*" is not going to be hailed for the purposes of fashion and *eco-cred* as an ecological miracle worthy of promoting.

ROBIN MORGAN
Pinelands