

# HUFFPOST GREEN

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THE **BLOG**

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## Organic Wine vs. Sustainable Wine

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Kevin Phillips thinks organic is a complete scam - so why is he farming one of Lodi's most renowned vineyards organically? Bechtold Vineyards is the oldest continuously-farmed vineyard in Lodi, originally planted in 1886. It's only 25 acres, but the grapes are highly prized by clients like Randall Grahm of Bonny Doon, Abe Schoener of Scholium Project and Turley Wine Cellars. Of the 800 acres of vineyards Phillips oversees for Michael-David Winery (founded by his father and uncle), Bechtold is the only one farmed organically. The rest are farmed under Lodi Rules - a sustainable program that Kevin prefers for both economic and environmental reasons.

### What are your thoughts on organic grape growing?

I think organic is a complete scam. It's a faulty premise to think something is specifically better just because you don't use a synthetic product in the growth of the fruit.

### Why are you farming Bechtold Vineyards organically then?

These producers [Bonny Doon, Scholium Project, Turley] prefer the organic method, so I do it for them because they're putting Lodi on the map. The wines are in hipster restaurants in New York and Chicago. It puts Lodi in people's consciousness. I don't need to sell the grapes, we could use them for our own winery, but it's my way of taking one for the team for the appellation as a whole.

### What are the problems with organic farming?

Take pests. There's certain materials I use in other vineyards that will target a specific species, but they won't hurt anything else in terms of beneficial predators. If I have a pest in an organic vineyard I have to use something that wipes out everything. It creates a self-serving problem.

Spider mites are a big problem in Lodi, the most economically damaging pest in the area. When I spray the organic vineyard it whacks everything. And I may have to use three or four applications to stay on top of the population.

