The Biodynamic Tasting Experiment

Ellis of Richmond & The Larderhouse

Date conducted: 17/10/11 & 18/10/11

Hypothesis

Whilst working in the wine trade and studying about Biodynamics, we have been increasingly interested in the effects of the Biodynamic tasting calendar when tasting wine. It is our hypothesis that the calendar does indeed make a difference to wine aromas, flavours and quality depending on whether the day is a fruit day or root day.

Methodology

For this experiment we wanted to try and control as many of the variables as possible. Firstly, we had to try and find people who had no knowledge of biodynamics so would probably not be aware of the calendar and could therefore be biased about the experiment. We also wanted some people who had no real experience of 'wine tastings' before so would have no preconceptions about it. We also wanted some people who did have more of a structured knowledge about wine tastings too. We managed to find both types of people.

We had to make sure that the people could attend on 2 nights consecutively so that it was a fair assessment. If people asked about the tasting then we just said that it was a tasting to find new wines for the Larderhouse and that we didn't want them to taste too many on one night so had to do 2 nights.

The wines were all served blind in carafes that were labelled by number and they received a tasting sample of the 3 whites first and then 1 rose, then a short break followed by 3 reds. We had 1 organic white and 1 organic red to see if these were affected more by the calendar days.

For the second night, we actually added 1 different white and red so that it wouldn't be too obvious that they were the same wines on both nights.

Key points:

- To find a cross section of people
- Try to ensure that they had no idea that it was a biodynamic test
- Make sure they could attend on both evenings
- All wines to be served blind
- Wines were from the same lot numbers and fresh wines used on each night
- 2 organic wines to be used as well as non-organic

Results

The results of the experiment show that our hypothesis was proved incorrect. On all except 1 wine was the wine marked higher on the root day than on the flower day. Overall the wines were marked 8% better on the root day. Please see the table of results that have been completed and show every taster's scores.

Conclusion

Immediately after the end of the second round of tasting, we asked who had heard of Biodynamics and 3 people had heard of it, when we asked those 3 people who had heard of the biodynamic tasting calendar, 2 of them had. This question should have gone some way to eliminate bias towards any particular day. When we also asked who thought that the wines were better overall on which night, 5 people thought that they were generally better on the second (Flower) day even though the statistics did not match.

So, although anecdotal evidence can suggest that the calendar does make a difference to tasting wine, our results disprove that and actually favoured a 'worse' day. We feel that more research should be done into this area perhaps on a larger scale in order to extrapolate more information.

Experimenters
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Venue
The Larderhouse, Southbourne

Thanks:
Thanks to all those people who gave up their time to participate in the experiment and also to all the staff at the Larderhouse for helping to set up the experiment.

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NAME	SCORE DAY 1	SCORE DAY 2
KASHI		
WINE NUMBER		
1	13	12
2	15	11
3	17	16
4	13	13
5	13	14
6	13	18
7	17	19
TOTALS	**101**	**103**

NAME	SCORE DAY 1	SCORE DAY 2
BEN		
WINE NUMBER		
1	15	15
2	14	13
3	15	18
4	16	11
5	15	16
6	16	18
7	18	16
TOTALS	**109**	**107**

NAME	SCORE DAY 1	SCORE DAY 2
PAUL		
WINE NUMBER		
1	15	12
2	15	13
3	16	16
4	15	14
5	10	15
6	17	13
7	16	16
TOTALS	**104**	**99**

NAME	SCORE DAY 1	SCORE DAY 2
KATY		
WINE NUMBER		
1	11	15
2	14	14
3	18	16
4	15	11
5	12	12
6	11	11
7	14	13
TOTALS	**95**	**92**

NAME	SCORE DAY 1	SCORE DAY 2
DEBBIE		
WINE NUMBER		
1	11	11
2	13	13
3	18	13
4	14	11
5	16	12
6	13	15
7	18	17
TOTALS	**103**	**92**

NAME	SCORE DAY 1	SCORE DAY 2
KAREN		
WINE NUMBER		
1	17	12
2	8	10
3	18	15
4	12	13
5	11	12
6	19	14
7	19	10
TOTALS	**104**	**86**

NAME	SCORE DAY 1	SCORE DAY 2
GEMMA		
WINE NUMBER		
1	12	13
2	14	12
3	15	16
4	15	12
5	11	14
6	13	14
7	15	16
TOTALS	**95**	**97**

OVERALL TOTALS		
	DAY 1	**DAY 2**
WINE NUMBER		
1	94	90
2	108	86
3	117	110
4	100	85
5	88	95
6	102	103
7	117	107
TOTALS	**726**	**676**

KEY		
Day 1	Root Day	
Day 2	Flower day	
	White wine	
	Rose Wine	
	Red Wine	