

# Bottles bursting with biodynamic goodness

You've heard of organic wines but what about biodynamic ones? Robert Eden practises this decidedly different form of viticulture in the South of France, using it to produce two exciting red wines exclusively for **Waitrose**

**T**he party season is almost upon us and that means celebrating with the finest wines around. None are finer than the red wines – Les Vieilles Vignes de Château Maris and Le Grenache de Château Maris – made in Languedoc in the South of France by Robert Eden (see box-out below) exclusively for Waitrose.

Eden is passionate about the environment and so practises biodynamic viticulture at his La Livinière vineyard. The resulting wines, made from Syrah Grenache and Carignan grapes, are smooth, powerful, succulent and elegant, with lovely dark-fruit flavours.

Biodynamic viticulture has become popular in recent years in Europe, especially in France. Like biodynamic agriculture in general, it's a holistic form of organics that takes into account the lunar cycles and energy forces and tries to work with them. It's based on the ideas of Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925), the founder of anthroposophy, otherwise known as spiritual science.

According to this theory, the astral environment is as vital to cultivating plants as factors to do with the soil. Growers work to astronomical rhythms, with some tasks undertaken only when the constellations are favourable.



An understanding of the ecological, energetic and spiritual aspects of nature is key.

Many grape growers have noticed improvements in the health of their vines after trying biodynamics, especially in the areas of biodiversity, soil fertility, crop

nutrition, and pest, weed and disease management. Wine makers, meanwhile, report that biodynamic wines remain drinkable for longer and have a stronger, clearer and more vibrant taste. Robert Eden, for one, would certainly agree.



LA LIVINIÈRE VINEYARD

## CASE STUDY: ROBERT EDEN

Robert Eden has a 60-hectare vineyard in La Livinière in the South of France and has been supplying Waitrose with wines since 2000. Here he explains why biodynamic viticulture is so important to him.

"Practising organics in any form is a declaration of total love of the earth. It's through the earth that we're part of nature and we become an integral part of nature when we respect and understand the earth as a living organism. The earth is not an object of human dominance, but a living thing with which we have a deep relationship.

"At Château Maris, we practise this belief by adding live compost, made from local organic manure, to our vines.



We replenish the earth, the soil of our vineyards, with the live matter it needs. We believe this is the best way to treat where we live.

"We use natural methods,

such as herbal teas, to stimulate our vines and help protect them against predators. By doing companion planting in the rows between the vines, we're trying to create a situa-

tion in which nature naturally takes its course. There is a delicate balance between every living plant and creature and this has been disastrously imbalanced through modern agricultural methods.

"We're also aware of what energies are around us. We use as a guide, wherever possible, the lunar cycles and the position of the planets in these cycles, allowing for their influences both during the growing period and during the ageing and bottling of our wines.

"At Château Maris, we don't just practise this method nine to five but all the time. It's a way of life and one we hope to encourage others to follow, thus creating a better future for all our children."

**A place in the sun: Eden's vineyards are in Languedoc in the South of France**

### Les Vieilles Vignes de Château Maris

This wine smells and tastes of casis, blueberries and chocolate, with notes of soy and cracked black pepper. The texture is seamless, rich and oily, while the finish is generous, with the sumptuousness of fruit lingering on. It can be drunk on its own – perfect for curling up by the fire on a wintry weekend afternoon – or is delicious with roast poultry stuffed with herbs. Pour at cellar temperature.



**To find out more about Waitrose wines, visit [www.waitrose.com](http://www.waitrose.com)**

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