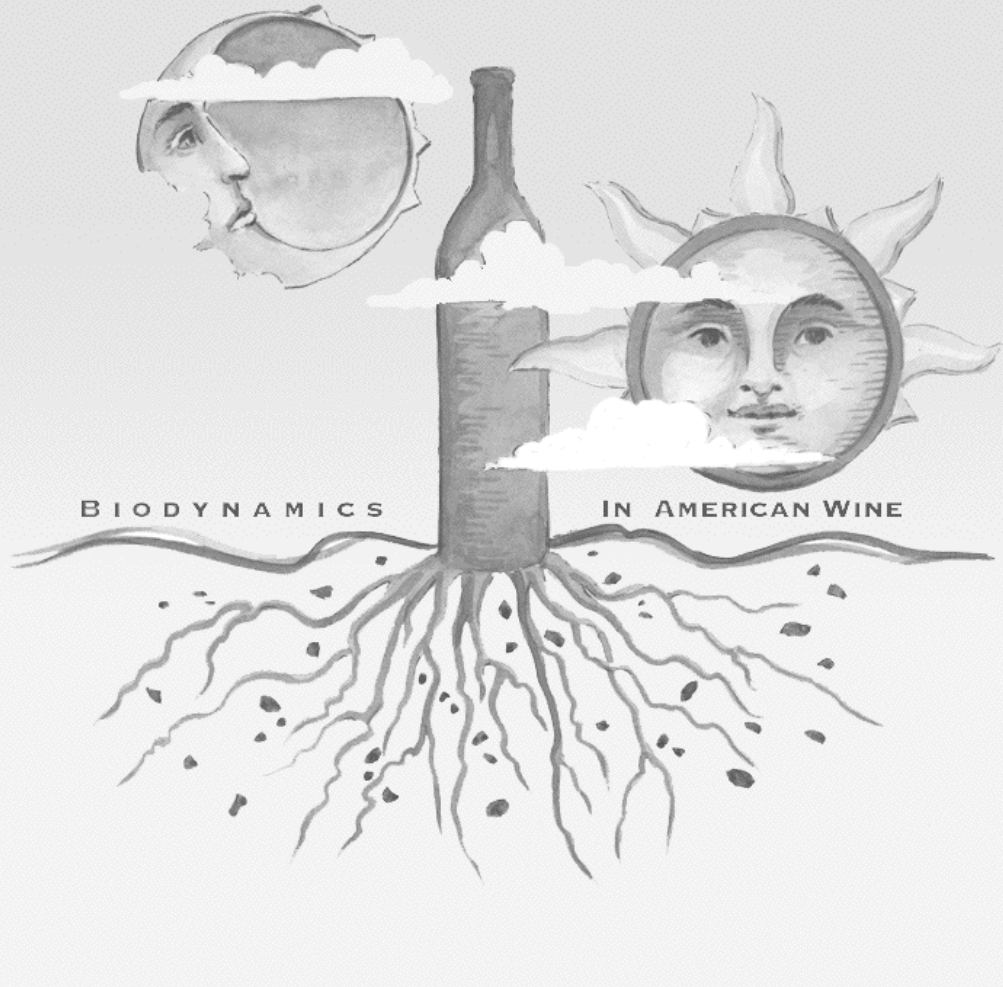


BD FORUM



BD FORUM 2006
APRIL 3, 2006 IN SAN FRANCISCO

Part 1: Introduction

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[BD Forum Host and Moderator Thom Elkjer Introduces Co-Producers Barbara Bowman and Jan Mettler]

Thom Elkjer: The first thing I would like to do is to introduce my partners in BD Forum, Jan Mettler and Barbara Bowman, who have pulled off a real miracle to create this event in an incredibly short time.

[Bowman and Mettler address the audience]

Barbara Bowman: You are the people who are doing miracles. Many of you have known Jan and me for the 25-plus years that each of us has been in this business. And what's happening today because of you is the most exciting thing we have seen in our careers. That's why we've worked with Thom to put on this forum. Thank you.

Jan Mettler: We saw a real need to preserve the identity and integrity of biodynamics. There's tremendous interest and momentum. We wanted to see the traction stick. We didn't want it to become a flamed-out buzzword, if you will. So this is the real deal and we thank you all for your participation.

[Applause]

Thom Elkjer: I want to do a few quick housekeeping things. We're going to do the seminar for the next 90 minutes or so and then lunch will be served and the tasting will open up pretty much the same time. So you'll be free to taste, dine, talk, and if you want to conduct interviews or talk to presenters, this area will continue to be available to everybody. So it's a forum, it's a conversation, it's for you, and feel free to use the time to the best of your ability.

The seminar program was inspired by some work I did with Paul Dolan on a book a few years ago. And Paul explained to me about the power of conversation. It was not something that I had understood at a real deep level. And what we're going to do today is have a series of conversations that explore the territory of biodynamics in American wine, and invite you all to join in that conversation to the greatest extent we can. So after we're done having our seed conversations up here, we're going to get you all involved in the conversation as well.

And so if you have any questions at any point while we're up here having our conversations, be ready to ask those questions 'cause we're going to want to hear them. And we may also have some questions for you.

The sequence in the conversations is a little bit arbitrary because those of you who know about biodynamics understand that it's a macrocosmic view of things and everything's

BD FORUM 2006: INTRODUCTION

interrelated. That's one of the essential tenets of the whole philosophy and the whole approach to viticulture. And so it's difficult to parse it out into little packages. But because we're physical beings with some linear qualities to our experience, it does have to occur in an order, and we tried to make it as organic as we could.

You'll see people from a number of different wineries, people with a lot of background in the industry. These are not my peeps, this is not my posse. These are people I can vouch for because I've been drinking their wine, I've worked with them, I've studied them, I've written about them, know their families, their vineyards, their histories. And we promise to be a little more diverse in future years. I can see some people in the audience actually that will qualify for greater diversity in future years. So think of yourselves in that light today because we want to do this event every year, we want to keep this conversation going for a long time. And those of you who are here today have already demonstrated your interest and your willingness to be part of that conversation, and we want to keep it going.

So the first thing I want to do is get a little reality check about the audience. Has anybody here ever had acupuncture?

[Approximately one-third of the audience raises hands.]

Okay. Ever had a Shiatsu massage?

[Approximately half of the audience raises hands.]

Okay. Ever had a clairvoyant moment when the phone rang and you knew who it was?

[Approximately a third of the audience raises hands.]

Anybody here ever gone to a psychologist or a psychotherapist?

[Approximately two-thirds of the audience raises hands. Laughter.]

Okay. Those are all examples of there being something going on that's more than meets the eye. And a lot of what we're going to talk about today falls into that realm of "more than meets the eye." And that's really the source of biodynamics and the source of our event today.

Take the word "biodynamics," for example. At first blush it sounds like a made-up word, and in fact it is, as all technical words are. If you ask a mechanical engineer what biodynamics means, she could tell you what it means just by breaking the parts down. "Dynamics" is the interplay of forces and "bio" is the root word in our language for life. So biodynamics is the interplay of forces in the sphere of life. It's a technical term. It sounds "woo-woo" to some people, but it's just a simple, scientific description of "more than meets the eye."

And the man who got biodynamics rolling -- but not under that title -- was Rudolf Steiner. And it's interesting to look back to Steiner's time from this time. We've had so much history since Steiner's time -- let's place him in the 1920s. In the 1930s we had the golden age of

physics when an astonishing number of inventions and discoveries were made in the physical and electrical realms. In the '40s there was atomic physics, including the atom bomb and nuclear physics. In the '50s and '60s, remember "Better Living Through Chemistry," when chemistry took off in products and life? Then we had computer revolution in the '70s and '80s. And then we had biotechnology after that.

So the layers of science and technology that have accumulated in the past four or five generations since Steiner's time have really changed how we think of agriculture and science. But in his time science wasn't just materialistic science. He practiced what he called spiritual science. It was not spirit in the sense of religion. It was spirit in the sense of stuff you can't see, nonphysical stuff. So he thought of himself as a scientist of the non-physical.

And if you read the lectures that he gave in the 1920s to a group of German farmers, he talks to them repeatedly about doing experiments, getting data, and not talking about it too much until you had some results and some correlations that you felt pretty confident about. He really urged them to be scientific about what he was advising them to do. Now what he was advising them to do, a lot of it was not something that looked on first blush like science to us, but to him it was the science of things that don't meet the eye.

So that's something to keep in mind as we go through today: to think of science not just in terms that we've been giving it for the past 40, 50, 60, 70 years, but the way science worked for people leading up to the time *before* that. There are many examples in our experience. That's why I asked about the acupuncture, the clairvoyant moments. These are things that we take for granted. They're more than meets the eye, but we don't question them.

For Steiner, the fact that the horns of a cow were a terminating point and a focusing point of energy in the animal was a fact of science for him. A doctor of acupuncture sees those points of termination in energy in our bodies everywhere. That's how it works. That's how Shiatsu massage works: by finding points of termination of energy. People study this, they draw maps of it, there are schools and colleges for it. We don't think it's weird.

In Steiner's time, talking about an animal having energetic termination points that we could understand and take advantage of also wasn't strange. It was science to them. So the rigorousness of spiritual science was the same as what we call science. And that's something else to remember about biodynamics as we go forward today. We're trying to understand something that is hard to see sometimes. We can see the results of it, but we may not always see the process of it.

And when we have our conversations today we're going to try to talk about some of the macrocosmic issues of biodynamics, how it operates in society, how it operates in the wine business, how it operates in other parts of agriculture, how it operates in the vineyard and the winery, how it operates in the glass, how it operates in the press. So we're going to try to look at the whole macrocosm of biodynamics, or at least get that conversation started today. And if you have questions about any part of that, those questions are all valid because we're exploring together.

That's one of the things that you also find if you read the lectures of Steiner, the eight lectures that he gave to the farmers. It's really uncanny when you look at some of the

parallels. For example, in Germany in the late 1800s there had been a lot of innovations in agricultural science and 20 years later they were backfiring. And you can think of parallels with some chemistry that got introduced into agriculture in our lifetimes that had some unintended consequences. Germany started a war by invading some countries and that kind of backfired on them pretty badly. And we've got one of those of our own right now, some people might say.

The economy of Germany was largely in the hands of other countries. If you think of how much of our national economy is owned by people in other countries, that's kind of spooky too. In any case, there were a lot of pressures at that time in Germany, in the culture and in agriculture. And Steiner was one of the people trying to propose solutions. He was trying to help. And when you read the lectures, the depth of his concern and his wanting to help, and his concern that his help might be misunderstood by some people, was very strong.

I bring that up because biodynamics has been misunderstood in this country, and for reasons that you can imagine. It's different. It's nonlinear in some ways. It's macrocosmic rather than microcosmic. And it takes a little bit of attention. It takes some conversation. It takes some time. And we're going to take some time to talk through it today.

The first conversation we're going to have is with Alan York, who has been working in biodynamics and viticulture for many years in different parts of California and the southern hemisphere as well. And Alan is going to talk to us about the basis of biodynamics, how it works.

And then we're going to have a conversation with Jim Fetzer and Paul Dolan who are, as you know, closely identified with sustainability and green issues in the wine business. And they have embraced biodynamics and we're going to talk with them about why they have stepped from organics and sustainability to biodynamics, what that represents for them.

We're going to talk with Mike Benziger and Jim Fullmer about the wider world that surrounds biodynamics and the wine business, the market for 90-plus-point wines that happen to be a biodynamic, the biodynamics in other fields, other parts of agriculture, how biodynamics is progressing in the wine business as far as the certification -- the kind of official, out-in-plain-sight biodynamics -- goes. There's a lot of underground biodynamics, by the way. There are vintners in this room who are practicing it without certifying and without making a lot of public statements about it. And that's part of the exploration. That's part of the process.

Finally we're going to talk with a couple of winemakers who are in the vineyard and in the winery full-time on their professional careers. They're both taking well-known, high-profile estates from well-known appellations biodynamic right before our very eyes, and we're going to talk to them about why they're doing that and how they're doing that. And then we're going to have the Q&A.

So without further ado, I'm going to introduce Alan York, and we're going to get the conversation going.