

The Signaterra Earthsign



Inspired by archetypal images of the natural world — Native American pictograms, the Lascaux cave paintings, the Uffington White Horse and the Neolithic carvings at Brú na Bóinne in Ireland's Boyne River Valley — the Signaterra “Earthsign” glyph is a richly layered, densely encoded symbol that encapsulates Signaterra’s commitment to sustainable winemaking, and to the Earth itself.

The sign’s intersecting curves can be interpreted as abstracted views of the Earth’s curving horizon, and the curve of the Moon or Sun. These curves also echo the orbital paths of the Sun and planets in space.

The interaction of the strokes that make up the icon represents the natural cycle that is vital to sustainable winemaking: Day and Night, Summer and Winter, Sowing and Reaping, tending and harvest are balanced; but with a strong rightward dynamic that represents movement forward — both in time and in terms of progress and improvement. The strong vertical stroke goes deep within the Earth, and into the rich traditions of the past, to gather strength and vigor for the diagonal stroke’s forward, upward journey out into the world, in the same way that we pull ourselves inward and gather energy into our muscles before we spring forward.

Overall, the glyph resembles two animals as they are represented in the oldest forms of human visual expression. The first is the head of a cow or a bull, which around the world symbolizes insight (especially into the past); fertility; maternal nourishment; and cosmic regenerative power. The second is the deer or stag, whose hoof is often pictured in Native American art as an organic triangular shape. The deer represents harmony; compassion; peace; intellect; gentleness; caring; kindness; subtlety; grace; innocence; and, above all, feminine nurturing balanced with masculine power of regeneration.

The symbol also represents the Horned God — the mate and consort of the Goddess (Mother Earth) in early Druidism and paganism, and the embodiment of the male principle in nature. The Horned God appears in other cultures as well; in Greece, he became Pan, the god of Nature.

Deepening the Earthsign’s symbolism further is the fact that it is made up of three strokes. Three is a powerfully symbolic number in virtually every culture: we have only to think of the Graces; the Fates; the Mysterious Three of Norse mythology; the Triple Gem of Buddhism, and the Three Pure Ones of Taoism; the Triple Goddess (Maiden, Mother, Crone); and of course, the Magi and the Trinity. In Chinese, the word “three” is a homonym with the word for “alive.” And one of the Wicca religion’s central tenets is the Rule of Three, which states that whatever you put out into the universe will come back to you threefold.

In alchemy, the number 3 not only represents the four elements — earth, air, water and fire — but also the union of the human with the divine. A stool with three legs will never wobble; just three points determine a plane or a circle, and in music three notes are needed to create a chord. Three is the union of positive, negative, and neutral; it means stability, perfection, completion, and balance. In numerology, 3 symbolizes the ability to inspire and lift society upward, and drive it forward, through idealistic contributions.

In the I Ching, or Book of Changes, the third hexagram is Chun, or “Difficulty at the Beginning,” which tells us that if we persevere, great success is at hand. Literally, Chun translates to “A leaf of grass pushing against an obstacle as it sprouts out of the earth.” The lines of the hexagram offer the following counsel:

“Hold to proper principles — allow things to blossom in their own time.”

“Do not push aggressively, but do not give up.”

“An effort at union, made in humility and sincerity, will meet with good fortune.”

“Avoid the temptation to force completion. Go slowly, methodically, and with quiet balance.”

The third section of Lao Tze’s Tao te Ching (“The Way of Life”) also speaks of 3 as a signifier of union:

We look at it, and we do not see it, and we name it ‘the Equable.’ We listen to it, and we do not hear it, and we name it ‘the Inaudible.’ We try to grasp it, and do not get hold of it, and we name it ‘the Subtle.’

With these three qualities, it cannot be made the subject of description; and hence we blend them together and obtain The One.