

**Organic food as new luxury:
A neglected perspective in the strive
for sustainable food consumption**

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Context

- I am not an expert on sustainability.
- Instead I am researching consumer culture.
- But an odd one working in areas like: female consumption of lingerie, the experience economy and internet gambling.
- Mainly based on qualitative methods and post-structuralistic theories.
- I am interested in the irrational or metaphysical aspects of consumption.

Ideas

- The idea of sustainability as luxury has been exposed in mass media over the last couple of years.
- The front cover of a special issue of: "Time Magazine" in the summer of 2006.
- Newsletter from the Luxury Institute on sustainable luxury.
- Latest newsletter from trendwatching.com talks about:
from eco-ugly to eco-chic to eco-iconic

The concept of luxury

- The concept of luxury has changed over the last couple of decades, but it was for the wealthy few.
- Beyond any needs.
- It was pure waste.
- Veblen: Conspicuous consumption.
- Bourdieu: Social Distinctions based on economic and cultural capital.

New luxury

- It is now common to talk about "new luxury"
- "Masstige" for mass and prestige.
- Mass-exclusivity, exclusive for the masses.
- It is not only for few, but now something for middle class.
- The standard consumer for organic products are in this segment or category.

The paradox

- When luxury becomes something the masses can afford how can the former luxury consumers then distinguish themselves from the masses? Keep away from the Jonsesses!
- There seems to be several aspects where cost of developing new sustainable products are high that the average consumer can not afford to buy these things.

The Solution?

- New sustainable products could be developed and marketed as luxury products, or maybe better as luxury brands.
- We know luxury products are a part of the trick-down process.
- By following such a strategy we can get products much faster at the market.
- It can be shown that these products works.