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STORING YOUR WINE

Basic Storage Tips

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Red Wines

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Basic Storage Tips

Awareness of the effects of factors that can harm your wine is your primary advantage when deciding how to store your wine. Practice the following for maximum age-ability of your wines:

- Lay your bottles horizontally to keep corks moist and stop the effects of air.
- Keep wine storage temperatures between 50° and 55° for optimum conditions. Any constant temperature between 40° and 65° is also acceptable.
- Keep exposure to light to a minimum.
- Avoid moving bottles to decrease the effects of vibration. For older wines, stand bottles up to let sediment settle before serving.

Effects of Air

Air is most likely of all harmful influences to spoil your wine, and can result in oxidation. This chemical process eventually leads to the conversion of wine to vinegar.

Because the glass is impermeable to air, the cork is really the entry point for air to sneak in. Keeping the cork moist is the solution, thus laying the bottle on its side is the prevention.

Effects of Extreme Temperatures

Either cold or heat can have detrimental effects on your wine. Storing your wine in temperatures that are too cold can result in cork shrinkage, letting air leak in. This leads to oxidation, described above.

Temperatures that are too warm cause expedited aging in your wine. In extreme cases, the wine can begin to bleed out through the cork and start deteriorating immediately. Researchers have proven that the rate of chemical reactions can double with each 18° increase. This rapid rate of change can seriously spoil your wine. Amazingly though, wine can survive short spans (a few hours) of exposure to heat, as long as you immediately deposit your cases into a dark, cool environment.

Effects of Light

Although most modern bottles have been designed with UV filtering, some light can still get through which can cause a phenomenon called "light struck". The result is an odor and even taste of sulphur, rubber, onion, garlic or cooked cabbage. Retailers unaware of this effect sometimes display wines under high-intensity or fluorescent lights. Educated store owners solve the problem with special lighting that

emits low levels of UV and damaging visible spectrum radiation. Private collectors just need to store their wines in a dark place.

Effects of Vibration

There is no actual proof that vibration or moving wines has harmful effects on preserving wine. However, enologist Dr. Vernon L. Singleton conducted experiments in 1962 and found that the most profound effect of vibration was the stirring of the sediment. Even that result is not so bad if the sediment has plenty of time to settle before serving. Dr. Singleton declares in his study, *Aging of Wines and Other Spirituous Products Accelerated by Physical Treatments* “The only bad feature about vibration is possibly in dispersing sediments . . . produces such fine particles that it fails to settle. So it may affect clarity, which in turn, can affect flavor . . . If you can look at a bottle of wine and it's still clear, then it wasn't vibrated enough to make a difference.”

Red Wines

Generally, if properly stored, reserve wines and heavier reds tend to keep for ten to fifteen years and can even improve with age. Reds from specific, noted appellations and vineyards normally store well between five and seven years. Wines made from grapes that come from numerous locations or “bulk wines” can generally remain on hand for two-to-three years, tops, but can make great everyday drinking wines.

Reserve and heavy red wines in larger format bottles, such as magnums, store better than the standard 750 ml, often adding several years to its drinkability. For instance, magnums and 3-liter bottles of reds such as [\[name and link to one of our upper-tier wines offered in magnum size\]](#) and [\[name and link to one of our upper-tier wines offered in 3-liter size\]](#) can conceivably keep up to 25 years.

White Wines

White wines have considerably less age-ability. Drinkable immediately upon release, most whites, such as Pinot Grigio or Sauvignon Blanc, will continue to be agreeable for the next two or so years. Some folks do like to age reserve whites that are inherently stronger in structure, full-bodied and higher in acid, such as a Chardonnay or certain white Burgundies. Whites worthy of aging may even be too acidic when young, but the wine will achieve balance over time. This phenomenon is especially true with Rieslings [\[link to one of ours\]](#) and Gewürztraminers [\[link to one of ours\]](#), which have higher residual sugar, but sufficient acid to balance the sweetness.