

THE CARE AND FEEDING OF OAK BARRELS

THE HOME BEER/WINE/CHEESEMAKING SHOP
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818-884-8586 (800-559-9922, in Calif.).

PREPARING NEW BARRELS

Our new barrel price includes external preparation with:

BARRELGUARD[®] (A synthetic alternative to linseed oil. It keeps your barrel free of exterior mold, does not seal the barrel, allowing it to concentrate the wine, and brings out the wood grain, making your barrel absolutely beautiful)

WET SURFACE LINER[®] (A 2-part, food grade epoxy that creates an hard, easy to keep clean, square patch around the bung hole)

- **You** will need to soak your barrel internally with hot water until watertight.
- We recommend the hottest water for the shortest length of time. No use pouring that wonderful toastiness down the drain.
- **Smaller Barrels (1-15 gallon):** Keep filled completely with hottest water. When water tight, empty and fill with your wine.
- **Larger Barrels (20-60 gallon):** Add ~10% by volume of hottest water. Roll barrel. Stand on one end for 5 minutes. Roll barrel. Stand on other end for 5 minutes. Repeat as necessary. When water tight, empty and fill with your wine.
 - If you've done the above, and for some reason decide not to fill your *new* barrel with wine, let the barrel drain completely and dry out, so that it doesn't mold from the moisture. You'll have to repeat the hot water swelling again before using.
 - Barrels stored dry, new or used, will shrink with time. If your barrel still leaks (very unusual for new barrels, but common in barrels stored between uses) you'll need to tighten down the bands. Try the soaking routine first, *then* do the band tightening.

STORING EMPTY BARRELS

When the time comes to store your barrels empty after use, do the following to insure that your barrel doesn't go bacterial.

STEP #1 - CLEAN THE BARREL

- **Use "Barrelclean" (sodium carbonate) and hottest water to remove tartrate deposits. Rinse until water runs clear.**
- **Use Citric Acid, hottest water and the same exact proportions, to neutralize the Barrelclean. Rinse until water runs clear.**

STEP #2 - SANITIZE THE BARREL

OPTION #1 - SULFITE SOLUTION

- **For barrels 1-15 gallons, fill with water and sulfite solution (1 tsp. Sulfite and 1 tsp. Citric Acid per gallon of water). Bung tightly.**
 - *Top up weekly with more water. Change solution monthly.*
 - **Most people lose their barrels while they are filled with sulfite/citric storage solution - or wine -, because they think that having a life is more important than weekly topping.**
- **For barrels 20 gallons and up, add 10% by volume of water. Then dissolve and add 1/8 cup Sulfite and 1/4 cup Citric Acid per 10 gallons of barrel size. Bung tightly, roll around, and store standing on one end. Roll around and change ends every 2 weeks.**
 - *Change solution every month.*

When ready to re-use, you'll need to get the sulfite/citric residue out of the wood:

- **Empty and rinse well.**
- **Add about 10% by volume of your hottest water and 1 tablespoon Citric Acid per 10 gallons of barrel size.**
- **Roll around, stand on ends, empty and rinse well.**
- **Smell cautiously. You should not smell SO₂.**
- **Repeat hot water/citric acid treatment if necessary.**
- **Finally, rinse with plain water. Drain well and fill with your wine.**

OPTION #2 - SULFUR GAS/WICKS/DISCS

- **CAUTION:** SO₂ gas is very obnoxious and irritating. Wear protective mask, stand upwind, and be in a well ventilated area.
- This sanitizing method is harder to do on barrels 10 gallons or less.
 - **GAS** - Sold only in ~10 gallon tanks. Preferred for multi-lots.
 - **WICKS** - Use 1/4 wick per 10 gallons of barrel volume. Either use "dripless" wicks or rig a vented, drip catching cup. Hang the burning wick from the bung hole with a wire. Bung loosely. *Warning:* Sulfur drips will sear to the barrel bottom. Almost impossible to remove, drips will generate H₂S into the next wine.
 - **DISCS** - They do not drip. Instead, they burn down to a fine ash. Same burning method as wicks.
- **Timing:** Clean barrel (see above), rinse, and *drain well. No puddles.* Add SO₂ gas or burn wick or disc *every week for 3 weeks* and then *repeat once every 3 weeks* until refilling with your wine.
- **Prior to refilling:**
 - Add about 10% by volume of your hottest water and 1 tablespoon Citric Acid per 10 gallons of barrel size.
 - Roll around, stand on ends, empty and rinse well.
 - Smell cautiously. You should not smell SO₂.
 - Repeat hot water/citric acid treatment if necessary.
 - Finally, rinse with plain water. Drain well and fill with your wine.

**"The best way to keep a barrel sound,
..... is to keep it full of wine".**

**"When full of wine, you'll keep an eye on your barrel,
topping it weekly with more wine".**

Whether filled with wine or sulfite/citric storage solution, *keep your barrels full, right up against the bung.*
Do this topping on a *weekly basis.*

**WARNING: WHEN YOUR BARREL GOES BACTERIAL,
IT'S HISTORY! NO CURE! USE IT FOR FIREWOOD OR A
PLANTER!**