

PRESQUE ISLE WINE CELLARS

“Serving the Winemaker Since 1964”

(814) 725-1314 www.piwine.com

Barrel Use and Care

New Barrel Storage

1. If the barrel comes with a protective film wrap, we recommend you keep the protective film wrap on each new barrel until you are ready to rehydrate, inspect and use it with wine.
2. Always store barrels in a cool, humid location.

Barrel Preparation

Before filling the barrel, hydrate it by using one of the following methods:

1. **Hot Water Hydration** - Fill the barrel with 3-5 gallons of very hot water (160deg to 180 deg, clear and potable without chlorine, filtered if necessary). Place the bung in the bunghole and roll the barrel and rotate it from side to side, wetting all interior surfaces of the barrel. Stand the barrel on each end for 4 hours to hydrate the barrel heads. Allow the barrel to sit, with the bung in place until cool. If there are no leaks present and there is a vacuum when the bung is removed, the barrel should be liquid tight. If possible, allow the water to remain in the barrel at least 8 hrs or overnight to completely rehydrate the barrel. Repeat the process if there are obvious leaks (mark their locations with chalk) or if there is not a vacuum present.
2. **Cold Water Hydration** - Fill the barrel completely with clean, clear, chlorine-free, odor-free water (filtered if necessary) and allow it to soak for 24 hrs. If you find any leaks, mark their locations with chalk and let the barrel soak for an additional 24 hrs.
3. If leakage is observed, drain the barrel leaving bunghole down and let dry for 2 hours then repeat the hydration process. If leakage persists after repeating the hydration process twice, contact Presque Isle Wine Cellars.
4. Note that barrels should not be left for more than 48 hours with water not treated with sulfites (1200ppm - 1500ppm) and citric acid (1-2 Tbsp/5 gal) to suppress microbial growth.
5. Once the barrel is confirmed to be watertight, drain the barrel and fill with wine immediately. If the barrel will not be filled immediately, it should be prepared for storage by treating with sulfur as described below.

Avoiding Pressure Buildup

After filling barrels with wine, seepage can occur due to pressure inside the barrel. To prevent seepage caused by pressure:

- Allow the wine to reach the temperature of the room in which the barrel will be stored. If you add cold wine, it expands as it warms, creating pressure inside the barrel.
- Use an airlock in a barrel filled with wine that is not dry or has not undergone malo-lactic fermentation.

Barrel Cleaning and Storage

After emptying wine from a barrel, the barrel must be cleaned and immediately refilled with wine or prepared for storage. To clean the barrel:

1. Completely drain the wine from the barrel
2. Rinse the barrel with clear water. If possible, support the barrel with the bung on the bottom in such a way that as you spray up into the barrel, the rinse water can drain as you spray. Alternatively, add 3-5 gallons of clear water and roll the barrel to rinse off any sediment. Drain this completely from the barrel.

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3. Add 3-5 gallons of a hot water solution of either B-Brite (sodium percarbonate) or soda ash. Roll this around for several minutes to completely wash the inside. Drain completely. **Do not use a chlorine-based sanitizer.**
4. Rinse with clear water, as before.
5. Add 3-5 gallons of cold water containing 1-2 Tbsp citric acid. Roll the barrel to completely wet the inside of the barrel. This is done to neutralize any alkali from the cleaning agent.
6. Rinse with clear water, as before.
7. Do one of the following: Fill with wine immediately OR prepare the barrel for storage.

Preparing Barrels for Storage

1. Thoroughly rinse barrel with clear, odor-free, chlorine-free water (filtered if necessary) until the drainage appears clear.
2. Drain the barrel and allow it to dry thoroughly (estimated 1 to 2 hours)..
3. Once you are certain the barrel is completely dry, treat it using 10g to 20g of sulfur discs or sticks (or equivalent in sulfur gas) to discourage microbial growth. Light the sulfur and quickly lower it into the barrel avoiding breathing in any fumes. A sulfur disk holder is recommended for easier control of the sulfur and to prevent sulfur ash from falling into the barrel. Use thin wire to suspend the sulfur or sulfur disk holder.
4. After lowering the sulfur into the barrel quickly insert a silicone bung snugly in the bunghole.
5. Re-treat empty barrels with sulfur every 30 days.
6. Store barrels in a cool, humid environment.
7. When ready to re-use the barrels, follow the Barrel Preparation instructions above.