

PRESQUE ISLE WINE CELLARS

“Serving the Winemaker Since 1964”

(814) 725-1314

www.piwine.com

Cleaning and Sanitizing for the Winemaker

As you get ready to bottle your wines, don't forget to clean and sanitize. As wine is a food product, good cleanliness and sanitization practices are a must for health and safety. Also, if you've ever heard of winemakers complaining about their wine smelling or tasting “off”, it can often be traced back to poor cleaning and sanitizing practices. The bottom line: poor cleaning and sanitizing practices can lead to poor wine quality.

Taking the time to clean and sanitize requires a few extra minutes, but it is a preventative measure that can help you avoid unnecessary wine faults. We offer a wide range of cleaning and sanitation products. Some require you to combine chemicals, while others are formulated for convenience.

How do I clean and sanitize?

This is a 2-step process. The first step is to remove materials. The second is to kill germs and bacteria that can affect your final product.

1. Choose a cleaning method and pay attention to crevices and hidden spots. Use a brush with your cleaner and scrub away gunk and debris and then rinse well with clean water.
2. Sanitize your equipment according to the instructions that go along with the method you chose. Some of these will require you to rinse. Other sanitizing methods are a rinse in themselves, requiring no rinsing at all.

Always allow your equipment and bottles to air dry to avoid attracting bugs, bacteria, mold and mildew.

What should I clean and sanitize?

Everything that touches your wine supply. This means all equipment: anything that you will submerge in wine, pass wine through and use for storing wine.

When should I clean and sanitize?

Sanitizing is a cyclical process. Good practices save you time in the long run. Always rinse after using your equipment. This cuts down on the elbow grease when it comes to cleaning.

The cycle is as follow: clean, sanitize, use, rinse, clean, sanitize, air dry and store.....

What products are available for cleaning and sanitizing?

Presque Isle Wine Cellars offers a wide range of cleaning and sanitizing products for a variety of options. Most products can be used on all wine equipment and bottles. Caustic soda is an exception, and is not the best option for home winemakers.

Cleaning and Sanitizing:

One Step – An oxygen cleaner free of chlorine, bisulfites, organic compounds or phosphates. Only 1 tablespoon is needed per gallon and rinsing is not necessary.

Cleaning:

B-Brite – An active oxygen and sodium carbonate base makes this cleaner ideal for cleaning barrels. Can be used for equipment and bottles as well. An 8-oz container will make 15 gallons of cleaner (One tablespoon per gallon). Rinsing and sanitizing is recommended.

Caustic Soda – Pure sodium hydroxide used to clean tartrates off of stainless steel tanks and SOME filter cartridges. This is a commercial method of cleaning that can be dangerous if contact is made with the user's skin or eyes. Follow cleaning instructions very carefully when using this product.

PBW: Professional Brewery Wash – This non-caustic, buffered alkaline detergent is safe for use on stainless steel, glass, brass and plastic. Use it to remove tartrate crystals without the dangers associated with caustic soda. Use 2 oz per 5 gallons of water for a cleaning method that rinses off easily.

Pro Foam Plus VF41 – When used with a hose end foamer, this chlorinated alkaline foam cleaner will cling to surfaces for deep cleaning. It may be brushed on surfaces, but the hose end foamer application is the most effective method.

Sal Soda (Soda Ash) – An unscented, inexpensive alkaline cleaning agent that works well to remove grape stains. Use about ¼ cup per gallon of hot water for equipment, barrels and bottles.

Sanitizing:

Campden Tablets – This method is preferred by some due to its long shelf life. Rinsing is not necessary, but keep in mind that the tablets need to be crushed. The tablets contain the same active ingredient as potassium metabisulfite.

Potassium Metabisulfite and Citric Acid – We often recommend this method to our customers. It creates a cost-effective sanitizing rinse, meaning no additional rinsing with clean water. Potassium metabisulfate has a strong odor and those allergic to sulfites may be aggravated by its potency.

Measure carefully. In a gallon of water, add 2 teaspoons of potassium metabisulfite and 1 tablespoon of citric acid. Use it as a rinse. If you're rinsing bottles, just go from bottle to bottle. You can reuse the rinse until you notice it losing its odor. Just mix up another gallon and pick up where you left off. Drain bottles and air dry. You can use this method for your equipment as well.

PIWC also offers products such as brushes, scrubbers, rinsers, draining racks and a stainless steel cleaner.