



To age or **not** to age?

Storing your **wine**

Before the advent of the “four week wine” (wine that’s ready to bottle four weeks after it’s started), everybody knew that wine had to be aged for a period of time. In fact, the longer, the better.

However, the way in which the juice is processed for home winemaking allows the wine to be ready sooner, and this has contributed substantially to its popularity. It’s inexpensive, a most satisfying hobby and it’s quick, so why not?

Four week wine is crystal clear soon after it has been fermented and, therefore, ready to drink. However, it should be aged at least three months. If you’ve made a six week premium wine, we suggest you allow it to age for a minimum of six months, but preferably longer. Only by aging will wine develop aroma and bouquet.

The best wines of the world have been aged in oak casks for several years before they are introduced to the market for consumption. Some red wines have been aged for even 25 years. Of course, home winemakers rarely go to this extreme. However, a few months of bulk or bottle aging will certainly improve its quality. You can even add oak chips to give your wine that “virtual barrel” flavour.

Wine left to age will be more enjoyable to drink, due to the formation of numerous compounds essential to a quality product. The wine requires an appropriate amount of time to allow the acids and tannin to bind together, ultimately making the wine less harsh.

Remember, before comparing your homemade wine to similar commercial wine, keep in mind that the commercial wines have been aged for at least two years, and often longer.

In winemaking it pays to be patient.

Wine requires storing in a cool dark place, before drinking. For this reason any serious winemaker ideally should possess a house with a wine cellar. However, since this is not always possible, an unheated basement storage area will suffice.

When using a basement storage area, bottles should be placed at ground level where the temperature is a few degrees cooler than, for instance, up on a shelf.

The optimum temperature for the storage of the wine is between 10-15°C. A steady temperature is preferable, even if slightly higher or lower than recommended, rather than a fluctuating one.

Aging wine shouldn’t be moved around or shaken. Avoid storage areas subjected to vibration, such as adjacent to stairs.

When the wine is first corked, leave the bottles standing upright for 3-5 days to allow the cork time to expand. After this, it’s important to store the corked bottles horizontally in order to keep the corks moist. Dry corks permit air to enter the bottles, resulting in a spoiled wine.

Last but not least – wine requires time to age*, “so let’s be patient”.

**Staff preference is: at least 3 months for a 4 week kit
at least 6 months for a 6 week kit
(more for red, less for white)*

Make Your Own Beer and Wine... Naturally!

BELLS CORNERS 613-721-9945 OTTAWA 613-722-9945 ORLEANS 613-590-9946