



VINTNER'S CELLAR - *Kawarthas Premium Wines*

999 Lansdowne St. W., Peterborough (at The Parkway)

(705) 741-3767 **www.vintnerswines.ca**

Tuesday to Friday: 9:30am – 6pm, Saturday: 9:30am – 4pm,

Sunday/Monday: Closed

How to Store Wine

6 Basic tips on keeping Vintner's Cellar wines at their best without spending a lot

1. Keep It Cool

Heat is enemy number one for wine. Temperatures higher than 70° F will age a wine more quickly than is usually desirable. And if it gets too much hotter, your wine may get “cooked,” resulting in flat aromas and flavors. The ideal temperature range is between 55° F and 65° F (and 60° F is often cited as close to perfect), though this isn't an exact science. Don't fret too much if your storage runs a couple degrees warmer, as long as you're opening the bottles within a few years from their release.

2. But Not Too Cool

Keeping wines in your household refrigerator is fine to condition the wine for serving, but it's not a good bet for the longer term. The average fridge temp falls well below 45° F to safely store perishable foods, and the lack of moisture could eventually dry out corks, which might allow air to seep into the bottles and damage the wine. Also, don't keep your wine somewhere it could freeze (an unheated garage in winter, forgotten for hours in the freezer). If the liquid starts turning to ice, it could expand enough to push the cork out.

3. Steady as She Goes

More important than worrying about achieving a perfect 60°F is avoiding the landmines of rapid, extreme or frequent temperature swings. On top of cooked flavors, the expansion and contraction of the liquid inside the bottle might push the cork out or cause seepage. Aim for consistency, but don't get paranoid about minor temperature fluctuations; wines may see worse in transit from Vintner's Cellar to the home. (Even if heat has caused wine to seep out past the cork, that doesn't always mean the wine is ruined. There's no way to know until you open it—it could still be delicious.)

4. Turn the Lights Off

Light, especially sunlight, can pose a potential problem for long-term storage. The sun's UV rays can degrade and prematurely age wine. One of the reasons why Vintner's Cellar uses colored glass bottles? They're like sunglasses for wine.

5. Don't Sweat the Humidity

Conventional wisdom says that wines should be stored at an ideal humidity level of 70 percent. The theory goes that dry air will dry out the corks, which would let air into the bottle and spoil the wine. Yes, this does happen, but unless you live in a desert or in arctic conditions, it probably won't happen to you. (Or if you're laying down bottles for 10 or more years.) Anywhere between 50 percent and 80 percent humidity is considered safe, and placing a pan of water in your storage area can improve conditions. Conversely, extremely damp conditions can promote mold. This won't affect a properly sealed wine, but can damage the labels. A dehumidifier can fix that.

6. See Things Sideways

Traditionally, bottles have been stored on their sides in order to keep the liquid up against the cork, which theoretically should keep the cork from drying out. If you're planning on drinking these bottles in the near-term, or if the bottles have alternative closures (screw caps or synthetic corks), this is not necessary.

Cheers!

Contents derived from August 24, 2011 WineSpectator.com article