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CREATE YOUR
OWN
Quality WINES
VINTNER'S CELLAR

15 FASCINATING FACTS ABOUT WINE

1. Cream of tartar is a residue left on the sides of wooden wine casks, after fermented grape juice is removed from the cask. Grapes are the only significant source of cream of tartar and there is no substitute for cream of tartar. Baking powder is a mixture of baking soda and cream of tartar.
2. A red wine grape can make white wine, but a white wine grape cannot make red wine. The juice of red, white and pink wine grapes is clear in color. Red wine is red because the juice is left in contact with the red or black grape skin until it achieves the degree of color that pleases the winemaker.
3. The shape of the shallow and wide-mouthed Champagne or sparkling wine glass (similar to a sherbet glass) is claimed by the French to be a tribute to the “breast” of Marie Antoinette, but the Greeks claim the glass is a tribute to the “breast” of Helen of Troy.
4. Italy is the world’s largest producer of wine, producing 12% of the world’s wine. The USA and France tie for second place at 11%. Spain is third, producing 9% of the world’s production. China and Turkey tie for fourth place—producing more wine than then the individual productions of Argentina, Chile and Australia.
5. A new French oak wine barrel costs \$800 to \$1200. A new American oak wine barrel costs \$300 to \$500. An oak wine barrel is capable of imparting oak flavor for only about three fills. The third fill will naturally have less oak flavor than the first fill.
6. Wine corks are harvested from the bark of the Cork Oak tree. The average life span of a Cork Oak tree is 150 to 200 years. The first harvest of a Cork Oak tree occurs when the tree is about twenty-five years old.

WINE FACT!

There are about 400 species of oak, though only about 20 are used in making oak barrels. Of the trees that are used, only 5% are suitable for making high grade wine barrels. The average age of a French oak tree harvested for use in wine barrels is 170 years!



Each Cork Oak tree yields sixteen bark strippings. The harvest date is painted on the bark of each tree, after each harvest. Laws protect these treasured trees, allowing them to be harvested only once every nine years. The Cork Oak trees of the Western Mediterranean area are considered to yield the best quality wine corks with Portugal being the largest producer.

7. The world's largest Cork Oak tree is The Whistler Tree, located in the Alentejo region of Portugal. This tree is over 212 years old and has been producing the world's best wine corks since 1820. The Whistler Tree is harvested every nine years and is currently producing enough cork for 100,000 wine bottles. The tree received its name from the many songbirds that live in its massive canopy.



8. The average life span of a grapevine is 25 years, but grapevines are capable of producing grapes for 100 years or more.

9. Fermenting grape juice has approximately 6,000 yeast cells per ounce. Grapes will ferment, naturally, if left untouched.

10. America's first wine district was located in Missouri. About 1830 German immigrants, from the Rhine River Valley, settled an area overlooking the Missouri River and produced the first commercially sold wine. Wine is still produced there.

11. Red wine is best served at about 62° to 65°. Chill in the fridge for about 15 minutes to reach correct room temperature.

12. White, rose and blush wines are best served at about 58° to 62°. The less expensive, or the more inferior, the white or blush wine, the more it benefits from even colder temperatures (50° to 55°).

13. It takes about 600 grapes to produce a bottle of wine.

14. The first corkscrew was invented in the mid-1800's.

15. Grape harvest, in Napa Valley and Sonoma Valley, California, usually begins in early August of each year and is completed by early November. Harvest is a great time to visit wine country but also a busy time.