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A relative humidity of 50–70% is the acceptable range.

Insufficient humidity may cause corks to dry out, lose their elasticity and thereby allow air to get into the bottle.

Too much humidity (over 70%) can cause mould to grow on corks. At its extreme, this can destroy a wine.



Constant exposure to light produces chemical reactions in wine that cause it to deteriorate.

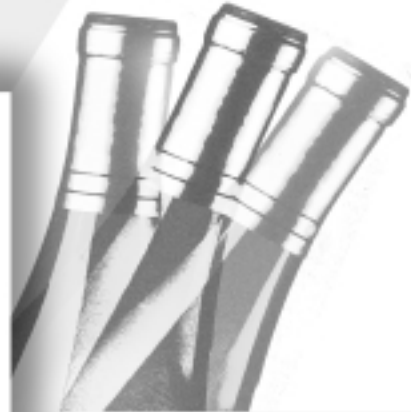
Ultraviolet light has the greatest effect, and white wines and champagnes are the most vulnerable.

Try to keep the cellar dark when not in use.

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It is natural for wines (especially high-end heavy reds) to shed some tannin during ageing.

Vibrations can cause bottle sediment to stay suspended, creating either a haze or “floaties”.



CELLARING TIPS

Basic factors that affect ageing

There are many reasons to age wine in a cellar. It may be a habitual routine, a suggested procedure, a curiosity, or due to a busy schedule! Cellaring time allows all the elements in a wine (fruit, acid, oak and tannins) to integrate and develop a delicate balance, and optimize the wine’s ageing potential.

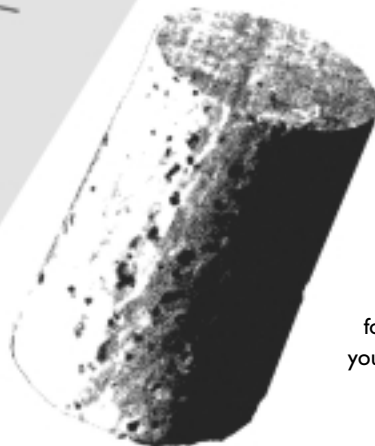
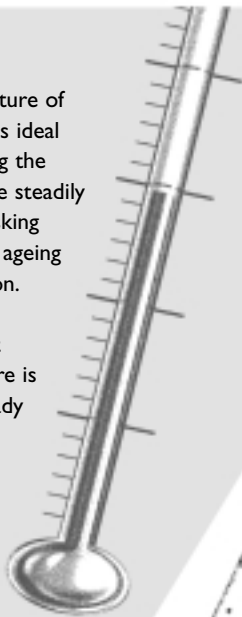


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A temperature of 12–15° C is ideal for allowing the wine to age steadily without risking premature ageing or oxidation.

A constant temperature is key to steady ageing.



Altec corks are great for long-term storage of 1–5 years. They eliminate problems such as leakage and random oxidation, and are commonly used by commercial wineries.

Agglomerated corks, supplied by RJ Spagnols, are suitable for wines for up to 1 year of ageing. Check with your retailer for recommendations.

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Sulphites help to preserve the wine from spoilage and oxidation.

If ageing beyond 6 months, add 1/4 tsp of extra sulphites (sulphite dissipates with age and is important for the long-term health of the wine).



C O R K S