

Keystone Homebrew Supply Newsletter

Winter, 2002

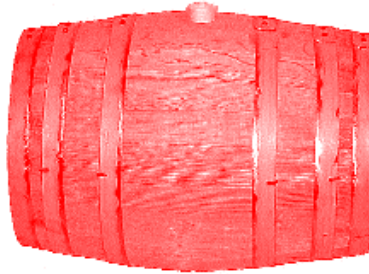
Oak and Wine

Oak often contributes significant flavor to wine. Finding the right oak character for the wine variety can truly raise the complexity and flavor to the next level. Historically this combination of wood and oak occurred as vintners used barrels as the most economical way to store their wine. While it is no longer a matter of economy, the tradition of aging wine in oak barrels has become an integral part of many vintners winemaking techniques.

Keystone Homebrew offers home vintners many options on adding oak to their wine. Before using any oaking technique you should first evaluate the style of wine you are making and determine if oak is an appropriate additive. Consider your own personal taste preferences as well. Next, find the right species of *white oak*, with few exceptions, the only kind of wood used in winemaking barrels. The most commonly used oaks are American white oak (*Quercus alba*) and French oak (*Quercus petrae Liebl*), known for its soft tannins. Other oak used in barrel making comes from Hungary, Slovenia, and Portugal. Finally, determine what oak product to use. Options include oak barrels, soakers, cubes, chips, powder, and oak essence. Each product can be compared by cost, ease of use, amount of wine needed, time until result is achieved, and replication of barrel effects.

The most genuine oaking method is aging wine in a barrel. Owning a barrel is like owning a pet: it requires attention and care or things can go very wrong. The best way to keep your barrel in good condition is to keep it full of wine. Barrels that have too much ullage (air space) can be ruined along with your wine by the effects of microorganism including mold, vinegar bacteria, and the effects of oxidation. Before being used, a barrel needs to be filled with water to make sure the wood swells and that there are no leaks. If, after being used, a barrel is going to be stored empty it is imperative that a sulphur source is burned inside to prevent the growth of microorganisms. As a source of oak flavor, the useful lifespan of a barrel is about 3 years, after which time most of the oak essence has been extracted from the wood. If a barrel is contaminated by mold or vinegar bacteria it should never be used for wine again.

Let's start the comparison with the real deal, a 225L (60 gal., \$595) oak barrel; this is the most common barrel size used by commercial wineries. This size barrel seems to have the best surface to volume ratio for extracting the oaks essence while reducing the effects of evaporation for one full year of aging. In order to utilize a barrel this size a winemaker must be committed to at least 60-70 gallons of one type of wine each year.



When winemakers use smaller barrels in the 5 to 30 gallon range, they have to take into consideration that the wine will only be able to spend a short period of time in the barrel. The high oak surface to wine volume ratio in small barrels increases the amount of oak tannin in the wine and also the amount of evaporation. One to three months is probably the longest you want to keep a wine in a new 5 or 6 gallon barrel. As the barrels get older and the remaining oak essence is reduced, longer aging may be possible. Nevertheless, the winemaker must stay vigilant and keep the barrel filled to prevent spoilage caused by too much evaporation. To use a small barrel, a winemaker should be committed to making six to ten batches a year, rotating the wines so that each batch gets only a short stay in the barrel. Oak barrels range from \$98.80 (2 gal.) to \$300 (30 gal.).

Oak cubes (\$4.50) and soakers (spheres, \$7.50 to \$11.95) are generally added to a wine after the primary fermentation and are allowed to soak in the wine; 1 ounce per 5 gallons for one month is typical. Oak soakers are toasted using a procedure that imitates the oak character of barrels: the outside edges are heavily toasted while the inside remains lightly toasted. This enables the soakers to contribute both the dark and light toasted oak flavors to maximize complexity. The soakers also have the added benefit of being easy to add and remove because of their spherical shape.

Oak chips are the least expensive way (\$2.95 to \$4.25) to add oak to wine. One ounce per 5 gallons for one month is typical. Unless you have an extremely discerning palate, these chips may provide an oakyness equivalent to the soakers or cubes.

Another fast method is oak powder (\$4.89), also called Oak mor, which is ground to the consistency of saw dust in order to quickly impart oak flavor. It is commonly found in wine kits and with time will settle out of wine in the fermenter. Multiple ounces are often added to wine allowing an even shorter contact time.

Last on the list of oak products is oak essence (\$7.49), commercially known as Sinatin 17. Oak essence is an extract of oak that can be added directly to the wine. This procedure can be done at the last minute before bottling. Using oak essence in wine is like using liquid smoke in cooking: you can get a good end result, but is it the same?

Additional information on oak barrels and oaking your wine can be found in the comprehensive book *Techniques in Home Winemaking*, by Daniel Pambianchi available for \$14.95 at Keystone.

Brew King Limited Edition Selection Wine Kits

Deadline to Order All Kits: Tuesday, December 24

The only way to receive any of these amazing kits is to pre-order (in person, by phone, or online) by the deadline and leave us a 50% deposit. These kits are released one per month starting in January.

Arriving in January NAPA VALLEY CHARDONNAY (California, USA) \$85.00

Brew King is proud to release the industry's very first product from California's prestigious Napa Valley. Their Chardonnay delivers all of the qualities expected of the white wine that put California on the world wine map. Intense fruit aromas and flavors abound, from the initial bouquet to long glorious finish, including pear, citrus, pineapple, tropical fruits, lychees and apples. Expect high alcohol and a full body, finished with the right balance of light, buttery oak and a hint of vanilla, for a Chardonnay that many consider to be the world's definitive version.

Arriving in February SYRAH/MOURVÈDRE (Rhône Valley, France) \$90.00

A red wine blend for the ages. Obtained from longstanding vineyards in the world-renowned Rhône Valley of southeast France, the synergy of Syrah and Mourvèdre varieties creates an undeniable magic, reflecting the traditions of this area. Rich and complex, the special blend combines subtlety and smoothness with lively berry aromas and flavors. Strong tannins and earthy character interact with deep plummy fruit, finishing and ripe raspberries, finishing with majestic length.

Arriving in March RIESLING/GEWÜRZTRAMINER (Washington, USA) \$85.00

Bright, lively, intensely fruity blend of two celebrated German white varieties harvested from Washington State's Yakima Valley. Riesling and Gewürztraminer are perfectly suited to this region, where hot days and cool nights develop sugars while maintaining acidity in the grapes. Both contribute vibrant fruit aromas and flavors of peach, green apple, nectarine, and lime, but the duo's zesty spiciness that steals the show. The nose is irresistible, hinting at the citrus celebration that follows. Crisp, thirst quenching, with a slight off-dry finish.

Arriving in April CASTELLINA™ SUPER TUSCAN (Tuscany, Italy) \$90.00

Winemakers of Italy's picturesque Tuscany region broke with tradition to create undeniably great wines -- the Super Tuscan -- which now command the highest respect (and highest prices) around the world. The light cherry and lively fruit of the accepted Sangiovese is matched with the firmer structure of the classic Cabernet Sauvignon. Named for the famed hillside Tuscan village, Brew King's Castellina™ Super Tuscan is an immediately appealing red that gets better with age. Black currants and cherries run prevail, backed by fine tannins, smooth oak, and a long finish that reveals a hint of blackberry.

Order 2 Kits: Save \$2 on Each ~~2~~ Order 3: Save \$4 on Each ~~3~~ Order 4: Save \$8 on Each Kit!

Discounts can't be combined with RJ Restricted Quantity Kits

Secure ordering Online at www.Keystonehomebrew.com

RJ Spagnol's RQ (Restricted Quantity) Special Kits

Deadline to Order All Kits: Tuesday, December 24

The only way to receive these kits is to pre-order (in person, by phone, or online) by the deadline and leave us a 50% deposit.

Arriving in February BABARESCO (Northwest Italy) \$90.00

A very popular Italian red based on the Nebbiolo grape, grown traditionally around the Barbaresco village in the Piedmont area. Considered the softer, younger brother of Barolo, Barbaresco has an elegance all its own, exhibiting an intense garnet red color with intricate notes of lush ripe cherries, blackberries and a classic touch of vanilla oak. Full on the palate, with an initial roundness giving way to soft, delicate tannins on the finish.

Arriving in March TREBBIANO DI SOAVE (Northeast Italy) \$85.00

A white wine traditionally made from garganega and trebbiano grapes in the Veneto region. This medium bodied wine displays a crisp, flinty and persistently fruity nose with a delicately bitter, elegantly light and refreshing taste.

Arriving in April CABERNET-SHIRAZ-MERLOT (Washington, USA) \$90.00

This blend has been made very popular by some of Australia's finest wineries. It boasts a well-balanced aroma of leather and black pepper, giving way to intense blackberry flavor. The spicy flavor from the Cabernet, sweet berry fruit from the Shiraz, and softening effect of the Merlot results in a tightly structured, well-balanced wine, ruby-red in color and hearty with an elegant and long finish.

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Gift ideas check list

\$10 or Less

Auto-siphon, Guinness Glasses, all styles of Wine and Beer Glasses, burlap wine bags, decorative recorkers, inflatable beer signs

\$20 or Less

Beer Books, Wine Books, T-shirts, Wine Racks, Beer Posters, Wine Posters, Bottle Draining Rack, Amber Swing Top Bottles, Vacuvin Wine Savers, Guinness T-shirts and Hats, 3 & 5 Gallon Carboys, Wine Picnic Totes, Hand bottle capper, Beer Steins

\$30 or Less

Beer Growlers, Screwpull Wine Openers, 6 & 6.5 gallon carboys, Iris Hand Corker, Bench Bottle Capper, Blue Swing Top Bottles, Sierra Nevada Mustards, Beer Steins

\$50 or Less

Beer Ingredient Box Recipes, 28 Day Wine Kits, Beer Steins, Half Yards, Beer Equipment Kit, Corona Grain Mill, Counter Pressure Bottle Filler

\$50 to \$100

Selection Wine Kits, Wort Chiller, Floor Corker, Refrigerator Thermostat for Lagering, Outdoor Propane Cooker, Wine Equipment Kit, Beer Steins

Over \$100

Homebrew Kegging Setup, Oak Barrels, Refrigerator Conversion Kit, Electronic Wine Filter & Pump, 10 & 15 Gal. Polarware Brew Pots, Neon Signs

War of the Worts VIII

Keystone Hops Homebrew Club is sponsoring a Homebrew Competition on Saturday, **February 22, 2003** at **The Drafting Room** Restaurant in Spring House, PA. Aside from fame and fantastic prizes, this is a great opportunity to have your homemade beer and mead evaluated by BJCP registered judges. Call Keystone Homebrew Supply for entry forms and additional information or visit www.keystonehomebrew.com. **Entry Deadline 02/16/03**

Volunteer BJCP judges and stewards (no experience necessary) are needed. You can become a certified judge; see the previous page of this newsletter. Stewards help organize, deliver beer, and occasionally taste beer.

Prizes and ribbons will be awarded at 4:30 p.m.

Start brewing now!

HOLIDAY HOURS Starting Friday December 13th

Monday through Thursday & Saturday 10AM - 8PM
Friday 10AM - 9PM Sunday 11 AM - 5PM

December 24 10AM-4PM December 31 11AM - 4PM

Closed Christmas, New Years Day, and January 2



Friends of Keystone Homebrew Supply have recently opened a restaurant nearby. Its called **Tavern 616**. Great beers on tap include Alpha King, Pyramid and Snow goose. The food tastes great,

I had the ribs. **Tavern 616** also serves 12 different wines by the glass. Try not to miss Happy Hours Monday-Friday 5:00 P.M.-7:00 P.M.

where all drafts \$1.00 Off and Buffalo Wings are just \$.15. They also run specials during Monday night football and during the Eagles' games.

Tavern 616 is located on Route 202 just south of Route 63, 5 minutes from Keystone Homebrew. So next time you need some libations try **Tavern 616** and tell them Keystone Homebrew sent you.
587 Dekalb Pike., North Wales, PA 19454
215-699-5800 www.tavern616.com

Do You Know Beer? . . .

Become a Beer Judge!

Impress your family (maybe not your wife or husband), be the envy of your friends, and get free beer. All kidding aside, being a beer judge is hard but rewarding work. The Keystone Hops Homebrew Club is sponsoring six study sessions followed by the BJCP* exam. The study sessions will take place on Tuesday nights from 7:30 to 9:30 starting January 7, 2003. The first meeting will be held at The Drafting Room, in Spring House. Call or email Jason at Keystone Homebrew (215) 855-0100 to join in.

The **final exam** will be given on Tuesday, **February 18** from 7 to 10 p.m. The three-hour exam consists of ten essay questions that test your knowledge of beer styles, recipe formulations, and trouble shooting. During the essays you will judge three beers to test the acuity of your taste buds. Test survivors can try out their new skills and start accumulating BJCP points at the 8th Annual War of the Worts on Saturday, February 22, 2003.

*The Beer Judge Certification Program (BJCP) is an organization devoted to the training and continued education of beer judges. www.bjcp.org

Club Meeting Schedule

3rd Thursday of the Month @ 7PM
mark your calender

December 19th Meeting starts at 8PM
January 16th

February 20th (Competition Prep night)
Sat. Feb. 22nd War of the Wort's
March 20th

Club Meetings are at the store and are open to all interested home brewers.