

OAK AGING BARRELS



Curing Your Barrel

First rinse the inside of the barrel by filling and emptying 2 or 3 times to remove any wood debris. Prior to use, your barrel must be filled with water or submerged for approximately 3 to 5 days. This will allow the oak to expand and retain liquid. (the barrel may leak until cured) After this initial curing period, place the barrel on the holder in a dry area. Liquid will continue to slowly drain through the wood for the following 3 to 7 days. Keep the barrel filled during this time. When the barrel stops draining, empty the contents and rinse again. You are now ready to fill with your spirits.

Filling with Spirits

When filling your barrel with spirits, fill the barrel completely removing all air. Place the cork in tightly. Air inside the barrel can spoil the aging process.

Reconditioning Your Barrel

In preparation for reusing your barrel after the initial use, the barrel may need to be reconditioned. This should always be done when aging wine. Fill your barrel with a cleaning solution such as Soda ash or Barolkleen (454g of Barolkleen per 5 gallons of water) and let it soak in the barrel for 2 to 3 days. This solution will remove excessive tannins.

For additional info on cleaning your barrel see our Barrel Cleaning Kit.

Storage

Barrels should be stored in a cool place and away from sunlight. This will protect both the exterior of the barrel and the aging spirits inside. In time liquid will be absorbed by the barrel or evaporate, generally about 5% over 2 years, this is called the "Angels' Share". Dry climates or heated homes tend to cause more evaporation.

Maintaining your Barrel

Over time the exterior of your barrel will show wear. Lightly sand your barrel with a fine sandpaper. Wipe off any debris with a clean cloth, and apply a coat of water based varnish on the outside of the barrel.

Barrels left without liquid will dry quickly and no longer hold liquid without leaking. If this occurs, begin the curing / reconditioning process again.

How to clean your barrel:

Mix 4 oz of Barolkleen with 1.25 gallons of hot water. Soak for 3 days rolling the barrel regularly. Drain and flush 3 times with hot water. Allow barrel to drain for at least 1 hour. Remove the spigot. Light the sulfur strip and submerge in the barrel through the bung hole. Do not drop the lit sulfur strip into the barrel. Mix 1oz citric acid with 2 gallons of water. Pour the solution into the barrel and swish it around for 5 minutes. Empty the barrel. Rinse and empty the barrel 3 times with hot water, each time briskly shaking the barrel. Allow the barrel to drain for 3 hours before filling.