

LE CUVIER LIBRARY WINES

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Le Cuvier's wine library holds in excess of 8,000 bottles going all the way back to the vin 1981 vintage, & it is our goal to share these extraordinary wines and the unique experiences they offer with you, our most esteemed Elliptical Society members.

Age-worthy wines that have slumbered for extended years in the cellar can be truly special. However, if you've not previously had the chance to enjoy these beautifully aged bottles, you may initially be put off by the experience. So, what should you expect from a Le Cuvier Library Wine, or from another bottle in your own aged collection of wines?

First & foremost, you should expect a level of complexity in the smells & flavors that extend well beyond the grapy-fruity essence of a young wine. As a wine ages (presuming that it is age-worthy, of course), an entire complex of tertiary aromas evolves over time, & it is this additional time that leads to what is called "bottle bouquet" & the wonderful levels of complexity found in well cellared wines.

Basically, young wines are a combination of primary aromas, those smells & flavors that come from the grape variety & the growing conditions. In a relatively young wine, the primary aromas combine with the secondary aromas resulting from the fermentation process. Add a little bit of barrel aging, & that's largely what you get in a bottle of young wine—a glass of fruity pleasure that defines a young wines over-all aroma.

If our young wine described above is given some years of cellar aging, then the aroma evolves into complex bouquet that might include layers of mushroom & truffle, leather & smoke, & a whole array of evolved experience that can be extraordinary & compelling. By example, think of cheese: if all you've ever eaten is fresh young cheese, imagine that first taste of a wonderfully ripe, aged cheese, & you will have some sense of the shock of new experience. But quickly the intense smells & flavors of a great, aged cheese will compel you to question why you've wasted your time with tubs of cottage cheese. So too aged wine.

Remember that older wines tend to throw sediment over time. This is a natural process of aging & evolution. When your Library Wine is shipped, or when you carry it home yourself, the sediment will swirl up through the wine, & it becomes necessary to let your Library Wines settle down before enjoying them. To help ensure extraordinary heights of pleasure, I've listed some useful tips for care and feeding of your most special Le Cuvier Library Wines on the flip side of this page.

Finally, once you've become familiar with the steps for the "Caring & Feeding" of older wines, then handling those lovely old bottles will become second nature. Above all, the pleasure you gain will become an experience to remember with special guests lucky enough to be invited to help enjoy the unique bounty of your table.

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CARE & FEEDING INSTRUCTIONS

1. Give your wine a rest of at least a month or so sitting upright to allow the wine to drop clear of sediment.

2. If you plan to cellar your wine for an extended period of time,
a. Gently lay it on its side after the initial 1-2 month up-right rest. This will help keep the cork wet & sound, & will ensure that any sediment remains at the bottom of the bottle.

b. It is a good idea to store the wine on its side with the label facing up so that any additional sediment that develops over time will settle on the inner surface of the bottle beneath & opposite the side of the label.

c. Store all wines in a dark, vibration free environment. Ultraviolet light is very damaging, & excessive vibration will prevent the wine from dropping clear.

d. A constant temperature within a range of 55 to 60 degrees is ideal! However, please note that it is better to cellar your wine at a slightly warmer degree than to subject it to wild swings at the lower range.

3. Keep the wine at the horizontal & with the label up when moving the wine. This will ensure that the original sediment at the bottom of the bottle, plus any sediment that developed on the lower inside of the bottle, does not swirl up into the wine.

4. When opening your wine, hold the bottle just enough above the horizontal so that wine is below the cork, but not so upright that sediment which formed on the side of the bottle swirls up into the wine.

a. There are wine baskets available that hold the bottle at the right angle, with neck exposed, & which make this task quite simple. These baskets also make it easy to carry your wine from your cellar while maintaining the bottle at the horizontal angle.

5. Cork removal and appearance:

a. We recommend the use of a twin-pronged cork puller, also known as a "butler's friend" or "Ah So", to help reduce the risk of breaking the more delicate cork of a mature aged wine.

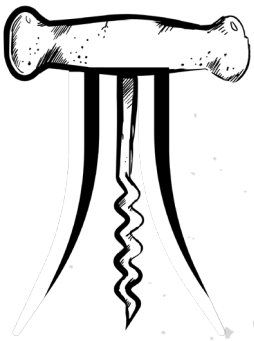
b. The cork may often appear discolored or sodden from its long rest in the bottle. Do not be alarmed as even the most precariously intact seal will yield an astounding wine within.

6. It is a good idea to decant your Library Wine off of the sediment, & to give it a rest of an hour or so in the decanter before pouring it to glass.

a. Again, the wine basket will help with this operation by holding the bottle steady while you gently decant the wine.

b. A light close to & behind the neck of the bottle (opposite your eye) will help you see as any sediment approaches the neck. Stop decanting the wine before any sediment is poured into the decanter. Candles are romantic & to some de rigueur, but perhaps not absolutely essential for this task.

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