



Oak Barrels Perth

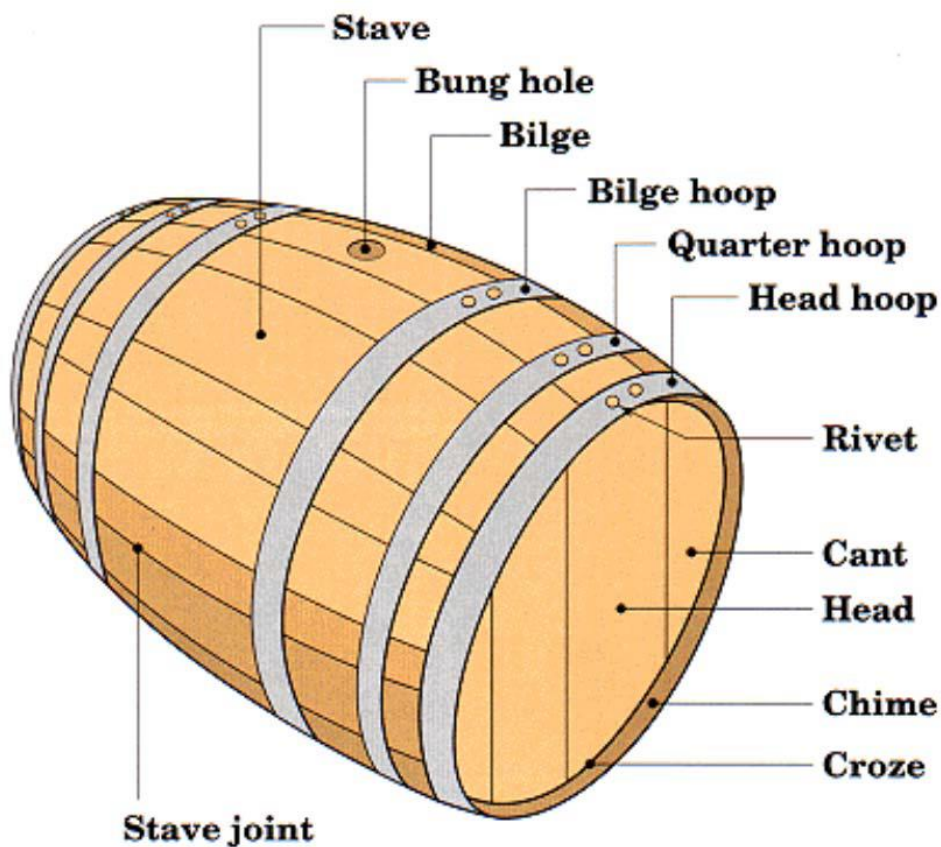
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How to care for, and prepare your Oak Barrel

Welcome to the amazing world of Barrel ownership! With your new friend you are entering a new and exciting level of wine or spirit making. With due diligence and proper upkeep of your barrel it will serve you in your beverage making for years to come.

It's important to remember that oak is a natural substance and simply takes more care than stainless steel but when used correctly and maintained, it can deliver a complex flavour profile that simply cannot be achieved in stainless steel.

First let's get to know your barrel with a little anatomy lesson:



Hydrating your Barrel:

All dry Oak Barrels will leak if they are not prepared correctly. Depending on how long it has been since the barrel was made it will be dry and will need to be swollen with water to ensure a liquid tight seal. As the oak takes on water it swells and expands causing a tight seal.

There are two ways to do this, start with the first method and continue with the second method (if necessary).



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Method 1 - The French Method (Hot Water):

Start with hot (around 60-80°C), chlorine free water. Warning: if you do not have a filter on your tap water and you are on a municipal water system you have chlorine in your water. If you set out the needed volume of water over night it should dissipate, or use store bought water. Chlorine can interact with the components in the oak causing off flavours.

1. Fill the barrel to 20% of its volume with hot water, insert the bung, and give it a thorough shaking for 30 seconds. There will be some spraying from between the Staves, this should subside quickly depending on how dry your barrel is.
2. Empty the barrel and let sit for 10 minutes then repeat step 1.
3. At this point, if the barrel wasn't overly dry, there is a good chance that this is all that it will require.
4. Fill the barrel to the top with cold chlorine free water and check for leaks over say an hour. If there are any leaks move onto Method 2.

Method 2 - Cold Water Soak:

If your barrel still leaks after the Hot Water method, leave it filled with the cold water for 24 hours and check again for leaks. As the oak soaks up the water it helps to top the barrel up every now and then while soaking. If your barrel still leaks after the 24hours soak, empty and refill with fresh water and soak for 12 more hours. If it still leaks after 36 hours then the final step is to use a small amount of wax (the included barrel wax is idea). Heat the barrel with a hair dryer and massage the wax into the leaking spot then using the hair dryer to melt the wax this will allow the wax to penetrate the oak to form a seal. Once this process has been completed your barrel is sealed it is ready for your wine or spirits. Since the barrel was recently sanitized by fire during toasting, there is no need for chemical sanitation with new barrels. Simply rack wine or spirit into the barrel.

Care and upkeep of your barrel:

The best way to keep your barrel hydrated and sanitary is to keep it full of the beverage that you are aging.

Check the fill level often and top off as needed. Smaller barrels will need to be topped off more often. Make sure to maintain an adequate level of product in the barrel to prevent it drying out (keep it above 3/4 full if possible).

Barrel age:

If the barrel is new or younger it will take less time to reach a particular oak level, if it's older then it will take longer. The flavour compounds leach out of the oak at different rates so the character it imparts will change over time, giving the barrel a "sweet spot" in its age.

Barrel size:

When it comes to aging time, it is all about surface area to volume ratios. With a larger barrel say 200-300L there is much less surface area in contact with the total volume of wine or spirit which will slow the extraction and evaporation rates. With a smaller barrel say 1.5-10L the higher level of contact area with the wine or spirit speeds up the oaking process. What might normally take 5 years to achieve in a 200L barrel can be achieved in around 6 months with one of these smaller barrels.