

Wine faults

With wine being such a natural product, there may be occasions when customers have to return wine. To help you understand what the potential problems may be, here are a few of the most common wine faults.



Corked

This only happens to a wine with a natural cork stopper (not a synthetic cork or a screwcap). Cork is a type of wood and can be infected with a mould called TCA. Although corks are disinfected before use, manufacturers cannot use too much as it may impair the flavour of the wine and if they use too little the TCA taste will affect the wine.

A corked wine will smell musty, sweaty and dull – a little like a pair of old trainers!

Oxidised

This means that oxygen has got to the wine and it has gone off. This usually happens when air has seeped into the wine, more often than not via a dried out cork in a bottle that has been standing on the shelf too long. Oxidised white wines often darken in colour and in red wines, the wine can take on a brownish tint. If you smell them they often smell like sherry.

If you notice that any of your white wines are looking browner than they should, it is a good idea to take them off the shelf and write them off. Anyone who knows about wine would not buy them, they create a bad image about your wine range and if anyone does buy a bottle without noticing, it's pretty certain they will be back before long to complain and get a replacement.

Tartrate crystals

Tartrates are a tasteless natural compound in wine. Very occasionally these tartrates can precipitate out to form crystals in the bottom of the bottle. The crystals look like brown sugar crystals and are harmless, but they can make customers panic because they also look a little like slivers of glass.

None of the faults above are harmful to health but all of them will spoil a customer's enjoyment of the wine. Your response should be to replace the wine without question.