

Moe Knows Wine

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“How Hot Is Too Hot?”

By Moe

At what temperature should you serve wine, at what temperature should you store wine, and how hot does it have to be to ruin a great bottle of wine?

Wine can be very fragile. To tell you just how fragile, I accidentally left out a bottle of wine on my dining room table in direct sunlight at 7AM; by 7:30AM the cork was pushed up about a half inch from the bottle. Incredulous, I checked the temperature on the wall and it was 62 degrees. The window acted as a magnifying glass and heated up the bottle. I opened the bottle that night and it was still fine, but there was no way I would have laid it down for another year. Think about that when you run in for an hour leaving your wine in the car. Never leave your wine in a hot car, just like you wouldn't leave a baby or a pet.

Keeping wine at a proper temperature slows down the aging process and lets it develop slowly. Long term storage for wine should be between 55 and 62 degrees. And one of the most important things is that there be no large temperature swings. Large temperature swings can cause pressure change that will in turn cause air to get in the bottle and start the oxidation process. This is the beginning of the end for that bottle. If it is too hot or too cold you can well ruin a bottle in a very brief period of time.

When serving red wine at room temperature, remember that's great when it is 65 degrees out, not when it is 95 degrees. When red wine gets too hot it loses some of its flavor and tastes a little mushy. A nice crisp Chardonnay or Sauvignon Blanc should be served around 45-50 degrees. If the wine is too cold it will lose its taste, and if it is too hot . . . well, let's not even go there.

You should also beware of the storage conditions of the places where you buy your wine. A friend of mine was at a non air-conditioned warehouse that carries wine and mentioned to me that it was so hot in there that he was drenched in sweat. I asked how hot he thought it was and his guess was at least 92 degrees. His car said it was 98 outside. One of my distributors was at a different warehouse and found some of the wine she sold them with drips across the label. Knowing the wine as well as she does, she did not think it was worth it to save a dollar or two. Not surprisingly, it follows that one of those warehouses has more wine returned as bad than anyone in the world. And that's not even including the ones that people lay down for five years and can't be returned. Of course,

this is not limited to warehouses, pay attention to how many places that sell wine are cool enough or if they run the air conditioning 24/7.

Remember to share.



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