

Chapter 5:
Environment

Environment for Making Wine

Maintain a clean and sanitary working environment.

- Spoilage micro-organisms (yeasts & bacteria) are ubiquitous waiting for the “right” conditions to strike. Molds can be particularly nasty, not only to wine, but to your health too.
- Once an area is infected, it is very difficult to clean up.
- Avoid puddles and clean up spills immediately (water and especially juice / wine); these can become a breeding ground for spoilage micro-organisms.
- Develop a strict cleaning & sanitizing regimen, and get into the habit of always cleaning & sanitizing equipment before and after use.
- Avoid areas with odours (e.g. oil, gas, mildew) which could otherwise affect wine quality.
- Install hand sanitizing stations in washrooms and winemaking area.

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Maintain an adequate temperature

20°–25°C (68°–77°F) is the ideal ambient and must (juice) temperature for fermenting wine.

Monitor ambient and must temperatures with a good quality thermometer.

- Avoid temperature spikes and fluctuations from HVAC units and sun, esp. in the fall & spring when furnace is not cycling as often.

Regulate water temperature to reconstitute concentrate.

Don't stress the yeast with high or low temperatures; you may end up with a stuck fermentation that could prove difficult to restart or possibly with a flawed wine.

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Ensure proper ventilation

- Alcoholic fermentation produces appreciable amount of carbon dioxide (CO²) gas.
- CO² is heavier than air and therefore it does not displace easily.
- CO² is colourless and odourless, and therefore impossible to detect.
- Ensure good ventilation to the outdoors during fermentation.
- CO² is a deadly asphyxiant in concentrations >10%.
- CO² has proved fatal in both the commercial and craft winemaking industry.
- Install a CO² detector!