

# Reclaiming an Oxidized Wine

By Jim Lloyd (AWO News # 57)

I hate to admit it but, there are times when I have screwed up batches of wine. Others of you may have done the same and may have found ways around the problem by various treatments or blending.

In my case, I had a 225 L barrel of 2011 Chardonnay that I wasn't very happy with. Maybe in another article, I will explain some yeasting choices for Chard. Since I wasn't too fond of it, I guess I sort of forgot about it, other than making a few additions of SO<sub>2</sub> during the year. At one point last fall, I withdrew a sample and really looked at what I had "created". It wasn't good and the prospect of dumping almost \$1000 of wine was not a happy thought. The wine was flat and the oak from the barrel / oak chips was more than slightly oxidized. I had run into this many years ago, and knew the taste of overaged / oxidized oaky character.

What to do?

I had some new 2012 Chard which was lovely and thought of blending it with the 2011. Tasting trials told me that I was wasting my time and ruining the lovely 2012 wine.

What else? I could have tried some Casein or other additives, but the wine had little fruit in it and I didn't feel that this would be the way to go. I thought about other possibilities and decided to re-ferment the contents of the barrel.

I went out and purchased 2 Chard kits from Costco. If I had to do this again I would probably go for better quality. At this point, I had \$1000 tied up and another \$140 seemed like a reasonable choice. I started 1 of the kits (actually a double kit when you buy from Costco) in each of 2x 45 gal, open topped plastic drums, covering the tops with sheets of plastic with a couple of bungee cords holding them in place. I added the yeast that came with the kits (1118), as it is a strong fermenter. In fact, I had some more 1118 on hand and tripled the dosage to ensure that I had a large early population. I waited 3 days, until the fermentation was becoming quite active.

Then I emptied my barrel (splitting it between the 2 drums) and waited to see what would happen. I also made an adjustment to the acidity level, as this got me here in the first place, but this is for another article, perhaps.

The fermentation took off and was pretty well done in about 10 days. How did it taste? Yeasty and it had a nose that comes with white concentrate kits. I stirred it up to help get rid of some of the CO<sub>2</sub>, then fined it with Kieselsol and Gelatin. I was surprised at how quickly the wine cleared up. In a little over a week, I was filtering the wine thru coarse filter pads into demijohns / carboys. A portion of the kit character disappeared, but was still lingering around. I decided to add some oak chips to a trial batch and I really liked the result. The fruit that was missing or subdued in the barrel had returned and the nice sweet touch of oak really finished it off.

Is it perfect? No! But it has come a long way from where it was.

It won't win a gold medal, but is a nice light fruity Chard with a lovely touch of oak.

I think that I won this one.

In the future, I will try to avoid the mistakes that got me here.