

Choice of barrel critical to winemakers

By Robert Celaschi, Comstock

Just as winemakers won't put just any old juice in a barrel, they won't use any old barrel either. For one wine, it's French oak. For another, American. For yet another, Hungarian. In some cases the wine goes into a steel tank and never touches oak of any kind.



When winemakers talk about the qualities that oak imparts on wine, the terms conveniently dovetail with national stereotypes. American, they say, is a little more aggressive, more powerful. French is more subtle, delicate and elegant. Hungarian, somewhere in between.

In choosing the wood, a winemaker operates much like a chef.

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