

## Preserving an unfinished wine

**By Sherwin Lao**

This is a dilemma amongst many of us. There are times we want to drink wine but couldn't finish a bottle alone.

Or when we are with a date who is not much of a wine drinker, we will end up with leftover wine, which of course we do not want to just throw away. Wine is really tough to preserve after opening. But there are gadgets to do this preservation for us. Remember, re-corking your opened wine does not help much, except prolong the wine for a few more hours. As you know, the cork is porous, and aeration will continue to happen, risking the optimum quality of your wine. Putting your leftover wine into a refrigerator also help very little, and may actually make the wine worst. Not only will the change in temperature of wine be drastic, but also refrigerators vibrate, and vibration further agitate the wine. The odor of food in the fridge may also creep into the wine. The only way to preserve is to seal the wine completely. Or you can just buy screw-cap wines (called Stelvin as discussed lengthily in one of my previous columns), which are actually a better closure, but ironically and for commercial reasons, are sadly not seen on wines worth preserving.

The following wine preservation gadgets can be found locally if you search hard enough:

- **Vacuum Wine Savers**—this is a pump and stopper system, where you pumped out the air of the opened wine bottle, and replace the cork with the stopper. The concept is to suck out the air of the wine so no more aeration occur on the leftover wine. I have this one at home, and it's not bad, though I don't advise over 24-hour of wine preservation. If you want to preserve the wine longer than 24 hours, you need to reopen the stopper and re-pump the wine. There are many brands available but VacuVin is probably the most commercially successful wine saver. You can also get a reliable one in the Oneida brand of wine saver at very reasonable price. Oneida Wine Saver and extra wine stoppers are exclusively available at Pago Wine Bar with telephone number 474-3602. Please call 3 p.m. onwards.
- **The Inert Gas Dispensers**—this is a spray can with nitrogen gas. To preserve the wine, you simply point the spray nozzle into the opened wine bottle, and spray some nitrogen gas inside. You then seal the bottle with the same cork. The concept is that nitrogen removes oxygen, and preserves the wine. Again, I tried this approach, and it does work, but knowing that something is sprayed on your leftover wine, isn't exactly going to be something you may relish. The inert gas cans used to be available at Bacchus Wine Shops. Please check with Bacchus if these cans are still around.
- **Wine Preservation Machines**—similar to the Enomatic used by CAV, the Wine Station from Napa Technology used in the Wine Museum (and locally distributed by Philippine Wine Merchant), and the pioneering Le Verre de Vin—French for 'the glass of wine' used by Wine Depot. These are contraptions that keep oxygen away from opened wine to

preserve the quality. Both the Enomatic and Wine Station machines use nitrogen to keep oxygen away from the wine to preserve its life. These machines function exactly like the inert gas dispenser. But with added features like precise wine portioning and smart card technology. There are household versions of these machines. With the Wine Station by Napa Technology, you can get a wine preservation set of four dispensers. Philippine Wine Merchant is the exclusive distributor of Wine Station and price for the single detached cabinet of four dispensers is roughly P300,000—a stiff price but surely a great fixture in any house, especially of wine lovers. On the other hand, the Le Verre de Vin functions like the vacuum wine saver pump, but of the highest engineering and technology. It is a savvy gadget that is shaped like a wine bottle. It is mounted to the wall and allows precision “de-oxidation” of opened wine bottles within 2 to 5 seconds—depending on the remaining wine amount. It also comes with stoppers and illuminated indicators. The Le Verre de Vin single system version is great for household use. Estimate price is around P100,000. The Le Verre de Vin also have a dual system that can preserve champagnes and other sparkling wines. The Dual version uses a calibrated infusion of carbon dioxide to preserve sparkling wines. For queries on the Wine Station machines, contact Philippine Wine Merchant at 833-1356. For queries on the Le Verre de Vin, contact Wine Depot at 889-4889.

Seeing how expensive (especially the machines) and complicated preserving wine can be, I suggest that you only save wines that are worth saving— those expensive and fuller-bodied Reds. Also, the fuller or heavier bodied your wine is, the better it preserves on its own for hours without any preservation method. When I am asked how long a wine should be kept when opened, I always give the six-hour rule—meaning, sip and drink gradually, and your wine should still be good for six hours (at comfortable room temperature). But the lighter the body, the lesser the alcohol, the faster the wine loses its elements. For these wines, even the wine preservation gadgets can not salvage them. Best solution, however, remains very simple .... just finish the wine.

I will be doing my second wine tasting event at Pago Wine Bar this coming Thursday, Dec. 4, 7 p.m. The theme this time will be on Napa Valley Reds. Napa wines have been at the forefront of New World wines’ ascension to fame. The famous 1976 Paris Tasting, where Stag’s Leap Cellars Cabernet Sauvignon 1973 and Chateau Montelena Chardonnay 1973—both Napa homegrown wines, bested the most prestigious Bordeaux and Burgundy wines in blind tastings scored by French wine judges, was only the eye-opener. Now, Napa Valley is already one of the world’s most expensive vineyard lots and consistently produces some of the best wines in the planet. In Pago, we will try six different premium Napa Reds and two Californian whites. Maximum of 10 slots open... please book with Pago at 474-3602, or through Rachelle Ramos at (0917) 761-3553. Exclusive wines, including Charles Krug, Silverado, Robert Mondavi Napa and Francis Ford Coppola white will be tasted. Food from gourmet sandwiches, Spanish charcuterie to cheeses will be flowing throughout the evening. Pago Wine Bar is located at ground floor, Promenade Building, Wilson Street, corner P. Guevarra Street, same building as Santi’s Delicatessen and Mini Stop.

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