



ABCCORK PRESENTS

Uh oh: That Rotten Egg Smell

What's that smell?

That rotten egg smell that is so distinctive in wine is the result of the formation of hydrogen sulfide at the end of fermentation. If caught early enough it can be treated. Better yet, you can avoid it.

Avoiding the Problem: Causes and Preventions

- **Causes:** Too many sulfites
Prevention: Carefully add the correct amount of sulfites to wine.
- **Causes:** Lack of proper nutrients like nitrogen and yeast hulls
Prevention: Add nutrients during fermentation.
- **Causes:** The combination of some yeasts with some sulfites
Prevention: Use yeast properly and carefully. Make sure it has not expired nor gotten over heated during storage.
- **Causes:** Bacterial contamination
Prevention: Sterilize all equipment and maintain sanitary standards for all tools used during winemaking.

Treating the Problem

If you smell that smell, it is not necessarily too late. But if left too long the hydrogen sulfide will react with other carbon compounds in the wine and will become too difficult to remove. So act fast. So here are some procedures to follow:

1. Measure the sulfites in your wine. Treat to 50 ppm.
2. Rack you wine. Be sure to splash it around quite a bit in order to get oxygen into the wine. Aeration, the introduction of oxygen helps to counteract hydrogen sulfide.
3. Put the airlock on and leave the wine over night.
4. If it is still not fixed pour the wine over a piece of copper into another receiving vessel.
5. Fine and/or filter the wine.
6. The smell should at least be fainter by now. If the wine is not completely cured, add an egg white or a gelatin fining agent. Fine the wine again.
7. Filter the wine. Be sure to use a tight filter.
8. As a close to last resort add copper sulfate. But be very careful because it is poisonous! DO NOT exceed 0.5 ppm of copper. 0.1% solution added at 0.5 mL per gallon will give you 0.3 ppm of copper sulfate.
9. Fine your wine with Bentonite or Sparkolloid fining agent to remove the copper sulfate.
10. Filter the wine to remove the fining agent.

It is important to take care at all stages of wine making. The care that you take at the beginning may save you some grief at the end.



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