



ABCCORK PRESENTS

Quality or convenience?

The question of glass vs. plastic carboys.

Taking the easy way out is never the way to go when making wine. We're always asked if there is a difference between plastic and glass carboys – the answer is undoubtedly yes! This article will discuss the advantages and disadvantages of using plastic or glass carboys.

Plastic carboys are being used more and more because they tend to be cheaper, safer to handle (there's no broken glass!) and lightweight. However, choosing these advantages may have detrimental affects on the finished wine. Plastic carboys make it difficult to monitor wines during fermentation and clearing. Furthermore, plastic allows oxygen to diffuse across its barrier: experienced vintners know that oxidation can lead to a soiling of the wine. The most prominent disadvantage with plastic carboys is how susceptible the material is to obtaining scratches on the surface. Microscopic scratches from cleaning can harbor harmful bacteria, and bacteria can harm your wine in the fermentation and aging processes. Often said of plastic, is that it is more likely to retain previous rotten smells or tastes – which can influence the final smell and taste of your wine.

Unlike plastic, glass is breakable and can be dangerous to handle e.g. slippery when wet. Glass is also heavier than plastic and this can create a handling problem. Although glass carboys allow you to see what is happening during the fermentation and clearing processes, glass allows sunlight to penetrate through it, which could potentially warm and harm the wine. What is most advantageous with glass carboys? They are impervious to scratching during a normal cleaning routine and glass is much easier to clean and sanitize when compared to plastic. Furthermore, glass is inert, which means that no chemicals or solvents can move across the barrier: little or no oxidation occurs.

Experienced vintners know that sanitation is the key to producing a clear, fragrant and tasteful wine. We take great efforts to sanitize our working areas and tools. Why waste all that effort? Plastic has a tendency to acquire scratches during the cleaning process, and these tiny gouges can seriously affect your finished product by tainting it with harmful bacteria. Despite this known fact, the selection of glass or plastic carboys may have nothing to do with the evidence; for many vintners it is a matter of preference. For a greater chance of success we suggest you choose the sanitation that glass carboys offer.



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London, Ontario N6N 1N7