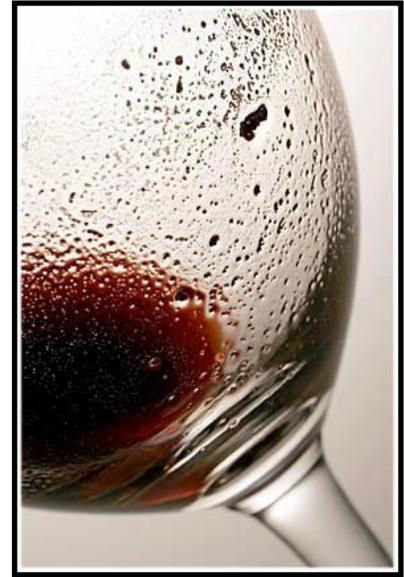


## All About Unfiltered Wines & Sediment

Over the last 25 years, winemakers across the world have spent great effort in filtering and fining their wines before bottling. Why? Filtering has proven to be useful in stabilizing wine so it lessens the risk of going through undesirable changes during changes in conditions. Fining and filtering also ensure clarity. Filtered wines outnumber unfiltered wines being made today, which results in many wine lovers puzzled whether or not to enjoy an unfiltered wine.



Before filtering methods were implemented, wine was bottled unfiltered. This left the wine cloudy and pale when poured, but safe for drinking daily. After a wine goes through fermentation, yeast, bacteria and particles of grapes can be in the wine thus leading to cloudy wine. During aging - in oak or stainless steel - the wine will become more clear, as gravity pulls these bits down to the bottom of the barrel or tank. If this natural settling lacks the ability to make a clear, polished wine, fining or filtration may be needed before going in bottle.

**Fining or Filtering?** Both fining & filtering are techniques used to improve clarity in a wine. **Fining** is done by adding a tiny amount of a substance (egg whites or milk) that will bind with protein in the wine. This will then fall to the bottom of the tank or barrel, allowing the clear wine to be racked off. Fining also reduces harsh tannins. **Filtration** is the process of passing the wine under pressure through something like a sieve, in order to directly remove something undesirable. Filtration can be used to completely remove yeast and bacteria, ensuring that a properly-filtered wine won't re-ferment in the bottle.

**Is unfiltered wine good and safe?** Yes! Unfiltered wine can contain leftover particles of the fermentation. Yet, it's perfectly fine to drink and is something great to taste, when made correctly! Many winemakers will not fine or filter; they feel it adds texture, complexity and body to the wine. In fact it does. Though, unfiltered wine needs to be created carefully and is often associated with higher price points, due to the careful attention that needs to take place to ensure the result is great. But unfiltered, regardless of price, does not always mean better.

**Sediment** will appear often on corks and at the bottom or sides of the bottle in unfiltered wines. Don't worry; it's perfectly natural, and there is nothing wrong with the bottle. Sea salt-like crystals on the cork of your wine, usually a white wine, are actually tartrate crystals, a by-product of tartaric acid and potassium binding together. In red wines, you may find dark sediment or yeast deposits left in the wine after fermentation and aging. Sediment forming in a bottle of red wine is actually a good sign; indicating it is in good condition and aging well.