



WINE BOTTLES

The vessel used to store the wine is very important. Carefully choosing the bottle is an individual winemaker choice. There is always a small amount of oxygen left in the bottle which causes a chemical reaction called oxidation. The oxidation process is not necessarily bad because it can soften the tannins and assist in the aging process, but too much oxidation can ruin the wine.

Ullage is a term to describe the space between the top of the wine and the bottle's cork. Over time the ullage may increase as fluid level lowers due to natural evaporation. Decisions related to the size, color, and shape are made and may differ depending on the wine's type. There are typical standards for a dessert wine vs. a white wine. But today, it truly is an individual winery's choice and in many ways reflects the winery's image. It is important to check the bottle to ensure that the oxidation has not deteriorated the wine. This is rare and usually occurs in wines that have been aged for a decade or more.

The bigger the wine bottle, the smaller the amount of oxygen relative to the wine's volume. It is for that reason that many large format bottles are used for wines that are intended to be aged for longer periods of time. There are a number of typical sizes of wine bottles. A typical wine bottle holds 25.4 ounces or 750 milliliters and you can get approximately five to six glasses of wine from a single bottle. Typically the bottle size is measured using the metric system. A case of wine includes 12 bottles totaling 2.376 gallons/9 liters.

The names for the various sizes of wine bottles differ around the world. Following are the common names used for different sized wine bottles.

Size	Bordeaux Region	Champagne, Burgundy or Rhone Regions	All Other Places
6.35 oz/187.5 ml		Split	Pony
12.7 oz/375 ml	Half-bottle	Half-bottle, Split, Pony	Half-bottle, Split, Pony
25.4 oz/750 ml	Bottle	Bottle	Bottle
50.8 oz/1.5 liters (2 bottles)	Magnum	Magnum	Magnum
101.6 oz/3 liters (4 bottles)	Double Magnum	Jeroboam	Double Magnum
152.4 oz/4.5 liters (6 bottles)	Jeroboam	Rehoboam	Rehoboam
203.2 oz/6 liters (8 bottles)	Imperial	Methuselah	Imperial/Methuselah
304.8 oz/9 liters (12 bottles)		Salmanazar	Salmanazar
406.4 oz/12 liters (16 bottles)	Balthazar	Balthazar	Balthazar
508 oz/15 liters (20 bottles)	Nebuchadnezzar	Nebuchadnezzar	Nebuchadnezzar
18 liters (24 bottles)	Melchior	Melchior	Melchior
25.5 liters (34 bottles)	Sovereign	Sovereign	Sovereign

Naming large volume bottles after biblical figures dates back to the early 17th century. Future generations continued the practice of selecting biblical figures to name large format wine bottles.



It is no surprise that the perfect wine vessel for storage and shipping is the glass bottle. Glass does not cause a chemical reaction when it comes in contact with other materials. Glass also won't impart any flavors into the wine like some other vessels might.

However, glass comes in a variety of colors. It is the additives in the glass making process that gives the glass its color. Since light can impact the wine's quality, choosing the appropriate color of glass for the wine bottle is critical. The darker the color, the more protection for the wine from the impact of light.

At LDV Winery, we typically use a Burgundy style bottle. We chose a lighter weight bottle for our wines to reduce shipping costs and ease in handling. The size of the bottle directly impacts the cost of handling. The color is dark green to protect the wine from light.

Last consideration when choosing a wine vessel is the shape of the bottle. There are typical bottle shapes.

Name	Shape and Color	Characteristics
Bordeaux (also known as the Claret bottle)	Shape - Straight sided bottle with steep and strong shoulder. Color - Usually dark green or brown but is being made for white wines or lighter red wines in clear glass.	Most common wine bottle shape. The shape of the shoulders slow or stop the sediment (if any) from flowing into the glass.
Burgundy	Shape - Typically shallow with gently sloping shoulders. Color - Can be clear or light green.	The shape of these bottles can cause problems with wine cellar racks. The height and weight can vary.
Fortified Wine	Shape - The neck is bulbous with accentuated shoulders. Color - Typically dark colors.	Similar to the Bordeaux bottle, the shape of the shoulders are intended to capture sediment. These bottles typically have a cork stopper rather than a traditional cork.
Champagne	Shape - Very thick glass with gentle sloping shoulders and a long neck. The bottle also has a large punt, or indentation, in the bottom of the bottle. Historically, this punt was needed to help reduce the pressure on the bottom of the bottle due to the carbonation that has developed in the bottle. The pressure can exceed 90 psi. However, the molded bottles of today may not need the punt but it is still included. Color - The color differs and can range from clear to pale green colors.	The bottle design is critical to the preservation of the champagne. Wire cages called muselet hold down the cork to stop it from popping out.
Riesling or Mosel	Shape - This is a narrow tall bottle with very gentle sloping shoulders. Color - This vessel is typically a light color of green or brown but you can see just about every color. These bottles can be clear too.	