



WILLAKENZIE ESTATE

Winemaking - French Oak Tanks

In 2007, we installed two new wood fermenters emulating the traditional method for wine fermentation in France. Traditional wood fermenters offer different thermal characteristics than stainless-steel fermenters. Heat distribution during fermentation is generally more uniform in wood vessels because wood has better insulating properties. Wood also allows for more air exchange because it is porous. Wood fermenters do require a heavier level of maintenance than stainless-steel vessels since they can leak more easily and also require more intensive cleaning since bacteria can collect in the wood.

In the past, the temperature of the must in the vessel was more difficult to control in a wood fermenter because cooling systems were not readily available. Most modern stainless-steel fermenters are built with “jackets” through which glycol may be run at the appropriate temperature. At WillaKenzie Estate, we purchased our wood fermenters from a well-known French cooper and designed cooling coils located inside each vessel, enabling us to control the fermentation temperature using the same glycol fluid that is run through the jackets of the stainless-steel fermenters. We also designed a stainless-steel frame around the wood tanks so we can use ‘Little Foot’ for punch downs. As a result, we have combined the best of the old traditional approach (using wood fermenters) with modern technology (using cooling coils and a movable punch-down device).

To find more information on WillaKenzie Estate, please visit the Trade Toolkit section of our website at: www.willakenzie.com/trade/toolkit