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Restarting Stuck Fermentations

The 2006 vintage has been plagued with stuck or sluggish fermentations. Vinquiry has many years' experience with these problematic wines.

It is necessary to know some of the wine parameters before restarting a stuck fermentation otherwise a restart can be difficult or might lead to further spoilage. There are two aspects to think about before starting the procedure below. First, it's important to know the condition of the wine.

Consider the following questions:

White or Red?

Has it been pressed or still on the skins?

What is the temperature?

How has the fermentation been managed?

Second, it is important to know the analytical properties of the stuck wine. You will need to know the current alcohol and fermentable sugar content. A microscan and V.A. will tell you if bacterial activity is a factor. The microscan will also assess the viable yeast concentration. Sometimes, a successful fermentation is about making conditions better for the yeast. A malic acid test will determine if a malolactic fermentation is complete - a dangerous situation in a stuck fermentation. These analysis are available in Vinquiry's [Panel 9](#).

Extra steps might be required if you find that your wine exhibits analytical properties or conditions that are less than desirable. Once your stuck wine is deemed ready to start, the following steps are Vinquiry's recommendation on how to restart problem fermentations. If you have additional questions, a brief consultation is provided with the Panel 9 analysis. In more difficult situations, one of our consultants can help map your plan step by step.

1. Prepare the stuck wine

In order to prevent the growth of spoilage organisms, Vinquiry recommends the addition of SO₂ in the form of [Efferbaktol Granules](#) and/or lysozyme in the form of [Lallyzyme Lyso](#) or [LysoEasy](#). [Yeast hulls](#) should also be added at 1-2 lb/1000 gallons to remove potential inhibitory substances in the wine. Suspend the yeast hulls in warm water and gently stir the suspension into the stuck wine. Allow the yeast hulls to settle for 48 hours, then rack or filter.

2. Select and rehydrate yeast

Select a strain that is both alcohol tolerant and a vigorous fermenter, such as [Enoferm L2226](#), [Enoferm QA23](#), [Uvaferm 43](#), or [K1\(V-1116\)](#).

Calculate the amount of yeast required for the total volume of stuck wine at 2-4 lb/1000 gallons. Rehydrate this amount of yeast in ten times its weight in 105°F clean water (approx. 1 lb yeast/1 gallon water). The use of [Enoferm Protect](#) or [Go Ferm](#) during the yeast rehydration step is highly recommended. Increase the volume of rehydration water by 2 and use a dose of 2.5 lb/1000 gallons Enoferm Protect or Go Ferm. Add the yeast slowly to the water while stirring to avoid clumping. Allow to stand for no more than 30 minutes before addition to initial wine/water mixture.

3. Activate the rehydrated yeast with nutrients and sugar

The nutrient content of the stuck fermentation will be low and unable to support adequate yeast growth. In addition the culture will require adaptation to the alcohol content of the wine.

Prepare the following initial mixture:

2.5 % of volume of stuck wine (25 gal/1000 gal)

2.5 % of volume as water (25 gal/1000 gal)

2 - 4 lb [Fermaid K](#)/1000 gallons of wine/water mix (100-200 g/100 gal)

Adjust sugar level of this mixture to 5°Brix with juice, concentrate or sugar (40 lb sugar/100 gal wine/water mix).

4. Start the fermentation and add the stuck wine in batches

Add the rehydrated yeast to the wine/water mix and maintain the temperature at 70°-75°F.

Monitor the sugar level of the starter. When the sugar level has dropped by half (<2.5°Brix), begin to add the stuck wine to the starter. Add in batches of 20% of the total stuck wine volume (total of five additions to the starter). When the sugar has decreased by half, add the next batch. When starting stuck fermentations in barrels, the above activated starter can be apportioned to 20% of the barrels, expanding the number of barrels at each stage.

Another Method: ProRestart QA23

Another method for restarting a stuck or sluggish fermentation is to use the encapsulated yeast, **ProRestart QA23**. The yeast cells are encapsulated within natural polysaccharides and are acclimatized to alcohol and other harsh conditions. The ProRestart "beads" come in 1kg packages for both barrel and tank applications. The beads must be preconditioned (rehydrated in a sugar solution) before addition to the stuck wine. ProRestart handles easily compared to the traditional method and works quickly because of the preconditioning step and direct addition into the stuck or sluggish fermentation. More information and full instructions are available by following the link, **ProRestart QA23**.

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