

INFORMATION BULLETIN

SPARKLING WINE PACKAGING WARNINGS

As sparkling wine is stored under pressure, scratching or damage to the bottle can cause it to burst. Injuries have occurred as a result of consumers using corkscrews to remove sparkling wine closures, and retailers opening shippers with sharp objects such as Stanley knives.

When shippers are opened with sharp objects, or cut as part of retail store product displays, bottles contained within the shippers can be scratched and damaged (weakened) from contact with the sharp object.

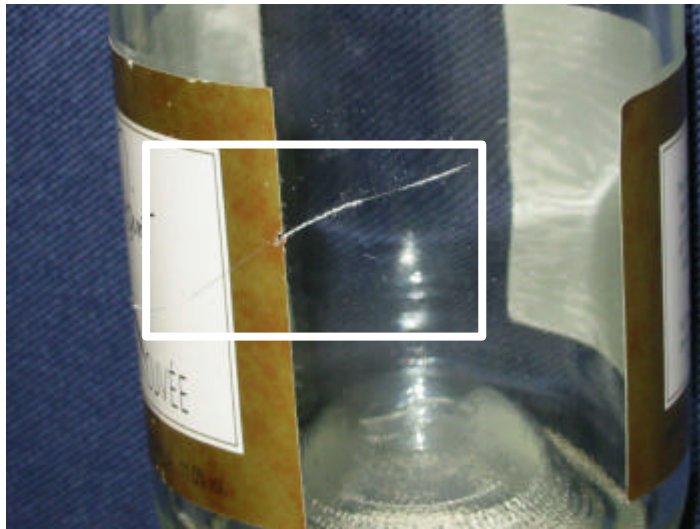


BOTTLES SHOULD ALWAYS BE REMOVED FROM SHIPPERS (CARTONS) BEFORE CUTTING THE SHIPPERS FOR DISPLAY PURPOSES

A common example of a damaged (weakened) bottle is a bottle with a scratch on a 45 degree angle indicating the shipper in which the bottle was delivered was most probably cut open for display purposes while the bottles were still inside. A simple way to avoid any damage to bottles is to remove the bottles before cutting the shipper to the desired shape.

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As sparkling wine is stored under pressure, varying temperatures inside retail stores and drive-through display areas and in consumer storage areas can increase the internal pressure on the bottle, thereby increasing the likelihood of a scratched or damaged sparkling wine bottle bursting. This could occur either in a retail store prior to the point of sale, or in any number of consumer locations after the point of sale.



BOTTLE SCRATCHED AS A RESULT OF OPENING THE SHIPPER WITH A SHARP OBJECT



BOTTLE AFTER BURSTING

In order to reduce the level of risk and injury associated with the improper handling of sparkling wine bottles, a number of wine companies have placed warning labels on their sparkling wine bottles and shippers. These companies asked the Winemakers' Federation of Australia (WFA) to develop standard warnings for adoption by all Australian wine companies at their own discretion.

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Consequently, WFA developed the following standard warnings for labels of sparkling wine and shippers:

Back Label:

WARNING: THIS WINE IS STORED UNDER PRESSURE. TAKE CARE NOT TO SCRATCH OR DAMAGE THIS BOTTLE AS IT MAY CAUSE IT TO EXPLODE. TO OPEN, POINT BOTTLE AWAY FROM SELF & OTHERS. DO NOT USE A CORKSCREW TO REMOVE THE CORK.

Shipper Warning (international warning symbol over a Stanley knife):

WARNING: BOX CONTAINS BOTTLED WINE STORED UNDER PRESSURE. TAKE CARE NOT TO SCRATCH BOTTLE BY USING SHARP OBJECTS TO OPEN THIS BOX.



WARNING: BOX CONTAINS BOTTLED WINE STORED UNDER PRESSURE. TAKE CARE NOT TO SCRATCH BOTTLE BY USING SHARP OBJECTS TO OPEN THIS BOX.



WARNING: Contents stored under pressure. Take care not to damage the bottle surface.

As part of the ongoing wine retail and trade education process on the proper handling of all wine bottles, WFA asks that the above warnings on sparkling wine packaging be included in wine retail and trade employee training and induction programs, and liquor organisation newsletters.

Please note that these warnings apply in particular to sparkling (or highly carbonated) wine bottles, and although WFA has recommended that the industry adopt these warnings, they are not compulsory.

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The Winemakers' Federation of Australia Packaging Committee

The Packaging Committee was established by the Winemakers' Federation of Australia to enable the development of a unified position for the wine industry in regard to packaging related issues. By maintaining a forum for direct discussion amongst industry stakeholders, the Packaging Committee is positioned to respond to political, technological, environmental, regulatory and market driven changes in wine, wine product and brandy packaging.

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