



Matt Skinner Uncorked

How to store leftover wine



Lustau San Emilio Pedro Ximenez NV
\$45, Jerez de la Frontera, Spain

A spellbinding range of aromas is on offer here, including dried fig, molasses, raisin, spice and spirit; while in the mouth it's syrupy, rich and long. Fortification means it will stay fresh for at least six weeks after opening. Try it with sticky date pudding or drizzled over vanilla ice-cream.

Larry Cherubino Ad Hoc Wait Flower Riesling 2008
\$22, Mount Barker, SA

Produced from a number of vineyards, this is a great dry riesling. Smells of lemon sherbet lime skin, blossom and minerals combine to make this a perfect partner to Asian food. Serve it with whole steamed snapper with ginger, spring onion and fresh coriander.

Balnaves Of Coonawarra The Blend 2007
\$20, Coonawarra, SA

This ready-to-drink red explodes with aromas and flavours of cassis, cherry, chocolate and leather, and the addition of merlot and cabernet franc helps to soften, round and fill in the blanks of an already sleek and stylish cabernet framework. Match it with barbecued lamb.

So Sylvester Stallone has come clean about the fact his ripped 62-year-old frame has more to do with human growth hormone treatment than ab crunches. No great surprises there. But for some bizarre reason, Sly's admission has me thinking about the question I get asked more than just about any other: how long can you keep an open bottle of wine, and what can you do to stop it from deteriorating?

It's a valid question – although starting with the knowledge that all wine is not created equal, you'll appreciate that the answer is a little more involved. Leftover wine is a tricky one, and how long it will stay fresh once you've pulled the cork will depend on what it is, where it's from and how you go about storing whatever it is you don't end up drinking.

Generally speaking, delicate white wines oxidise faster than full-bodied reds, and wines from cooler places last longer than those from warmer ones. Tastes differ, but I've found that most light, delicate whites are best consumed within 24-36 hours of opening, and fuller-bodied oak-influenced whites and lighter reds within 36-48 hours. And while there's always the odd exception, few full-bodied reds will still be improving after 48 hours.

The other big consideration is how much wine is left inside the bottle – more wine means less room for oxygen, which translates into a slower rate of deterioration. Less wine equals more oxygen and that, as you can probably guess, spells trouble.

Storage is key. Whether white, red, sweet or fizzy, refrigerating leftover wine will dramatically help to preserve its lifespan and freshness. By chilling leftovers, you're effectively slowing down the chemical reactions that cause wine to oxidise.

The easiest way to reduce the amount of oxygen in the bottle prior to putting it in the fridge is to transfer what's left of your wine into a smaller container. Soft-drink bottles are useful here, but make sure they've been properly rinsed with hot water (no detergent) and have a tight-fitting lid.

Taking all of that on board, here are three wines that once open will stay fresh for a good while.