



# BRAVIUM

## Bâtonnage

Bâtonnage is a traditional winemaking technique that I use with Bravium wines to add a creamy texture and mouthfeel while maintaining the inherent qualities of the wine. It also naturally makes a wine more resistant to oxidation, removing the need to add sulfur dioxide during the winemaking process. It's a simple, gentle practice that can bring a wine into balance—but one that requires balance in how it's applied to retain vibrant freshness and sense of terroir.

While I use this process on Bravium's Chardonnay, Blanc de Noirs and Rosé, the method and effect is unique to each wine.

For all three wines, the fruit is hand picked, whole-cluster pressed into oak vessels and fermented using native yeasts. The Blanc de Noirs and Rosé ferment in 228L oak barrels, while the Chardonnay ferments in a combination of 70% 228L oak barrels, 20% puncheon (500L barrels), and 10% oak casks [15 hL each].

The yeast expires after fermentation, dropping out of solution and combining with the grape phenols and solids at the bottom of each barrel or vessel. These solids are reintroduced into the wine by gently stirring it with a metal rod.

How often to stir the lees depends on the wine and the winemaker. Some winemakers don't stir at all, and others until the wine is bottled. I fall somewhere in the middle, depending on the wine.



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Bravium

Linguistic origin: Latin / Meaning: prize, reward, gift



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I ran trials over three vintages and found that wine that was not stirred was less resistant to oxidation and lacked texture. At the other end of the spectrum, wines stirred long after malolactic conversion completed started to lose their distinctive qualities and took on a yeasty/bready character. Finding that sweet spot gives the best of both worlds, adding subtlety and nuance but not overwhelming the wine, so my protocol is to gently stir the lees once a week until ML completes.

The Rosé doesn't undergo malolactic, so bâtonnage is a way to soften acid profile and texture for the three months that it's in barrel.

For the Blanc de Noirs, I use bâtonnage through primary and malolactic conversion. This builds the mid palate and softens the acid of the still wine before it undergoes second fermentation in the bottle, so that I don't need to add sugar to the dosage once the sparkling wine is disgorged.

For the Chardonnay, stirring through primary and malolactic conversion allows me to hit the middle of the Chardonnay continuum, somewhere between too linear and too lush. I want my wines to retain the acidity and freshness from their coastal sites while broadening the midpalate and adding texture for a Chardonnay that is good on its own and with foods.

I derive a lot of pleasure from the texture of a wine, and find that when making a serious dry wine, bâtonnage enhances that texture so that the wine feels complete—the best it can be.

Derek Rohlffs, Founder & Winegrower



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