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Removing Red Wine Stains Is Not A Cause For Panic

By Ken Finnigan

Imagine that you are hosting a party for some of your best friends. The atmosphere is bubbling with the excitement of everyone chatting and mingling with each other, when all of a sudden you hear a crashing sound and see the sight that every host prays will never happen; a glass of red wine has taken a swan dive and landed not on your tile floor where it is easy to clean up but on to your very embarrassed guest and all over your furniture. It would appear that Murphy's Law has struck again, but don't panic, it is possible to get red wine stains out!

The first thing to do (aside from not panicking) when cleaning red wine spills is to remove the excess spillage. If the wine has been spilled on a couch or carpet take an absorbent cloth (something you don't mind being stained) or paper towel and blot the excess wine, do not rub in any way! The point of blotting it to remove the wine without working it further into the fabric. If it was a piece of clothing that has been spilled on, remove the article and blot in the same manner.

Once the excess wine has been removed it is very important to rinse the carpet, furniture or clothing to dilute the wine before it has a chance to set in. The best method for this is going to vary on what exactly where the spill is. For clothing or other items that are easily removed, pour cold water from the backside. For items such as carpets and sofas pouring water directly onto the stain and blotting with an absorbent cloth immediately works best.

There is a good chance that this will not take the stain out completely. Carpet and furniture cleaner very well may need to be used. In the past I have had much success with Resolve cleaners for carpets, and for laundry there are many stain removers that should be helpful. A little trick my mother taught me which works wonders is Lestoil. I know some of you may be thinking to yourself that you always thought Lestoil was a floor cleaner, but when diluted with water and used as a soaking agent it works wonders on lots of stains including grease (when mixed with hot water) and wine (when mixed with cold water).

Of course even with all your best efforts there is always the chance that the red wine is going to be so stubborn that you need to call in the professionals. Carpets and furniture sometimes are dry clean only but it is still best to remove as much of the stain as possible while it is still wet because this will make it

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easier for the professionals to remove the remnants.

The key to ensuring effective stain removal is time. Do not let a stain sit for days or weeks before deciding to try to remove it and don't wait a week before ringing a carpet cleaner because by then it might just be too late and the stain is now a permanent fixture. The same goes for clothing, don't wait to wash your shirt or pants. I once watched a friend take a shirt out of the washing machine become horrified at the fact that the red wine didn't come out of her top. When I asked her when she spilled on herself, she told me that it was from a week before. No wonder the stain didn't come out!

In the end there is always going to be the possibility that the stain has decided that it never wants to come out or it will not come out completely. Taking the proper steps the moment a spill occurs can greatly reduce the chance of a permanent stain. There is no easy way to prevent spills and stains, aside from slipcovers or not serving red wine at social events, so when a spill does happen remember to stay calm, work quickly and to blot.

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Not So Essential Wine Accessories

By Ken Finnigan

As a follow up to my last article, "Essential Wine Accessories" I thought it would be interesting to touch on a few accessories that may not be quite so essential but are fun or handy to have regardless.

Wine pourers are traditionally made from clear plastic and fit into the neck of a bottle of wine. The pouring surface is designed to prevent dripping when pouring, for those with an unsteady hand, by returning any excess wine back to the bottle. This can be very handy for those interested in preventing red wine stains on any item of furniture that is not already red in color!

Decanters allow red wine to breathe, enhancing flavor and bouquet. Typically created from glass or crystal, decanters have a narrow neck, which leads to a very wide base. This wide base allows more of the wine to come in contact with the air, letting it breathe before consumption. Decanters are not a necessity but are a practical addition for those interested in enhancing the flavor of their red wine.

A bottle tote is also a practical accessory to have when going out on a picnic or to bring a cold bottle of wine to a dinner party. Usually made from neoprene (the same material diving wetsuits are made from), bottle totes can keep a bottle cool for hours, something handy if you are going to be out and don't want that nice chilled bottle of Sauvignon Blanc to warm up before you have had a chance to

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drink it.

How many times have you been at a dinner party and have had to juggle your plate and your glass? Mingling plates are the perfect solution for those dinner or cocktail parties when a third hand is essential. With a slot and hole on the side of the plate, a wine glass stem can be inserted so that the glass is resting on the side of the plate. This leaves your hand free to eat without needing to balance a glass in your hand or setting it down on a table.

My personal favorite not so essential accessory is a wine chiller or wine refrigerator. Wine chillers can come in a variety of colors, finishes and capacities to fit your desires. Usually they are small enough to fit on or under a kitchen counter and most have gauges, which allow you to set the chilling temperature according to the type of wine being chilled. That way if you are using your wine refrigerator to store and chill red wine (because red wine should best be served at a temperature of 60 degrees Fahrenheit), the temperature can be adjusted so that bottles are not chilled as if they were white!

The list of wine accessories can appear to be endless, and to write about them all in this article would take too long and bore you to death. So I hope that the few I have touched upon are helpful in deciding which not so necessary wine accessories are more necessary than others.

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