



News Alert
January 7, 2025

We Need Your Samples to Protect U.S. Wine Authenticity

Request: Send these samples from all regions

- Chardonnay
- Pinot Grigio/Pinot Gris
- Riesling
- Sauvignon Blanc
- Cabernet Sauvignon
- Merlot
- Malbec
- Petite Sirah
- Pinot Noir
- Syrah
- Zinfandel

Project Summary

This project focuses on ensuring a bottle of wine's legitimacy, helps combat fraud and counterfeits and, most importantly, protects a wine's integrity. Coordinated and funded by Wine Institute to help the U.S. wine industry authenticate domestic wines, it was launched as a response to increased international trade, counterfeiting, adulteration and protectionist regulations. Authentication of samples is being conducted with industry-leading Nuclear Magnetic Resonance (NMR) spectroscopy

to create a robust database to authenticate the variety and the grape source, with as broad a geographic range as possible.

Project Status

We have received more than 3,000 samples over the last three years from California, Oregon and Washington, which have been run by NMR spectroscopy. We have moderate confidence in our major varieties being able to be identified with U.S. origin but need thousands more samples to ensure comprehensive results.

Project Questions

Contact project lead [Dr. Patricia Howe](#) to express interest in participating or ask questions.

Please find more detail on the overall project below:

Determining the authenticity of food products has increased in importance, partly due to the increase in international trade, but also due to the increased pressure from counterfeiting, adulteration and the response in protectionist regulations. Wine is no exception to this trend, and already there are “authenticating databases” in use, utilizing different chemical and statistical approaches.

Unfortunately, the quality of the databases can vary depending not just on the quality and type of instrumentation, but also on the quality and quantity of the samples used to construct and validate these databases.

There are authenticity databases in use by major European bodies which can, and have, been used to cast doubt on the authenticity of wines being imported from the United States. These models were developed using a limited number of American wines and there is little transparency on the robustness of the model.

To respond to this ongoing challenge, Wine Institute has partnered with Bruker Corporation and ETS Laboratories to develop a wine authenticity database, using Nuclear Magnetic Resonance (NMR) spectroscopy with the highest scientific rigor to protect the U.S. wine industry not only from counterfeiting and adulteration, but also from authenticity models which may not provide the level of accuracy and confidence

required from a competitive market.

This ongoing, multi-year project will collect a wide representation of wine samples from throughout the country, looking to get representative samples based on factors such as volume produced, while also noting the natural analytical variation of the types of samples when determining when additional samples are need. In addition, the project will focus on documenting the supporting data needed to allow a strongly defensible and scientifically valid wine authenticity database unlike any in current existence.

The focus of this database is directed at authenticating the variety of the grape source, with as broad a geographic range as possible. It is not intended as a validation of appellation, although the results may force some granularity if geography prevents a more general categorization.

We are looking for as many wineries as possible to contribute several wine samples over the course of the study. We have developed a system of double-blind sample handling to protect the information of all participants. The sample set and the percentage requirements may change in the future. Only 50 mL of each sample is needed, along with information on the vintage, variety and some production methods.

For smaller wineries submitting fewer than 20 samples annually, an alternative basic process has been established. This simplified method has reduced anonymity. The name of the winery submitting samples will be visible to ETS Laboratories upon sample arrival, although the confidentiality of the results will be maintained.

For additional information, members can go to the [Wine Authenticity Project web page](#).

Questions?

Contact [Dr. Patricia Howe](#) for more information or to express interest in participating.