



Cornell University
College of Agriculture and Life Sciences
Cornell Cooperative Extension



Ask Barry Waite...

Ben Gavitt, Extension Associate, Cornell University -NYSAES

First published in [Cellar Dweller - April 2010](#).

Ask Barry Waite is a feature for answering some of the New York Wine Analytical Lab's most frequently asked questions.

Dear Barry Waite:

I have a recently bottled blended wine that after rigorous filtration is now exhibiting a very slight precipitate as a bottled product. What could this be and can you help?

Signed, Mystified in Manitauck

Dear Mystified:

Thank you for your question. This could be many, many different things. Suffice it to say, we need to see your wine. I can pontificate on the many and varied things it could be. First, it could be a protein stability issue. If you blend two wines that are protein stable, they are essentially a new wine and can now be unstable. A stability bench trial would have to be done on this "new" wine and a sample would be examined with the turbidimeter. It could be microbiological. We would sterile filter 100 mls to concentrate the wine and then take that filter pad and place it on specific agar for bacteria and yeasts to see if there are any viable bacteria and/ or yeasts in the wine. If something did grow we would then examine it microscopically to see what specific bacteria or yeasts or both that it is morphologically typical of. The third thing is it could be an innocuous amorphous particulate material i.e. almost anything. This is very difficult to identify, as there is no specific tests to identify this. Centrifuging a sample to get a concentrated sample, pouring off the supernatant and then looking at the particulate matter under the microscope completes this. Upon examination we could see many different things, such as filter fibers, diatomaceous earth, mold, iron particulates, acid crystals, cork or dust particles etc.... as you can see the possibilities, unfortunately, are almost endless. As with many sciences it begins and is completed many of the times by ruling out what it isn't instead of what it is. If you would like please send in a bottle and we can begin the solving of the mystery.

If you any questions that you would like to ask Barry Waite please forward care of bkg1@cornell.edu

The information, including any advice or recommendations, contained herein is based upon the research and experience of Cornell Cooperative Extension personnel. While this information constitutes the best judgment/opinion of such personnel at the time issued, neither Cornell Cooperative Extension nor any representative thereof makes any representation, endorsement or warrantee, express or implied, of any particular result or application of such information, or regarding any product. Users of any product are encouraged to read and follow product-labeling instructions and check with the manufacturer or supplier for updated information.

Cornell University provides equal program and employment opportunities.