

Auditing of the barrel seasoning process

# IT 12

## Auditing of barrel seasoning

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OECCA Foundation

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*Organisation for Agro-alimentary Evaluation of Compliance and Certification*

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## 2. OBJECT

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The object of this instruction is to describe the established auditing system to be carried out by registered operators who perform the seasoning of newly manufactured barrels which will contain wine for the first time, and which guarantees compliance with the requirements of the Technical Specification "Barrel Seasoning".

All those barrels used by certified operators for ageing wines with the Denominations of Origin Jerez-Xérès-Sherry and/or Manzanilla-Sanlúcar de Barrameda and which can demonstrate that they have been included in the inventories of barrels ageing wine for the last two years will be considered to be in compliance with the Technical Specifications.

At the same time, the object is to ensure correct use of the brand Sherrycask associated with the Denominations of Origin Jerez-Xérès-Sherry and/or Manzanilla-Sanlúcar de Barrameda.

## 3. SCOPE

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This applies to all activities carried out by the staff of the FOUNDATION in the auditing of certified operators in the register of the Consejo Regulador and who perform barrel seasoning or the ageing of wines from vineyards registered in the Denominations of Origin Jerez-Xérès-Sherry and/or Manzanilla-Sanlúcar de Barrameda.

Definitions:

- **Seasoning:** process to which a barrel with a capacity of less than 1,000 litres and for the first time since its manufacture is submitted in order to condition it throughout a determined period of time so that it will be able to store, develop and age, as the case may be, products of quality such as the wines of the Denominations of Origin Jerez-Xérès-Sherry and/or Manzanilla-Sanlúcar de Barrameda, vinegars of the DO "Vinagre de Jerez" and Brandies from the IG "Brandy de Jerez", which require the use of previously seasoned barrels in their production.
- **Barrels:** wooden vessels with a capacity of less than 1,000 litres.

## DESCRIPTION OF THE AUDITING PROCESS

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### 3.1 - VERIFICATION OF AN APPLICATION OR REGISTRATION

The inscription of a firm which ages wines into the register of the Consejo Regulador implies that the firm and its installations must comply with current legislation. In the initial audits, up to date inscription in the following registers will be verified:

- Geographical location of the installations
- Tax registration number
- Register of agricultural industries
- Health register
- Special tax card/s

All documentation brought by the operator to the FOUNDATION along with the certification agreement will be verified during the course of the audit.

In follow-up, renewal or extra-ordinary audits, checks will be made to see that listing has been renewed on those registers which are not of a permanent character or if there have been changes to them.

Complementary to this and related to safety and food quality, the existence of the following will be checked:

1. Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point policy
2. General Hygiene Plan
3. Traceability Systems
4. Complaints and Deficiencies Policy

### 3.2 - WINES USED FOR SEASONING BARRELS

The origin of wines used for seasoning barrels will be verified by checking entries in the following registers:

- Inventory of qualified and non-qualified wine
- Official Register Books of protected wines and Official Register Books of wines without Geographical Indication
- Accompanying documents, both official and those issued by the Consejo Regulador
- Analysis of the alcoholic strength of the wines

In those cases where the wine used is supplied by a third party, the operator must guarantee its traceability or facilitate a visit to their installations by their supplier with the purpose of verifying that the wine comes from vineyards registered at the Consejo Regulador of the Denominations of Origin Jerez-Xérès-Sherry and Manzanilla-Sanlúcar de Barrameda. In the latter case the supplier must provide the auditing team with the following records:

- Internal traceability records
- Declaration to the Consejo Regulador and records of movements
- Official Register Books
- Any other documentation deemed relevant and which shows the origin of the wine

Thus, during the audit stocks and storage capacity in wood will be checked. To do this, stocks of ageing wine will be itemised by the bodega as follows:

- Wines ageing biologically
- Wines ageing oxidatively
- Varietal wines

Operators wishing to make reference to the type of wine used in the seasoning process will have to itemise stocks of the same for each of the types for which they seek certification and guarantee that these types of wine have remained inside the barrel during the entire process. They will also have to guarantee compliance with the requirements laid down in the Regulations of the Denominations of Origin Jerez-Xérès-Sherry and/or Manzanilla-Sanlúcar de Barrameda, whichever is the case, evaluation of which will be conducted by the auditor by means of sampling of the wines used in the seasoning or under ageing with the object of verifying their alcoholic strength.

For the checking of wine stocks being used in the seasoning of barrels, the extent of stocks of wine in the process of barrel seasoning will be verified according to the IT<sub>01</sub> – Extent of Stocks. The taking of samples will be carried out in line with the procedure established in the IT<sub>02</sub> - Taking of Samples in section 3.2 Taking of samples of products ageing in barrels.

Once the results of the checking of stocks have been obtained, a comparison will be promptly made with stocks declared in the Official Registration Books, and any differences will be calculated in terms of percentage.

### **3.3. – TIME PERIOD OF SEASONING**

For certification of the period of time in which the barrels have been seasoned it will need to be declared and demonstrated that the barrels have continually held the required fill level during the whole of this period, expressed in years/months completed.

In cases where the operator requests certification of the type of wine used, as well as the period of seasoning, both these aspects will have to be mentioned or entered by the operator in the relevant commercial documentation, which should be made available to the auditor during the audit.

#### **3.4. –INSPECTION OF BARRELS**

The wooden barrels used in the process of seasoning must have a capacity of below 1,000 litres. The counting of the barrels will be done with the help of registers kept by the bodega, which must have, at least, an inventory of barrels by lot, showing their capacity and the type of wine contained.

The count will be carried out along with details of the relevant buildings or bodegas and sampling must be taken of at least one lot of the barrels being seasoned in the bodega.

Those barrels protected under certification within the scope of Jerez-Xérès-Sherry and/or Manzanilla-Sanlúcar de Barrameda for ageing or ageing and shipping will be considered seasoned barrels. In these cases the operator must be able to demonstrate this aspect using inventories from at least two successive audits of ageing or ageing and shipping activities of wines with the Denomination of origin Jerez-Xérès-Sherry and Manzanilla-Sanlúcar de Barrameda.

These registers, as well as the tasks of emptying the barrels, their removal from storage and shipping will be checked by the audit team who will have to verify:

- Inventories of barrels supported by certification of Ageing or Ageing and Shipping using the register and the in situ count.
- Verification of the wine they contain which may include taking a bulk sample from at least one lot of barrels.
- Commercial documents relating to the shipping of the barrels.

#### **3.5. –VERIFICATION OF GUARANTEE CARDS**

Once the initial audit is passed the operator will have access to the guarantee cards and be able to physically attach the Sherrycask brand to the barrels.

Thus, to be able to know the number of these guarantee cards held by an operator, the following checks on their inventories need to be carried out:

- Unattached guarantee cards: stocks of guarantee cards in the possession of the operator but which have not yet been affixed to barrels will be checked.

- Attached guarantee cards: guarantee cards which have already been attached to barrels which have not yet been shipped will be checked.
- Guarantee cards which have been shipped: the guarantee cards which have been shipped along with the barrels will be checked using the commercial documents provided by the operator during the audit.
- Damaged or obsolete guarantee cards: guarantee cards whose condition has deteriorated during the process, while in the operator's custody, during their attachment to the barrels or in any other type of accident, will be retained by the operator so that the auditor can check and take any samples. If a direct recount is not possible due to the state of the guarantee cards, it will be done by comparing the weight of a particular number of guarantee cards with that of the damaged ones.

Once total stocks of guarantee cards have been verified, a comparison will be made with the total stocks of guarantee cards removed by the bodega.

The auditor will take away all those guarantee cards which are considered damaged or obsolete and give the bodega a record of the number taken.

#### **4.1. 3.6. – DEALING WITH NON-COMPLIANCE, OBSERVATIONS**

The audit will include checking that the proper implementation of corrective actions resulting from observations made in previous audits has been carried out.

## 5. RESPONSIBILITIES

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Responsibility for the realisation and enforcement of the various activities outlined in this technical instruction rests with the auditors of the FOUNDATION.