



Wine & Spirits Collection Quick Assessment Checklist

**A Triage Tool for
Generalist Appraisers**

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How to use this checklist:

This worksheet is designed as a preliminary condition and risk assessment tool for generalist appraisers encountering a wine or spirits collection during estate, insurance, divorce, donation, or liquidation assignments.

It is not a valuation instrument, nor does it replace specialist review.

Its purpose is to help you quickly determine:

- Whether the collection appears commercially viable
- Whether condition concerns may materially affect value
- Whether the presence of high-risk or high-value categories warrants referral to a specialist

When in doubt — especially in cases involving incomplete provenance, storage concerns, or top auction-traded producers — specialist consultation is strongly recommended.

Section One

Provenance & Documentation



Records

- ☐ Purchase records available
- ☐ Auction documentation or lot references
- ☐ Direct-from-winery acquisition
- ☐ Evidence of consistent ownership
- ☐ Prior appraisal or insurance schedule
- ☐ Up-to-date inventory, or does one need to be created

Triage Insight:

- Absence of documentation does not eliminate value — but it materially increases risk for high-value producers and older vintages.
- In some cases, known purchase sources can flag concern of inauthenticity, given other notable elements.
- It is strongly suggested a person with broad wine and spirits knowledge create any inventory as misidentification or incomplete recording can be common.

Section Two

Storage Assessment



Present Conditions

- ☐ Climate-controlled cellar
- ☐ Passive cellar (below grade)
- ☐ Ambient residential storage
- ☐ Visible temperature or humidity monitoring

Visual Indicators of Past Instability

- ☐ Pushed corks
- ☐ Seepage
- ☐ Label tide lines
- ☐ Mold beyond surface spotting
- ☐ Significant fill variation within identical bottles (more on ullage follows)

Triage Insight:

- **Any** storage outside of temperature- and humidity-controlled is a cause for concern. (Passive cellars are still subject to temperature fluctuations even if the owner says it is “always cool.”)
- Evidence of sustained heat exposure may reduce value dramatically.
- Inconsistent ullage within a case often signals prior temperature fluctuation.

Section Three

Bottle Condition Review



Labels

- ☐ Clean/light bin staining (normal and generally acceptable)
- ☐ Moderate staining
- ☐ Heavy staining or obscured vintage/producer
- ☐ Active mold
- ☐ Lifting/tearing or loose/missing

Capsules

- ☐ Intact
- ☐ Corroded
- ☐ Scuffed
- ☐ Cut or disturbed
- ☐ Missing

Fill Levels (Ullage)

- ☐ Within expected range for age
- ☐ Slightly low
- ☐ Significantly depressed

More on ullage follows...

Triage Insight:

- Condition does not need to be pristine — but compromised legibility, active mold, or abnormal fill levels can materially affect resale liquidity.
- Front labels are of greater importance, but neck labels, back labels, tax stamps, import labels, and other packaging should be assessed as well.

Recording Ullage:



Triage Insight:

- “Bordeaux”-style bottles (on L) have more well-defined shoulders, originally to help contain sediment or deposits that would precipitate into the wine over time when pouring. Measurements here are by position in the neck or shoulder area.
- “Burgundy”-style bottles (on R) with sloped shoulders or those with unusual shapes are measured by the distance from the bottom of the cork to the top of the wine. Use of centimeters or millimeters is standard, even in the U.S.
- It is generally accepted that some evaporation over time will occur, so non-pristine ullage can be acceptable depending on the wine’s age. But very low levels, or low for the age, can indicate possible damage.

Section Four

Packaging & Integrity



Notable Packaging

- ☐ Original Wooden Cases (OWC) present
- ☐ Original Cardboard Boxes (OCB) present
- ☐ Case bands intact
- ☐ Mixed vintages within case
- ☐ Large-format bottles
- ☐ Specialty packaging (Champagne boxes, limited edition, decanters)

Triage Insight:

- For certain categories (e.g., classified Bordeaux, cult Napa), intact OWC may enhance resale confidence and value.
- It is advised not to open an intact OWC or OCB during an initial inspection.

Section Five

Collection Composition Snapshot

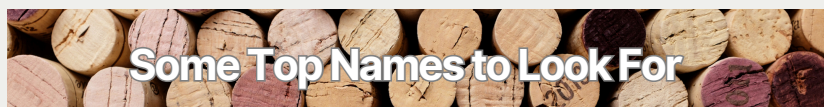


Important Considerations

- ☐ Auction-traded producers present
- ☐ Depth in a single producer (by vintage: verticals)
- ☐ Depth in a single producer (by vineyard/designation: horizontals)
- ☐ Case quantities vs singles
- ☐ Pre-1985 European wines
- ☐ Cult Napa producers
- ☐ Investment-grade Burgundy
- ☐ High-value spirits (limited-release Scotch, Japanese whisky, vintage Cognac)

Triage Insight:

- The presence of globally traded producers such as Château Lafite Rothschild, Domaine de la Romanée-Conti, or cult Napa estates like Screaming Eagle materially elevates the need for specialist review.



Some Top Names to Look For

Bordeaux, France

Left Bank: First Growths Château Lafite Rothschild, Ch. Latour, Ch. Margaux, Ch. Haut-Brion, and Ch. Mouton Rothschild; estates such as Ch. Palmer, Ch. Léoville Las Cases, Ch. Montrose, and Ch. La Mission Haut-Brion.; Right Bank stars Ch. Petrus, Ch Le Pin, Ch. Cheval Blanc, Ch. Ausone, Ch. Angélu. Also the dessert wine Ch. d'Yquem.

Burgundy, France

Domaine de la Romanée-Conti, Domaine Leroy, Armand Rousseau, Georges Roumier, Domaine Leflaive, Coche-Dury, and Comte Georges de Vogüé. Also Dujac, Faiveley, Méo-Camuzet, Ponsot, Drouhin, Hudelot-Noëllat, de Montille.

Napa Valley, CA

Screaming Eagle, Harlan Estate, Opus One, Scarecrow, Bond, Colgin Cellars, Dominus Estate, Dalla Valle, Schrader, Abreu.

Italy

Giacomo Conterno, Bruno Giacosa, Masseto, Sassicaia, Ornellaia, Solaia, Tignanello, Biondi-Santi, Soldera, Mascarello.

Others

Champagne (Krug, Dom Perignon, Salon, Selosse); Australia's Penfolds Grange; Spain's Vega Sicilia, Pingus, Aalto; Egon Müller.

Spirits

Scotch: Macallan, Bowmore, Springbank, Ardbeg; Japanese whisky: Yamazaki Distillery, Hibiki, Karuizawa. American: Buffalo Trace Distillery, Old Rip Van Winkle Distillery

Section Six

Review or Referral Indicators



Refer to a wine & spirits specialist if you observe:

- High-value producers (especially with incomplete provenance)
- Evidence of heat damage
- Large-format bottles
- Collections stored outside climate control long-term
- Pre-1985 Bordeaux or Burgundy
- Suspected authenticity concerns
- Estate collections exceeding approximately \$50,000 in potential market value

Wine is a perishable asset class. Condition, storage history, and market liquidity can alter value by 20–60% or more.

Quick Triage Outcome Guide



Likely Acceptable / Low Risk

- Modern wines
- Consistent storage
- No visible damage
- Primarily retail-tier producers

Borderline / Requires Further Review

- Mixed storage history
- Moderate condition issues
- Auction-traded producers without documentation
- Older vintages with variable fill

Specialist Strongly Recommended

- Investment-grade producers
- Provenance gaps
- Heat exposure indicators
- Large, multi-case collections
- Insurance schedules requiring current market valuation
- IRS Donation Reports

Any Questions?

When in doubt, give **Edgerton Wine and Spirits Appraisals** a call. We are happy to advise.



Annie Edgerton, DWSET, CS, CSW, CSS is a specialist in the appraisal of fine wine and rare spirits, with over 30 years experience advising on collections ranging from private cellars to significant estate holdings. She is currently an Accredited Member of AAA (Certified Candidate) and a Senior Candidate of ASA. As owner of Edgerton Wine & Spirits Appraisals, she works alongside attorneys, insurers, and generalist appraisers to deliver defensible, market-based valuations for a highly nuanced, globally traded asset class.

Her expertise includes condition analysis, provenance assessment, authentication, and secondary market liquidity, critical factors that can materially affect value.

She is also a highly sought-after wine and spirits educator, writer, and media host under her brand, Wine Minx®.

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