

# TRUCHARD VINEYARDS



## **What is that sediment in this bottle of wine??**

Do not be alarmed... The sediment you see on the side of the bottle and on the bottom of the cork is simply potassium bitartrate, also known as cream of tartar. These crystals, commonly referred to as tartrates, are formed as tartaric acid and potassium in the wine and combine over time to form an insoluble salt – KHT or potassium bitartrate. Tartrate crystals are not harmful to the consumer or a sign of a spoiled wine – their impact is only visual.

There are many factors that contribute to tartrate formation. In the case of our Syrah it is a combination of soil, climate, and winemaking techniques. First, Syrah on the Truchard Estate Vineyard grows in potassium-rich volcanic soils. Throughout the growing season potassium makes its way from the soil to the vine and eventually into the grapes (and wine). Secondly, the cool Carneros climate allows grapes to ripen slowly, resulting in wines with higher acidity (higher tartaric acid content). Finally, our Syrah is made in a very tradition (minimal-handling) method; which we feel allows for the true expression of Carneros Syrah. The fact that tartrates are present is proof that this wine has not been over-treated during vinification, undergone any stabilization procedures, or subjected to aggressive filtration. These treatments will prevent the formation of tartrates, but they also strip the wine of flavor and character.

Actually, in some areas of France when tartrates coat the side of a wine bottle, it is referred to as a “chemise” – translation – “shirt”. It is regarded as a sign that this particular bottle is a well-made wine that has been properly stored and aged. Tartrates are also very common in vintage ports (for reasons similar as listed above). In the “old-days” many die-hard English port drinkers would save the sediment from the bottom of their empty bottles to spread on their toast in the morning! Better than preserves...

If you are concerned that the presence of tartrates in your wine glass will interfere with your (and your guests) enjoyment; simply decant the wine through a fine sieve or some cheesecloth before serving. Then enjoy!