



3-STEP PROCESS FOR CONSIDERING CUSTOM CRUSH AND THE BULK MARKET

The following process describes custom crush and bulk wine market options for growers who have either had contracts canceled or fruit rejected due to smoke taint concerns.

Step 1: Prior to harvesting fruit, conduct a micro-fermentation

- A micro-fermentation will give you the knowledge you need to determine whether custom crush and the bulk wine market is a viable option
- It is one of the best tools available to predict smoke exposure markers that may be present in a wine post-fermentation
- Pick a minimum of 40-50 clusters, one per vine, across all corners and areas of the block. When collecting clusters, it is important to preserve the identity and chain of custody of the grapes and resulting wine
- Bring a 5-gallon container(s) of each block to the custom crush facility
- Cost is approximately \$95 per 5-gallon micro-ferment at a facility such as Bin to Bottle and Napa Wine Company
- Micro-fermentation takes approximately 5-6 days to complete

Step 2: Custom crush facility conducts sensory analysis of micro-fermentation(s)

- This evaluation will determine if there might be smoke taint concerns
- The finished micro-fermented lot is evaluated for presence of off-aromas and ashy flavors
- Custom crush facility will provide juice samples, so that you can send to an accredited third-party lab to test for smoke taint markers for insurance claims, contract negotiations and federal disaster relief programs

Step 3: Decide which option is best based on preliminary micro-fermentation sensory analysis results

- Option 1: Juice shows no signs of smoke taint
 - Make into wine at a custom crush facility and plan to sell on the bulk wine market
 - Grower pays for all custom crush expenses

- Note: it's important to remember that even with experienced experts, taste and smell remain subjective experiences. Sensory analysis may not immediately detect smoke taint, so once initial micro-fermentation passes sensory evaluation, third-party lab testing is still recommended
 - NVG custom crush associate member resources:
 - [Bin to Bottle](#)
 - [Napa Wine Company](#)
 - [Napa Junction](#)
- Option 2: Juice shows no signs of smoke taint
- Participate in the [80-20 program](#) with Bin to Bottle
 - No cost option for grower. Bin to Bottle incurs winemaking costs and takes 20% of the profit upon sale of wine on the bulk market. Availability dependent on capacity.
 - Participate in Napa Wine Company [Grower Program](#)
 - Small up-front fee for crush. No further cost until resulting wine is sold. Grower retains 100% of proceeds after fees are paid. Availability dependent on capacity.
- Option 3: Juice shows signs of smoke taint
- Send juice samples to a third-party lab to test for levels of smoke taint markers, Guaiacol and 4-Methylguaiacol. Caution: lab results likely will not be returned by the time you need to harvest.
 - If sensory analysis shows only slight signs of potential smoke taint, talk with the custom crush facility to determine if you should consider continuing with the winemaking process for the bulk wine market
 - Keep all lab results as these will be needed for insurance claims and any federal disaster relief programs that become available
 - Freeze a sample of both the grapes and juice. This insures you have extra samples in case something happens, and you need to retest