

# WINES&VINES

65 Mitchell Blvd., Ste. A, San Rafael, CA 94903 • (866) 453-9701 • [www.winesandvines.com](http://www.winesandvines.com)

## Tips on Buying Stainless Steel Tanks

When locating tanks, leave at least a four-foot alleyway between the bases of tanks for pumps and hoses, six to eight feet if a forklift will be used in the tank area. Allow for a minimum of 2½ to 3 feet from the top of the tank to the ceiling. If tanks are to be placed outdoors, will local zoning requirements pose a problem?

Tanks of 250 gallons or less are usually put on a cradle, and tanks of 20,000 gallons or more on concrete foundations. Other tanks may be put on a concrete foundation, a mild steel base, or mounted on legs (avoid wooden platforms because of the difficulty in cleaning underneath). Mounting on legs may be more practical for the smaller winery because a small press can be moved right under the tank.

Methods of proper temperature control must be considered, and can range from placing tanks in a cold room to the use of heat exchangers or internal coils. Jacketing requirements can be calculated from a number of variables, and a decision on refrigerants is usually made prior to ordering the insulation jackets. Depending on the size of tank and the supplier, it may be prohibitively expensive to add jackets to tanks at a later date, or it may be possible to do so at a reasonable cost.

Ordering several tanks at one time, or combining an order for tanks with another winery may lower the per unit manufacturing cost and save on shipping charges. It is most economical to ship a full truckload.

Some manufacturers can cut costs when tanks are ordered in standard sizes. Other companies may custom-build tanks to customer specifications at affordable cost.

The gauge of steel used in constructing a tank is generally dictated by the size of the tank. Type 304 stainless steel is the least expensive; type 316 with nickel added is more corrosion resistant and its use may be advisable depending on the amount of exposure to SO<sub>2</sub> and high acid wines. A mill 2B finish is usually adequate. The size and type of drain fittings must be compatible with other equipment. A variety of diameters and types are available. A common mistake made by newer wineries is to use a pump that is too small, and a size with a diameter of at least 1½ inches should be used from the start.

Get more than one estimate based on the same specifications, particularly in terms of the weld and how it is finished out. The size and capabilities of a manufacturer may make prices more competitive for one size tank than another.

Most manufacturers stress the proper cleaning and sanitizing of tanks. Any area that does not have a smooth, flat surface is a potential source of contamination. Special attention should be paid to weld areas, behind doors and under the gasket.