

Richmond Grove automates barrel cleaning

Katherine Lindh

Penard Ricard Pacific's Richmond Grove winery in the Barossa installed the first automated barrel cleaning system in Australia last month.

The new automated cleaning system for wine barrels will help save time, labour and improve barrel cleaning efficiency.

The principal design of the EKINSA barrel washers is a multi-directional rotation system that shoots water at a high pressure produced by the hydro cleaners, in such a way that cleaning reaches every internal point of the barrel with enough pressure and volume to eliminate all existing residues. It empties, cleans, sterilises and refills automatically.

Local winemakers, engineers and winery staff met at Richmond

Grove on Monday 3 November at a workshop coordinated by EKINSA'S local distributor - Australian & New Zealand Winemakers, to learn more about how the system works, its advantages, and the company.

The general reaction from those who attended the workshop was one of great interest as minimal handling is a desire for most wineries.

Australian & New Zealand Winemakers' national sales and product manager, Frank Belperio has been working with EKINSA on introducing this technology to Australia and New Zealand for two years.

"We looked at a few machines of this type in Europe, and this company and its products was the one that stood out," Belperio said. "EKINSA's design revolution has achieved great acceptance by wine-producing sectors. We are excited to introduce this technology to Australia and New Zealand."

"The beauty of this machine is that it is flexible and is designed to suit all wineries, production size and different barrel shapes.

"On the one hand, it performs a superior, efficient and thorough cleaning of the barrel, and at the same time, the new barrel cleaners are a tremendous saving of time and labour costs, taking just one minute to clean a barrel," Belperio said.

Peter Pollocki, technical engineering manager for Pernod Ricard Pacific said he thought it was a simple, robust machine.

"From an engineer's point of view, the machine is simple and robust," Pollocki said. "It also has great safety aspects which are important."

John Ide, winery manager for Oxford Landing, said he thought the new automated cleaning system was an efficient machine.

"This machine is able to locate the bung hole, which I have heard other models find difficult to do," Ide said. "The unloading of wine, refilling and re-shaking are all important processes in this production."

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The forklift driver loads the wine barrels onto the crate ready for the machine to pick up.

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The machine is manufactured by Spanish company, EKINSA-Equipamientos Industriales, S.A.

EKINSA was founded in Spain in 1981 as a family business with the goal of creating new applications in the field of high pressure water cleaning. Today, the company is a world leader in automated barrel washing.

For more information on the EKINSA automated barrel cleaning system, contact Frank Belperio on (03) 8405 9000 or email frankb@ausnzwinemakers.com.



The EKINSA automated system takes the empty barrels across the machine to be filled.



The EKINSA automated system pumping out the wine.

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