

Wine cellar in space: 12 bottles arrive for year of aging

November 5 2019, by Marcia Dunn



In this Saturday, Nov. 2, 2019 photo provided by Space Cargo Unlimited, researchers with Space Cargo Unlimited prepare bottles of French red wine to be flown aboard a Northrop Grumman capsule from Wallops Island, Va., to the International Space Station. The wine will age for a year up there before

returning to the Luxembourg company. Company officials say researchers will study how weightlessness and space radiation affect the aging process. (Space Cargo Unlimited via AP)

A dozen bottles of fine French wine arrived at the space station Monday, not for the astronauts, but for science.

The red Bordeaux [wine](#) will age for a year up there before returning to Earth. Researchers will study how weightlessness and space radiation affect the aging process. The goal is to develop new flavors and properties for the [food industry](#).

The bottles flew up aboard a Northrop Grumman capsule that launched from Virginia on Saturday and arrived at the International Space Station on Monday. Each bottle was packed in a metal canister to prevent breakage.

Universities in Bordeaux, France, and Bavaria, Germany, are taking part in the experiment from Space Cargo Unlimited, a Luxembourg startup.

Winemaking uses both yeast and bacteria, and involves chemical processes, making wine ideal for space study, said University of Erlangen-Nuremberg's Michael Lebert, the experiment's scientific director, in a company video.

The space-aged wine will be compared to Bordeaux wine aged on Earth. What's left will go to those who helped pay for the research, according to a company spokeswoman.

This is the first of six [space missions](#) planned by the company over the next three years touching on the future of agriculture given our changing

world.

"This is a once-in-a-lifetime adventure," Nicolas Gaume, chief executive and co-founder of Space Cargo Unlimited, said in a statement.

NASA is opening the space station to more business opportunities like this and, eventually, even private astronaut missions.

The Cygnus capsule that pulled up to the space station on Monday contains multiple commercial ventures. Also on board: an oven for baking [chocolate chip cookies](#), as well as samples of carbon fiber used by Italy's Lamborghini in its sports cars.

Budweiser has already sent barley seeds to the station, with an eye to becoming the beverage of choice on Mars. In 2015, a Japanese company known for its whiskey and other alcoholic drinks sent up samples. Scotch also made a visit to space in another experiment.

As for high-flying wine cellars, this isn't the first. A French astronaut took along a bottle of wine aboard shuttle Discovery in 1985. The [bottle](#) remained corked in orbit.

The [space](#) station's current crew includes three Americans, two Russians and an Italian, who might have preferred a good Chianti on board.

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