



Synthetic corks: tough to extract

UK CLOSURES

Plastic corks on way out

SYNTHETIC CORKS ARE on the wane in UK supermarkets, according to the country's leading retailers.

Waitrose buyer Simon Thorpe puts much of the dislike of synthetics down to ease of use, but adds that, 'There remain quality problems such as oxidation and leakages.' Angela Mount of Somerfield also spoke of problems, with leakages and with getting the closure out of the bottle. 'A lot more work needs to be done on the quality of synthetics.'

Tesco, meanwhile, which describes itself as 'very pro-screwcap' says that its customers don't like synthetic corks because they get stuck on the corkscrew.

Even Jim Rankin of the UK importer of

Australian synthetic closure NuKorc, admits that 'over the longer term [use of] synthetic corks will probably fall a little.'

Meanwhile, trial bottlings of Australian classic Penfolds Grange under screwcap are 'incredibly promising'. Penfolds has been testing different closures since the early 1980s. Head winemaker Peter Gago said wines sealed with the metal cap evolve more slowly, but consistently and comprehensively. But it's likely to be a while before we see screwcapped Grange on the shelves: 'We have a responsibility toward the people who invest in our wines,' Gago says. 'If you bought 10 cases of Grange and after 25 years the caps had all rusted you wouldn't be happy'