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100% CORK CAMPAIGN LAUNCHED

The overwhelming preference of American wine drinkers for wines sealed with natural cork closures is being reinforced through a new promotional campaign titled 100% Cork.

The Portuguese Cork Association (APCOR) and the US-based Cork Quality Council officially launched the campaign at the 2010 Sustainable Brands Conference in California.

100% Cork aims to encourage US wine consumers to choose wine sealed with natural cork stoppers because of cork's environmental, technical and societal benefits. It will also seek to influence winemakers and retailers to choose natural cork over alternative closures.

"Natural cork embodies sustainability like few other products, so this conference is the ideal venue to launch the campaign," said Peter Weber, executive director of the Cork Quality Council.

The campaign website (www.100percentcork.org) asks consumers to pledge their support for natural cork, while an informative Facebook page (www.facebook.com/100PercentCork) has already attracted thousands of fans.

"United States wine drinkers and winemakers overwhelmingly prefer cork over synthetic stoppers for its uniquely rich tradition and unmatched technical performance," Weber said.

"However, there are also powerful environmental reasons to choose cork."

"Cork is recyclable, biodegradable and creates a commercial incentive for the sustainable stewardship of the Mediterranean cork oak forests, which trap carbon emissions while providing one of the world's richest ecosystems.

"Choosing cork over artificial wine stoppers is a small but easy step to show that you care about your planet and your wine.

“In addition to its own environmental and technical advantages, that simple cork in the top of a wine bottle sustains vast cork forests and a way of life that stretches back more than 400 years.”

Natural cork wine closures are a truly sustainable resource and one of the few forms of product packaging that is 100 per cent recyclable, renewable and biodegradable. Cork trees are not cut down to make wine corks, rather the bark is stripped from the trees every nine years during their average 150-year lifespan. Cork is also a natural retainer of CO₂ and helps fight global warming.

The 2.2 million hectares of Mediterranean cork forests sequester carbon, just like the world's rain forests. Portuguese cork forests alone — which account for about a third of all Mediterranean cork forests — retain 4.8 million metric tons of CO₂ every year, according to the Lisbon School of Agronomy.

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