



## TRIAL POSITIVE FOR CORK

A wine closure trial conducted by leading UK retail chain Somerfield has proven positive for cork and in particular Amorim's high-tech Neutrocork seal.



→ On trial — Amorim's Paulo Lopes (left) and Miguel Cabral test the Somerfield chardonnay at Amorim's research and development laboratory.

The trial — a joint effort between Somerfield, Amorim and Italian winery Cantina di Soave — is comparing the performance of Neutrocork and a synthetic closure on a Somerfield own-label chardonnay over 12 months.

Former Somerfield beer, wine and spirits technical manager Brian Humphreys said variations in the wine under the two different closures became apparent after just nine months.

"When we undertook the nine months tasting there was a noticeable difference in the aroma and to a certain extent the flavour, which was much better and fresher in the Neutrocork sealed wine," he said.

"The plastic sealed wine appeared to be suffering a slight oxidising, which is the usual outcome, but nine months is sooner than I would have expected."

Somerfield, which was acquired by The Co-operative Group in March, operates approximately 750 local grocery outlets across the UK. Its wine range includes about 80 own-brand lines comprising wines sourced worldwide.

One of the main reasons behind the trial was that Somerfield was keen to obtain its own data on wine closures rather than relying on information from other sources.

More than 16,000 bottles of the Cantina di Soave chardonnay were bottled with 10,000 sealed under cork and 6000 under the previously used synthetic closure.

Brian supervised the bottling, taking bulk samples from the beginning, middle and end of line runs for the trial. Sample testing has been carried out at Somerfield by an independent panel and at the Amorim laboratory in Portugal.

Prior to bottling, Brian toured Amorim's facilities to review the latest developments in cork production.

"The main message from that visit was the amount of thought and investment that Amorim has applied throughout the production process," he said.

"It was really impressive. Amorim was one of the first in the industry to realise that things had to change and they deserve

recognition for their efforts to improve cork quality."

While Somerfield currently uses a range of closure types on its own-label wines, Brian said it was likely that they would make a clear distinction between cork and plastic closures in the future.

"I think this trial helps to substantiate that cork is a lot better than plastic in many applications," he said.

Brian suggested Somerfield would consider changing the wines currently under plastic that it believed would be better under cork — basically the higher end own-label wines.

He said he hoped the entire UK wine trade could benefit from the data sourced from the Somerfield closure trial.

"There are a lot of common problems within the wine industry that can only really be sorted out by co-operation between suppliers, winemakers and retailers," he concluded.



→ Amorim's Crisóstomo Ferreira at the Oenovideo awards ceremony.

## 'SAVE MIGUEL' WINS AT OENOVIDEO FESTIVAL

Amorim's innovative 'Save Miguel' video has won two prestigious awards at Oenovideo — the International Grape and Wine Film Festival.

The production was awarded 'Best Original Screenplay' and collected the 'Peoples' Choice Award' at an awards ceremony held at Palais du Luxembourg in Paris recently.

At the ceremony, Oenovideo organisers acknowledged Save Miguel director Sean Ashcroft together with leading American director Martin Scorsese and British director Howard Greenhalgh, whose short films also collected awards.

The world's oldest festival dedicated to the value of the image of grapes and wine through cinema, Oenovideo was staged at Nuits-Saint-Georges in Burgundy in May. Almost 100 films from 12 countries were entered in the competition and of these only 12 received awards.

The Save Miguel video features Hollywood actor Rob Schneider. It is the cornerstone of an online educational campaign designed to promote the environmental qualities of cork oak forests and natural cork products as well as highlight the positive impact of purchasing wine with natural cork closures.

In the video, Schneider embarks on a quest to find 'Miguel' and save him. Following an amusing journey he discovers that Miguel is in fact a mature cork oak tree in the Portuguese forests.

"Everyone involved in the production is thrilled that it was acknowledged at this year's Oenovideo festival," said Amorim's director of marketing and communications Carlos de Jesus.

"It was particularly pleasing to win the Peoples' Choice Award as this shows the environmental messages struck a chord with festival patrons."

For more information visit [www.savemiguel.com](http://www.savemiguel.com)

# TCA NO LONGER A PROBLEM SAYS U.S. INDUSTRY LEADER

A leading American professor of enology and wine judge has stated that TCA is no longer a major problem for the United States wine industry.

In a report published in the May/June 2009 edition of 'Vineyard & Winery Management', Dr Christian Butzke said TCA was no longer a major issue from both a consumer and winemaker perspective.

Considered one of the leading wine experts in the US, Dr Butzke is a professor of enology at Indiana's Purdue University and is president-elect of the American Society for Enology and Viticulture.

The director of winemaking at Sakonnet Vineyards from 2002 to 2005, Butzke is also a member of the LLC managing committee of the Unified Wine & Grape Symposium and chairman and chief judge for the Indy International Wine Competition — one of the largest wine competitions in the US.

From his experience reviewing the thousands of international and US wines submitted to the Indy International Wine Competition, Dr Butzke says he believes cork has achieved a performance rate exceeding 99 per cent.

Amorim's director of marketing and communications, Carlos de Jesus, said it was refreshing to hear industry leaders acknowledging the progress that has been made by the cork industry in recent years.

"As Dr Butzke's assessment suggests, the problems associated with TCA contamination are now a rarity and this is evident in both scientific analysis and

anecdotally," he said.

"As with any other product or service, promises of perfection are difficult to deliver, but Amorim will continue aiming higher and higher when it comes to the performance of our products. We look at strong figures such as those presented by Dr Butzke as a great departure point, never as the limit of natural cork's performance capabilities.

"While some commentators continue to live in the past when talking about natural cork, we know from our discussions with winemakers on all continents that the industry recognises the progress that has been made."

A number of independent analyses provide scientific evidence of the improvement in cork's performance and particularly the drop in the incidence of 2,4,6-trichloroanisole (TCA) contamination.

The US-based Cork Quality Council, for example, shows a dramatic reduction in TCA levels in bulk cork imports since 2001. The average TCA count has dropped from 4.0 nanograms (parts per trillion) several years ago to less than 1.0 nanogram — well below human sensory thresholds.

Meanwhile, Decanter.com has reported that one of Australia's leading wine brands, Penfolds, is in the very early stages of trialing a glass stopper that might imitate the oxygen exchange provided by natural cork. Chief winemaker at Penfolds Peter Gago maintains that oxygen exchange is essential for the development of fine wine and he told Decanter.com that if you can neutralise the problem of TCA, cork "can't be beaten" as a wine closure.





# CORK A KEY TO SUCCESS IN USA

The preference for natural cork as a wine closure in the United States has been underlined with the release of two new studies as well as the outstanding success of a cork-sealed New Zealand wine in this major market.

Leading US trade publication 'Wine Business Monthly' again highlighted the positive perceptions of natural cork among US wineries in its 2009 Closure Report.

The publication says its survey of 229 US wineries, published in the June edition, shows that natural cork remains the highest rated closure in terms of 'overall perceptions'.

The best 'overall' rating was achieved by natural cork's top ranking in several categories including consumer acceptance, performance on the bottling line and product performance.

With consumer acceptance an important consideration for US wineries, it is clear that companies exporting to the US also need to consider American consumers' preference for cork when developing their packaging strategies for this market — and some are doing so with excellent results.

A New Zealand wine recently became the best selling sauvignon blanc in the United States with the use of a natural cork closure seen as a major factor in the wine's sales success.

As reported by Decanter.com, the company had packaged the brand specifically for the US consumer by sealing the wine under cork, a move that meant going against the screwcap trend in New Zealand.

Several studies published over the last five years have highlighted US consumers' preference for natural cork as a wine seal.

A recent consumer perceptions study by Nelson Barber, Christopher Taylor and Tim Dodd of the Texas Tech University titled 'Twisting Tradition: Consumers' Behavior Toward Alternative Closures', suggests that 71 per cent of US consumers prefer natural cork closures.

In a presentation on the study the researchers said that "packaging can be of considerable value as a competitive marketing strategy" and that the "style of closure adds directly to the look of the product and is considered by consumers as a direct reflection of the quality of the wine".

They suggested "consumers still consider screwcaps to be an indication of cheap wines and cork an indication of quality".

This study indicates little has changed in terms of US consumer perceptions since a survey in 2005 by Tragon Corporation showed that US consumers prefer to buy wine sealed with natural cork ahead of all other closure types.



→ Research and sales figures point to a strong preference for natural cork closures among US consumers.

# CORK RECYCLING TAKES FLIGHT

ReCORK America, a wine cork recycling program developed by Amorim, has received another boost to its rapid growth with an agreement to recycle used wine corks at American Airlines' Admirals Club locations throughout the US.

Admirals Club has partnered with ReCORK America and Sodexo (the airlines club services management vendor) to begin the environment-friendly program.

This initiative — offered in the 24 domestic Admirals Club lounges in the US as well as its San Juan site in Puerto Rico — will recycle natural corks used by the clubs as well as corks brought in by customers.

The corks will be turned into items such as shoe soles or flooring. ReCORK America recently shipped seven tonnes of cork to a footwear manufacturer in Canada.

"We are pleased to work with ReCORK America to recycle and reuse products

that would normally be thrown away," said Admirals Club president Nancy Knipp.

"Even small items such as wine corks, when recycled, can make a big difference to our environment."

ReCORK America has attracted strong interest in the US with extensive media coverage including an NBC story on the partnership with American Airlines.

As a result, the program has grown dramatically since its inception two years ago and has now recovered over three million corks.

"About 13 billion natural cork wine stoppers are produced for the global wine industry each year," said Teresa Relogio, program coordinator for ReCORK America.

"Amorim's program is designed to turn as many of those corks as possible into useful products.

"Natural cork wine closures are ideal

for recycling. They are a truly sustainable resource and one of the few forms of product packaging that is 100 per cent recyclable, renewable and biodegradable."



→ ReCORK America has recycled over three million corks.



## DROP US A LINE

For more information about cork and/or Amorim please drop a line to:

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# IN BRIEF

## UNIVERSITY HONOURS AMÉRICO AMORIM

St John's University in the United States has awarded a Doctorate Honoris Causa in Commercial Science to Amorim Group chairman Américo Amorim.

The award recognises his commitment to environmental issues as well as his work in economic development and in social and humanitarian fields.

In a statement St John's University said: "With this award to Américo Amorim, St John's pays tribute to an entrepreneur who has led a truly remarkable life.

"Américo Amorim transformed a small cork factory founded by his grandfather in 1870 — the year in which St John's was established — into the world's greatest producer of cork." →1

## WINERIES EMBRACE FSC CORKS

Amorim is experiencing increasing demand for its Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified corks.

Les Vignerons Catalans from the Languedoc-Roussillon region of France is the latest winery to release a wine sealed with Amorim's FSC-certified natural corks. The winery has launched an environment-friendly brand called 'Le Temps de Vivre'. The wine is bottled in lightweight bottles and also features environment-friendly labels and packaging.

In South Africa, Graham Beck Wines — a champion of the Biodiversity and Wine Initiative — has taken its environmental support further by adopting Amorim's FSC-certified corks for its Gamekeeper's Reserve cabernet sauvignon.

Graham Beck Wines cellar master Pieter Ferreira says the use of FSC corks allows wine producers to demonstrate their commitment to sustainable production. →2

## GEISENHEIM CERTIFICATE FOR GERMANY

Following two years of preparation and inspections, Amorim Cork Germany has passed its final audit by the prestigious

Geisenheim Research Center and is now a 'Geisenheim certified company'.

The demanding certification process included inspections and audits at Amorim's facilities in Germany and cork production plants in Portugal. Dr Rainer Jung and Dr Frederick Zürn — experts on issues related to wine closures and cork stoppers — carried out the final audit.

Each Geisenheim certified company commits to comprehensive and statistically reliable methods of product analysis and to ensuring the quality of corks delivered to customers.

In recent years Amorim Cork Germany has also secured the ISO 9001 standard and HACCP certification as part of its quality management systems.

## FOREST TRADE NETWORK HOSTED

Amorim has hosted the first trade mission of the Forest Trade Iberian Network. Established by environmental conservation organisation WWF in 2008, the network is an alliance of 17 Portuguese and Spanish companies.

The trade mission was organised to highlight the importance of sustainable forest management and Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification.

Luís Silva of WWF said the trade mission provided an opportunity to demonstrate the added value that FSC certification can bring to the cork sector.

## AMORIM SPONSORS 'WORLD TITLE'

Amorim has continued its successful partnership with one of the world's most renowned wine and spirits competitions, the Concours Mondial de Bruxelles. The 16th event was staged in Valencia, Spain earlier this year and featured 6289 samples from 54 countries.

An assessment of wine faults showed the incidence of 2,4,6-trichloroanisole (TCA) at 0.8 per cent from the thousands of wines tasted. The TCA figure has been consistently

below one per cent in recent years.

Amorim has been a major sponsor of this 'world championship' of wine since it was established in 1994.

## FRENCH WINERIES SUPPORT RECYCLING

Amorim France has entered into a partnership with prominent wineries Champagne de Castellane and Les Vins Georges Duboeuf that will see it collect over 230,000 corks for recycling by the end of 2009.

Both wineries see the move as an opportunity to contribute to sustainable development. The announcement received extensive media coverage in France including an article in leading daily newspaper 'Le Monde' and a segment on national television channel TF1.

The corks will be sent to Amorim's cork recycling plant in Portugal.

Revenue from this recycling effort will support the cork forest preservation work of Portuguese environment organisation Quercus. →3

## IN GOOD SPIRITS

Amorim has been actively involved in a number of whisky sector events for both consumers and industry professionals in 2009.

Early in the year Amorim participated in the World Whiskies Conference in London. The conference brings together leading whisky producers and suppliers with the aim of discussing strategic challenges, priorities and opportunities for the industry.

Amorim took the opportunity to highlight the environmental qualities of natural cork and the positive role cork closures play in the whisky sector.

Recently Amorim participated in the world's premier whisky tasting event, Whisky Live in Glasgow, Scotland. An international consumer event, Whisky Live featured tasting locations in 16 countries and 21 major cities.



→01

→ Amorim Group chairman Américo Amorim at St John's University



→02

→ Demand for FSC-certified corks is growing.



→03

→ Cork recycling in France is helping to preserve cork forests.