

Screwed Up?

As more and more producers turn to this new way of protecting their fine wines, here are the answers to some typical questions about the development of screw caps.

Why put something used on soda onto fine wine?

The Screwcap on a wine bottle isn't the same as those used for other food and drink: it has been specially developed for protecting fine wine over an extended aging period in the bottle. Specifically, the part in contact with the wine, (made from a thin Teflon film covering pure tin) is designed to stay stable and flavor neutral for decades.

Is cork taint that bad a problem?

In a word, Yes. At least 5% of wine closed in cork suffers from cork taint and it could be as high as 12%. Lower levels of cork taint are the most unpleasant in that they spoil the personality of the wine subtly, but it takes an expert to identify it as corked: most people just don't think the wine is very good. Badly corked wine is easy to spot, but somewhat rarer.

Why don't the cork manufacturers do something about it?

They're trying and have been for many years now. The principle chemical causing the problem is 2-4-6 Trichloranisole, and is almost unbelievably potent: you would easily be able to taste one drop of it dissolved in 50,000 liters of water! So the amounts they are trying to eliminate are unimaginably low: they need to get under 2 parts per trillion before the problem is solved, and many people say they need to be below 1 part per trillion.



If the corking problem is solved, will wineries go back to corks?

That is very unlikely, because even without cork taint, screwcap wine tastes noticeably better. The first thing you notice if you compare the same aromatic wine in cork and screwcap bottles is that you can actually taste the cork in the wine! Aside from the cork taste, wines age more gracefully in screwcap, holding their aromatics while developing complexity. There have been a number of comparative tastings now, where distinguished tasting panels have compared the same wines in cork and screwcap at various points in their development, (there are library stocks of many wines in screwcaps going back more than 20 years). In every single tasting, the majority vote has been heavily for screwcap.

Not for REDS surely?

A few months ago, in Bordeaux, a group of very senior tasters, did comparative tastings of many reds in screwcap and cork. The oldest wine was a 1983 Kanonkop, from South Africa. Not a single red wine in the tasting was preferred by the tasting panel in its cork version. In most cases the preference for the screwcap wine was considerable.

Don't wines need a cork that "breathes" to age properly?

Quite how this myth has arisen is a mystery. Good, flawless corks do not breathe anyway, and the entry of oxygen into the bottle is unnecessary and potentially very harmful. It is the opposite of oxidation, a process of reduction by which wine develops in the bottle. Reactions that take place in bottled wine do not require oxygen.

Excerpts from web article by: Paul, Scott. "Yes, We're Screwed." 2006 www.paulscott.com



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Classic Wine Club Selections

Trincherro Winery

The Trincherro family immigrated to the US from northern Italy in the 1920s. In 1948 they moved to Napa Valley and purchased an abandoned 19th-century winery called Sutter Home. In 1960, the second generation of Trincherros took over and, at the end of the decade, moved the winery away from bulk sales and into bottled varietal wines. In the early 1970s the Trincherros gained a lofty reputation among consumers, press and gatekeepers for their single-vineyard Zinfandels out of Amador County. They were, in fact, among the first of California's boutique wineries to recognize the potential of the Sierra Foothills. In 1972, the Trincherros created the world's first White Zinfandel and the rest, as they say, is history.

Decades later, to honor their heritage and long history in Napa Valley, the family launched Trincherro Napa Valley. The Trincherro wines are divided into two tiers. The Napa Reserve wines are single-vineyard bottlings featuring grapes from the family's 200 acres of estate vineyards in Napa Valley. The Trincherro Family wines showcase the Napa vineyards plus 200 acres in Lake County and 525 acres in Santa Barbara County.

Trincherro Family Merlot 2005

WINEMAKER NOTES : Trincherro Family wines typically express the purest manifestation of the grape variety, which means they are often fruit-driven and delicious. This 2005 Merlot is no exception. The wine is lush, rich and remarkably smooth with ripe, juicy fruit and mouthwatering acidity.

CHEF NOTES: Juicy ripe fruit, flavor-enhancing acidity and medium-plus body make our Trincherro Family Merlot a staple for many of our winery dishes. Their chef pairs this versatile wine with Rosemary Roasted Lamb Chops with Caramelized Cippollini Onions and Mashed Vanilla Sweet Potatoes. Enjoy.

Trincherro Family Chardonnay 2007

WINEMAKER NOTES: The 2007 Family Chardonnay displays the tropical flavors and great acidity typical of our Los Alamos Vineyard in Santa Barbara County. There's a slight spice on the silky smooth finish.

CHEF NOTES: Many think that Chardonnays must go with cream sauce pastas and lighter dishes, but their Chardonnay can even be paired with dishes that have a touch of heat. Light Asian fare and seafood dishes with a hint of spice also make great accompaniments to our Chardonnay. Their Chef pairs this Chardonnay with Pan-Seared Diver Scallops with Shitake Mushrooms and Fresh Basil.

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