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## **AUSSIE CORK INVENTION SHINES AGAIN**

Australian membrane cork technology ProCork has passed another round of testing with flying colours with top marks across a range of key indicators for wine tested after 36 months of cellaring.

The independent study was undertaken by the Australian Wine Research Institute (AWRI)\*.

The results at 36 months showed the ProCork sample had the highest average level of free SO<sub>2</sub> without the level of rubber character found in the screw cap wine. Rubber character and other sulphur like odours (SLO's) lower the quality of the wine and are often attributed to reduction.

The samples were also tested at 12, 18, 24 and 30 months. Over the five test intervals, ProCork's average sensory score for the fruit characters was enhanced over the cork and was either enhanced or similar to the screw cap. ProCork did not have the level of rubber character found in the screw cap wine from 12 months onwards.

ProCork founder and Chief Executive Officer Dr Gregor Christie said the latest test results provided further evidence that the membrane technology in ProCork had the ability to help wine reach its full potential. The results also debunk the myth that reductive characters in wine are purely a wine-making fault.

"I detect a lot of low level reduction in aged screw cap wine and it annoys me just like TCA annoys me because the wines would be better without it and it can be avoided with better closure choice," he said.

Reduction occurs when air is restricted from wine and the naturally occurring sulphur compounds in the wine convert to malodorous mercaptans which make the wine less appealing. At low levels it causes a jammy and bitter pallet and at high levels it makes the wine smell.

"This is not the first trial which has found reduced character in screw cap wine where it is not present in other stoppers," he said. "We have known all along that ProCork is the best performing closure and it doesn't surprise us that these tests have discovered this on five out of five occasions."

ProCork's growing reputation was further enhanced in closure debates at Wine Australia in Sydney in July and the 2006 London International Wine and Spirits Fair in May. Both debates focussed on closure permeability with panellists discussing the various closures now available to the market and their individual experiences.

The Wine Australia Closures Debate revolved around tastings and discussions of several wines under various closures by panel members.

The panellists included chief winemaker and ProCork user Kevin Mitchell from Kilikanoon who told the debate "big, serious reds needed oxygen to age and mature to their full potential".

"I would only use screwcaps for my aromatics and early drinking red wines under \$25 as they will be consumed within 6-12 months of bottling and would not require aging," he said. "For my big premium reds, I have been using ProCork (a membrane cork product) for two years now and have not had any problems," he said.



Meanwhile, with closures such a contentious issue in the industry the Closure Debate at the London Wine & Spirits Fair<sup>†</sup> was one of the best attended of all debates. The role of oxygen in the development of wine and the impact of closures on oxygen transmission was high on the agenda.

Matthew Barry of Mount Avoca Winery, the first winery to use ProCork, said the focus of both debates was indicative of a growing realisation that current closure trends have limitations and were not the ideal solution for the problem of cork taint.

“The acceptance by a number of leading winemakers at the show that a controlled amount of air is good for wine, particularly for premium red wine, gives us the confidence that ProCork’s ability to block taints while allowing wine to breathe is the best solution currently available,” he said.

ProCork’s technology helps prevent any such reduction and revolves around the membranes that are applied to each end of the cork and is designed to significantly inhibit flavour modification by allowing controlled micro-oxidation to prevent reduction in the wine, blocking glue and cork taint and preventing random oxidation.

For further information visit the ProCork website at [www.procork.com](http://www.procork.com).

\*Participation in and reporting of the independent AWRI “Commercial Closure Trial” does not constitute an endorsement by AWRI. The data used in this media release should be read in conjunction with the full AWRI report.

†Full transcript available.

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