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September 23, 2003

PROCORK PUSHES AHEAD AFTER STRONG RESULTS

Australian wine closure company ProCork is one step closer to commercialisation of its revolutionary new cork after a new round of successful testing at the Australian Wine Research Institute (AWRI).

ProCork chief executive officer Gregor Christie said the results of the AWRI testing had given the company the confidence to push forward with plans to have its closure commercially available within 6-12 months.

"These results have been a real shot in the arm for us and prove we have a product which has the potential to be a major player in the global market for wine closures," Dr Christie said.

"Our own testing has been extremely positive and to have those results reinforced by testing at AWRI gives us a tremendous amount of confidence to continue with our plans."

Sensory testing by eight AWRI sensory panel members found no bottle variation or any perceptible level of taint or other off flavour irregularities in the 24 samples tested after nine months cellaring. An extract of the results is attached.

The team of scientists, engineers and industry professionals at ProCork have spent more than three years developing technology that reduces the fear of "cork taint" enabling natural cork to be used with confidence in wine and other beverages.

The technology revolves around a series of membranes that are applied to each end of the cork that significantly reduces flavour modification and reduces chemicals entering the wine, regulates the passage of oxygen through the cork and retains cork moisture resulting in less cork breakage.

The new technology will enable natural cork to be used by winemakers with high certainty that the membrane will reduce any off character imparted by the cork.

The primary taints/off flavours which were tested by AWRI included TCA (trichloroanisole), oxidation, volatile acidity, sulfide and cork wood.

Dr Christie said the sensory panel provided a rigorous benchmark and to have all scores below the barely perceptible level was a tremendous result.

"The consistency from bottle to bottle was also very good," Dr Christie said. "This proves to us that cork is a great product and our membrane makes it even better."

Results of other testing by ProCork were unveiled last month (July 30, 2003) at a Winemakers Forum held by the Victorian Government's Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development.

Dr Christie, a former CSIRO scientist, told the forum ProCork had the simple goal of being the preferred closure for wine makers and wine drinkers.



P R O C O R K

"We want the people who make wine to be confident their hard work is rewarded when consumers open their wine and taste it as it was made to taste," he said. "We also want consumer's to purchase wine confident the product will taste just as the wine maker intended."

While synthetic and screw-cap closures continue to make inroads into the market Dr Christie told the Forum wine drinkers and producers still overwhelmingly preferred cork.

"Cork is a wonderful product, it has been an integral part of the winemaking process for 400 years and will always be the preferred choice of both wine makers and wine consumers," he said.

"But as with all elements of the wine making process, from growing to crushing to barreling, it is not good enough to accept that because that is the way it has always been done that is the way it should always be.

"The evolution of cork, through the adoption of new technology to create a better product is what ProCork is all about."

Independent testing commissioned by ProCork has also highlighted the company's outperformance in the area of sulphide taint when put into direct comparison with screw-cap closures.

"The question we are always asked is – How good is it compared to screw-cap?" Dr Christie said.

"From our very first experiments right up to commercial trials conducted by some of the largest wineries in the world, ProCork has outperformed all closures, including screw-caps, in the areas of freshness, flavour, consistency and sulphide taint.

"In testing of ProCork by Vintessential Laboratories using a screw-cap control group we were very surprised at the incidence of sulphide taint under the screw caps in a relatively short period of time."

ProCork is currently undertaking further testing, while the first release of wine under a ProCork closure will be released this month through Victoria's Mount Avoca label.

NOTE: High quality digital images are available. Please e-mail request to benready@bigpond.com.

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P R O C O R K

AWRI 24 Bottle Sensory Analysis Trial

- Sensory analysis conducted by AWRI on July 4, 2003.
- Blind tastings with eight AWRI sensory panel members.
- The first figure represents the average score of AWRI panel using sensory analysis. The scale used was a ten point equal interval scale from 0 to 9; where 1 corresponds to just detectable, 5 to moderate intensity, and 9 to a very strong intensity.
- Samples with mean scores less than 1.0 across the whole tasting panel are considered not to be affected by the fault or taint.

Sample	Overall Fruit	TCA	Oxidation	Volatile Acidity	Sulphide	Cork Wood
1	5.2(0.3)	0	0	0	0.1(0.4)	0
2	5.8(0.3)	0	0	0	0.1(0.4)	0
3	5.4(0.6)	0	0	0	0.1(0.4)	0
4	5.2(0.5)	0.2(0.4)	0.1(0.4)	0	0	0
5	5.2(0.3)	0	0	0	0.1(0.4)	0
6	5.1(0.4)	0	0.1(0.4)	0	0	0
7	5.5(0.2)	0	0.1(0.2)	0	0.5(1.1)	0
8	5.1(0.3)	0.3(0.7)	0.1(0.4)	0	0	0
9	5.4(0.4)	0	0	0	0.1(0.4)	0
10	5.0(0.5)	0.1(0.4)	0.1(0.1)	0	0.8(1.0)	0
11	5.0(0.6)	0.9(1.8)	0	0.1(0.4)	0.3(0.5)	0
12	5.9(0.3)	0	0	0	0.2(0.4)	0
13	5.4(0.5)	0	0	0	0.4(0.7)	0
14	5.3(0.4)	0	0	0	0.1(0.4)	0
15	5.3(0.6)	0	0	0	0	0
16	5.5(0.4)	0	0	0	0.4(0.6)	0
17	5.0(0.4)	0.5(1.3)	0	0	0.2(0.4)	0
18	5.0(0.6)	0.2(0.4)	0	0	0.1(0.4)	0
19	5.1(0.4)	0	0.1(0.4)	0	0	0
20	5.7(0.4)	0	0.1(0.4)	0	0.1(0.4)	0
21	5.0(0.5)	0	0.1(0.4)	0	0	0
22	5.1(0.2)	0	0	0	0.5(0.8)	0
23	4.9(0.3)	0.2(0.4)	0	0	0.4(0.7)	0
24	5.5(0.4)	0	0	0	0.1(0.4)	0



P R O C O R K

Freshness

- Source- AWRI Commercial Closure Trial – Six Month Report July 2, 2003 (Winery 1) Vintessential Laboratories (Wineries 2, 3 and 4)
- Increased Free SO₂ is recognized as a parameter which determines freshness
- In all bottlings ProCork has a higher retained Free SO₂ than screw cap

	Free SO ₂ (mg/l)	
	ProCork	Screw Cap
Winery 1 (6 months)	28 (mg/l)	25 (mg/l)
Winery 2 (9 months)	21 (mg/l)	14 (mg/l)
Winery 3 (12 months)	19 (mg/l)	17 (mg/l)
Winery 4 (12 months)	17(mg/l)	13 (mg/l)

Flavour and Consistency

- Source- AWRI Commercial Closure Trial – Six Month Report (July 2, 2003)
- Obtained through sensory testing by 10 AWRI staff with extensive experience in wine sensory evaluation.
- The first figure represents the average score of AWRI panel using sensory analysis. The scale used was a ten point equal interval scale from 0 to 9; where 1 corresponds to just detectable, 5 to moderate intensity, and 9 to a very strong intensity. The figure in parenthesis represents the standard deviation.

	ProCork	Screw Cap
Overall Fruit (Aroma)	5.3 (0.2)	5.0 (0.3)
Overall Fruit (Palate)	5.2 (0.2)	5.0 (0.2)
Fruit Persistence (Palate)	4.7 (0.2)	4.4 (0.4)