



P R O C O R K

July 10, 2003

## **PROCORK SET FOR FIRST COMMERCIAL RELEASE**

Australian wine consumers will be the first in the world to have the opportunity of sampling wine sealed with a revolutionary new cork designed to eliminate the fear of cork taint.

Several thousand cases of new vintage Cabernet and Sauvignon Blanc by family-owned Victorian winery Mount Avoca will be the first commercial release of wine using the ProCork stopper.

The new technology developed by Melbourne-based ProCork will enable natural cork to be used by winemakers with high confidence that the membrane will reduce any off character imparted by the cork.

A team of scientists, engineers and industry professionals have spent more than three years developing the membrane-based ProCork and associated production machinery.

The technology revolves around a membrane that is applied to each end of the cork and reduces chemicals entering the wine, regulates the passage of oxygen through the cork and retains cork moisture resulting in less cork breakage.

ProCork chief executive officer Dr Gregor Christie, a former CSIRO scientist, said the Mount Avoca release would be the first chance for wine consumers to trial the product.

"It has been a long road to get to this point and we still have a long way to go but this is a real milestone for us and for the entire cork industry," Dr Christie said.

"We will use the Mount Avoca release to gather as much feedback as possible from consumers and use that to continue refining the product in preparation for more widespread use.

"We are still about 12-18 months away from full commercialisation but we are getting closer all the time."

Dr Christie said ProCork's many years of research and development had produced a product that complemented all the best aesthetic features of wine and added some real technical enhancements to traditional cork.

Mount Avoca owner and winemaker Matthew Barry was first introduced to the product last year and quickly realised its potential for the wine industry.



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After recently reacquiring Mount Avoca, which was established by his father 30 years ago, Mr Barry is now a consultant to ProCork and a keen advocate of its technical and aesthetic features.

"As a small family-owned winery that is in constant contact with customers we see first hand the impact that cork taint can have on our brand," he said.

"We have also tried various synthetic closures over the years and while they have some merit, particularly in reducing costs, they have met some consumer resistance and we feel they are not really appropriate for a winery of our calibre.

"Pure natural cork provides a wonderful link to the history and romance of wine drinking but everyone in the industry is aware that there are problems which must be overcome.

"With ProCork we think we have developed a product which is acceptable to both wine drinkers and wine makers."

ProCork is currently in discussions with major cork and wine producers for further trials.

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