

# Mt Avoca finds closure in next generation cork

Winemakers will recognise the scenario: you're showing off your best wines at a showcase event to great enthusiasm - except for one table.

"It's all right," their looks say. "But I don't know what all the fuss is about ..."

Mt Avoca winemaker Matthew used to blame the drinkers' taste buds when this happened.

Now he believes they had probably just tasted a bottle of wine with low-grade cork taint.

And he believes the problem is probably much greater than the industry has previously realised.

But it was leaking bottles that convinced Matthew he

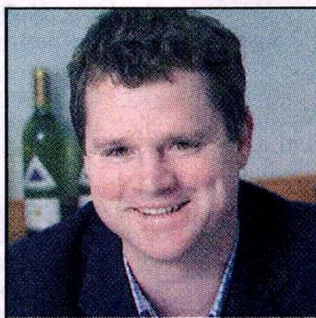
had a real closure problem.

"We had recently changed cork suppliers, and had a couple of batches where a lot of the bottles leaked and there was a lot of cork taint. That was an expensive wine so we were really annoyed."

In June 2003, Mt Avoca became the first commercial winery in the world to switch to ProCork, a cork lined with a plastic membrane at both ends that protects the wine from cork taint but also allows it to breathe.

Matthew says nine out of 10 people wouldn't even notice the membrane, and the results have been exceptional.

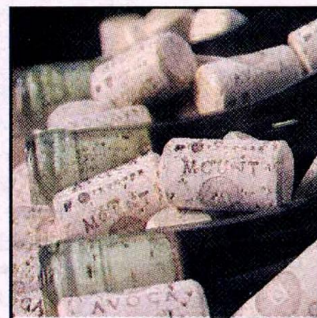
"Since we have been using it, the wine is a lot more consistent.



Dr Gregor Christie

"Every time we do a wine show, people says it's fantastic."

The membrane and associated technology were designed by leading food packaging scientist and ProCork chief executive officer Dr Gregor Christie, a former CSIRO scientist.



The evolution of the cork ...

Dr Christie said ProCork's products have undergone extensive testing over the last three years to ensure they meet the exacting standards of wine makers and wine drinkers and reduce 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 flavor 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 company has commissioned its first membrane cork machine, signalling a major step in its ambitions to be a major player in the global cork industry.

"It has been a long road but we are very proud of the fact that this technology has remained wholly Australian-owned from the moment of conception to the point where

we are now marketing these corks to all corners of the wine drinking world," Dr Christie said.

While synthetic and screw-cap closures continue to make inroads into the market, he said 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.

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