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FRIDAY, JUNE 13, 2008

Some thoughts on closures

I'm stiff. Stiffer than stiff. I played cricket for the wine trade team on Wednesday (first game of the season for me), and came away stiff after bowling seven overs and running between the wickets for a while, as well as acting as a substitute fielder for the other side. And then I went and spent two hours in the nets last night. The result is that today I feel about 83 years old.

Just been writing a piece on closures for US trade magazine *Wines & Vines*. The topic was alternative closures to cork, so I was covering the likes of screwcap, synthetic corks, Vino-Seal (Vino-Lok in Europe), Zork and Diam.

The whole closures debate seems to have died down a little of late. What we really need, to make any progress, is the answer to a two part question:

Precisely what oxygen transmission levels do we need from a closure for each style or type of wine? And precisely what oxygen transmission levels do the existing closures we have deliver?

Synthetic cork manufacturer Nomacorc have embarked on an 'Oxygen and wine' study with a multimillion pound budget to try to answer these questions, and I think it will be very interesting to follow this. They are collaborating with INRA Montpellier, the Australian Wine Research Institute, University of California Davis, Geisenheim and an unnamed Chilean research institute.

Each centre will be looking at the development of one or two varietal wines under a range of closures. The project will be following the wines from grape to analysis, knowing exactly how much oxygen the wine has seen before and after bottling. It looks to be an exciting project.

It's all very well offering a range of closures with different oxygen transmission properties, but who knows what the desired oxygen transmission properties are in the first place?

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posted by Jamie @ 4:37 PM

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Jamie, what are your impressions of these closures? The Vino-Lok seems like it might be too "tight", and the synthetics all seem fine for short-term. How are your experiences with the Zork? Seems a best of both worlds solution, but sometimes a good idea doesn't work out so well.

Thanks. Looking forward to the article.

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