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Latest News



Top French producers gun for screwcap

March 20, 2007

Natasha Hughes

France's top wine producers are putting their weight behind screwcap closures.

While the New World has adopted the Stelvin closure with enthusiasm, until recently French producers have lagged behind.

But at a seminar held yesterday at the Bordeaux plant owned by Alcan, manufacturer of the Stelvin closure, French winemakers explained the reasons behind their switch from cork to screwcap to an audience composed largely of sceptical French journalists.

Representatives from Domaine Albert Mann in Alsace, Boisset in Burgundy, André Lurton and Château Malartic-Lagravière in Bordeaux, Domaines Paul Mas from Languedoc, and Michel Laroche were present.

Journalists are not alone in their scepticism, said Nathalie Bergès-Boisset, PR director of Boisset, who explained that the French public as well as the wine trade were still reluctant to accept alternatives to cork.

'We need to get the supermarkets to put their weight behind the move to screwcap, but even before that happens the French press has to get behind screwcaps and explain it to the French public, who still associate the closures with cheap wine.'

Véronique Bouffard, communications director for André Lurton said, 'People in France still haven't understood why they should buy screwcap rather than cork.'

Jean-Claude Mas of Domaines Paul Mas isn't convinced, however, that explanations are what it will take to tip the balance of public opinion. 'I really think that the threshold moment will come once people have realised how practical screwcaps are,' he said.

Alcan Packaging's Bruno de Saizieu said it all came down to the buying power of the supermarkets.

'If we can find a supermarket that will be brave enough to put their weight behind screwcaps in the way that Tesco did in the UK, demand is bound to take off in France too,' he said.

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Do you check the alcohol level when buying wine?

- No
- Only on New World Wines
- Yes, and if it's more than 14.5%, I don't buy it