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# BARK to BOTTLE

#51 APRIL '24

AMORIM CORK



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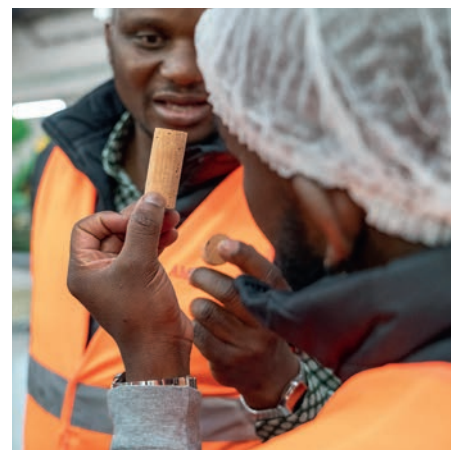
# “Zim Somms” in Portugal

The incredible story of overcoming and resilience of the Zimbabwean sommeliers

**In a country where people hardly drink wine, it seems highly unlikely that a constellation of top sommeliers could be born, ready to conquer the world with their talent and sensitivity. But improbable isn't impossible, and that's what happened to Joseph Dhafana, Marlvn Gwese, Pardon Taguzu and Tinashe Nyamudoka, four Zimbabwean refugees who, after working their way up through the restaurant world in South Africa, became renowned sommeliers, leading one of the most inspiring stories in the world of wine (and beyond).**

**In February, three of the four magnificent “Zimbabwe somms” travelled to Portugal to get to know Corticeira Amorim and attend the 20th edition of the Essência do Vinho. They immersed themselves in the world of cork, tasted Portuguese wines, toured Porto and learnt about the wonders of the Douro wine valley. And they left us with an incredible story of hope, determination and overcoming, which moves and inspires anyone who listens to it.**

Seven minutes can seem like a short time, or an eternity, depending on the circumstances. Seven minutes is all the time the world's best sommeliers, gathered at the World Blind Wine Tasting Championship - a kind of Olympics of wine tasting - had to analyse each wine they were given to taste, and identify its origin, grape variety, region and even its producer. For Team Zimbabwe, which made its debut at this renowned blind tasting event in 2017, seven minutes were sufficient to show, wine after wine, that life is what we make of it.



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The story of Joseph Dhafana, Marlvín Gwese, Pardon Taguzu and Tinashe Nyamudoka, four Zimbabwean refugees who arrived in South Africa in search of a more dignified life, has touched the world. In just over a decade, they have built a prodigious career in the world of wine, as sommeliers and now also as producers, an incredible story, especially when you consider that they started from scratch. In their home country, wine was the exception: “If you look at Zimbabwe in general, it’s a beer-drinking nation, and wine wasn’t consumed at lunch or dinner. Only now is it growing, but at the time it wasn’t accessible anywhere. So, I don’t think I saw myself in this position at all. When I moved to South Africa, wine was available everywhere, but the world of sommeliers was just starting to grow,” recalls Marlvín Gwese.

In the early 2000s, the situation in Zimbabwe was complicated, with the economy falling apart, forcing many people to leave the country. In neighbouring South Africa, the wine industry, along with the restaurant sector, was the only one that accepted foreigners, as Pardon explains. “It was the only opportunity and we had to take it”.

“If you look at Zimbabwe in general, it’s a beer-drinking nation, and wine wasn’t consumed at lunch or dinner. Only now is it growing, but at the time it wasn’t accessible anywhere.”

That’s what the four future sommeliers did. And they did everything. In some of Cape Town’s best restaurants, they started out as food runners (a kind of “butler” who takes the food to the dining room, but has no contact with the customer), became waiters, worked as bartenders and finally as sommeliers. They arrived at different times, with different histories, despite their common origin, and they didn’t know each other, but they ended up crossing paths in an environment that was nonetheless small and conservative, where, almost all of them unknowingly acted as pioneers, paving the way for a new generation of sommeliers.

### The discovery of wine

Before arriving in South Africa, neither of them had ever tasted a drop of wine. It was in the country that welcomed them, working in restaurants to earn a living, that they discovered this “lovely drink called wine”, in Joseph’s words. That’s what initially sparked their curiosity. And where the challenges also began. Coming from an African country with no tradition in the world of wine (and therefore no “taste memory”), these sommeliers had to fit into a world with a strange language, where wines were described using exotic terms, such as “blackcurrant”, “cranberry” or even “paprika”.

“When you work in restaurants, that’s where you come into contact with drinks, including wine. From then on, I became more fascinated with wine and its whole personality, in terms of tasting, serving, that sort of thing. And I thought ‘ah, this is a really cool job, let me study it’, and that’s when the passion started to grow and I started studying wine,” recalls Marlvín.

### Team Zimbabwe

Working hard, studying a lot, the sommeliers, with independent but connected paths, began to make a name for themselves and became recognised in South Africa. It was then that Jean-Vincent Ridon, a star sommelier of French origin in South Africa, challenged them to do what seemed impossible, and take part in the World Blind Wine Tasting Championship. “In 2017, Jean Vincent said: ‘Guys, four of you are in the Top 10, why don’t you create Team Zimbabwe? The four of us, me, Tinashe, Joseph and Pardon, started discussing and thinking about forming Team Zimbabwe. That’s how the team was created,’” recalls Marlvín.



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An article, written by journalist Erica Platter and published on the website of renowned wine critic Jancis Robinson, breathed life into this great adventure. The story of four immigrants turned sommeliers who, against the wind and tide, created their own destiny - is moving, profound, transformative and real. A crowdfunding campaign was quickly set up to help cover the costs of the trip to France, which exceeded all expectations. And two Australian filmmakers, Warwick Ross and Rob Coe, fascinated by the story, decided to accompany them to the championship in Burgundy, recording the memorable, touching, emotional images that form the basis of the documentary "Blind Ambition" (2021), available on Apple TV.

As we hear in the film, "It was as if Egypt had assembled a team of skiers to compete in the Winter Olympics". But improbable is not impossible. And it happened. After their debut - it was the first time in history that a team from Zimbabwe had taken part in this major global event - in 2018, Team Zim, as they became known, returned to the championships. That year, they came 14th out of 24 competitors, beating Spain, Italy, England and the United States, proving that you're not born a sommelier, you become one.

## Being a sommelier

"Working as a team, what you learn from each other is probably to have great cohesion, because you realise who among us has what weaknesses, and who among us has what strengths as well," summarises Pardon, describing what happens when they put nose and palate to work together. In the championships, everyone has a speciality - Pardon - Italian and German wines, Marlvin - champagnes, for example - and makes the final decision when the seven minutes are up. "We have to trust each other when it comes to the decisions we make. And when we make a decision, it's a decision we've made together, not individually," explains Pardon.

It takes a lot of talent to be a good sommelier, but, as we quickly realise, it takes a lot more than that. On this subject, Pardon is assertive: "I don't think anyone is born a sommelier or an engineer or a pilot, but you go to school and you have to work on your talent to realise it."

Marlvin adds a healthy dose of the unexpected to the recipe: "I think a great sommelier has to think outside the box, explore and be adventurous when it comes to serving a wine. Or even create a wine list."

You also need "discipline", assurance, good "communication skills" and meticulous attention to detail. And study, study a lot.

## Memories of wine

Not least because, as they remind us, there are many lessons to be learnt from wine. "Wine makes you very humble, it's very natural the way it's done, from the harvest to the production of the wine, to the way you open the bottle, serve it, drink it and hear that message. It's genius. It has to be respected. You can't cut corners, honestly speaking, in wine", explains Joseph, with the depth that characterises him (on Instagram, he goes by the moniker, wine\_poet). "There are times when I've felt super humble about wine, in competitions where you're given seven minutes to analyse wines and say where they come from, the grape variety, the region, the producer... people take that moment for granted, but you're sweating and bleeding inside because you want to do your best and you've been working hard. That's why that moment humbles us to the lowest possible point," he concludes.

Joseph takes on this poetic vein, but Marlvin isn't far behind:

"We all have that bottle in the cellar that we can't wait to open. When you have that opportunity, I think when you release the cork, then you feel the satisfaction and say 'oh, it's finally happening', and this wine has been protected with a natural cork for years and years, and now I have the opportunity to open the bottle. And remember, wine is just a poem. It's when you release the cork that you start to hear all the sounds, all the poems that come out of the bottle."

"I believe that every great bottle of wine you drink should tell you a story, should take you somewhere and should make you search your memory, not only for the basic flavours of the terroir that come from the wine, but also for what it evokes in you, what occasion you remember, where you've been," adds Pardon.



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## From wine to cork

Despite having opened thousands of bottles of wine throughout their careers, before visiting Amorim, Marlvin, Joseph and Pardon knew relatively little about cork. Their time in Portugal, which included a visit to the Amorim Cork factory and to Heritage House, besides a close contact with the Amorim team, was transformative.

**“The visit to Amorim opened my eyes, I realised,” summarises Marlvin, “For example, sustainability: it takes years to get a cork.”**

The issue of sustainability, inherent in cork, is vital for sommeliers, who are very sensitive to the balance between the three “P’s” - people, planet and profit - that conscious and responsible companies pursue. After getting to know cork inside out, there are few doubts left. As Pardon explains: “At the end of the day, what we want for our customers is to have the best possible product, so we’re definitely going to look for natural closures in contrast to others. Because it’s a tradition, the clientele also anticipates quality, they also associate quality with cork.”

Back to their projects - they are all in the world of wine, as producers, in South Africa and also in Europe - the fabulous sommeliers continue to set an example of hope and overcoming throughout the world. True to their roots, their culture and the place they call home, in their personal projects they establish a strong relationship with the community, empowering and raising awareness through the power of education, in the world of wine and beyond.

“Life is how we make it. There are so many immigrants all over the world. We don’t have to wait for someone to lift us up”, says Joseph. “We have to use the resources available to us to improve our lives. When I went to South Africa, I didn’t know anything about wine, but then I stayed in a wine region where I was surrounded by vineyards. I was very curious to learn more about vineyards, curious to learn more about wines, and I made a career out of it. So it might not just be wine (...) it could be anything. People should use whatever is next to them to change their lives.”



**Life-Cycle Assessment  
by PricewaterhouseCoopers  
confirms that cork stoppers  
have a lower environmental  
impact than artificial  
closures**



A recent peer-reviewed Life-Cycle Assessment (LCA) by PwC, commissioned by Corticeira Amorim, provided in-depth information on the environmental impact of different kind of closures, demonstrating that cork stoppers have a significantly lower impact than screwcaps or plastic stoppers.

**Cork's robust performance in the wine closures market is underpinned by growing awareness amongst consumers and wineries that it is the most environmentally-friendly solution.**

Eco-conscious customers are highly attentive to data on the environmental impact of all elements used in wine packaging.

PwC conducts Life-Cycle Assessments across the entire spectrum of industrial activities, as companies look to unlock value from their products, by benchmarking their performance against competitors and thereby further enhance their sustainability.

The new LCA follows a series of studies commissioned by Amorim that provide hard data on the negative carbon balance of each of its stoppers.

This study provides comparative data that demonstrates why cork stoppers outperform screwcaps and plastic stoppers.

Encompassing seven indicators, the LCA adopted a cradle-to-grave approach to compare natural cork stoppers produced by Corticeira Amorim with typical screwcaps and plastic stoppers.

**The study analysed seven indicators, across which cork stoppers clearly outperformed artificial closures in five indicators, especially in terms of non-renewable energy consumption and emission of greenhouse gases.**

**Non-renewable energy consumption** – Screwcaps and plastic stoppers have significantly higher non-renewable energy consumption compared to cork stoppers, primarily due to energy consumed for production of raw materials.

**Emission of greenhouse gases** – Screwcaps are associated to the highest greenhouse gas emissions, followed by plastic stoppers. Emissions associated to cork stoppers are significantly lower, primarily due to carbon intake during cork tree growth.

**Water consumption** – Plastic stoppers recorded the highest water consumption of all three closures, above all during the production stage. During the bottling stage, cork and plastic stoppers have higher water consumption, associated to use of PVC covers.

**Production of solid waste** – Screwcaps are the biggest producers of solid waste, followed by plastic stoppers and then cork closures.

**Contribution to atmospheric acidification** – Screwcaps are the biggest contributors to atmospheric acidification, followed by cork stoppers and plastic stoppers. The main source of atmospheric acidification is the production stage, particularly for screwcaps (99%).

**Contribution to the eutrophication of surface water** – Plastic stoppers are the biggest contributors to water eutrophication, followed by screwcaps and finally by cork closures (primarily due to bottling).

**Contribution to the formation of photochemical oxidants** – Plastic stoppers are by far the biggest contributors to the formation of photochemical oxidants, followed by screwcaps, with a much smaller impact associated to cork stoppers.

Overall, the production stage is the main source of negative environmental impacts in each indicator, particularly marked for screwcaps and plastic stoppers.

One of Amorim's goals in commissioning the LCA was to identify possible strategies to further enhance the superior environmental performance of cork stoppers.

The study identified two possible solutions – to dispense with PVC capsules, which are responsible for 70% of associated emissions (but are dependent on the winery's packaging requirements) and to further expand ongoing cork stopper recycling. This stands in line with the company's recycling programmes which have attained their highest-ever level.

Above all, this new report provides Amorim's clients with more in-depth information, in complement with existing data on the negative carbon balance of the company's comprehensive range of stoppers and underlines the fact that cork is the most environmentally-friendly solution and thus plays a key role in fostering sustainable growth for wineries.



Additional information  
on carbon sequestration potential

# Waitrose & Partners won the Amorim Special Award at the Drinks Business Awards

In the 2023 edition of the Drinks Business Green Awards, Waitrose & Partners won the Amorim Special Award.

Amorim has sponsored the awards since 2012, including a dedicated Sustainability Award launched in 2022. In 2023 Amorim sponsored three separate awards – the Amorim Special Award, Amorim Sustainability Award and Amorim Biodiversity Award - which were won by Waitrose & Partners, Lungarotti and Château Léoube respectively.

The awards were announced at a lavish prize ceremony, held in London on December 5, 2023.

The jury of the Amorim Special Award underlined how Waitrose & Partners' new Loved & Found wine range has done away with plastic packaging, while adopting an FSC® certified, carbon-sequestering cork closure.



The retailer's ground-breaking initiative was acclaimed by Carlos de Jesus, Amorim's Director of Communications, for its "coherence" in responding to environmental concerns.

Many UK supermarket chains stock wines sealed with artificial closures, whose production generates carbon dioxide. Waitrose's reinforced commitment to using carbon-sequestering closures marks a significant shift. The retailer's sourcing team stated that advances in quality control of stoppers means that TCA has been effectively defeated and cork's benefits are now available to the wine trade across all price segments.

Carlos de Jesus considers that the Loved & Found wine range demonstrates shifting attitudes to cork in the UK wine trade, as technological advances and an added focus on sustainability drive retailer choices: "It displays the kind of leadership that actually moves the needle."

The Amorim Sustainability Award was attributed to Italian winery Lungarotti, with commendations for the South Africa's Spier Wines and France's Domaine Lafage.

The jury of this award said of Lungarotti that "despite its small size, it wowed the judges for its many sustainable initiatives. Indeed, it was praised for single-handedly holding together the agricultural community in Umbria."

Lungarotti has adopted a four-pronged approach to sustainability based on four pillars: Countryside, Cellar, Culture, and Community.

The practices implemented under these four pillars include rational soil management, regenerative agriculture and mechanical weed control; sustainable packaging and photovoltaic panels; collaborations with universities; and achieving a work life balance for workers and partners.



The Amorim Biodiversity Award was attributed to the French winery, Château Léoube, with a commendation for Chilean winery, Viña Maquis.

Château Léoube is an organic wine estate, olive grove and restaurant, spread across four kilometres of Mediterranean coastline. It is considered one of the most sustainable organic vineyards in Europe.

The jury commented that Château Léoube is "a Provençal winery that has done everything possible to augment species richness in its vineyards and beyond, including rewilding large swathes of its estate."

# Amorim Cork triples its installed production capacity of Xpür® stoppers

Amorim Cork's ground-breaking Xpür® technology, was launched in January 2021 and the company has tripled its installed production capacity, making it possible to produce over one billion Xpür® stoppers per year.

This development allows Amorim Cork to keep pace with the growing demand from wine producers for the world's most modern micro-granulated stoppers.

Xpür® uses state-of-the-art supercritical CO<sub>2</sub> technology to extract volatile compounds from cork and removes any molecules that can give off undesirable aromas and flavours to wine.

Supercritical CO<sub>2</sub> extraction technologies were first introduced in the early 1960s, traditionally applied to a wide range of food industries, including tea, coffee, hops extraction, spices and many natural products. The technologies began to be applied to the cork industry in the 2000s.

Xpür® is considered to be the most efficient and sustainable supercritical extraction technology in the food industry. It only uses 25% of the energy and 10% of the CO<sub>2</sub> previously required, besides reducing the production cycle to 4 hours.

Due to their low percentage of binder and the absence of plastic additives found in competing technical stoppers, Xpür® and Qork® stoppers incorporate 98% cork by volume, are sensorially neutral and are free of molecules that cause organoleptic alterations, including TCA (releasable  $\leq 0.3$  ng/L).

According to Paulo Lopes, responsible for Amorim's Development and Innovation process associated with this technology, "Xpür® and Qork® also present low oxygen transmission rates, which, combined with greater sensory neutrality, makes them an excellent solution to preserve the aromatic profile of the wine in the bottle."

The binders used in Qork® stoppers are exclusively comprised by vegetable polyols, thus reinforcing the quality and sustainability of this product. Through use of an exclusive formulation, Xpür® and Qork® stoppers also guarantee physical-mechanical behaviour in line with the wine's shelf life, optimising the consumer experience through comfortable extraction.



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# Amorim Cork hosted a panel with Waitrose & Partners at Wine Paris 2024

During La Wine Tech Perspectives at Wine Paris 2024, on February 12 Amorim Cork hosted a panel discussion with Waitrose & Partners dedicated to the topic: “How does Waitrose make its wine shelves more sustainable?”.

The panel came hot on the heels of the attribution of the Amorim Special Award to Waitrose for its Loved & Found wine range, at the Drinks Business Green Awards.

Waitrose’s sourcing and sustainability trading manager, Barry Dick MW, joined UK-based wine consultant Clem Yates MW and Amorim’s Carlos de Jesus to talk about how choosing wines that are sealed with real corks delivers a lower carbon footprint, and how Waitrose’s decision to eliminate capsules on its Loved & Found range of own-label wines has further reduced their environmental impact.

The round-table discussion also focused on how to develop wine brands with a coherent sustainability strategy, while helping export capabilities and meeting evolving consumer needs.

The participants talked about rising demand for cork among wine brands, driven by quality and sustainability factors, that recently led two UK bulk wine bottlers – Encirc Beverages and Broadland Drinks – to install bottling lines able to seal wines with cork stoppers, in complement to existing lines equipped for screwcaps.

In an interview with the Drinks Business after the event, Carlos de Jesus said that as plastic stoppers have recorded marked decline, demand for cork stoppers is consistently rising. Worldwide around 13.2 billion cork stoppers are sold annually, compared to under 6 billion screwcaps and plastic stoppers tending towards zero.

Clem Yates explained that UK retailers are switching their closure preferences back to cork due to sustainability concerns, matched by the development of new technology that has removed the risk of TCA taint.

Barry Dick emphasized that cork-sealed wines are increasingly prioritised by Waitrose’s customers because of their sustainability credentials.



**WAITROSE**  
& PARTNERS

# Amorim Cork promoted an event with its clients at the Château Olivier

On the occasion of the 3rd anniversary of the launch of Naturity® and Xpür® technologies, for natural and micro-granulated stoppers respectively, Amorim Cork recently organised an event in the Château Olivier in France.

The aim was to raise awareness of these new technologies among customers, demonstrating their potential and added value in the company's comprehensive portfolio of cork stoppers.

In December 2023, Amorim France hosted a ground-breaking comparative tasting event in the Château Olivier, between wines sealed using its cork stoppers and the solutions offered by competitors.

The presentation, provided by Paulo Lopes, Amorim Cork's R&D Manager, highlighted the taste and aroma impact of Naturity® and Xpür® cork stoppers compared to artificial closures. Above all, the event revealed the ability of Naturity® and Xpür® stoppers to respect the work of winemakers and the need to adopt a personalised approach when choosing a stopper in function of each wine.

Based on technical analysis and tasting, Paulo Lopes presented the new Xpür® and Qork® micro-granulated cork stoppers, treated with supercritical CO<sub>2</sub> technology, that were in the spotlight at this event.

Paulo Lopes explained that these stoppers help “preserve fruit and aromatic freshness” and “organoleptic balance over time”. He presented three wines that were bottled at the same time (a muscat from Alsace, a Chardonnay from Burgundy and a blended red wine from Portugal), but which were sealed with two different stoppers: one supplied by Amorim and the other from a competitor, from a similar range, stored for 12 to 48 months. After these time periods, the bottles presented different concentrations of certain aromatic compounds, and in the case of the Amorim micro-granulated cork stoppers revealed clearer overall intensity of positive aromatic compounds.

Amorim's stoppers ensure increased sensory neutrality, deliver non-detectable TCA performance (i.e. below the detection threshold limit) and remove volatile, semi-volatile molecules and some phenolic molecules.

Franck Autard, General Manager of Amorim France, added “On average our competitors' stoppers have 60% cork and 40% other things, including microspheres, in contrast to our micro-granulated stoppers that incorporate at least 82% of cork by weight”.

As well as strengthening the relationship with customers, this type of event helps to reinforce the importance of the choice of closure and its impact on the evolution of the wine. It's a model that will be replicated in new locations throughout 2024.





# France's EcoBouchon is the world's cork recycling champion

As part of its circular economy strategy, Amorim has implemented cork stopper recycling programmes in various countries - France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, United States or South Africa. Overall, Amorim Cork and its subsidiaries are the largest recyclers of cork stoppers in the world.

France holds the record in volume and number of corks collected and recycled, thanks to the EcoBouchon programme, launched in 2010.

Amorim France's programme is supported by the Fédération Française du Liège (French Cork Federation) and through active involvement of associations, making France the world's leading cork recycler - with 517 million cork stoppers collected and recycled to date, equivalent to more than 2.000 Tons of cork and with over €600.000 donated to research initiatives conducted by 50 associations.

Current partners include NICOLAS, Agir Cancer Gironde, France Cancer, Bonheur Corks and Handi'Chiens.

As a result of the EcoBouchon programme, 8.900 cork oak trees have been planted in more than 17.8 hectares of forests in the Pyrénées-Orientales.

Around 350 to 380 tonnes of cork stoppers were collected and recycled in France in 2023 alone, with over 55% (204 tonnes) collected by Amorim. The company now aims to reinforce its partnerships across France.

The EcoBouchon programme has an extremely impressive record with over 65% of the volume of recycled cork stoppers making a direct contribution to helping with medical research or to fight against disabilities.

The lists of collection points are updated regularly on the sites, EcoBouchon.com and Planeteliège.com. Collected stoppers are then transported to Amorim Cork's recycling site, where they are transformed into granules.

Franck Autard, General Manager of Amorim France, mentions that "recycling our corks is a major challenge, and we're only at the beginning. Indeed, if Amorim hadn't taken the initiative of creating this recycling channel, the cork would have been sent to a landfill, which is a shame when you think that there's nothing more natural and environmentally friendly than a cork stopper (our cork stoppers have a carbon balance ranging from -288gr to -564gr of CO<sub>2</sub> per stopper). Today, the challenge is to increase the number of collection points and to structure it, so that everyone can have these cork stopper collectors close to home."

Recycled cork is used in many high added value products, such as insulation panels, fashion, design, acoustic products, seals, aerospace (thermal protection of space shuttles), the automotive sector (engine, transmission and valve seals), construction (sound insulation materials) or the creation of large infrastructures (e.g. vibration control equipment for roads, bridges and railways). These new applications not only make it possible to reduce waste, but to give a new life to cork, extending its lifecycle and contributing to a more sustainable world.

## 96% of Spain's finest wines are cork-sealed

A recent study of wine closures conducted by the Cork Center Laboratory of the Catalan Cork Institute Foundation has confirmed that 96% of the 100 wines with the best quality-price ratio in the Peñín 2023 Guide are sealed with cork stoppers. The remaining 4% are sealed with a screw cap (2%), synthetic closure (1%) and glass closure (1%). Of the 100 wines referenced in the guide, 63% are still wines, 34% are fortified, sweet and aromatic wines and 3% are sparkling wines.

Among the still wines, 98% are cork-sealed, and of these, 77% with natural cork stoppers. 91% of sweet, aromatic and generous wines opt for cork stoppers as well, demonstrating the unparalleled sealing quality of this solution.

The average price of the wine bottles referenced in the Peñín Guide's list of the 100 best quality-price wines is €13.40, wherein those sealed with natural cork stoppers have an average price of €14.90.

For still wines, the average price of bottles is €13.80 and €14.70 for those sealed with natural cork stoppers. Bottles sealed with artificial closures had an average price of €12.80 which means that wines sealed with natural cork stoppers command a price premium of about €2 (15% more).

The study confirms the premium price associated to cork stoppers and their impact on consumer perception, while demonstrating that winemakers trust the active role that cork plays in the evolution of their wines.

LE SALON DES  
**OUTSIDERS**  
*de Jean-Marc Quarin*

## Amorim Cork attends the 10th edition of Le Salon des Outsiders

In November, Amorim Cork attended the 10th edition of Le Salon des Outsiders, in Paris, in the wake of the partnership established in early 2023 between Amorim and Les Rencontres Jean-Marc Quarin - one of the wine industry's most exclusive encounters.

Based in Bordeaux, Jean-Marc Quarin is one of the world's most highly renowned wine educators and critics and runs the website Quarin.com and Carnets de Dégustations wine newsletter.

The Salon was attended by wine professionals, media and representatives from leading wineries in France and internationally.

Amorim Cork's R&D Manager, Paulo Lopes, made a presentation during the event entitled "Cork – Noble and Durable by Nature", which began with an overview of the company activities, cork's sustainability credentials and the negative carbon balance of Amorim's stoppers.



He then provided data on how cork stoppers have enjoyed the highest growth of market share since 2009, with slower growth recorded by screwcaps and a slump in demand for plastic stoppers.

Cork's robust market performance has been underpinned by major R&D investments and Paulo Lopes discussed the latest innovations to defeat TCA, including NDtech®, Naturity® and Xpur®. Implementation of quality control measures since 2002 have delivered a 99% reduction in TCA, which is now essentially a thing of the past.

Finally, the presentation focused on how cork stoppers influence evolution of the wine in the bottle, due to factors such as phenolic compounds and the oxygen transmission rate, further fine-tuned by Amorim Cork's BeeW® technology.

Data confirms that natural cork stoppers preserve the fruit and floral aromas and contribute to more complex, rounded and elegant wines.

The presentation concluded with the assertion that the choice of the right stopper is the last and most important decision taken by the oenologist, with different types of cork stopper best suited for different wines.

The next edition of the Salon des Outsiders will be held in Paris, on November 14-16, 2024 and Amorim Cork is already confirmed as an active contributor for this new event.

# Amorim Cork organises seminar on sparkling wine stoppers in Spain

Amorim Cork's Francisco Campos provided a technical presentation on Sparkling Wine Cork Stoppers at the Bodega Dominio de la Vega, in Requena, near Valencia.

Francisco Campos joined Amorim Cork in 2020, where he is in charge of Research and Development projects for sparkling wine cork stoppers. An oenologist and professor, Francisco Campos has a PhD in Biotechnology from the Portuguese Catholic University School of Biotechnology and was Director of the Research and Development Agency of ViniPortugal between 2005 to 2006.

The presentation focused on the quality control procedures and technology used to produce sparkling wine closures, focusing on wine-making concepts such as sensory performance, desorption of cork compounds, oxygen kinetics and CO<sub>2</sub> retention.

Sparkling wine stoppers are required to withstand the pressure from the sparkling wine, while being easily extractable, in a controlled manner, and preserving the wine's sensory profile.

The presentation highlighted the rigorous quality control procedures implemented to ensure that the stoppers respond to these requirements.

It also highlighted Amorim's procedures to eliminate TCA from its stoppers, including technologies such as R.O.S.A., Super R.O.S.A, NDtech® and CorkNova for the cork discs, which are further reinforced by analysis of 48 500 samples/month by SPME-GC-MS/ECD.

The presentation also explained how sparkling wines sealed with Amorim's stoppers with two natural cork discs have a much better performance, in terms of retaining CO<sub>2</sub> and preserving the wine's distinctive aromas, than micro-granulated stoppers.

Francisco Campos concluded by showing how sparkling wine retains greater flavour when tirage is performed under cork stoppers, compared to the use of crown caps.

The event also included a commented blind tasting, which helped to reinforce the impact of the closure, as the last oenological act, on the physical-mechanical and sensory performance of sparkling wine. The seminar ended with a lunch that promoted networking among all the participants, demonstrating the important role this type of event plays in the work of winemakers.





# Amorim Cork sponsors the Revista de Vinhos and Revista Grandes Escolhas awards

Amorim Cork is official sponsor of Portugal's most prestigious wine awards.

The Best of the Year awards, attributed by the Revista de Vinhos magazine, were announced in a prize ceremony held in February in the Alfândega Conference Centre, in Porto.

The main winners included a tribute to João Portugal Ramos, with Juan Carlos Escotet winning Personality of the Year in Wine, Luís Cabral de Almeida Winemaker of the Year, and João Rodrigues declared as Personality of the Year in Gastronomy and João Roquette as Personality of the Year in Brazil.

Czar 2014, a liqueur from the Azores, won Wine of the Year. Producer of the Year went to the Quinta da Alorna, with Barbeito winning Fortified Wine Producer of the Year. Revelation Producer of the Year was attributed to the Azores Wine Company, based in Pico, Azores.

Other winners included Falua as Company of the Year, Murilhas de Monção as Brand of the Year and Sogrape's Luís Cabral de Almeida as Winemaker of the Year.

The Revista Grandes Escolhas magazine announced its Best of the Year awards in a ceremony held in the Estoril Conference Centre in March.



©Revista Grandes Escolhas



©Revista de Vinhos/ Essência Company

The top five wines of 2023, sponsored by Amorim Cork, were attributed to "Murganheira Assemblage Távora-Varosa Grande Reserva Sparkling white 2006", for Best Sparkling wine, "Bacalhôa 1931 Vinhas Velhas", for Best White Wine, "Quanta Terra Phenomena", for Best Rosé Wine, "Quinta do Crasto Vinha Maria Teresa, Douro red 2019", for Best Red Wine, and "Dalva, 50-year Tawny Port", for Best Fortified Wine.

In addition to the main awards prizes were awarded for the 30 best wines of 2023 and also 20 Grandes Escolhas trophies, which included the Restaurant World Cuisine award, sponsored by Amorim's Quinta Nova estate, attributed to Soão, the acclaimed Asian tavern, in Lisbon.

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# Amorim Wine Vision wins award for Best Communication Media at the Iter Vitis Awards

Amorim Wine Vision, a new magazine launched by Amorim Cork Italia in 2023, won the award for Best Wine Tourism Communication Tool in the 2023 Iter Vitis Awards

The 2023 ceremony of the Iter Vitis Wine Routes in Europe awards was held on October 27 - European Wine Day - in the Maison des Vins in Fronton, Occitania region, hosted by ITER Vitis France and IVSO.

Since 2018 the Iter Vitis Awards encourage actions concepts, commitments of public or private structures in Europe to safeguard vine and wine heritage and promote sustainable wine tourism.

15 prizes were awarded based on the democratic values defended via the Council of Europe's Cultural Routes programme.

Amorim Wine Vision is published by Amorim Cork Italia, in collaboration with media partner, Wine Meridian.

It is a network dedicated to wine-related technical and current issues, pioneered by entrepreneurs and managers.

The project serves as an "out-of-the-box" observatory that will focus on interviews, analysis and opinions of professionals in the wine sector with a focus on direct, concrete experiences and the internal dimension of companies.

It includes monthly interviews with top professionals, that are also shared on the online pages of Wine Meridian.

Two issues of the Amorim Wine Vision magazine have been published to date, including interviews with António Amorim, Chairman and CEO of Corticeira Amorim; Riccardo Cotarella, President of Assoenologi; Piero Antinori, owner of Marchesi Antinori Spa; Marina Cvetic, of Masciarelli Tenute Agricole; Lulie Halstead, wine marketing expert; Filippo Bartolotta, sommelier and globetrotter; and Stevie Kim, Managing Director of Vinality International.

The Iter Vitis awards ceremony also included the Iter Vitis General Assembly, several reports on the state of the art in member countries, and signature of an agreement with the REMCI network. Representatives from Azerbaijan, Bosnia Herzegovina, Croatia, France, Georgia, Israel, Italy, Lebanon, Moldova, Portugal, Spain and the Ukraine attended.



# WHAT'S HAPPENING AT AMORIM CORK

1 Dennis Tonon, Deputy Industrial Director of Amorim Cork Italia, has won the Positive Leadership Award 2023

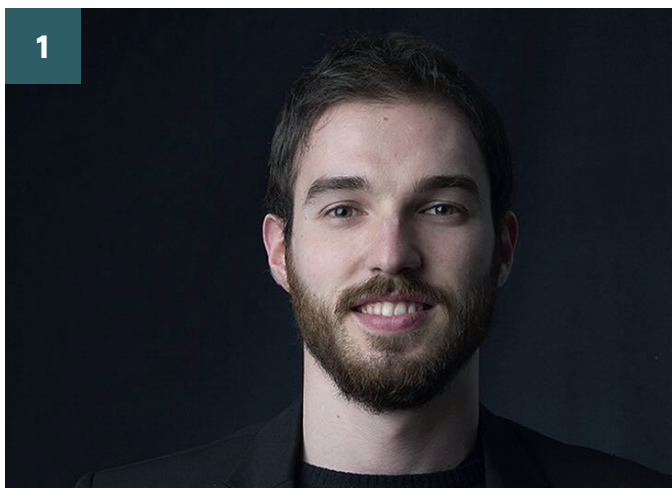
2 Christmas Party

3 Cork oak plantation

4 Amorim em Movimento

5 Italian journalists' visit

6 Unified



# Naturity

by Amorim Cork



## The world's greenest and most efficient anti-TCA technology for natural corks.

Inspired by Nature's remarkable work with cork, we've created Naturity®, an entirely natural process that removes TCA and other sensory-deviation compounds from our natural stoppers. Developed by NOVA University and Amorim Cork, Naturity® is a groundbreaking technology designed to maximize the performance of our stoppers without compromising their true nature. Thanks to a streamlined process that combines time, pressure, temperature and purified water, we are now able to separate TCA molecules from the cellular structure of natural cork stoppers through a non-invasive method that keeps the crucial features of this unique material intact.

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Additional information  
on carbon sequestration potential