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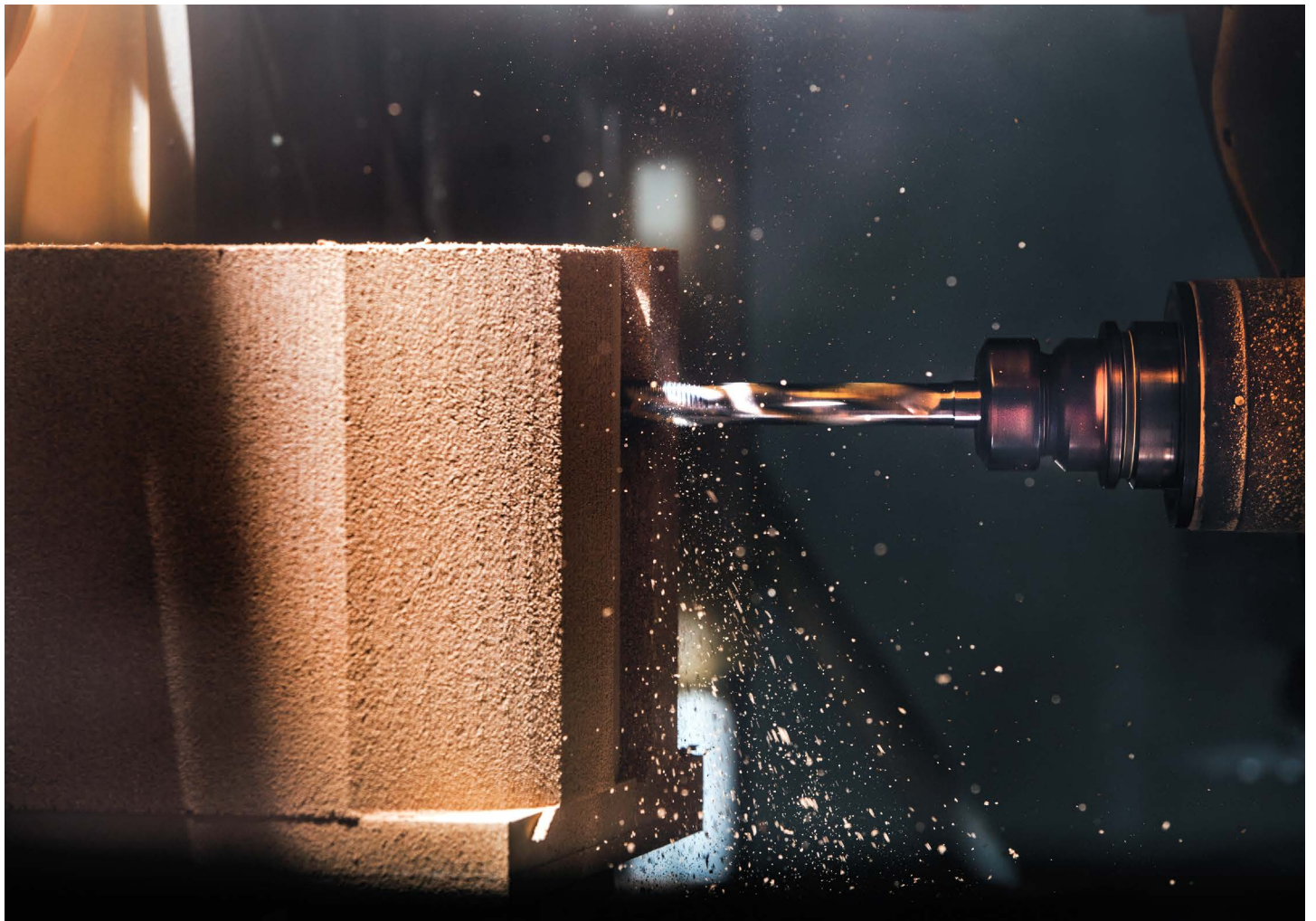
# AMORIM NEWS

YEAR 40 / NUMBER 1

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## The 1001 forms of cork

Cork is a unique raw material, whose properties no artificial material has been able to replicate. There is rising demand for cork in sectors such as aerospace, architecture, mobility, construction, energy, sport and design. Investing in cork-related R&D means investing in the advancement, evolution and growth of these sectors and also, by virtue of cork's unique characteristics, ensuring a better response to the challenges facing our planet. There is no need to reinvent the cork stopper. We just have to find a thousand innovative ways to work with, study and apply it!



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Innovation underpins the development of all business fields and the world of spirits is no exception.

For luxury spirits, innovation is reflected in highly differentiated, to the high-value products - from the spirit itself to packaging - where major producers seek solutions that will have a positive impact on their brands, while seeking to reduce their environmental impact. Innovation is increasingly a key competitive advantage. At Amorim Top Series, through our Product Development department, we have been creating unique and innovative solutions that we present to our customers at an early stage. Every year, in collaboration with the sales team and our customers, we define an Innovation Agenda that responds to various market trends and requests. We already have a vast portfolio, including more than ten innovations and four patents, spanning anti-counterfeiting and interactive systems to innovative decoration technologies, while guaranteeing environmentally sustainable solutions. These solutions enable us to stand at the forefront of the spirit closures business and consistently offer new products to the market. In view of all customer requirements and trends, over recent years we have concentrated our efforts on three main areas of innovation: sustainability, digital and anti-counterfeiting solutions. The world's leading players are committed to achieving ambitious sustainability goals, in particular in terms of reduction of fossil-based plastics. In the field of Sustainability, we have created alternative solutions to plastic capsules. Two product types should be highlighted: Re.Cork, produced with cork granules and polymers of renewable origin or recycled plastic; and Re.Wood, produced with wood fibres and a polymer of renewable origin. After several years of development, sales of these products consolidated in 2022. We anticipate that there will be a rising tendency to transfer from plastic

components to this type of polymer. In terms of Circular Economy solutions, in 2023 we have already developed a project to reuse wood from barrels to produce wooden capsules. Reuse of materials and raw materials from the production of spirits is a topical issue and our customers are challenging us to find solutions for their waste. In terms of Digital Smart Packaging, we have developed NFC-embedded capsules, enabling our customers to communicate directly with the end consumer. This solution opens up a world of possibilities that our customers can use to communicate with their consumers and develop increasingly strong brands. Finally, anti-counterfeiting solutions are in great demand for luxury and ultra-luxury goods. Our innovations in this area include three types of solutions, mechanical, digital or a hybrid solution that incorporates both physical and digital devices. Amorim Top Series' innovative solutions are not limited to the above. We have an ongoing calendar of workshops with the R&D teams of our main clients to discuss and develop increasingly differentiated and added-value capsulated stoppers, thereby making a significant contribution to the value of each bottle that our clients place in the market.

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# «Embrace equality»

Corticeira Amorim marked International Women's Day with a communication campaign with the slogan "Together, we embrace equality", that evoked some of the achievements attained so far and the progress that is still needed in societies in terms of gender equality. Streamlined through the company's different media channels and promoted across all business units, the initiative involved several employees, who literally embraced equality in large format photographs. In parallel, Corticeira Amorim invited each employee to recognise, distinguish and encourage someone by giving a card with a message of growth, improvement and evolution. The inspiring messages included statements such as: "Did you know that women have only been able to vote in

Portugal since 1974? Give this card to someone you want to have the freedom to decide their future", "Did you know that 55% of women in the European Union have experienced harassment? Give this card to someone you want to feel safe, wherever they go", "Did you know that 2.4 billion women do not have the same economic rights as men? Give this card to someone who fights for equality every day" or "Did you know that Portugal has never had a female President of the Republic? Give this card to yourself. You can change that". Aware of the importance of the issue, its impact on the professional context and the urgent need to speed up the overall process within society, Corticeira Amorim has invested in various ways to promote gender equality, in particular through implemen-

tation of the "Equality Plan" and the "Towards Equality" training courses. The company is also developing a strategy to encourage a higher number of female employees in the various business units and a higher proportion of female managers in decision-making positions. Because equality is a job for us all. Undivided. Together.



# Suber Cork Second Life wins C-IDEA Golden Award 2022



The Suber Cork Second Life project has won the C-IDEA Golden Award 2022 - one of Australia's most prestigious annual design awards. After a meticulous selection process involving 48 jurors from 37 different countries, the international jury awarded the top prize to Amorim Cork Italia's initiative which, since 2019, has offered a second life to recycled cork stoppers. This distinction is one of many awards that the project has received around the world, in recognition of its added value, through the combination of social responsibility, circular economy practices and the 3Rs policy -

The Suber Cork Second Life project stems from the ETICO programme, launched in 2011 by Amorim Cork Italia, which has 6,000 cork stopper collection points for recycling, more than 1,000 tons of cork stoppers collected and around 1,000 volunteers. The cork stoppers are initially transformed into small granules which, after being combined with other materials, give life to new objects. The C-IDEA Golden Award seeks to promote talent in a wide range of categories, that include communication design, industrial design or interior design, among other design disciplines.

The C-IDEA Golden Award recognises outstanding design with social value and also aims to create opportunities for cooperation among design professionals, fostering synergies, knowledge sharing and the discovery of new creative approaches.



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**“There are few materials that offer such a wide range of beneficial social and environmental impacts as cork”**

Since taking over as head of the School of Constructed Environments at Parsons School of Design, architect and academic David J. Lewis has sought to affirm a materials-led perspective on design. And cork, as a regenerative and circular material par excellence, may have a crucial role to play in this paradigm shift. A revolution that will count on the contribution of the collaborative project “The Thick Skin: Cork as Material for Design New Futures” a collaborative project signed with Corticeira Amorim. An initiative that brought a group of students to Portugal for an immersive programme on the the possibilities of cork and its role in the future of design.

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«...One of the things that I think is really interesting about cork is its ability to make us think about longer timeframes.»

**Before this collaborative project with Corticeira Amorim, what did you know about cork?**

As a child I remember visiting several projects by Frank Lloyd Wright that used cork - such as the Fallingwater House and the Martin House in Buffalo. It struck me that one of the few materials used in his interiors that lasted was cork. As I began to look for different materials to use in my own projects, I really wanted to use cork because of its acoustic properties, impact absorption, durability and the fact that it's a renewable resource. From my perspective, cork ticks all the right boxes. That was even before considering the question of carbon sequestration.

**Now that you are more familiar with cork, what do you consider to be its most significant feature?**

From the point of view of circularity and carbon sequestration, the fact that the tree itself is not cut down, that it's a process in which almost everything can be used, can be continuously reused, that it doesn't have an end-of-life like other materials. All of this makes cork an interesting and viable solution. The key challenge, at least in the United States, is scale. In other words, the time from seed to the first harvest is not a single growth cycle. So we're looking at longer time horizons and this really involves great learning, knowledge, culture and concepts. This is also very important. One of the things that I think is really interesting about cork is its ability to make us think about longer timeframes.

**What was the genesis of this project involving Corticeira Amorim and Parsons?**

It was actually Daniel Michalik [designer and assistant professor of product and industrial design at Parsons School of Design] who brought this project to Parsons. We gave him our full support. He's been working with cork as a material for industrial design, furniture, interiors, over many years. He wanted to figure out how we can access resources that will enable our students to focus intensively on this material, through this programme - "The Thick Skin: Cork as Material for Design New Futures". The main challenge was to try to combine the issue of materials and the idea of learning, together with experimentation and research. In a way that takes this material seriously, in terms of both its properties and potential, and also helps students realise that they're not working in a vacuum: that this is knowledge that other people have acquired, in particular Corticeira Amorim, and has a firm cultural base. And not just assume that they are taking a material and making things. It's actually about looking at things that have been done and understanding how we can build on that knowledge.

**Do you usually do programmes like this at Parsons, with other materials?**

We do, but not so explicitly, focusing on a single material. In other words, there are few materials that have such a wide range of beneficial social and environmental impacts, as cork. We have projects and students who effectively work with wood and have been looking at the possibilities of hemp, another regenerative material. But cork is unique, given its singular properties and ability to have a complete and much more robust circular life cycle, and because we have knowledge and professors who can facilitate this kind of experience and make connections, and inform students in a way that they are able to develop them. My own interest in cork derives from looking at regenerative materials.

**Do we need a change in mentalities?**

After working for more than 20 years at Parsons, I was appointed as Dean 18 months ago. My core objective in this new position has been to foster a clear focus on addressing the issue of materials in design practice, to operate a shift from the dominant perspective that we still rely on: an industrialised process where we think of design as a form and then apply a material

to it. This is the modernist understanding of materials, where materials are actually by-products of form. We need to foster materials-driven innovation.

**As a professor do you have hope in the new generations?**

We need a systemic change. When we talk about climate change, we tend to fall essentially into the 'doomsday' discourse. If you're a student, you're going to say "I didn't create this problem. Why's it my problem?". The question is: what are the actions that we can take now? What are the actions that we can plan to do 15 or 20 years from now? These are very different things. What are the actions that can be taken now, within each of our disciplines and spheres? The key question for students is to give them the framework and the materials, in particular materials such as cork, that make them think: why are we doing this with plastic, when we could be using cork? Why are we designing this in a way that does not take into account the materials? It's up to us, as a faculty, to change the way that we are talking about design - to move it from identifying problems to a perspective where we are actually creating educational conditions, to allow change to happen. This has to happen now - not in 10 or 15 years time. That's why it's inspiring to have 10 to 12 students involved with cork. Because they can become ambassadors to talk about it to their colleagues. What are its possibilities and limitations? What are the complementary materials? We want materials that are regenerative and transformative. Not those that are extractive and reductive. So this is really exciting.



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# At Amorim, innovation is our strength



An ancient material, with an eye towards the future. This is the winning combination that makes Corticeira Amorim, with its 150+ year history, the leader of the cork industry, as it constantly discovers new ways to add value to this unique raw material. Transversal across all business units, Research & Development + innovation (R&D+i) is one of the group's main strategies, given that the innovative spirit is a core part of its DNA. Since it launched the first specialised laboratory for quality, production and process control (Labcork, created in 1983), the company's R&D+i commitment has grown consistently and currently involves an average annual investment of over €8 million.

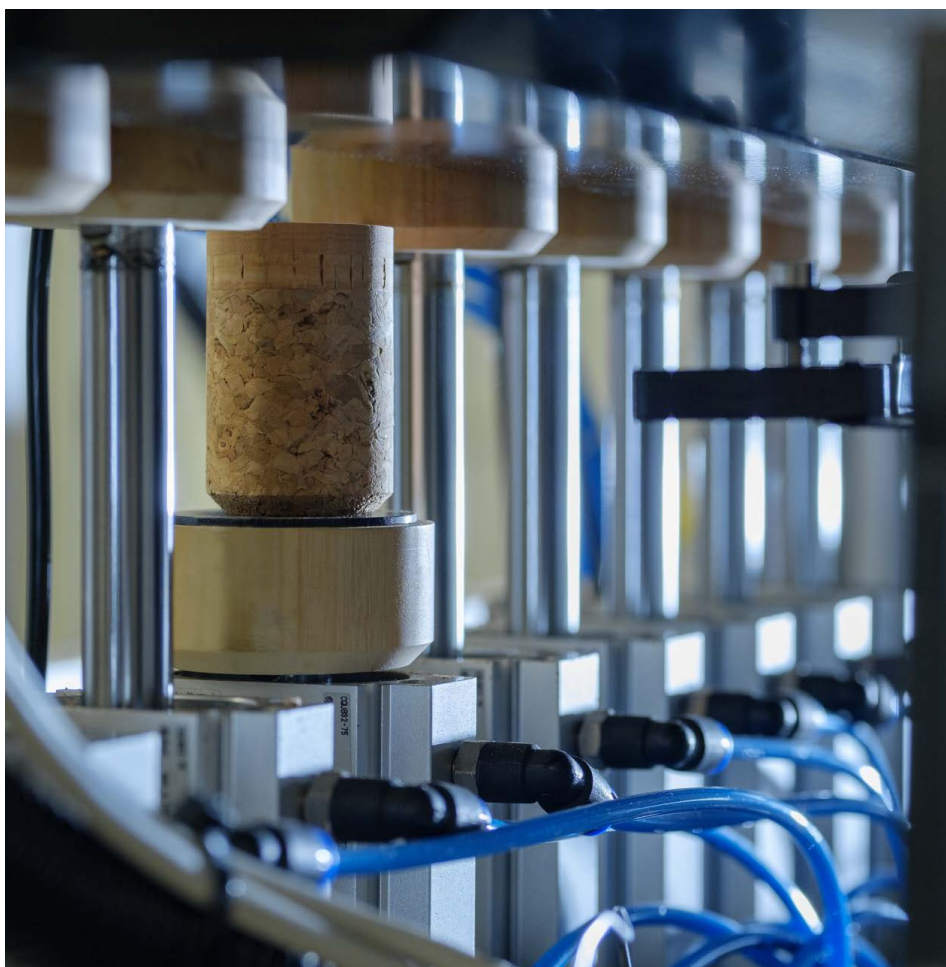
Cork is an out-of-the-ordinary material that combines a set of properties that no artificial material has been able to replicate. It is in increasing demand in sectors such as sustainable construction, aeronautics and aerospace industries, mobility, design, architecture and the arts, landscaping and sports. For this reason, investing in R&D enables further development of these sectors and, due to cork's unique characteristics, also helps us confront the future challenges facing our planet. There is no need to reinvent the wheel (or, in this case, the cork stopper). We just need to find innovative ways to apply it.

## Amorim Cork: Improving Perfection

Miguel Cabral, Amorim Cork's director of Research and Development, is adamant: over recent years, while the world seemed to be closing in and slowing down, "very significant progress has been achieved for cork stoppers in terms of combatting TCA". Winning the war against the Trichloroanisole compound - the arch-enemy of cork stoppers - continues to be a key focus of Amorim Cork's R&D+i. Not only by developing completely new technologies, but also by perfecting and optimising existing technologies, to increase efficiency, reliability and productivity. The 2021 launch of Xpür - a supercritical fluid technology, developed for technical stoppers, enables "any granulate with a certain concentration of TCA, whatever it may be, to be treated and returned to non-detectable values". By ensuring that all cork granules deliver non-detectable TCA performance, the technology guarantees the quality of all of Amorim's technical stoppers. There are currently three reactors installed in Amorim Cork's factories, and six more will be in operation by the end of the year. "Extraordinary" progress has also been achieved for natural cork stoppers. By means of a thermal desorption process, known as Naturity, launched in 2021, "natural cork stoppers are treated prior to NDtech analysis, which means that NDtech has a much higher productivity because the rejection rate is much lower",

explains Miguel Cabral. All natural cork stoppers produced at Amorim Cork undergo the Naturity cleaning process, prior to eventual individual stopper-by-stopper analysis, using the unrivalled NDtech technology. And if one thing epitomises innovation, it is that it is in constant evolution. This is precisely what occurs with a technology such as NDtech, that Amorim Cork launched in 2014, but which continues in "permanent development". The installed equipment currently achieves "extraordinary productivity" and "excellent results", but there is always room for further improvement. For example, through development of a new algorithm, that is more effective in detecting TCA, and makes it possible to reduce the number of "false positives". These are artificial intelligence and deep learning systems applied to the world's most prestigious stopper. But we don't rest on our laurels. We are continuing to use science carefully to study the complex interaction between cork and wine. This is another area that has merited growing attention from Amorim Cork. Over recent years a number of scientific studies have been published, based on

research that has shed new light on this subject, for both still and sparkling wines. Based on our research findings, it is possible to segment the product portfolio and offer solutions that are increasingly adapted to each wine. Because the closure may not make the wine, but it will certainly play an "oenological role" in its evolution. This is confirmed by science. Finding the right stopper for each wine!



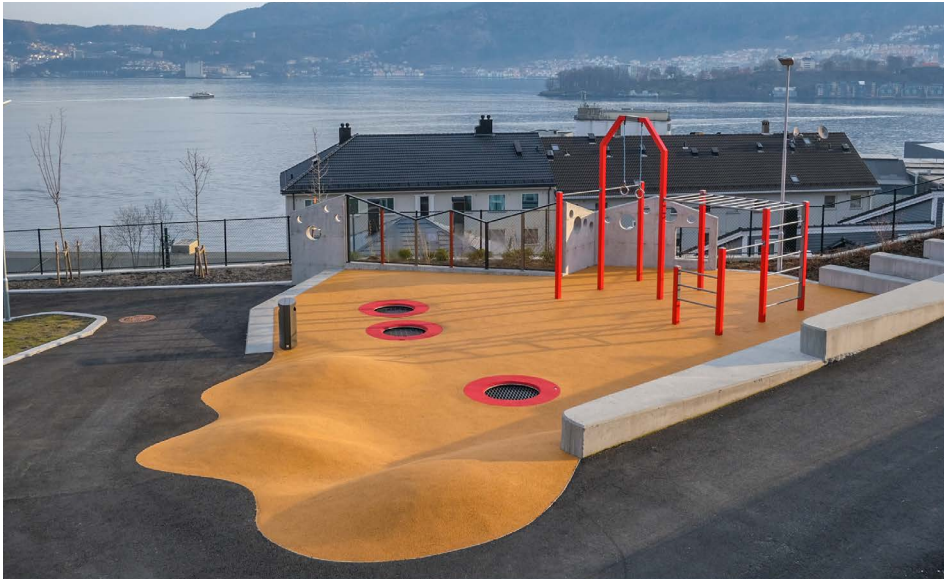


## Amorim Cork Flooring: Safer and Greener Design

In 2020, when Amorim's most recent R&D+i report was drawn up, Amorim Cork Flooring had just launched Cork Signature, a fully customisable programme of flooring solutions that enables 17,000 different combinations of colours, shapes, finishes and even installation methods. Roberto Teixeira, the unit's R&D director continues to defend customisation as a business strategy, but believes that the added value of the company, and of cork, fundamentally depends on differentiation. "There has to be a direct association between [cork] and sustainability and also with certain characteristics, properties and solutions that are differentiating factors in the market. We are talking about a premium product, which therefore has to be good in all its components, not only in terms of sustainability and circularity, but also for its functional and aesthetic components."

He is therefore committed to a true return to its roots, to the material and to Nature, with ever greater appreciation of cork and an increasing focus on sustainability. This vision includes projects that were already under development, such as Dekwall, a collection of wall coverings with cork visuals, which is now being developed to provide greater resistance of this material to any kind of wear and tear, in domestic or commercial uses. Transversal to these goals is the commitment to increasingly invest in products without plastics of fossil (or oil) origin, to continue investing in circular economy practises and, by 2024, eliminate the use of compounds such as PVC. A 100% green product will also be launched by 2024, that combines cork with renewable compounds, such as biopolymers made from plant waste. For Roberto Teixeira there is an evident need to invest in innovation in order to meet these objectives. "The world is in constant movement, it is always changing and we have to be at the forefront of innovation to be pioneers in the market."

A 100% green product will also be launched by 2024, that combines cork with renewable compounds, such as biopolymers made from plant waste.



## Amorim Cork Composites: From the Toy Chest to the Stars

Whereas in 2020 Corkeen - the revolutionary solution of impact-absorbing surfaces for playgrounds, leisure and recreational areas - stood out as one of Amorim Cork Composites' principal commitments, today it is difficult to choose just one project or even one segment in which ACC has been making its biggest investment. With applications ranging from mobility to energy, sustainable toys or the aerospace industry, there is only one constant factor: the ongoing ambition to add value to cork. Eduardo Soares, Director of Innovation explains that in order to achieve this goal "innovation is not only fundamental, it is an integral part of our strategy".

In the mobility area, cork responds to the increasingly urgent need to reduce the industry's carbon footprint, and has naturally emerged as the preferred sustainable material, due to its negative carbon footprint. It also provides an answer to "one of the safety issues that most concerns users and developers of all electrical technology", i.e. fire resistance, by providing thermal insulation solutions for electric batteries. This characteristic also makes it stand out in the aerospace industry as the ideal material for the coating of satellites. In the energy sectors one of the key developments has been the use of a pioneering solution that

combines cork with recycled polymers in the floating photovoltaic power plant in Alqueva (and in future new plants). The solution has been developed by the i.cork factory - Amorim Cork Composites' pilot factory and innovation hub - whose creation represents an important milestone in the company's R&D+i history. Creation of the new ACC Design Studio department promises to be a new innovation and creativity hub that will strengthen the company's commitment to product design.

After the success of the first collection, which sold 100,000 units in its first year, a new collection of three sets of building blocks has already been announced and will arrive in shops next Christmas. The cornerstones of all these projects are both innovation and sustainability - Corticeira Amorim's main pillar. According to Eduardo Soares, Amorim Cork Composites is "what we call an ambidextrous company. Our right foot is what sustains the company in terms of turnover, i.e. through current applications in areas such as construction, sealing and flooring... The left foot is the part that is oriented towards innovation. And with innovation comes research and development as a necessity."

## Amorim Cork Insulation: Future-proof cities

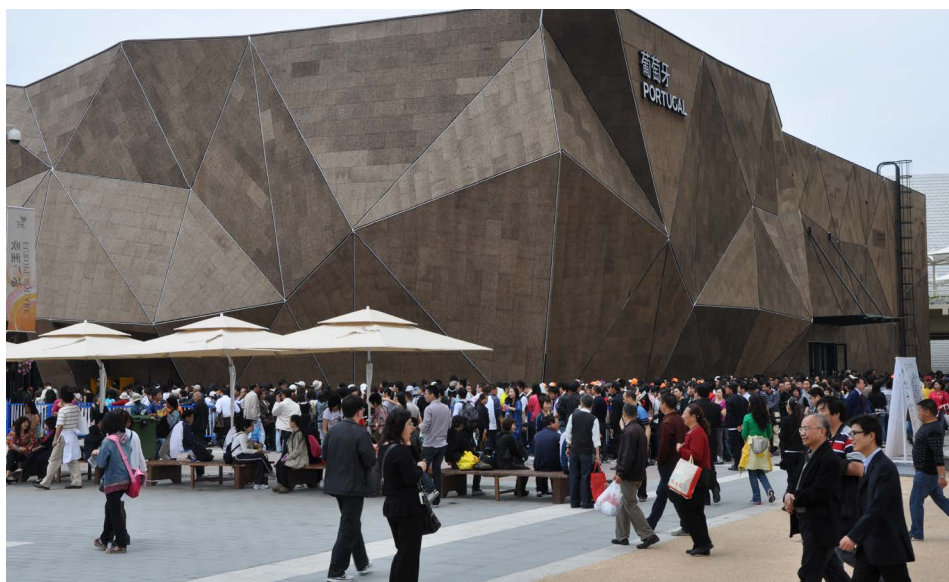
For Amorim Cork Insulation, explains the company's CEO, Carlos Manuel, innovation does not mean reinventing the product, but rather "innovating throughout its applications. We have a 100% natural material that responds to all sustainability considerations". The focus is therefore not on "continuous improvements but on continuous advancements" of this material based on cork's out-of-the-ordinary characteristics. A truly dynamic process, Research & Development + innovation within this unit seeks to offer solutions to the many challenges posed by architects, engineers and landscape architects, while simultaneously responding to the real challenges of people's daily lives and the future of the planet. A prime example is the MDFachada solution, that has revolutionised the sector, in which cork is clearly visible on the outside of buildings. The solution has been used to create decorative designs for a wide range of aesthetic purposes. Along the same lines, the use of by-products from the production process in new solutions for natural turf, initially designed for use in football stadiums, is now also being used in landscaped roofs of buildings or in vertical gardens on building façades, making it possible to reduce water consumption in irrigation, maintain a specific humidity level and minimise thermal variations. But innovation at Amorim Cork Insulation goes far beyond the fields of architecture and interior design. It also contributes to protecting people and the planet. For example, the Corksorb product, developed to mitigate hydrocarbon spillages in the oceans, caused by large oil tankers, is currently being tested in order to respond to yet another important environmental issue: water treatment. "To respond to the risk of fire but also to climate change, there is also the wall vaporisation system, which consists of applying cork to exterior walls with a technological system that administers water on very hot days, or even in the event of fire. An ongoing commitment to the circular economy is also part of this environmental concern. "We have recently strengthened our activity in terms of recycling in order to fully integrate ourselves within the circular economy.

Amorim Florestal is planting for the future, enabling it to produce and supply new plantations with high-quality cork oak trees, with a differentiated guarantee of growth *and survival*, while also guaranteeing more and better cork.

## Amorim Florestal: Cork oak forest 2.0

At Amorim Florestal, R&D+i is already so extensively developed that in recent years it has been divided into different branches, in order to provide a more specialised response to each requirement. On the one hand, forestry research, which is divided into three distinct sub-areas, and industrial innovation, that is more focused on processes and products. Within the field of forestry research, José Pedro Fernandes, director of R&D+i in the area of Fundamental Forestry Research, explains the different “lines of attack”: firstly “a forestry support office that aims to respond to and provide support for the most diverse issues related to forestry.” Secondly, “a strand of Applied Forestry Research, i.e. everything that

can be achieved in the field, in terms of new plantations or plantation models, installation support systems, controlled irrigation systems, fertilisation systems, new cork oak forest management models or farming models”. And finally, Fundamental Forestry Research, which is his direct field of work. “All three are part of the Forestry Intervention Project (FIP), launched in 2013, which is based on a fundamental pillar of innovation in this unit: sowing the seeds of tomorrow today. José Pedro Fernandes explains that this project arises from the realisation of a problem in guaranteeing viability in new cork oak plantations. “Today we have cork oak plantations with mortality rates above 50% and without any guarantee of growth or cork production and, therefore, of economic viability. For this reason, we realised that we had to implement a cork oak selection and improvement programme that will enable us to select specimens found in our cork oak forests that have premium characteristics which distinguish them from others and will help them to propagate. “These characteristics include attributes such as faster growth, better vegetal formation or greater production of cork, and also greater resistance to the infestations and diseases that exist in the cork oak forest and, increasingly importantly, offer greater resilience to climate change. Therefore, through the phenotypic selection of trees within the cork oak forest that have these characteristics, we have developed a programme for the propagation of these trees in conjunction with a biotechnology company and a university research body (among several entities with which protocols have been established). Alongside this programme and to compensate for the fact that the cork oak is a slow-growing tree, we are also developing genetic and molecular analysis to identify and select specific molecular markers associated to each of these characteristics, making an early selection and validation of the best specimens. In this way, Amorim Florestal is planting for the future, enabling it to produce and supply new plantations with high-quality cork oak trees, with a differentiated guarantee of growth and survival, while also guaranteeing more and better cork.



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# “A commitment to cork oak forests is always a commitment to the future”.

Owner of three estates in Alcácer do Sal which currently pertain to the Sociedade Agrícola dos Pinheirinhos, António Luís Posser de Andrade has marked a turning point in the history of what was once Portugal’s biggest estate - the Herdade de Palma, in operation since the late 1800s. In a conversation with Amorim News, the forestry producer talked to us about the fundamental role that cork played in this restructuring process, the challenges ahead and his wishes for the sector’s future.

Extending over nearly 3,000 hectares, the estates that pertain to the Sociedade Agrícola dos Pinheirinhos once formed part of the centuries-old Herdade de Palma, that was acquired from the 8th Count of Sabugal (D. Luís Assis de Mascarenhas) in 1896. In the wake of the agrarian reform, the estate was divided into various companies. António Luís Posser de Andrade’s father owned three of these companies, which have now been merged into one. When he began managing the estate in 1998, António Luís Posser de Andrade immediately defined his key priority: to restore and safeguard the cork oak forest, that since 1974 had been primarily used for livestock breeding, with a significant impact on the ecosystem. From the moment that the estate was returned to the family in 1992, after nationalisation of the land following the 1974 revolution, he dedicated himself to planting pine and cork oak trees, embracing a bold vision of the future, which has been the biggest factor of his success.

“When I began working in the Herdade, the forest was my principal concern. I negotiated with the tenants and persuaded them to move out of the forest and instead focus on rice cultivation. In this way, I was able to give back land to the cork oak forest.” Deep down, he was following the advice of his father who, notwithstanding the multiple activities pursued in the estate (in addition to cattle and rice, also corn and wheat), had always instilled in him a concern for the cork and the cork oak forest. His father used to say: “By the end of the year, if it weren’t for cork, we wouldn’t make enough money”. António heeded this lesson.

#### **The joys and challenges of cork**

In addition to helping him recall his father’s business advice, cork also brings back fond memories of the “long holidays” of his childhood, often spent in the countryside, that gave him numerous opportunities to accompany the cork harvest. “The cork

[harvesting] season has always been a joyful time for the workers,” says António Luís Posser de Andrade. “The people singing, the chef preparing meals, many people... It was an exuberant atmosphere.” Back then, he never imagined that he would dedicate himself to studying the profitability of this activity or to the production and conservation of this material, for which he has so many happy memories. Even as a child he was fascinated by the cork oak forest: “its beauty, its biodiversity, everything that the forest gives us - the wild animals, the silence, the animals in their habitat... it’s impossible to convey it in words”. Today, he knows that the challenges are as great as the joyful moments. His main concerns are the ageing of the cork oak forest and the short-term vision of a large part of the forestry producers, who opt for livestock breeding to earn quicker profits. “The big problem with the Alentejo’s cork oak forests is that if you have cattle, you can’t renew them.



The cork oak forests become old, which is reflected in the quality of the cork.” He nonetheless maintains his focus. He is committed to the annual rotation of land in order to harvest cork and prefers the long-term vision that he learned from his ancestors, which he hopes to hand down to future generations. ““God willing, my children will preserve [the cork oak forest] as well as I have preserved it”

#### **Sow today, reap tomorrow**

In order to maintain this vision of the future, he argues that it is vital to have support for the sector and collaboration with institutions that invest in innovation and research, such as Corticeira Amorim. He highlights the Greening initiative, which encourages agricultural practices that are beneficial to the climate and the environment, and the Terra Prima Project, which he regrets is no longer in force, which compensated producers with fertilizer and seeds due to their key role in the fight against climate change.

In relation to Corticeira Amorim’s involvement, he describes the Forestry Intervention Project as “a very large and commendable investment by Dr António Amorim, who is extremely forward looking. It takes dedication to achieve what Amorim has done. I take off my hat to him”. Without this support, he believes that it would be very difficult to continue to make a commitment to a sector where income generation is slow and which is threatened by numerous constraints. “Investing in the cork oak forest is always a commitment to the future because it only delivers results after at least nine years. But people are often primarily concerned with making a quick profit.” One possible solution, and one of the main pillars of Amorim’s Forestry Intervention Project, is to continuously invest in innovation and research, in order to guarantee higher productivity from cork oak forests, through selection of particularly resilient specimens, and circumvent challenges

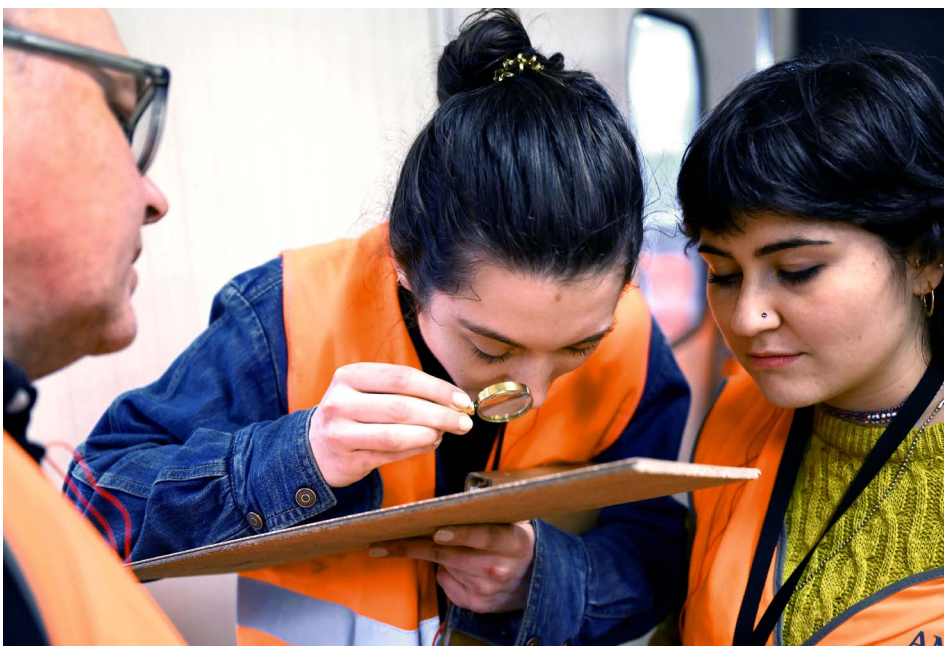
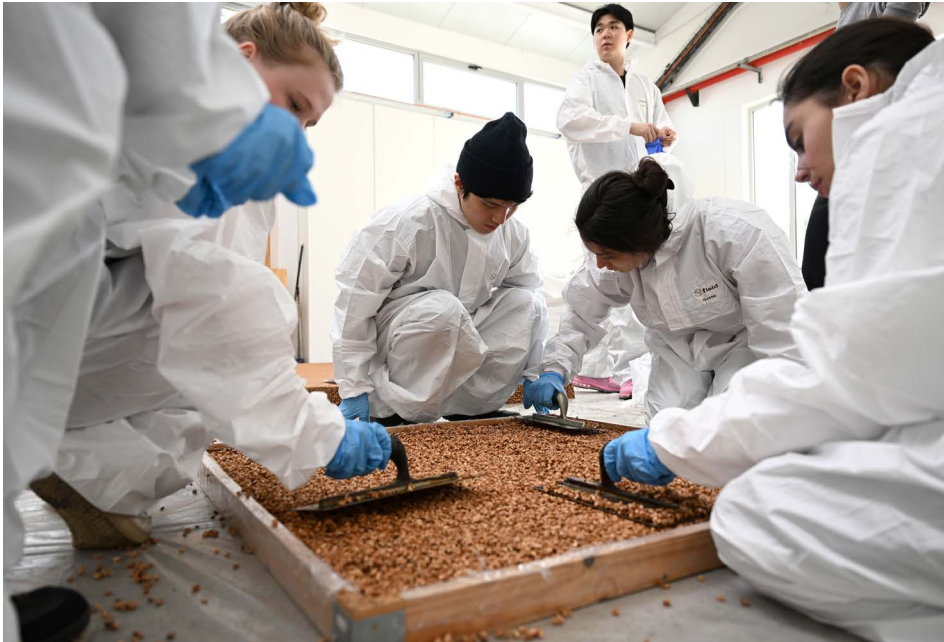
such as climate change, through innovations such as irrigation systems. He is also a pioneer in the mechanisation of cork harvesting, having invested from the outset in the first machines to enter the market and testing Amorim’s prototypes whenever possible. What’s his biggest wish for the future? “That the Amorim Group continues to research and collaborate with us, forestry producers, which has been fundamental for the valorisation of cork.”

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# Corticeira Amorim and Parsons School of Design «design new futures»

Corticeira Amorim and Parsons School of Design - one of the world's most prestigious design schools - have signed a cooperation agreement that will enable students from New York University to learn more about the benefits, qualities and characteristics of cork as a privileged material for the design and development of their creative proposals, in the fields of industrial design, architecture, arts and interior design and related activities. The main focus of the agreement is research, testing, investigation, experimentation and hands-on making, aimed at discovering new functionalities and applications for cork. It is hoped that ground-breaking solutions and products will emerge that can respond to the key challenges facing our societies through design and sustainability. In short, the mission is “to design new futures”.





The first action to be implemented in the framework of this agreement is the first edition of the course, “The Thick Skin: Cork as Material for Design New Futures”, coordinated by Daniel Michalik, designer and Assistant Professor of Product and Industrial Design. This one-semester course incorporates a 45-hour theoretical and practical component and an immersive learning week in Portugal (between 13 and 18 March) at the “i.cork factory”, Amorim Cork Composites’ (ACC) innovation factory. The week will provide a unique opportunity for the students of Parsons School of Design to interact with new processes, formulae and technologies for working with cork. Support is provided through involvement and mentoring from ACC’s specialised technicians, the provision of state-of-the-art facilities and technologies, and the supply of raw material for experimentation. The initiative will also involve the ACC Design Studio, that is geared towards sharing knowledge, forming reasoned opinions and educating people about the future of cork. Throughout the course, “The Thick Skin: Cork as Material for Design New Futures”, students will learn, assimilate and engage with different cork processing methods, expand their understanding of how natural raw materials are currently extracted, propose circular practices to balance the use of materials with natural growth cycles, develop design processes that integrate well-established wisdom about the regeneration of the raw material and produce prototypes at different scales, from the perspective of resources, constraints and imitation of specific materials. The course also features a broad range of synchronous design activities - such as participation in lectures, co-design workshops, and others. During their stay in Portugal, students will also be able to learn about the vertical integration process of cork processing implemented at Corticeira Amorim, by visiting the different business units, with a visit to the Cork Oak Forest (Raw Materials business unit), Amorim Cork (Cork Stoppers business unit); Amorim Cork Flooring (Floor and Wall Coverings business unit) and Amorim Cork Insulation (Insulation Cork business unit). This initiative will provide them with an integrated vision of the cork industry, the ground-breaking advances that have been achieved in the sector and the sector’s various products and by-products - integrated into a circular economy model, where all cork materials are valued.



The collaborative project “The Thick Skin: Cork as Material for Design New Futures” is perfectly aligned with Corticeira Amorim’s strategy to “disseminate cork’s unparalleled properties around the world, as a response to many of the challenges that are currently faced by the planet, humanity and contemporary societies”, explains António Rios Amorim, Corticeira Amorim’s Chairman and CEO, who adds: “What better way to positively inspire citizens than by consolidating this work with the architects, designers and curators of tomorrow? The people who will design smart cities, green buildings, design products, etc. When these professionals are trained at one of the world’s leading design schools, such as the Parsons School of Design, then you have found the right basis to foster this

necessary paradigm shift: a new model, in which cork will undoubtedly play a central role”. The Dean of the School of Constructed Environments at Parsons School of Design, David J. Lewis, says “I am thrilled to be working with Corticeira Amorim on this innovative course which challenges our students to rethink what they know about cork. It will inspire them to create unique and will further their education in regeneration and circularity. Parsons is committed to educating and training designers who create positive social impact through the use of regenerative materials, and we are looking forward to seeing what this group of students will create with the world’s leading cork processing group.” Works produced during the course “The Thick Skin: Cork as Material for

Design New Futures” are expected to be exhibited at the NYCX Design Festival 2023. Students are invited to showcase their work at an exhibition to be held at Canal Street Market between May 18 and 25, 2023.

# Our brains prefer cork-sealed wines

Are our brains hard-wired to prefer cork stoppers? The question was posed in the most recent neuromarketing study developed by the “Behaviour and Brain Lab” of Milan, of the Neuromarketing Research Centre of the University of IULUM, and promoted by APCOR - Portuguese Cork Association and Assoimballaggi - Federlegno / Arredo. The study revealed surprising data such as the fact that cork-sealed wines generate an emotional activation in consumers that is 238% higher than that of artificial closures. This reaction is based on our senses of smell, taste, sight and even hearing: the sound of

opening a cork-sealed bottle generates a 39% stronger rational response than the opening of a bottle sealed with a screwcap. The olfactory experience of wine, in turn, from a cork-sealed bottle generates a 34% stronger rational response than opening a bottle sealed with a screwcap. Tasting wine from a bottle with a cork stopper generates a 80% stronger rational response than opening a bottle sealed with a screwcap. Finally, analysing the label of a wine with a cork stopper takes approximately 10% more time than the label of a bottle sealed with either a screwcap or a synthetic stopper.

The participants in the study also declared that they would be willing to pay a higher price for the wine they perceived to be sealed with a cork stopper: €7.78 per bottle - i.e. €1.21 more than for a bottle sealed with a screwcap (+18.5%). These results confirm the conclusions of similar studies carried out in other countries, such as the “Grand Cork Experiment - Neuroe-nological Tasting”, held in 2017 in Soho, London, designed by Oxford University’s Crossmodal Research Laboratory, in which 140 participants were tested to understand how the sounds, aromas and sensations associated with opening a bottle of wine can activate our brains.

Are our brains hard-wired to prefer cork stoppers?

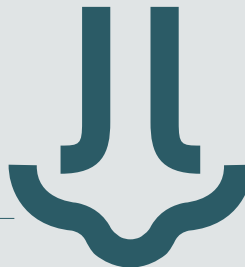
Hearing  
**39%**



Sight  
**10%**



Smell  
**34%**



Taste  
**80%**



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# The future belongs to them



Manuel Miranda, Marta Rato, André Dias and Ariela Luque were the four winners of the Corticeira Amorim 2022 Revelation Award, which distinguishes young professionals with a particularly strong performance throughout the year. Even though they come from different backgrounds and work in four different business units, they all seem to share something in common: the pride of working with a raw material as unique as cork and the pleasure of “supporting the cause” in this joint mission to take cork to new heights. The future belongs to them.

## **Manuel Miranda**

Manuel Miranda (35) displays exemplary leadership skills and resilience. Born in Mirandela (Trás-os-Montes), he joined Amorim Cork Composites in 2019, inspired by the idea of working for “a Portuguese group, from the North, with a long history (spanning over 150 years), and working with a raw material that is typically Portuguese and increasingly relevant in terms of sustainability”. With a Master’s degree in Civil Engineering and Business Management, from the University of Porto, a professional background in sales and what he defines as his “constant ambition to grow”, Manuel Miranda has consistently demonstrated his desire to acquire in-depth knowledge about the value chain, the business strategy of the sector’s main players and Amorim’s value proposal. He has quickly become one of the people with the greatest knowledge of this business segment.

In just four years, he rose to the position of Sector Sales Leader and received the 2022 Revelation Award. Among other attributes he is praised for his organisational capacity, high customer focus and dedication that has enabled him to make a key contribution to the geographical expansion of the flooring sector - from Europe to the world, and also created bridges between various flooring producers and the unit’s different departments. Manuel Miranda describes his immense pleasure in working for a company with a culture and values with which he identifies, including a “focus on objectives, resilience, always rising to the challenge, ..., all of which are very important values in order to defend the company’s positioning and the application of cork in the market.” He was pleasantly surprised to learn that he had received the award, since he believes that this is the “fruit of teamwork and I therefore share this distinction with all the colleagues with whom I work on a daily basis”.



### **Marta Rato**

As an environmental engineer who graduated from the Universidade Nova, Lisbon, Marta Rato (30) believes that working with cork, a sustainable material with a negative carbon footprint, is contributing to something much bigger than herself. In her four years at the company, Marta Rato combines her position as an Environmental Technician with that of Senior Occupational Health and Safety Technician at Amorim Florestal, in the Coruche unit, where she is also responsible for the company's radiological protection. She has distinguished herself in the field of occupational safety by implementing rigorous safety standards that are still in force today. In terms of sustainability she was an integral and essential part of the team which won the Amorim 2022 Sustainability award. Focused on conservation of water resources and efficient use of water, the winning project created a filtration system that allows industrial effluent to be reused, which facilitates a significant reduction in water consumption and discharges into the municipal drainage system. Marta is proud to receive this award and says she is even more proud "to work for a company that invests so much in sustainability and where we feel that our contribution is appreciated". Indeed, it was because of the shared vision of building a more sustainable ecosystem that she accepted the challenge to join Corticeira Amorim in 2019. She believes that it is this vision which will guide her work in the future. "We never stagnate in this company," she says. She is still in the early stages of her career. Just like cork, which has been subjected to countless innovations, without ever compromising its nature, Marta Rato is ready to face any challenge that may arise, always keeping the same final objective in mind: to build a greener and fairer world for all. "I am always learning, I never stand still.»



### **André Dias**

Born in Nogueira do Cravo, André Dias (28) joined Amorim Champcork in 2017, during a curricular internship as part of his master's degree in Economics at the University of Aveiro. Aware that "Innovation" and "Sustainability" are two key pillars of Amorim's business activity, he wrote his master's thesis on the topic of "Sustainability-Oriented Innovation", and sensed alignment between his personal interests and those of the company. "I increasingly identify with the company's culture and also given my passion for wine, I knew we were a great match." As a trainee in a manufacturing environment, he also developed an understanding of operational efficiency. With this overall background and after passing through various business segments and cork stopper production units, he arrived in the area of management control. Today, he is an industrial Controller in the still wines segment. He confides that he was surprised to learn about his nomination for the "Revelation Award". "I don't consider myself as being special or different for this reason, and I know that many others merit exactly the same distinction". However, he sees this recognition as "confirmation that the organisation is aware of the work undertaken by its talented staff, which it values". Looking ahead, his main professional objective is "to continue to make value grow around me". He is therefore constantly attentive and open to any opportunity that will allow him to grow and continue along this path. Asked about the privilege of working for the industry leader, with a material as unique as cork, the two main words that come to mind are "pride" and "responsibility".



### **Ariela Luque**

"If it were possible to define Ariela Luque in a few words, it would be "someone who makes things happen". It was precisely for this reason that she won Amorim Cork Flooring's "Make it Happen" prize. Ariela Luque moved from her native Brazil to Porto almost five years ago. Of all the nominees she is the most recent entrant to the Amorim Group, having joined in February 2022. With a degree in Business Administration and Management, specialising in Business Intelligence, she has extensive professional experience in the area, which she currently applies in her position as Manager of Business Analytics and CRM. Responsible for aligning the customer relationship management system with the company's business strategy, she says she chose Amorim because it is "a leading Portuguese company that works with countries all over the world, and with a natural and sustainable material such as cork". She is both flattered and surprised to receive this distinction, but above all feels that it confirms "that I'm on the right track and still have a long way to go". Among the challenges that she aims to embrace in the future, she highlights her will to provide an increasingly comprehensive response to the sales team's requirements, empower staff with increasingly intuitive and accessible knowledge and thereby generate more sales. To all those who, like her, strive to build a career path of excellence she emphasises the importance of "understanding the needs of the business to which they are dedicated, always willing to learn new things and trying to find the best solution for all parties involved". She thinks it's equally important to never be complacent. "I'm always on the move, always in continuous improvement, always asking for feedback, always willing to listen and ask for suggestions for improvements to achieve the highest possible level of optimisation".

# The flooring polyglot



The 2022 Career Award was presented to Manuel Fontes, Amorim Cork Flooring's sales director, for over 50 years of work, dedication and commitment to Corticeira Amorim. He first learned about the company through his mother and joined Amorim Cork Composites in 1972 as a postal clerk, receiving, preparing and distributing mail to the different departments. "Always a fast mover, but very cooperative," said those who have known him since then. Working gallantly with a high level of competence, commitment and loyalty, he joined Amorim Cork Flooring's sales department after only four years at the company, and has "always demonstrated great knowledge of the service, product and the business". This attitude soon made him one of Corticeira Amorim's youngest sales managers, with responsibilities in the markets of Spain, France, Italy and Switzerland.

He became a polyglot thanks to the daring of Mr Américo Amorim who "sent me first to France, then to England and then to Spain, even though I didn't previously speak a single word of any of their languages". He added: "These were tough times, but involved great learning, growth and evolution", today "I only have words of gratitude...it was certainly the best university course I could have had in my entire life"! Manuel Fontes became a true defender of cork, and cultivates this intense passion to this day, helping Corticeira Amorim to disseminate the many attributes of our unique raw material throughout the world. From 2013 onwards he led Amorim Cork Flooring's expansion into Portuguese-speaking African countries (PALOP), and later extended its field of operations into the entire African continent, after he spent a few years in Spain as head of the company Intercork, based in Palafrugell, Girona. He is extremely proud to

receive the Career Award, "it represents recognition for my work". One of his fondest memories is "my first salary, which at the time was 200 Portuguese escudos". Embracing his love for football, and since a winning team is also based on a healthy coexistence between colleagues, he joined the company's football team. He has cultivated ardent support for the Reds, as a Benfica fan, but without ever losing his composure when the club's biggest rivals win on the pitch.

# Our People



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# AMORIM

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# Sustainable by nature