about cork stoppers
From tree to table, here’s how the spirit of the world gets its cork—and how one of nature’s most extraordinary materials is harvested and transformed.

**about cork stoppers**

**cork**

Cork, *corka* in Portuguese, is the outer bark of the cork oak tree—Quercus suber— which has grown for millennia throughout the Mediterranean Region.

The life span of these exceptional trees is between 200 and 300 years. It takes each cork oak 30 years before it can be harvested for the first time. After the first harvesting, cork oaks are stripped in nine year cycles, always between May and August, when the tree is at its most active phase of growth and it is easier to strip. In a context of increasing concern for the environment, it is important to stress that cork is the only tree whose bark can regenerate after each harvest, leaving the tree unharmed.

**cork stoppers**

70% of wine producers choose cork to seal their product

Cork’s natural characteristics—lightness, compressibility, resilience, resistance to liquids and gases, and its capacity to isolate against moisture—make it an incomparable closure, thus contributing in a unique way to the development of wine. The secret is a complex structure, that manmade technology has been unable to replicate. Each natural cork stopper is a sophisticated valve, made up of around 800 million tiny cells of suberin with an air-like gas.

**research & development = innovation**

Amorim’s quality standards include state-of-the-art laboratories, sampling according to protocols used by US Armed Forces, over 10,000 tests per month and one golden rule: analyse the cork stoppers at each stage of production.

There are just some of the quality rules of Amorim. The company is wholly focused on guaranteeing reliable products, while continuously creating new ones, meeting the needs of winemakers.

**market recognition**

Consumers prefer cork

Several studies show that the majority of wine consumers prefer cork stoppers, associating it with quality and premium value.

- **United States:** 56% of wine consumers prefer natural cork stoppers (Tragon Corporations).
- **France:** 80% of wine lovers prefer the cork stopper and 88% state that cork stoppers preserve the full aroma (Spac.)
- **Italy:** 95% consider the cork stopper the best closure to ensure the quality of wine (Boccalarelli)
- **China:** 85% of consumers believe that wines sealed with cork are a better quality (CTR/Market Research)
- **Spain:** 90% of consumers prefer the cork stopper for wine and cava bottles (Cork Project)
- **Brazil:** 86% of Brazilians say that noble wines must have cork closures (Conecta/Ibope)

**Premium value**

According to information produced by Nielsen’s Track Scan Data, US consumers are willing to pay US $4.90 more for a bottle sealed with cork. Annual sales for cork finished wines recorded a 4% year-on-year increase in case volume, compared with a 1% drop for wines sealed with artificial closures.

Amorim is the world’s largest producer and supplier of cork, exporting 96% of its production to more than 100 countries. The company set up a small cork stopper factory, established in 1870 in the heart of the Port wine region. The proximity of forces, over 16,000 tests per month and forces, over 16,000 tests per month and forces, over 16,000 tests per month and every single lot; strategies, anticipating client needs and swiftly meeting their requests. Four generations later, this continues to be the strategy which consolidates the company’s leadership in the sector. Amorim is a forerunner in strict quality control at every production stage, including use of a high precision gas chromatography analysis system.

Amorim is committed to the sustainability of natural cork stoppers. It provides innovations and solutions, and is a key player in conservation and research efforts. Every day Amorim makes major contributions to the maintenance of cork oak forests.

Cork is manually harvested from the trunk, a process that doesn’t harm the tree.

Cork is transported to an industrial plant, where strategies for alcohol months, acquiring the ideal moisture content for processing.

The plastic is baked in a closed filter for 30 minutes. This process softens and cleans the cork, while maintaining its integrity and improves its internal structure.

The cork stoppers are graded and sorted by a computer, using sophisticated customised algorithms.

The final stages include: cleaning process with hydroperoxide solution, polishing and branding.

The finished cork stoppers are placed in a leahter bag and sent to the distributors.

**how is it made?**

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