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20 - 22 May at ExCeL London

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Opinion poll

Does London really need a drinks czar as Boris Johnson has suggested?

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News

20 May 2008



Stand-off ahead of closures debate: LIWF 2008

By: Rebecca Gibb

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Closure producers will go head to head today, debating consistency over the lifetime of a closure and whether taint caused by faulty closures is still a problem for the wine trade.

Debate sponsor Oeneo Blomhage, which stopped producing corks in 2006 to focus on its technical cork, Diam, claims it is the only closure producer offering a guarantee on the life expectancy of its devices.

Ahead of the debate, Dean Banister, Oeneo's sales director, told Harpers: "We put a five-year warranty on our closures which guarantees that it seals the bottle and doesn't allow excess gas transmission. We are now working on a 10-year warranty, which will be ready for release next month."

But Olav Aagaard, director of global research at synthetic closure manufacturer Nomacorc, claimed a warranty was unhelpful. "You cannot say five years for all wines because a white wine has shorter lifespan than a red," he said.

He was backed by Carlos de Jesus, marketing and communication director at cork giant Amorim, who believes the lifespan of natural cork closures couldn't be questioned. "Just look at any Grand Cru from Bordeaux or Burgundy to see what life expectancy means," he said.

"We have decades of track record but don't know anything about the life expectancy of other closures like plastic stoppers. Let's compare when they do," he added.

Banister will claim that taint has been consigned to history. "As far as I'm concerned, there are no reasons to bottle a wine under a closure that is tainted. It should be a thing of the past, because there are so many closures that are taint-free," he said.

But Aagaard admitted he was "not confident" taint was a dead issue. "There will be an answer. If you know the cause of the problem you can get rid of it but that comes at a cost."

All closure producers agree that oxygen is beneficial to the evolution of wine in bottle, but research continues into the optimum level of permeability.

The Closure Debate takes place today (May 20), 3.30pm–4.30pm in the South Gallery, rooms 11 and 12.

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