



NOMACORC®

EBERLE WINERY: A CASE STUDY



Views of the Eberle Winery in Paso Robles, California

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—Ben Mayo, Eberle Winemaker

PROFILE

In 1973, Gary Eberle began his career in the wine industry by heading his family's Estrella River Winery (currently Meridian Vineyards in Paso Robles) and produced 500,000 cases a year at its facility. Eberle's pioneering spirit didn't stop there. In 1980, he co-founded the Paso Robles Appellation and in 1983, Gary opened the doors to his own Eberle Winery with the premiere of Eberle's 1979 Cabernet Sauvignon.

Eberle Winery is focused on creating premium, small production wines. Gary, who studied in UC Davis' enology doctorate program, aims to produce high-quality products at a reasonable price, delivering 25-30% more value to the consumer.

Eberle handcrafts 25,000 cases of wine each year from surrounding Estate vineyards. In addition, 16,000 square feet of underground caves located below the winery create the perfect place to age every bottle of wine Eberle makes.



Owner Gary Eberle

The winery's philosophy: Everyone should be able to afford a really good bottle of wine.



PROBLEM

Eberle Winery was losing approximately 3.5% of its wines to cork taint—875 cases a year—a substantial quantity. The financial impact was significant particularly since Eberle sought to maintain strong relationships with its customers and retailers by replacing wines tainted by cork. In addition, Eberle was concerned about how such a high return rate reflected on its brand and its customers' experience with the wines.

SOLUTION

Eberle winemaker Ben Mayo had been experimenting with microagglomerated and synthetic closures for almost ten years, even prior to his tenure at Eberle Winery. He found that Nomacorc's co-extruded closures significantly outperformed cork-based and injection-molded closures in overall quality and consistency while at the same time looking and feeling like natural cork.



Eberle wines bottled with Nomacorc closures

"Over a five year test period, Nomacorc closures produced the most fresh-fruit smell," said Mayo. "Nomacorc closures allowed our wines to age more slowly and retain freshness."

"One of the most impressive things about Nomacorc is their highly efficient, quality production process and commitment to innovation from the CEO to the factory worker," continued Mayo. "This is absolutely critical when you are putting your product and trust in a partner."

Eberle began using Nomacorc closures in 2002 first in white wines and within the same year transitioned all its wines to Nomacorc closures.

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Most Eberle wines were closed with Nomacorc Classic, now Nomacorc Classic⁺. For reserve wines, Eberle used Nomacorc Premium closures to provide ageability for collectors. "With Nomacorc, we have a product that collectors can lay down with confidence," said Mayo. "We've had no complaints with ageability."

"Nomacorc closures never leak or break, either—they've been a really great product for us," said Mayo.

As Eberle celebrates its 30th anniversary in 2009, the winery consistently is one of the highest award-winning wineries in the United States and has received recognition from *Wine Spectator*, *The Wine Advocate*, *The Connoisseur's Guide* and The San Francisco International Wine Competition, among many others.