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Background information:

Aluminium Closures: Turn 360°

- **Aluminium closures combine a multitude of positive properties for the individual enjoyment of wine**
- **Enormous production growth over the ten last years: the number of aluminium closures used for wine worldwide increased rapidly to 4 billion (2011)**
- **Aluminium closures are ‘more sustainable’ than traditional closures**

November 2012. Wine is a matter of taste: red or white or rosé; still or sparkling – today wine is enjoyed by many. There are many occasions for wine to be enjoyed; in a restaurant, at a party or a family celebration, during a relaxing moment ... one thing is for sure, there is a wine for every occasion and every taste. One aspect that is common to all wines is the special aroma that emerges when the bottle is opened. In order to preserve the aroma in the best possible way, it is crucial to choose an appropriate closure that ensures there is no variance in taste.

Too much oxygen in the bottle is a thing to be avoided because exposure to air can result in the wine eventually “turning”: aluminium closures not only create a highly effective barrier without affecting the product’s taste and smell, but they also have other benefits regarding quality assurance, sustainability and recycling, convenience, technology and costs, as well as design.

Aluminium Closures – A Seal of Quality

Aluminium closures are literally a “seal of quality”. They prevent a sensitive beverage like wine from oxidizing too swiftly, thus prolonging its life in perfect condition. Aluminium closures offer an effective protection without affecting the wine’s taste or smell. All materials used in aluminium closures are perfectly neutral from an organoleptic point of view, helping to preserve the flavours of the wine and prevent contamination.

Aluminium closures guarantee an absence of 2,4,6-trichloroanisole (TCA), the chief cause of cork taint. Corked wine containing TCA has an unpleasant characteristic odour, often making the wine unpalatable. Due to the aluminium closures, which are specially developed for wine bottles, the special wine aroma emerges only when it comes into contact with the air as it is poured into the wine glass or the carafe, and not before it has left the bottle. This guarantees the wine’s steady ageing, eliminating premature oxidation.



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Aluminium Closures' Benefits for the Environment

Waste reduction is one of the crucial issues in the modern process of food production. Reducing waste is a major objective in every area of food and drink production and consumption. For wines, edible oils and many other liquid foods, waste represents not only the loss of some of the product – or sometimes even the complete product – but also the energy, water, fertilisers and other materials used to produce, process and package them. It is estimated that between 2% and 5% of bottled wine is wasted due to corkage or TCA. Thanks to the growth in use of aluminium closures this situation is changing.

Aluminium is a material with impressive sustainability credentials. It is widely available and, through recycling, saves a lot of energy. About 75% of the aluminium ever produced is still in use today. So, collection and recycling of aluminium closures is simply natural. A minimum of 4 out of 10 aluminium closures consumed in Europe are already recycled today – either separately or together with the glass packaging fraction. This figure can be easily improved as long as the volumes of aluminium closures increase and simple and clear collection instructions are communicated widely to consumers.

To understand what is meant by 'more sustainable' it is important to look at the complete picture. In the case of bottled wine, an independent full lifecycle assessment (LCA) has shown that systems using aluminium closures have a better environmental performance and prevent wine spoilage. The aluminium closure provides a more sustainable solution by using fewer resources and less energy through preserving and protecting the product better and by being recyclable.

Aluminium closures have the lowest overall environmental impact when the whole lifecycle of a bottle of wine is considered. This is because they significantly reduce the risk of spoilage. When comparing the two wine closure systems (cork stopper and aluminium closure) the aluminium closure has the lowest overall environmental impact ... and the quality of the wine is better preserved. In the LCA various different recycling scenarios for the aluminium closures were investigated: 100% material recycling, 100% incineration and 100% landfill. They all demonstrate the advantageous characteristics of aluminium closures, even in comparison with a scenario of 100% corks stopper recycling.

Convenient Handling, Ease of Use and Significant User-Friendliness

When it comes to convenience, opening a bottle of wine with an aluminium closure has a clear advantage. It can be opened with a simple twist, which eliminates the familiar risk of having the closure block the bottleneck, fall into the bottle, or disintegrate. They are a guarantee of convenience, reliability and safety every time the bottle is opened and re-



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closed. The aluminium closure's highly effective barrier properties makes it convenient for consumption at any time.

The positive 'clicking' sound heard when first opening a bottle of wine with an aluminium closure is the reassuring guarantee that the wine is in its pristine, original state. It is a quality indicator for the wine's authenticity and good taste.

Aluminium closures offer the advantage of easy opening and secure re-closing, meaning a bottle of wine can be consumed by the glass over an extended period of time: at home, outdoors, or in a restaurant. The closure mechanism offers the consumer an additional aspect of convenience: an opened wine bottle with the special aluminium closure can be stored and transported easily without the risk of spillage.

Over the last twenty years the aluminium closure has contributed to the introduction of wine to a whole new generation of wine lovers, as well as opening up the market to wines from all over the world. It has also enabled winemakers to introduce PET as an alternative to glass, the only closure suitable for both.

Cost-Efficient Solutions and Creative Design Opportunities for Producers and Fillers

Besides aspects concerning quality, convenience, and environment, it is financial issues which play a decisive role for producers, fillers and winegrowers alike when it comes to the choice of the right closure.

Depending on the design and configuration, aluminium closures permit a cost-efficient solution, since their production costs are often clearly below those of traditional closures. Aluminium closures are manufactured all over the world and are part of the local value chain. The worldwide usage of aluminium closures for wine increased rapidly in the past ten years to about 4 billion in 2011. This allows a faster reaction to the customer's needs and they can be transported economically and sustainably to the winemaker, at any time and whatever the location.

Not only is a dependable availability of aluminium closures and outstanding barrier properties of importance, wine producers strive to create a 'personality' and a distinct reputation for their products, with which consumers can identify – whether on a local, regional, national, or international market. So, it is not surprising that in addition to flavour and aroma, the visual impression, the style of the bottle, label and its closure is of such importance. For winegrowers and marketers alike, aluminium closures have the potential to enhance the brand appearance of their products. Intricate design options include glossy or matt finishes, embossing and even digital printing are readily available. There are few technical or practical limits when it comes to giving aluminium closures an individual touch.



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Aluminium closures, of whatever size, offer plenty of space for individual artistic freedom and using printing technologies such as silkscreen, hot foil or even photographic images via digital printing means the look of the closure can be varied enormously and can augment the visual experience and enhance the overall impression of the wine bottle.

For the consumer aluminium closures offer protection in more than one sense. The positive click of a screw cap being opened for the first time is the audible sign that the bottle contains a wine in the condition it left the winemaker.

More information about the benefits of aluminium closures and its positive properties can be found at www.aluminium-closures.org.

Further information:

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About the Aluminium Closures – Turn 360° campaign:

The 'Aluminium Closures – Turn 360°' campaign is launched by the leading European manufacturers of aluminium closures and screw caps organized in the European Aluminium Foil Association (EAFA) and supported by the manufactures of aluminium strip and sheet for closures. EAFA's members represent more than 80% of the global alu closures production for wine.

About EAFA:

The European Aluminium Foil Association is the international body representing companies engaged in the rolling and rewinding of alufoil and in the manufacture of aluminium closures and alufoil containers as well as of all kinds of flexible packaging. Its more than 100 member companies are based in Western, Central and Eastern Europe. Founded in 1974, it has its roots in associations dating back to the 1920s.