



*Contacts: Katie Myers
+1-214-766-4566
kmyers@nomacorc.com*

*Whitney Rigsbee
+1-919-460-2274
wrigsbee@nomacorc.com*

NEW RESEARCH SHOWS CONSUMERS CARE MOST ABOUT WINE QUALITY, HIGHLY RECEPTIVE TO CLOSURES THAT PREVENT FAULTS

Study Found 97% of Consumers Don't Focus on Packaging Unless Problems Occur, 92% Believe Protecting Wine is of Primary Importance

ZEBULON, N.C. (May 31, 2012) – The majority of U.S. core wine consumers are not heavily influenced by bottle closure type, according to a recent survey by Merrill Research, a global, full-service market research firm focused in the wine and spirits categories. When purchasing wine, 97 percent of survey respondents report that the type of closure is not one of their top three reasons for buying a wine, indicating varietal, price and geographical region as the most important criteria. The survey was commissioned by Nomacorc, the world's largest producer of synthetic wine closures, to learn more about consumers' acceptance and perceptions of synthetic corks in the U.S. wine market.

When asked about a closure's role, the vast majority of participants, 92 percent, indicate that their main concern about closures is protecting the wine. In fact, two-thirds of participants are aware of the term 'cork taint' and one-half of respondents have experienced some type of problem with natural cork, either being difficult to remove or breaking apart.

"When we look across our studies throughout the years, we found that the majority of wine consumers have become mainly concerned about the quality and taste of wine versus closure type, and this survey confirms that trend," said Pat Merrill, co-founder and partner at Merrill Research. "In fact, the research showed that most core wine drinkers only focus on the closure when it creates a problem, like cork taint, or challenges in extraction. However, while consumers deemed it important, they are generally not educated on the technical performance of a closure and its role in protecting wine."

Other aspects of the survey focused on consumers' acceptance and perceptions of synthetic corks in the U.S. wine market. The survey found that:

- Nearly all participants, 95 percent, will or might buy a wine closed with a synthetic cork, like Nomacorc, in the next three months.
- Of the respondents polled, 87 percent of core wine consumers would still buy the wine if their favorite traditional cork-closed wine switched to a synthetic cork.
- For wines priced at or near \$10, 90 percent say it is always or usually appropriate for a synthetic cork to be on a white wine and 85 percent say it is always or usually appropriate for a synthetic cork to be on a red wine.
- When shown a photograph of Nomacorc's new Select Series corks, 82 percent said they would buy any or most wines closed with this new product offering.

"While we continue to see the strong impact of label design on wine purchasing, we see little importance placed on the wine closure materials and methods and a continuance of the decade-long trend toward broader acceptance of less traditional closures," continued Merrill.

The online survey, conducted in early 2012, included a highly-qualified audience of nearly 600 U.S. participants that consumed wine at least once a week, representing about 93 percent of the total U.S. wine consumption volume. These core consumers frequently spent \$7 to \$20 on a bottle of wine and were either the primary household wine purchaser or shared responsibility.

For a full summary of the research, please contact Whitney Rigsbee at wrigsbee@nomacorc.com.

About Merrill Research LLC

Merrill Research is an independent, custom marketing research firm based in San Mateo, CA. The firm was established in 1986 and provides a full range of qualitative and quantitative research services. The company focuses in the alcoholic beverage and technology sectors and works with global leaders to help them "connect" with their customers and distribution partners.

About Nomacorc

Nomacorc is a worldwide leader in wine closures and the No. 1 closure brand for still wines in many countries including France, Germany and the United States. Dedicated to technological innovation, Nomacorc manufactures its portfolio of products using a patented co-extrusion process. As a result, Nomacorc closures provide consistent, predictable oxygen management and protect against off-flavors due to oxidation, reduction or cork taint. Nomacorc's

100 percent recyclable products are available through a vast network of distributors and sales agents on six continents. With 500 employees worldwide and state-of-the-art manufacturing facilities in the United States, Belgium and China, Nomacorc produces more than 2 billion closures annually. Working with renowned wine research institutes worldwide, the company leads the wine closure industry in fundamental and applied research into oxygen management in wine. For more information, visit nomacorc.com or follow Nomacorc on [Twitter](#) (@Nomacorc) and [Facebook](#) (Nomacorc).

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