

TCA – A status report on South African cork closures

J.A. Minnaar

Institute for Wine Biotechnology, University of Stellenbosch, Private Bag X1, Stellenbosch, 7600, South Africa. jminnaar@sun.ac.za.

Cork taint decreases the commercial value of wine as tainted wines are rejected by consumers. Although other compounds in wine and cork can also be responsible for causing a taint, 2,4,6-trichloroanisole (TCA) is regarded as the primary cause of cork taint. As cork taint is often used in marketing campaigns against natural cork closures, manufacturers extended their overall quality control to monitoring TCA levels. Since August 2004 a representative sample of all batches of cork closures that are imported by members of the South African Cork Quality Council (SACQC) are tested for TCA before release into the market. Quality control on TCA is conducted by an independent laboratory, established by the Institute for Wine Biotechnology (Department of Viticulture and Oenology, University of Stellenbosch) and Thalès Wine Cellar Services (Pty) Ltd. In this contribution we report on the current status of TCA in cork closures in South Africa. The analytical methodologies as well as the quality control program that is currently implemented are also outlined.