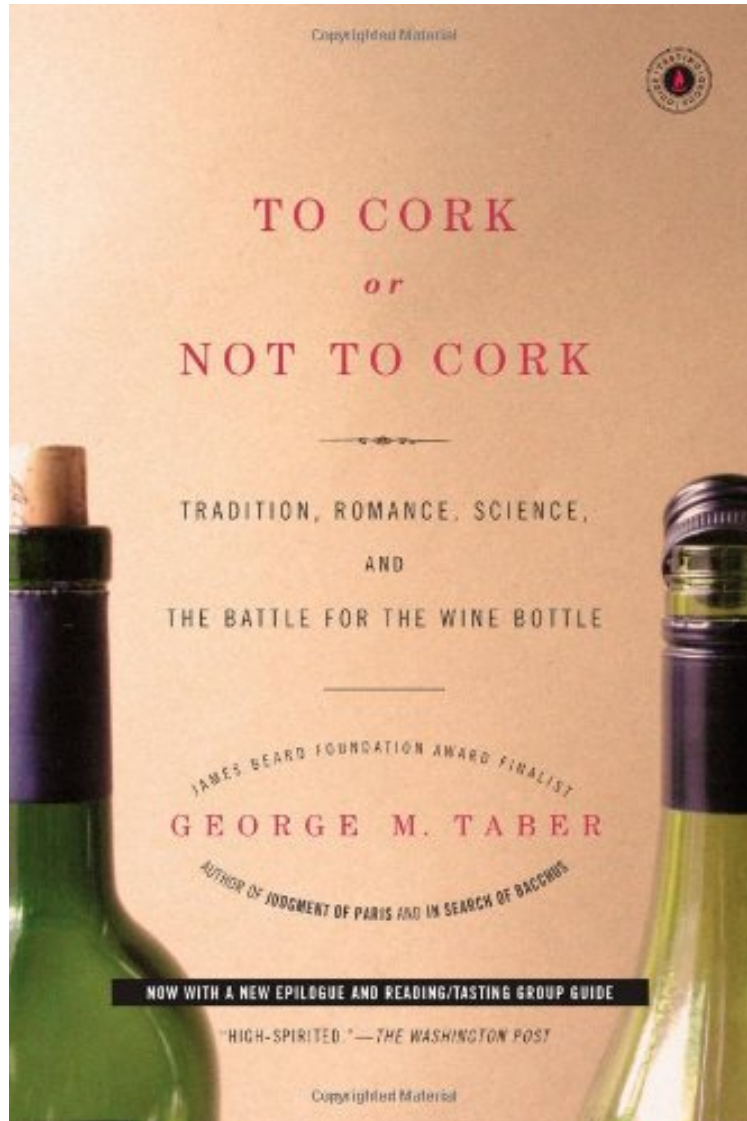


To Cork or Not To Cork

George M. Taber

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George M. Taber : To Cork or Not To Cork before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised To Cork or Not To Cork:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. An interesting book with a limited audienceBy UrsiformTo really enjoy this book I think you need to like wine, have some interest in the chemistry of wine, and enjoy stories of marketplace battles between products. The book worked for me, but many will find parts of it uninteresting.The cork has a long, generally distinguished tradition as a wine bottle stopper. But in the last three decades poor process control started to allow corks tainted with a foul-tasting contaminant to reach market, and the "corked" bottle of wine became

an increasing challenge to vintners. This set off a wave of entrepreneurs trying to build a better "cork" (or at least a better seal). The book tells the story of many brands, and their challenges, successes, and failures. Many fell by the wayside, but several are still expanding in the marketplace, each having its proponents and detractors. Ultimately, there is probably no ideal stopper for every bottle. Different approaches may apply to different wines with different aging requirements and different life expectancies. And wines may need to be made differently depending on the stopper chosen. While the need for new stoppers seemed obvious five or ten years ago, corked bottles are clearly less of a problem in recent years. At the end the author explains how the cork industry has brought this about by cleaning up its act. So cork is likely to remain the stopper of choice for wines intended for years of bottle aging for some time to come. But as wine production expands the need for seals that don't rely on the bark production of some old oak trees is certain to increase. The battle for that market will continue. At least as long as bottles hold out against bags in boxes ...

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Three Stars
By MdmOk0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Interesting read
By MarkIf you have ever had cork tainted wine you should read this book. An interesting history of wine closures and what is being done to improve them and how they effect the wine

In Judgment of Paris, George M. Taber masterfully chronicled the historic 1976 wine tasting when unknown California wines defeated top French ones, marking a major turning point in wine history. Now he explores the most controversial topic in the world of wine: What product should be used to seal a bottle? Should it be cork, plastic, glass, a screwcap, or some other type of closure still to be invented? For nearly four centuries virtually every bottle of wine had a cork in it. But starting in the 1970s, a revolution began to topple the cork monopoly. In recent years, the rebellion has been gathering strength. Belatedly, the cork industry began fighting back, while trying to retain its predominant position. Each year 20 billion closures go onto wine bottles, and, increasingly, they are not corks. The cause of the onslaught against cork is an obscure chemical compound known as TCA. In amounts as low as several parts per trillion, the compound can make a \$400 bottle of wine smell like wet newspaper and taste equally bad. Such wine is said to be "corked." While cork's enemies urge people to throw off the old and embrace new closures, millions of wine drinkers around the world are still in love with the romance of the cork and the ceremony of opening a bottle. With a thorough command of history, science, winemaking, and marketing, Taber examines all sides of the debate. Along the way, he collects a host of great characters and pivotal moments in the production, storage, and consumption of wine, and paints a truly satisfying portrait of a wholly intriguing controversy. As Australian winemaker Brian Croser describes it: "It's scary how passionate people can be on this topic. Prejudice and extreme positions have taken over, and science has often gone out the window."

From Publishers Weekly
Unexpectedly fascinating, this history of wine corks may sound like a book only an oenophile could love, but Taber's zingy writing and juicy anecdotes make it a genuine page-turner, even for those who prefer wine coolers to wine lists. The first chapter alone is full of intriguing facts: for instance, wine was once sealed with a slick of olive oil, and the practice of tasting wine before pouring it "actually started as a way of making sure all the oil was gone." Cork, a structurally unique substance used for sealing bottles since the Roman Empire, replaced olive oil centuries ago, but cork is not a perfect solution to the vexing problem of protecting wine: between 3 and 5 percent is tainted with a noxious chemical compound that can ruin an otherwise perfect bottle. The debate about whether or not to continue using cork has torn through the multibillion dollar wine industry, pitting traditionalists against innovators, cork farmers against scientists: "Says Brian Croser, one of Australia's leading winemakers, 'It's scary how passionate people can be on this topic. Prejudice and extreme positions have taken over, and science has often gone out the window.'" If it seems strange to harbor such passion about cork, Taber, a respected wine journalist, will do much to change your mind. Copyright copy; Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. "Fascinating...This discussion not only is relevant to today's wine producers and enthusiasts but will continue to stimulate interest until the 'perfect' bottle closure is developed. Highly recommended, especially in wine-producing and -consuming areas." -- Library Journal (starred review)"In 'To Cork or Not To Cork,' Mr. Taber does an able job of telling the story of the cork industry's early history, its rise to global monopoly status and the recent search for alternatives." -- Wall Street Journal"'"To Cork or Not To Cork' reads like a novel. While the book contains some scientific terminology and at times appears to be highly technical, even a non-scientist can understand it, and it's an easy and fascinating read." -- Napa Valley Register"'"No matter where you stand on the great debate over corks -- love 'em, hate 'em, or still undecided -- To Cork or Not to Cork: Tradition, Romance and the Battle for the Wine Bottle by George M. Taber, gives the subject a timely and thorough examination. Taber is a good storyteller and the book reads and flows easily." -- Wine Spectator Online"'"Taber is well-qualified to tell the story. He was the Time magazine correspondent on the scene in Paris for the 1976 blind tasting that proved American wines could not only hold their own but beat the best of the French. His 2005 book on the tasting, 'Judgment of Paris,' is the theme for two movies now in preproduction." -- Chicago Tribune

About the Author
George M. Taber is the author of Judgment of Paris, the 2006 wine book of the year for Britain's Decanter magazine. His second book, To Cork or Not to Cork, won the Jane Grigson Award from the International Association of Culinary Professionals and was a finalist for the James

Beard Foundation Award for best book on wine and spirits and the Andre Simon Award for best wine book. Before turning to writing wine books, Taber was a reporter and editor for Time.