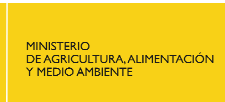


Through the pilot project *Cork Territories*, co-funded:



## ACTIONS TAKEN YEAR 2012

### PUBLICATION OF INFORMATION AND PROMOTIONAL MATERIAL

During the last year, RETECORK has continued working on the publication and constant updating of material linked to the Network, on promotion campaigns in favour of the use of cork stoppers, on the travelling exhibition and catalogue *Cork Landscape. Mediterranean. Miscellaneous*, the *CorkLab* publication, on experiences in design and architecture with cork and its own website.

You may consult this material in the Publications section.

- **Publication *CorkLab* 2011**



# CorkLab

Experiencias en diseño y arquitectura con corcho Experiences in design and architecture using cork

Entidades organizadoras *Organising institutions*

**RETECORK**  
RED EUROPEA DE TERRITORIOS CORCHEROS

**ELISAVA**  
Escuela Superior de Diseño  
e Ingeniería de Barcelona

En el marco del Proyecto "Territorios Corcheros"  
*In the framework of the Cork Territories Project*

Con la colaboración de *In collaboration with*



GOBIERNO  
DE ESPAÑA

MINISTERIO  
DE AGRICULTURA, ALIMENTACIÓN  
Y MEDIO AMBIENTE



FEADER

**CX CatalunyaCaixa  
Obra Social**

Entidades implicadas  
*Agencies involved*



**aecork**  
Asociació d'Empresaris Sureds  
de Catalunya

CONSORCI FORESTAL  
DE CATALUNYA

**INSTITUT  
CATALÀ  
DEL SURO**



MUSEU DEL  
SURO DE  
PALAFRUGELL  
MUSEU DE LA CIÈNCIA  
I EN LA DIVERSITAT CATALUNYA

Comunicación  
*Communication*

• **Bingo!**

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- Leaflet from the forest to the cork stopper.



All the cork that is not used to make a natural cork stopper and the remains of the process for making the stoppers are sent to be ground into different thicknesses to be used to make various other products.

The most common one is the **agglomerated cork stopper**; however, we should not forget insulating panels for construction, as well as shoes, automobiles, etc.

To obtain an agglomerated cork stopper, once the cork has been ground, it is dried, mixed with special binders and made into bars (extrusion) which are later cut and made into stoppers or they are made directly in a mould, with a machine that makes them stopper by stopper.

This process makes agglomerated cork stoppers which are ideal for young wines and cavas.

Thin sheets of natural cork can be used for making **discs**. These discs are used for certain kinds of agglomerated stoppers. They are stuck onto the end of the cork so



that there is natural cork in contact with the liquid. This happens, for example, in the case of cava corks, most of which are made of agglomerate with two natural cork discs at the end. The mushroom shape that one sees comes about when the cork is put in the bottle due to the pressure.

#### A CORK STOPPER FOR EVERY KIND OF WINE

**Natural:** Excellent quality wines, reserves and grand reserves

**Natural or agglomerated with a crown:** Wines from Jerez or other similar wines, whiskey, oil, rum, brandy, cognac, etc.

**Technical or multi-piece stopper:** Young and ageing wines

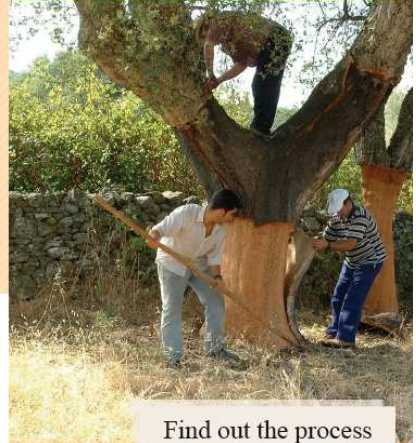
**Cava:** Sparkling wines, cava, champagne and cider

**Cylindrical agglomerated stopper:** Young wine for fast consumption

Thanks to the following companies for their cooperation: Eurospón Nuñez, Natural Cork, Unicor and Espor Taponera  
Texts and Photos: Laura Brixedo and Susana Expósito

Museo del Corcho *calas*  
San Vicente de Alcántara Centro de Interpretación de la Zona de La Peña del Corcho de Alcántara

## From the Cork Oak to the stopper



Find out the process of transformation



Ayuntamiento de SAN VICENTE DE ALCÁNTARA

RETECORK  
RED EUROPEA DE TERRITORIOS CORCHEROS

En el marco del proyecto Territorios Corcheros cofinanciado por:



### WHY USE A CORK STOPPER?

Cork is currently the best system for stopping bottles thanks to its incomparable characteristics. Its elasticity, impermeability and incorruptibility allow wine to breathe but not to oxidise, as well as preserving all its properties.

To manufacture a cork stopper the **cork oak** does not have to be cut down; the tree will continue to create more cork after it has been stripped, meaning that we are contributing to preserving the environment, saving unique natural open spaces in which more than 400 species of animals and plants make their habitat in our valued **Mediterranean forests**.

### THE CORK INDUSTRY

Today, the preparation and transformation of cork stoppers is the main economic outlet for this natural product.



1.

**Stripping the cork:** This consists of extracting the bark from the cork oak. It can only be done during the summer months, when the cells have not yet swelled, making it easy to separate it from the trunk.

The first stripping is carried out when the cork oak is between 25 and 30 years of age or when its trunk is between 30 and 40 cm thick and the stripping is usually done up to 1.30 meters high.

This first cork is called virgin cork and its quality is not sufficient to be able to be converted into a natural one piece stopper meaning that it will be taken to be ground (it is also used to make Christmas crib scenes).

From now on, cork can be stripped from the tree every nine years. So that the tree is not damaged, cork can only be stripped by specialist workmen called *sacaeros*. They use a cork axe, although nowadays there are hand-held machines for stripping the cork. They make vertical and horizontal cuts which help it to peel off.

They then take the cork in tractors to pile it all up in the same place so that the truck can take it all to the factory.

2.

**The cork preparing industry:** Once the cork pieces reach the factory, they are first left to stand in the open air out in the courtyard for some months. They are then boiled in water at 100°C for 90 minutes, without any detergents.

This process makes the cork gain elasticity and thickness and cleanses it of impurities.

Next, the more irregular parts of the sheet of cork are cut off with a knife, and the pieces are classified by the workers according to their thickness and quality.

This is the first step to know which cork will be able to be transformed into which type of stopper.



3.

**The cork transforming industry:** To obtain a **natural cork one-piece stopper**, sheets of natural cork are used.



First, the sheets of cork are cut into slices which are passed through a perforating machine which, thanks to a gouge (a knife in the shape of a tube) perforates them and pushes the cork stopper out of the slice.

The next step is when stoppers with significant defects are separated, and the remaining ones are chosen according to quality.

Later the cork stoppers go into a dryer and are polished and sanded so that they are all even. They are washed and softened with a special paraffin to make them easier to introduce into the bottleneck and to un-cork. Finally, the cork stopper is branded with the name of the corresponding wine cellar.



- **Good practice manual *Creation of a tourist product in cork-producing territory.***

## Creation of a tourist product in cork-producing territory



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