

WINES WITH NATURAL CORK STOPPERS

Our single-vineyard Smaragd wines are under natural cork stoppers. This change has been carefully considered and is a decision that has evolved over several years. We converted all of our bottle closures to screw cap, including closures for Smaragd wines, in the 2010 vintage and have since collected much experience with this. We simultaneously follow all research and scientific testing that has to do with this subject. Unfortunately there is very little relevant material available about matured high-end white wines under screw cap. We see screw caps as the ideal solution for many of our wines: all of our Steinfeder, Federspiel, and Terrassen Smaragd, Village Smaragd and half bottles of single-vineyard Smaragd wines will remain under screw cap. The screw cap guarantees a nearly fault-free, gradual, stabile and homogenous development. For wines that are intended to be drunk within three to five years after the harvest, we continue to see this closure as the perfect solution.

Our single-vineyard Smaragd wines are slower to open and often reveal their nuances first after five, six, and several years after harvest. In numerous comparative tastings between wines under screw cap and wines under natural cork that had been matured for more than five years, wines under screw cap were usually more taut and steely than their counterparts under cork. This points to a positive progression of development under screw cap, but ultimately we found the wines under natural cork to be more layered, deeper, more expressive, and also more approachable. They impressed us with more substance and a more concentrated and complex structure.

Seminal for our decision to return to natural cork closures for our top-single-vineyard Smaragd wines is the increasing quality of cork that is available. Developments in cork production have progressed so far that the possibility of detectable TCA taint can soon be nearly completely excluded. There are now quality control methods that can test every single cork stopper for potential taint. We are willing to accept the remaining, shrinking risk of eventual cork taint in exchange for the increased character development during a few years of bottle maturation.

