



Protecting Our Environment



Cork Is On A Comeback

(NAPSA)—After years of people trying to replace natural cork with metal screw caps and plastic stoppers, the real thing is on a comeback.

The trend is showing up in everything from sales figures and recycling programs to window displays and websites. It's even showing up on celebrities, with Lady Gaga donning a dress made from cork in her hit video "You and I."

"U.S. consumers have always preferred cork," said Peter Weber, executive director of the Cork Quality Council. "Now wineries are returning to cork because of quality improvements in cork and emerging problems with artificial closures."

Worldwide, the wine industry used 85 million more corks this year. Some of them went into the growing number of top 100 U.S. wines that have opted for genuine cork.

This is good news for the environment. The Mediterranean oak forests that produce cork not only serve as a sanctuary for thousands of plant and animal species, they offset the greenhouse gases from 2.5 million passenger vehicles every year. The trees are not harmed or cut down and there is no shortage of cork. In fact, the more demand there is for cork, the more incentive there is to preserve and even extend the cork oak forests.

Environmental groups are also getting behind natural cork.



Cork is sustainably harvested from special oak trees in the Mediterranean Basin.

The Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) now recommends the use of cork in its Green Guides, which inform purchasing decisions by most of the country's major professional sports leagues and The Recording Academy, hosts of the annual GRAMMY Awards.

Meanwhile, at least two organizations, ReCORK and the Cork Forest Conservation Alliance, have set up hundreds of cork recycling locations, as cork is 100 percent biodegradable and recyclable.

And Anthropologie, the hip clothing store chain, recently made bold window displays constructed from wine corks to educate shoppers about the sustainability of cork.

You can get in on the corking good fun on Facebook at www.facebook.com/100PercentCork or visit www.100percentcork.org for more information, a pledge to buy only wines sealed with natural cork, and a database that identifies those wines.