

Test: Repour by Campbell Mattison

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On February 28 I opened a bottle of the lovely Punt Road Gamay 2017 in among a vast number of other wines. I immediately wanted to stop tasting and just drink it, but alas life wasn't on my side. I would tip it. And move to the next wine. Or normally I would, except that I'd recently been sent a promotional box of Repour stoppers, and had just started testing them. Journalism stopped and wine enthusiasm started. I opened the pack and popped one in the neck of the half-empty gamay. I'd come back in a few days, I thought. It was April 6 before I got to it. It had sat on my desk throughout those intervening five weeks, in ambient summer/autumn temperature. It would surely be shot. But it wasn't. It was more or less perfectly preserved. It was drinking equally as well as the day I'd opened it.

Repour is basically a plug or stopper designed to absorb oxygen and hence keep oxygen from opened wine. Each Repour stopper is single-use; you then throw each stopper away. They cost somewhere between \$3 and \$5 each, depending on volume bought and/or where you buy them, so you'd reckon they're only applicable to wines of a certain value. Using them is simply a matter of sticking one in the end of the bottle, just as you would a cork; ease-of-use is one of the key selling points.

At the back of my desk, behind the monitor in fact, I'd also stashed a few other half-full bottles, also stoppered with the Repour gadget. One of them only had about a glass worth left in it. It was the Il Palagio Casino Delle Vie Rosso 2015. I'd opened this one on February 25. These Italian Sangiovese-based wines always taste a bit developed, to my palate, even when freshly opened; I was pretty sure this would be a bridge too far for the device. Especially given that most of the wine had already been consumed. And yet – it was bang on. Or close enough to anyway; maybe it was fractionally more advanced than the day it was opened but a) the difference would be minute and b) I'd have no hesitation in drinking it.

Ocean Eight Aylward Pinot Noir 2013. Opened February 26, plugged with a Repour, two-thirds full. Re-opened April 6. Now is a good time to note that when I "re-opened" the previous two wines there was a distinct pop, as though there'd been some kind of gas build-up. When I opened the Aylward there was silence. I thought that might be a bad sign and it probably was; this wine wasn't shot, but it had tired. This was likely to be user error, given the above, though there's no way of telling. If it was, it means you need to be careful for the device to work properly.

There's a good chance the same scenario affected the Allies Assemblage Pinot Noir 2017 – it too didn't 'pop', and it too was still drinkable but had lost a deal of freshness – though it's also possible that less robust reds aren't quite as suited to the seal. That said, all these wines were taken a long way past an advisable time period; you'd reckon this device is best used for taking an opened bottle of wine from one weekend to the next, maybe, and not for five week stints.

But the real or most enlightening test was the final one: I opened two bottles of Leconfield Cabernet Franc 2016 on March 15, poured a glass out from each, and stoppered one with the Repour, while the other I just re-capped with its

screwcap. I left these alone until April 6. How does a Repour-stopped bottle compare against simply putting the screwcap back on?

Re-sealed with its screw cap: totally and utterly knackered.

Repour-sealed: still drinking very well. Advanced a little but not to any great degree. No one would blink an eye if you served this, and yet it had been open for three weeks.

Now to be honest I am forever sceptical of all wine gadgets and/or devices and I don't use any of them for anything.

These Repour samples came to me via Winesaver Holdings, or wineme.com.au, the latter of which offers telemarketing services. On googling Repour it seems to have been launched off the back of a kickstarter campaign. All idle facts of the kind I usually run from at pace. But the above results had me intrigued; it might not be unswerving but in general, this Repour thing was certainly a vast improvement on simple re-capping, or indeed on a good wine being wasted. How it compares to other devices I don't know, but it did work better than I had expected.

Price here, given that they are one-use, is obviously critical. Repour is distributed in Australia by WineSaver. The RRP's in Australia are: 1-pack (\$4.99), 4-pack (\$17.99), 10-pack (\$39.99). There's also a 72-pack at \$180 but it's available to industry only. Make your own value calculations. Though I should note that if you google-around you'll likely find better prices.

According to Frank Malgioglio, who is distributing Repour, "It is the first wine saver that actively removes oxygen from the opened bottle, rendering full elimination of Oxygen ... Not only is it the only preservation method that actively removes oxygen, there are no apparatuses, methods or tricky techniques to make Repour functional."

Frank fully acknowledges that Coravin is the "gold standard" but that Repour is easier to use, and ultimately more cost effective. I personally haven't used Coravin though our esteemed colleague Gary Walsh is a keen user and fan; I'm hoping that he chimes in here with his thoughts.

Am I going to buy Repour for myself? I was sent a 10-pack and a 4-pack. I've used about 6 in testing but I have no doubt that I will go on and use them all, which says something in itself. I'm unlikely to go ahead thereafter and spend my hard-earned because I'm just not a wine gadget guy. Though we'll see about that when I finish the pack.