

Subject: M.A. Silva Corks, USA to Construct New Sonoma County Facility

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M.A. Silva Corks, USA to Construct New Sonoma County Facility
New Building to Increase Production Capacity and Quality Control

Santa Rosa, California (March 29, 2006) -- M.A. Silva Corks, USA has broken ground on a new Sonoma County processing and administrative facility with a completion date in November 2006. The 30,000-square-foot structure will provide this purveyor of natural cork wine stoppers with 50% more workspace, a 50% increase in production capacity, and the ability to improve customer service while maintaining the highest standards of quality control. The design is the work of DES Architects with Mid-State Construction acting as the building contractor. The privately held M.A. Silva Corks, USA anticipates a workforce of 25 by the end of 2007.



"We're building a food-grade facility that will enable us to control our product to the highest standards," said Neil Foster, managing director of M.A. Silva Corks, USA. "We're not just growing, but growing in a more efficient manner."

While searching for a new facility, Foster demanded that the new location provide a clean never-occupied work environment with enough square footage to increase quality control and improve product handling.

M.A. Silva Corks, USA currently leases space just west of downtown Santa Rosa.

With a laboratory that will be 250% larger than the existing one, the new building will provide winemakers with greater access to sensory evaluation testing. "Our new facility will have enough room for winemakers to participate in the purchase to their level of choosing," said Operations Manager Lee Miller. "Visiting customers will be able to safely do their work while we do ours. The end result will be a more informed customer who can make more comfortable decisions."

Production Manager Christopher Zapalski anticipates an enhanced workflow and more efficiency from employees. "Product will move through the new facility in a linear fashion," he said.

Undeterred by the alternative closure movement, M.A. Silva Corks, USA was founded on the premise that winemakers would continue finishing their products with natural cork if they were provided with closures that passed the most stringent quality control standards available. "We anticipate the continued use of natural corks among our key customers because of the improved quality of natural cork and the assurances we can deliver," said Foster.

Those assurances stem from adhering to the strict guidelines of the Cork Quality Council (www.corkqc.com) and the introduction of food safety standards never before seen in the natural cork industry.

As a member of the Cork Quality Council, M.A. Silva Corks, USA subjects its products to a multi-levelled process of sampling, testing, acceptance/rejection, and lot definition. In-house testing includes sensory evaluation, visual inspection, moisture measurement, and residual oxidants analysis. An independent lab further tests for the presence of TCA.

Furthermore, M.A. Silva Cortiças, Lda. was awarded ISO 22000:2005 food safety certification in December 2005 by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO). It was one of the first companies in the world to be certified with that standard, and the first cork producer anywhere to garner the distinction.

Established in 2000, M. A. Silva Corks, USA (www.masilva.com) is a collaborative effort between Manuel Silva Sr. of M.A. Silva Cortiças, Lda. and long-time industry representative Neil Foster. The company imports high-quality natural cork wine stoppers from the southern region of Portugal, and processes them domestically for distribution throughout the United States. Backed by their strong supplier, M. A. Silva Corks, USA is a customer-focused company supplying the finest corks in America.

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