

**IDENTIFICATION OF A NEW CORK TAINT COMPOUND (FUNGAL MUST – FM)
BY GAS CHROMATOGRAPHY/MASS SPECTROSCOPY (GC/MS)**

Dimitra L. Capone¹, Robert F. Simpson¹ and Mark A. Sefton¹

¹The Australian Wine Research Institute, PO Box 197, Glen Osmond, SA 5064

Cork taint affects consumer acceptability and decreases the commercial value of the wine. 2,4,6-Trichloroanisole (TCA) is regarded as the primary cause of cork taint, although other compounds in wines and corks can also be responsible for causing a taint, eg. geosmin and 1-octen-3-one.

The largest Australian winery conducts assessments of the physical properties and the occurrence of taint in corks and this has led to a relatively comprehensive listing of types of taints observed in natural and Agglomerate Corks (Duncan 1994). A term the winery panelists described as 'fungal must' was considered by the panelists to be the second most important form of cork taint after TCA. It was claimed at times to be present at an intensity that would make the wine undrinkable and, where this taint was assessed as strong, could lead to rejection of batches of cork.

After comprehensive GC/MS analysis, the taint compound has been identified as 2-methoxy-3,5-dimethylpyrazine. A stable isotope dilution analysis coupled with GCMS method was developed for its quantification in wines and corks.