

THE LIST

A WAY WITH WINE

Bottle invention springs forth from bottom up

"A fine wine is produced with exacting precision without contact to oxygen," said Harald Tomesch, owner of Chiselled Grape Winery in Cedarburg.

And because he grew tired of quality wines whose flavors became "wilted and oxidized before their time," he said it was time to re-invent the bottle.

Tomesch devised the QikVin Wine Press, a wine preservation system using a process that protects wine from oxidation without use of a vacuum or gases.

According to Tomesch, the unique bottle removes all oxygen, allowing the wine to be preserved and stored in any amounts until the consumer is ready to enjoy, serve and finish.

German engineering was a key element of the bottle design, he said, and prototypes were all made at Makerspace in Milwaukee, "where a supportive network of inventors, designers and friends meet each week."

As illustrated in a video Tomesch is working on for the product, the process allows the user to decant wine into the QikVin bottle, specially designed without a bottom – using instead a piston which first pushes the air out of the bottle.

"Once primed," he said, "you can serve and preserve any wine until it is entirely enjoyed one to 15 days later."

The Wisconsin Winery Association last fall described it: "Think of a syringe and you will begin to understand the mechanism, which can be sealed in two ways in the threaded neck of the bottle. The pouring options for the bottle allow you to pour the wine in an aerated and non-aerated fashion or the bottle can be totally sealed off."



Harald and Renate Tomesch of Chiselled Grape Winery in Cedarburg



The patent is pending as of October 2015 on the QikVin and inventor Tomesch expects to move patents into Europe and around the world in the next 30 months.

The product will be manufactured in Wisconsin and molding of specific parts will be ready this fall. He's also looking ahead to pre-orders starting around the same time using a Kickstarter campaign.

The QikVin will be priced at approximately \$98 and Tomesch said ordering should begin with 3,000 to 5,000 units, which he hopes to exceed by Christmas.

As for the invention's primary market, "according to our business plan it will be to wineries and wine clubs, then Amazon fulfillment, along with web sales," he said.

Looking ahead to 2017, he sees attention pivoting to select retailers and television sales.

The product's website, www.qikvin.com, spells out the perks for a variety of users, including wineries, distributors, restaurants, wine lovers, event planners and wine competitions.

Tomesch's enthusiasm for his product abounds – and he's not the only one who feels that way. Sentiments in California's wine country this year mirrored his own.

Officials at wineries including Tooth & Nail Winery in Paso Robles; Robert Young Estate Winery in Geyserville; and Lucas & Lewellen Vineyards in Solvang, all were excited about the new bottle and its prospects for success.

— Barb Zaferos

► IT'S THE LAWYERS TALKING

The burgeoning winery, distillery and craft brewing industry means growth in many areas, including legal representation. Recognizing the distinct legal challenges of wineries, Milwaukee law firm Reinhart Boerner Van Deuren SC formed a specialty practice group to serve the industry.

WHAT: Food & Beverage Practice — Craft Brewery, Distillery and Winery Law Group

WHY: Licensing, M&A, capital raise, distribution contracts, labeling, financing, environmental compliance, labor, real estate acquisition, social media, trademark, succession planning

HOW: Representing manufacturers, retailers, distributors, wholesalers,