



Creative gifts

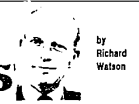
Judy Lutz returns to Farmington Community Center's all juried Arts and Crafts Show with her booth "Creative Gifts." The Berkely resident, who has a fine arts degree, teaches color and design at the Fashion Institute of America. Her creative gifts, fashioned in bright colors, cost \$2 to \$16. Show hours are from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 20. (Staff photo by Randy Borst)

First task: Pull cork

The dramatic moment arrives. The guests are assembled. The meal prepared, the call to dine given — and then the host prepares to open the wine. This he must do with dignity and authority. The bottle is addressed and the cork attacked. It is at this point that we all have had some trying frustrations. The wine helix (screw) tears the center out of the cork or pushes it into the bottle. The cork won't budge. It tears. It breaks or some other misfortune occurs.

This most vicious tool in our kitchen repertoire needs taming and control. And a solution exists. But first — know the enemy. It comes in many shapes and sizes. Of recent origin is the pressurized cartridge that forces CO₂ or gas into the space between the bottom of the cork and the top of the wine. The theory behind this device is that the pressure build-up in that small region will be sufficient to force the cork out of the bottle — before the bottle itself explodes. It sometimes works.

From the Wine Press



by Richard Watson

But when the bottle has a weak point the outcome can be more messy and dangerous than simply embarrassing. The corkscrew used by waiters, while highly compact, can easily tear a weakened or dry cork. This one is highly dependent on its users' skill. Entering at the slightest angle can mutilate and even break the cork. The device with two arms that lift out and up as the helix enters the cork works well only when the bore is wide and deep enough. An expensive version of this type is

generally required to find a fully dependable one. Until recently the most dependable for me has been the double-whirlybird, the item with the elongated verticle handle, a helix and two wooden blades or turners on top. One handle forces the helix into the cork, the second counter-turns it out via leverage. While often doing great damage to the cork this tool usually works well and I wouldn't want to operate regularly without one close by.

ABOUT FIVE YEARS ago a new device came into the scene, the only one that does not penetrate the body of the cork. Very simple in concept, it consists of an open handle and two exactly opposite blades extending down. The two blades slip via a twisting hand motion between the cork and the neck bottle. Once fully inserted, a sharp turning twist brings out the undamaged cork. This tool, the Ah-So, works better than any I know on weakened corks.

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