

Packaging Suppliers Unveil New Products

Companies share innovations in design, label stock, glass and much more

By Jane Firstenfeld



Every year, wine industry suppliers of all types submit hundreds of listings touting their newest products and services. Their entries are included in the supplier guide starting on page 40. For readers seeking packaging options, we combed the earliest entries and contacted them with specific questions about their offerings.

Concept and design

Deciding on a new or re-designed package is always extremely time consuming and should ideally begin months (if not years) in advance. Wineries in the depths of decision may find inspiration and expert advice from an ongoing series of webinars hosted by Sterling Creative.

Cynthia Sterling explains that each webcast is devoted to a specific branding or packaging challenge. Past topics have included “Harness the Power of Color,” “Naming Your Brand,” “Branding Luxury” and “The New Tastemakers: How to Use Sensory Perception to Increase Brand Enjoyment.”

Most events include presentations from Sterling and distinguished guests. Between 90 and 150 people typically register, and some 70% attend live to participate in the Q&A segment. To accommodate varied schedules, a recorded replay of the event is sent to each registrant, with links and resources included. Anyone can sign up at sterlingcreativeworks.com.

Familiar veteran designers continue to create savvy work for clients old and new. Patti Britton Designs created a popular, eye-catching label for Ferrari-Carano Siena wines that has been used for 24 vintages. To celebrate the 25th anniversary,

Britton commented, “We didn’t want to change the look, so I designed a two-part label. The upper label remains the same, except copper foil stamping was changed to silver foil. The bottom band holds a special hand-lettered ‘25th’ with silver foil-stamped dates 1990 and 2015.” The screwcap capsule is marked “25th Anniversary.” After this celebratory vintage, the label will revert to a single layer.

Dan Mills Productions is well known in the wine industry by virtue of its photography and design. Clients include Constellation Brands, Trinchero Family Estates, Jackson Family Wines, Bronco, Duckhorn, Patz & Hall, Grgich Hills, Orin Swift, V2, Don and Sons Wine, TOR Wines and Wente Family Estates.

This year, Mills moved his fully equipped studio from Napa to Petaluma. “Sonoma County is my new home—what a difference,” he said.

Washington state’s Sara Nelson Designs introduced digital models for all her packaging clients. The models fully display the concept so clients can see it on the right bottle, with the right color

Digital models (above) allow clients of Sara Nelson Designs a preview of their finished packaging concepts.

of wine inside and the chosen capsule and other embellishments, allowing them clearly to visualize the finished product. The service is free to all clients, who are free to make changes and adjustments—a normal part of the process.

Over the top

One thing we know for sure, checking on every part of the process is vital in effective packaging. Janson Capsules has added press checks for decorated screwcaps at its Napa plant. Vice president of sales Melanie Thomas reported that three or four customers come in every week to create designs and choose colors. Something as small as the position of the design on the caps can make a big difference in the final impact.



The 25th anniversary Siena design Patti Britton created for Ferrari-Carano includes a secondary label.

Materials: the 'A list'

Amcor Rigid Plastics provides PET bottles in sizes from 375 ml on up, and it's working to make all these stock options by the end of this year. A glass spray barrier prevents wine from ever coming into contact with the plastic, according to marketer Jeff Chang. Once the smaller sizes are available in stock, lead-time for orders will be only "a couple of weeks."

When it comes to paper labels, Avery Dennison's Aqua Opaque technology preserves white appearance even in ice bucket conditions. The technology is in the adhesive, which can be combined with any face-stock or texture and can be foiled. The solvent-free Z 1010 emulsion adhesive works with standard face-stock widths and stiffness, according to associate product manager Stephanie D'Cruz.

Ardagh Direct invites clients to its new Napa office to meet face to face and view its gallery of glass products. Wineries of all sizes located west of the Rocky Mountains may purchase bottles in a variety of sizes, colors and styles direct from the producer. Less-than-truckload (LTL) quantities are available.

See it in print

Vintage 99 Label launched technology that gives wine branders "a front row seat" to shopper behavior by deploying and managing interactive labels with iQ-dio. Wine, beverage and product label specialist Brian Lloyd said only four wineries are currently using the system, which adds nothing to packaging prices, since Vintage 99 pays to add it to the label.

With a dynamic QR system, changes to content can happen without reprinting labels. It shows winery monitors a real-time "dashboard" that displays how long the customer viewed the online content and tracks which varietal they are most interested in.

McDowell Packaging's new Digital Combination blends traditional brand augmentation technologies including foil stamping, micro embossing of stereograms, rotary screenprinting, doming and tactile features driven by a digital print engine.

John M. McDowell said many brand owners already are using this program, due to the many changes naturally incumbent within the wine industry: vintage, varietal, appellation. The program enables "freedom of design" without incurring cost-prohibitive setups for emerging or trending ideas or personalization for marketing to a region, retailer or event.

Crisp-Dot-Technology is also an integral part of McDowell's service—both for front-end pre-press software and in-line printing platforms. The sharp dots bring smooth vignettes, high-definition screen tone transition and spot-on detail for graphic-intensive and photographic images.

One87 now offers pressure-sensitive labels, direct silkscreen printing, heat-transfer labels and, most recently, shrink sleeves. Most clients

KEY POINTS

A deeper look into the earliest responders to our November packaging listings offers details about advantages, pricing and more.

From design to bottling, virtually every aspect of the arduous packaging process continues to evolve to serve the wine industry.

If you're in the market for improvements to packages or processes, keep on shopping in the listings, starting on page 40. Contact information is included there.

are using direct silkscreen bottle printing, according to founder Bill Hamilton.

Shrink sleeve bottle wraps have gained acceptance in recent years. Waterloo Container has a high-speed applicator and steam tunnel, and can quickly convert from sleeve to non-sleeve jobs to prioritize repack orders, according to marketing and project coordinator Bobbi Stebbins.

Waterloo currently stocks more than 450 different bottles in its warehouse. Customers can source their own preferred sleeves for automated or hand application. Once the sleeves are on, the bottles are sent to the winery ready to fill.

Waterloo asks for four to six weeks of lead-time for major sleeve jobs, to allow time for production and scheduling. It can produce as many as 2,000 cases of sleeves per day, and projects are coordinated with other special package needs like custom bottles or closures. As with all aspects of the packaging process, "Forecasting and planning are key elements," Stebbins stressed. She noted that many clients have added sleeves and observed that "sleeving" has increased more than 50% in 2017, compared to previous years.

Sleeves provide an economical way to transform a less-expensive bottle with 360° graphics, and can work on unusual shapes of bottles. "The enhanced value perception can



Vintage 99 Label offers iQ-dio interactive labels to help wineries understand consumer behavior.



McDowell Packaging's technologies include foil stamping, micro embossing, rotary screenprinting and tactile features driven by a digital print engine.



These packages from Waterloo show screen-printed and full-sleeve options. The company applies sleeves in a steam tunnel.

be realized with an increased price-point," Stebbins said. With cutouts, special effects and textures, sleeves offer brand differentiation. Waterloo also offers eight-color UV glass screen-printed bottles.

Shiny and shimmery is the new black for wine packaging, as we reported in our October packaging feature. Kurz Transfer Products introduced a novel process that applies foil directly to the glass, no label required, according to marketing coordinator April Lytle.

Lytle said the process is still relatively new to North America, but European wineries have had many successful projects with it.

Put it in the bottle

Mobile bottlers provide such an important service to small wineries that cannot support an in-house bottling line. AT Mobil added a second mobile bottling line. Both provide self-contained nitrogen generators, in-line dry ink case printing (which saves a person and a label), laser bottle coding for time and date and hot glue case closure, which looks better and lasts longer, according to owner John Davis.

Steam Sterilization on both trucks provides the Four Big E's (economy, efficiency, effectiveness and environmental). The new, MINI bottling and labeling line is designed especially for small lots, and fills bottles from 375 ml to 18 liters, Davis said.

Ship it away

When your precious bottles are ready to go, you'll want to protect them in transit. Traditional shippers use partitions for wine cases. Great American Paper (GAP Packaging) provides an upgraded version of these to box suppliers including Orora North America, Saxco and Tricor Braun, as well as international wine monarch Treasury Wine.

The chip board partitions are especially green: fabricated from 100% recycled post-consumer mill-grade board, according to vice president of sales Jim Lindsay.

Or you could blow them away with auto-inflatable wine packaging that allows shipments of one to 12 bottles by changing the box size. Just tear the inflatable per-

forated unit to match bottle count, using a small tabletop machine that runs on 110 volts.

High internal air pressure gives cushioning but is clear to let the receiver view the contents. The "shrouds" are fully curbside recyclable, according to Inflatable Packaging owner Mich Tschantz. As many as 18,000 units fit on a single shipping pallet.

Stock the tasting room

From all our research into tasting rooms, we've learned that every one has a retail section, and that most of the best sellers are branded items. Proforma Wine Country, a woman-owned Napa business, brings them to clients with a solar-powered mobile showroom. Custom products include shirts, vests, jackets, pet goods and more: more than 1 million items in all. Owner and creative director Teri Beauchamp says she can provide "everything but the wine." Wine club premiums are another specialty.

Trade shows are another venue for getting your brand out there with logo items, and Proforma Wine Country specializes in these. A staff artist can help create logo products in consultation with marketing departments, managers and owners.

Most apparel and accessories can be ordered and decorated within one to two weeks; rush service is available. Wine club gifts may take one to three months for delivery.

Beauchamp has more than 100 winery clients in California as well as 15 in Texas, 75 in Oregon, 50 in Washington state and 15 in Virginia. Wine country-related businesses also use the service. The solar-powered mobile showroom allows California businesses to touch, feel and try on available products prior to ordering.

Keep on shopping

As mentioned earlier, this feature is just the tip of the iceberg. If these categories have whet your appetite, find contacts for these and similar vendors listed under "Packaging" starting on page 36.

As always, we urge that you begin working with your packaging suppliers early in the game, and coordinate every piece of the puzzle so it fits seamlessly. 🍷