

what women want?

Marketers aim to please with wines that women will enjoy. By Konrad Ejbich

There was a time when men shopped for wine and booze. Today, according to industry statistics, women purchase more alcohol than men do, though men still spend significantly more on a bottle. "Men tend to purchase higher-price wines, spend more time researching the purchase, and are more technical in that respect," says Rob Glover, Canadian marketing director for Wolf Blass Wines, which is owned by Foster's Wine Estates (the company's premium brands include Lindemans, Penfolds, Rosemount, Beringer Vineyards, Chateau St. Jean and Stags' Leap).

"The luxury end is male dominated, so we provide more technical information, like alcohol content and growing regions," he says, adding, "As the prices of wines decrease, there's less of a need for that kind of information, so then we can focus on packaging. When it comes to the package, women tend to know what they like."

Nevertheless, Rob says it's important for companies to do a lot of sampling, which women really enjoy. "If they like something, they communicate it among themselves, which creates a buzz that can be a promotional factor," he says.

Wines marketed to women today are invariably sealed with a screw cap. Although it had been around for years, the "old" screw cap – a shabby, thin, aluminum number – was relegated to bottles of the cheapest plonk. "Good" wines were expected to have corks. The problem was, you needed a tool and a strong arm to yank the damn thing out. And good luck trying to get it back in again. Bottles sealed with a screw cap are simpler to open, require no tools and are resealed with little effort.

Wolf Blass wines switched from corks to screw caps last year. Like many large companies, Foster's Wine Estates also spends time, effort and money making sure the labels on their products are attractive. They recently updated Wolf Blass wines with more vibrantly coloured labels.

Blass was the first Australian winemaker to recognize the need to change the taste of wine if it was to become more appealing (and more salable) to women. He softened the alcoholic, hard-edged



local stuff by blending it with wines from other regions, then colour-coded his labels to identify the different varieties and styles. "When women are unfamiliar with a product, they're likely to make purchasing decisions based solely on packaging," says Rob. "One woman I spoke with buys Wolf Blass Grey Label shiraz because its dark grey label looks great on her granite kitchen counters."

Small wine producers face the same marketing challenges with fewer resources. Henry of Pelham winery, in St. Catharines, Ont., recently introduced two wines called Sibling Rivalry. Their labels – one

marketing to women," says Paul, winery president and eldest brother. "I thought the label was too masculine, but the women we showed it to all loved it."

One of the most successful campaigns has been managed by Doug Beatty, vice-president of marketing for Colio Estate Wines in Harrow, Ont. In July 2008, the winery introduced a \$13 red, white and rosé under the brand name Girls' Night Out, with a screw cap, and promised to donate 25 cents for every bottle sold from July to December of that year to second-year female students at Ontario colleges (the province would match the amount). Bottles

Women prefer the simplicity and efficiency of the screw cap.
Men love the ritual of the cork

teal blue, the other fire-engine red – feature three handsome young bucks who look like modern-day Hardy boys. Copy focuses on the passion and personalities of the sibling owners, Daniel, Matthew and Paul Speck, never mentioning any technical details. Sealed with screw caps and priced at \$14, the wines hit women's statistically preferred price band of \$12 to \$15. "I know nothing about

decorated with a cocktail dress and a cute saying were intended to appeal to 25- to 49-year-olds. To the winery's surprise and delight, Girls' Night Out was purchased by women of all ages, as well as by men taking it home to share with their wives or girlfriends. By Dec. 31, more than 9,500 cases of wine had been sold, and in early 2009, cheques were presented to the four beneficiaries.