

Sovereign Estate Vineyard uses an in-house label printer to create custom labels on-the-fly.



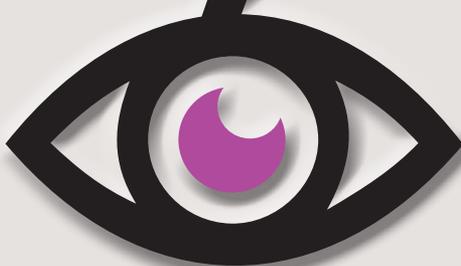
A close look at three different methods that can help your custom labeling needs come to life.

The blink of an eye often determines a winery's success. According to a 2015 Gallo Consumer Wine Trend Survey, millennials are four times more likely to select a wine based on the originality of its label, while baby boomers look at labels as part status symbol, part infomercial.

Bottle labels both tell and sell the story of a winery, revealing useful facts and fulfilling government requirements while evoking emotional responses in consumers. These reactions, in turn, provoke purchasing choices often based on a wine's perceived popularity, quality or value.

This helps explain why winery owners devote precious resources to ensuring successful wine label programs. Yet one size doesn't fit all. Cost-effective, in-house labeling delivers an affordable, aesthetically appealing alternative for the budget-conscious. Other wineries engage professional printing enterprises to drive every aspect of the labeling process, from proofing to packaging. Meanwhile, those who value convenience find virtual solutions with online printing companies. Let's take a look at all three.

Blink of an Eye



BY L.M. ARCHER

AT A GLANCE

- + Bottle labels both tell and sell the story of a winery.
- + In-house printers are good for special events, promotions and rush projects.
- + With custom label printers, seek out quality and customer service.
- + Online printing promises custom projects with minimal interaction at the click of a mouse.
- + Custom labels provide a way to personalize the winery visit.

IN-HOUSE LABELS

Ben Banks, winemaker and graphic artist at Sovereign Estate Vineyard in Waconia, Minn., hires a custom printing company for standard inventory labels, but turns to his in-house Primera Technology's LX900 printer for special events, promotions and rush projects.

"Labeling is a challenge, even when you have the very best companies do the work for you," says Banks. "One of the things that's nice about in-house printing is that you see the finished label immediately. If they don't look good or you spot an error, you can just press 'stop printing' and fix it instead of getting stuck with thousands of dollars' worth of labels that you can't use. It also gives you the ability to be really nimble and make special-edition wine labels on short notice. For example, our winery is located near Prince's former home, Paisley Park, which is now a museum. With our printer, we can create a custom Purple Paisley wine label for guests stopping by the winery on their way to visiting the museum or before attending a concert there."

Banks estimates that Sovereign spent about \$2,000 eight years ago to purchase the printer, an investment he considers invaluable. He says it's durable, reliable and easy

to use and requires far less maintenance and cleaning than the other commercial printers in his design studio. Banks does admit to a learning curve in finding the best substrate (label surface and adhesive)



Sovereign Estate has seen good results regarding water resistance when using custom-printed polypropylene labels.

to match how the labels need to perform (resistance to scratches, water and ice) and has seen very good results using polypropylene.

"We're a boutique winery," he explains, "and we like to have some unique labels every year. With the in-house printer, we have the capacity to make changes fast, often with better-quality color and less of a hassle than sending it to a print shop. "The Primera isn't the only thing I need in my toolbox, but I'm glad I have it."

CUSTOM PRINT LABELS

Some wineries don't have the time, interest or staff to steer in-house label production, opting instead to hire professional print houses to fulfill their label needs. One such company, Paragon Label in Petaluma, Calif., specializes almost exclusively in custom wine bottle label production.

Owner Jason Grossman recommends digital printing for low-volume or startup wineries seeking small runs with high quality at an affordable price. The digital service even provides three color gradations samples for customers to review before the job ever goes to print.

As the business grows, Grossman suggests trying the flexographic process, which offers a



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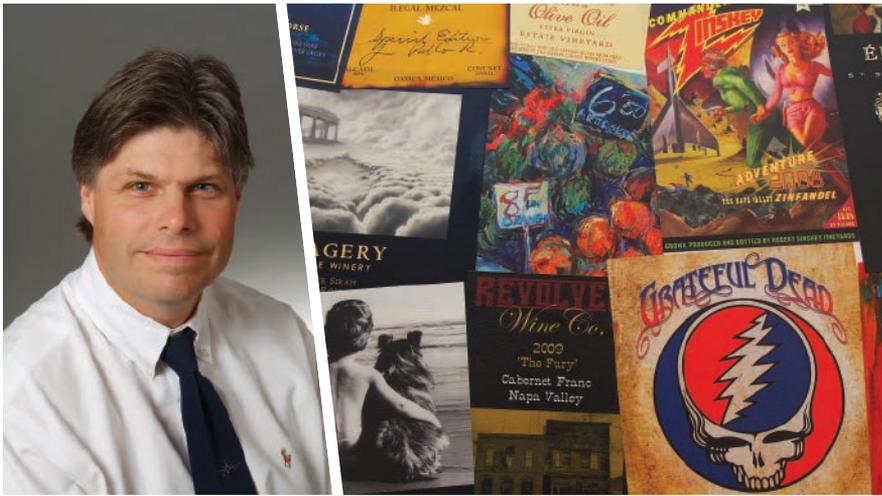
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Jason Grossman, owner of Paragon Label in Petaluma, Calif., offers multiple choices for custom printing.

slew of substrates, including coated and uncoated papers, clear film, metallic film and even wood, glass and adhesive-backed paper, as well as an array of embellishments such

as foiling, embossing, sequential numbering, die cutting, silk screening, laminating and UV varnishing.

For wineries determined to dazzle, Paragon also owns the world's

only Laserweb laser printer, a proprietary machine capable of fabricating one-of-a-kind, intensely intricate, multidimensional label creations.

Grossman recommends seeking custom label printers who offer both quality and customer service. His company boasts more than 80% customer retention in its 20 years of operation.

"We spend more effort taking care of existing customers than we do looking for new ones," confesses Grossman, "Which lets us focus on quality and service. Hey, I started out in the custom label printing business buying labels from print shops, so I know what it feels like to stand in front of the counter, not just behind it."

A custom printing company should also dispense checks and balances during every aspect of the process, from verifying bottling dates and conducting water-

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"The bottling date is a sacred date — we won't even start labels until we have the bottling date in place," says Grossman, "We've been doing this for more than 20 years, so we know the ins and outs, and are very serious about honoring those bottling dates and watching out for everything that's needed to avoid failure when [the winery] goes to the line. If it's using a mobile bottler, we're also aware of every mobile bottler configuration in the area, of every type of bottle used, and the alignment of each label machine. We also ensure the label liner [the backing for the pressure-sensitive label and adhesive] is made of anti-stick silicon for easy label release, and has no cut marks, which can cause snapping and breaking."

In the end, Grossman asks, "How much time do wineries want to spend worrying about labels? We worry for them, so they can do what they do best — make wine."

ONLINE PRINTING

Finally, those who prefer quick turn-around, simple interfaces and up-front pricing turn to online printing companies like PsPrint.com for custom labels. This multi-product merchant gives business owners control over custom label printing projects with minimal interaction at the click of a mouse.

Other benefits consist of easy artwork transfer from previous printing companies to PsPrint.com's online design template, not to mention competitive pricing. The company employs cost-effective "gang print" (bundling many separate orders in one run) for both small-volume digital and

large-volume offset jobs. Other online enticements involve flat fees for full-color printing, and a menu of paper stocks like fancy parchment and water-resistant vinyl. It also offers reasonable graphics services to those clients who do not have pre-existing designs, or need help revising existing ones.

The company's online custom label process isn't complicated. Clients complete a layout template, insert the artwork, and submit it to the graphics department for a 20-point "pre-flight" review. Should the graphics department run into any problems during final inspection, it contacts the customer directly to resolve pending matters before green-lighting the job. Once finished, the labels ship — sometimes within 24 hours of fulfillment. These are all things to seek out when choosing an online printing service.

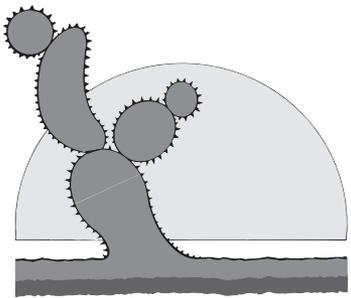
CAPTURING CONSUMERS' EXPERIENCES

"Premium wines are a relatively inexpensive luxury item," observes winery brand consultant Carl Giavanti, "and they're subject to impulse purchasing while consumers are enjoying themselves during a wine tasting. Winery guests want to take that experience home with them to share with friends and family."

Giavanti urges winery owners to consider the power of custom labels this way, "Custom labels appeal to vanity, but also provide a way to personalize the winery visit, reinforce branding and even promote case purchases. They're also ideal for birthdays and other special events, not to mention during the holiday gift-giving season. By offering custom labels, wineries furnish a memorable service while differentiating themselves from their competition."

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L.M. Archer is a freelance writer, video correspondent, and creator/editor of www.binnotes.com, a site devoted to inspired stories about artisan wine and taste makers.
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