

Raising a glass – wine packaging predictions

The wine industry is nothing if not adaptable; from ecommerce and wine in a can to sparkling wine being more consumed than beer in the US things never stay the same for long. However, with change now the only constant in the industry, how is wine packaging continuing to adjust? Here Stephane Triquet, Vice President of Strategic Marketing at Selig discusses the wine packaging predictions and how wine sealing is evolving.

Wine – a growing business

The wine industry is predicted to grow by a CAGR of 4.28% until 2026. A key factor expected to fuel growth over the coming years is product premiumisation. Despite the low uptake of interest in wine amongst Gen Z's and Millennials, older generations seem to be drinking more wine. In fact, according to a recent American wine industry report, in 2022 wine drinkers aged 60+ were driving volume growth, with the largest growth being amongst the 70-80 year olds!

Wine packaging predictions

Whilst the industry navigates the challenge of encouraging a new generation of wine drinkers, wine packaging is also on the move. According to industry predictions, sustainability is driving a



growing interest in the light weighting of glass packaging in non-sparkling wines, to help major retailers meet their carbon reduction targets. This is particularly important, as up to half of a wine's carbon footprint comes from its glass bottle.

Recent innovative alternatives to glass include the first premium wine bottle made from 100% recycled PET. This was launched by Ron Rubin Winery in the US and, being made from PET, is 85% lighter than glass and has a third of the Greenhouse Gas emissions. In the spirits sector, Green Gen Technologies has packaged A. De Fussigny 2050 Cognac in a bottle made from flax fibres, plant-based resins and an RPET liner.

On-the-go consumption is also fueling packaging change and canned wine popularity continues to increase, particularly when paired with low-alcohol formulation RTD options. No wine

packaging overview is complete without mention of the bag-in-box format, particularly as the traditional aluminium-lined bags are being replaced by malleable polymer alternatives that don't trigger wine oxidation.

Evolutions in wine sealing

For many years the glass bottle and cork have seemed like a match made in heaven. However, over recent years, issues with cork taint have led to wine providers exploring other options. Cork can harbour chloranisole-producing microbes that can lead to 2,4,6-trichloroanisole (TCA) and other taint causing compounds that can spoil the wine. Aiming to resolve this, many producers have turned to synthetic corks but they have high gas

permeability and are only suitable for wines destined for early drinking.

The issue of cork taint is significant because of the amount of wine it impacts and wastage it produces. In fact 3% - 6% of corks contain TCA and other taint causing compounds; with 30 billion bottles of wines produced per year closed by cork, this equates to an estimated one billion bottles ruined by TCA annually.

The concerns around cork have led to alternative wine sealing methods, particularly screw caps, being explored. Following successful results of extensive screw cap testing by The Australian Wine Research Institute, 90% of New Zealand and Australian wine is now sealed with screwcaps.

Screw caps – tried and tested

A 20-month trial compared the performance of a range of closures. The Australian Wine Research Institute concluded that screwcaps offered many benefits: the lowest reduction in free and total sulphur dioxide (SO₂) and highest retained free SO₂ and ascorbic acid, the lowest incidence of browning (OD420) and least variation between bottles for all compositional variables, as well as the lowest in developed and oxidised characters and effectively zero TCA. Also, screwcaps have been shown to have no negative effect on bottle maturation.

The screw cap and liner – a match made in heaven

The secret to screwcap success is the seal, which is traditionally formed of a malleable aluminium alloy that is rolled onto the bottle. This is then combined with a wine liner that creates a seal between the closure and the bottle. The screwcap and liner exclude oxygen from the bottle, and promote the development of the bottle's bouquet. This high pressure hermetic seal is capable of withstanding relatively large pressure and temperature increases and is guaranteed against failure for 10 years (but realistically can be expected to last at least 20 years).

Screwcap and liner technology is cheaper than a cork and can be tailored to suit specific wine requirements. For example, Selig's popular OenoSeal™ wine liner range, which offers excellent oxygen barrier performance, no negative impact on wines prone to reductive notes and a reduction and prevention of volatile sulphur compounds (VSCs), is also available with varying levels of oxygen permeability to suit different wines. As well as eradicating wine taint, the range delivers high quality ageing and preservation performance.

Much development work has gone into creating the perfect match between the wine, liner



and screwcap, and the result is the industry leading wine liner - OenoSeal™. It is made up of different barrier level layers unlike cork, an organoleptically neutral liner is in direct contact with the wine, eradicating any risk of taint.

To find out more about wine sealing and read the latest wine sealing white paper, visit www.seliggroup.com

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Selig Group, renowned as a top manufacturer of tamper-evident cap and closure lining materials, has established itself as a reliable partner in the global packaging industry. With over 50 years of experience, the company specialises in container sealing and venting, flexible packaging, and high barrier engineered laminates, catering to a diverse range of industries. Selig Group's comprehensive selection of one- and two-piece structures enables the handling of even the most complex applications with customised aluminium foil/heat seal combination products. Selig Group is committed to quality, safety, and protection, and offers a range of easy-open products that enhance consumer convenience and product freshness, while also differentiating the brand owner's product.

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