

# Marketing to Millennials

SoWine2 offers advice on cultivating customers via the Internet



BY JANET EASTMAN

**T**ech-savvy adults in their 20s and 30s have discovered a new playground: vineyards. Capturing their attention and dollars was one focus of the Southern Oregon Wine Marketing & Sales Conference held on June 14 in Central Point.

Although Gen-Xers and Millennials don't have the spending power of older adults, they support the "buy local" philosophy, are willing to pay more than \$20 for every fourth bottle of wine and, if well treated, will reward a winery by posting an endorsement that could be viewed by hundreds of thousands of people.

In the age of peer-to-peer review sites like Yelp and CellarTracker, "everyone's a critic," said Sheila Nicholas of Anam Cara Cellars in Newberg, speaking to 100 winery owners and tasting room managers attending the sold-out conference.

Using social media to build direct-to-consumer sales to all ages is now a crucial part of the promotional wheel. Think Facebook invitations. Live Tweets of events. YouTube videos that deliver information and fun.

"I don't read anything," said 24-year-old speaker Christine Collier, exaggerating to make a point. "But I watch everything." At Troon Vineyard in the Applegate Valley, she generates an event calendar through dotCal and recommends Living Social and Groupon giveaways.

Other advice offered at the day-long conference presented by the Southern Oregon Wine Institute:

- Michael Donovan of the Oregon Wine Board said Oregonians drink a lot of wine, but only 15 to 18 percent of the wine sold here is made here. "An additional 5 percent would have a huge impact." He added that 70 percent of wine buyers use Facebook and Millennials over 21 are more likely than others to buy wine online.

- The key to reaching Millennials, if that is your goal, says Dixie Huey of Trellis Wine Consulting in Vancouver, Wash., is to be where they are. Research their preferences and seek responses about their experiences. "Every point of contact, from customer service and events, to e-mails and website presence, needs to appeal to them," she said.

- Richard Roberts of Palazzo Creative in Seattle advised wineries to convey a consistent message through well-designed logos, labels, packaging, websites and social media platforms. His firm created a sophisticated new look for L'Ecole N° 41, updating the Walla Walla Valley winery's logo of a schoolhouse. For others, he said edgy packaging "alienates some people," but it also offers them something to remember. Printing words sideways on labels requires a shopper to take the bottle off the shelf to read it. "At that point, it's halfway to the cart," he said.

- A show of hands revealed that most of the conference-goers e-mail newsletters and event alerts. Terry Miller of CRM Group in Redmond, Wash., said that although e-mails have lost some of their cachet, each dollar spent to create an effective one reaps \$43 in sales.

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ABOVE: Michael Donovan speaks to attendees at SoWine 2, June 14 in Central Point.

## South Block Bash

This summer, The Eyrie Vineyards is unveiling four decades of the legendary Pinot Noir South Block Reserve at a special vertical tasting in McMinnville, July 28.

Just ten rows planted in the southern most corner of Eyrie Vineyard make up the South Block; and since 1975, this exceptional block of vines has had its own special place in the cellar as well as the history books — the 1975 South Block took honors at back-to-back international tastings in France in 1979 and 1980 — putting Oregon wines on the map.

The fruit, selected for its elegance and refinement, is fermented and aged separately and, in some years, only two barrels from the block have "earned" the South Block designation. With the exception of a few vintages, most of these wines have never been shared with the public.

At the unprecedented tasting, Jason Lett and the Eyrie team will uncork four decades of South Block, — 1975 to 2007. This event is truly a unique opportunity to taste the history of the Willamette Valley.

The tasting will begin at 1 p.m. and take place at the McMinnville Grand Ballroom, 325 N.E. Third St. Tickets are \$185 per person and space is very limited. Reserve your seat exclusively through The Eyrie Vineyards by contacting Anneka Miller at 503-472-6315 or [anneka@eyrievineyards.com](mailto:anneka@eyrievineyards.com).



## Corrections

Oregon Wine Press June 2011: Bridgeview Vineyards' Blue Moon label has added the bag in the box packaging to their product line; these will not replace Bridgeview's signature blue bottles, only complement the winery's offerings. OWP regrets this error.



## Shape Shifter

As winemakers throughout Oregon experiment with packaging wine in taller and bigger bottles, they face a perplexing problem: how to ship the various sizes and shapes of bottles in a cost-efficient, single shipping.

Western Pulp Products (WPP) has a solution. The Corvallis-based manufacturer of molded fiber wine shippers recently introduced the 3-6-12XL Vintner's Choice Wine Pack, a new addition to its line of premium molded fiber wine shippers.

The lay-down shipper accommodates a number of extreme bottle profiles, including Burgundy bottles (diameters up to 3.65 inches), high-shouldered Bordeaux bottles and slender Mosel and Alsace-style bottles (up to 14.25 inches tall).

Developed with input from leading consumer-direct fulfillment and supply chain services for the wine industry, the 3-6-12XL wine shipper is compact, cost competitive and able to withstand the hazards of the distribution environment. It also offers a minimum 1-inch clearance around the perimeter for increased protection and shock absorption during storage and shipping.

"Wine bottles have grown taller and fatter over the past several years, creating a packaging challenge for both wineries and fulfillment houses," explained Jim Lee, WPP marketing and sales manager. "Our new design not only accepts multiple bottle profiles from around the world, it allows the carton's depth to remain constant, ensuring more efficient pack out and eliminating the need for multi-scored flaps."

As with all of WPP's wine shippers, the 3-6-12XL is certified by Scientific Certification Systems (SCS) as containing 99 percent post-consumer recycled paper content. WPP has long worked to conserve natural resources and use recovered paper as an important raw material in producing innovative molded fiber packaging. By providing SCS-certified shippers, the wine industry can help meet consumer demand for green products and materials.

For more details: 800-547-3407 or [www.westernpulp.com](http://www.westernpulp.com).