

MARKETING

Catchy name pays dividends in sales

Dirty Laundry label sells more wine than Scherzinger Vineyards

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Ever wonder what Fat Bastard, Little Penguin, Mad Dogs & Englishmen, Wild Pig, Glamour Puss, Seven Deadly Zins and Cat's Pee on a Gooseberry Bush have in common?

They're all different varieties of wine on liquor and wine store shelves, for starters. But they're also part of a growing trend in the wine business that's embracing wild, crazy, and often irrelevant names as a way of standing out from the hundreds of other bottles at your disposal.

Al Bowness, manager of specialty purchasing at the Manitoba Liquor Control Commission, said many of the aforementioned wines have been very successful. "The wine is good," he said. "What's bringing the people to try them is the contemporary packaging."

He said the naming trend is being driven by New World countries, such as Australia, New Zealand and Chile, but Old World nations, such as France and Italy, have recently begun to follow suit.

Cher Watkins, co-owner of Dirty Laundry Vineyard, based in Summerland in British Columbia's Okanagan Valley, said it usually has wine left over at the end of the year. But this spring, after changing its name from Scherzinger Vineyards, its stock was sold out "in a matter of weeks."

"We've had a lot of fun with it," she said in an interview. "The day we put up the new sign on the highway, we were immediately busier."

She said she and her husband, Ron, decided to change the vineyard's moniker because customers had trouble pronouncing and remembering the name.

They enlisted the help of a branding consultant and the result, after picking through hundreds of possible names, was Dirty Laundry. A big part of the attraction was the local connection. In the 1800s, a



Winemakers are employing reverse psychology with brands such as, from-left, Fat Bastard Shiraz from Thierry and Guy, France; le Freak Shiraz Viognier from Thierry and Guy; and Cat's Pee on a Gooseberry Bush Sauvignon Blanc from Cooper's Creek, N.Z.

OTTAWA CITIZEN, CANWEST NEWS SERVICE

Chinese entrepreneur opened the town's first laundromat. But he did more than wash clothes. Upstairs, he also ran a gambling den and a brothel.

Derrick Coupland, partner in Blacksheep Strategy, a Winnipeg-based branding consulting company, said it's a little optimistic for wineries to hope they can get their product in consumers' mouths for the first time because of the name and keep them for the long term.

"For the very same reason you get customers to try your product is the very same reason they'll move on to try another one," he said in an interview.

"They tend to be influenced by trends or fads. They're brand hoppers."

He said if you think of all the wines available in the marketplace today, how many of them are so good that once you try them, you'll never drink anything else?

"A few? None? It's a very risky proposition," he said.

He said Dirty Laundry is going about things the right way by expanding the relationship with consumers by telling its story on its website.

"You want to tie the unique aspects of the company and their brand. If customers relate to it, they'll feel it's unique and the relationship will go beyond the facade of the paper-thin label."

Ear-catching names aren't unique to the wine industry. Around the world, breweries are hoping beer drinkers will try Old Engine Oil (Scotland), La Fin du Monde (Quebec), Blithering Idiot (Pennsylvania), Stumblin' Monk (California) and Dead Frog Beer (British Columbia).

According to Bernie Hadley-Beauregard, a principal at Vancouver-based Brandever Strategy Inc., wine manufac-

turers have for decades named their operations after creeks, valleys or other geographical landmarks. While that made perfect sense to the owner picking grapes in the middle of the vineyard, it did nothing to make its bottles jump off liquor store shelves. "Most people can't remember the name of the wine they had at dinner last night," he said.

Hadley-Beauregard said his motto for smaller players is "safe is dangerous and dangerous is safe" when rebranding a company or product.

He said the naming principle is valid for all industries. For example, when consulting for a group of free-range cattle farmers recently, he coined their new name, "Nomad Cows."

"The play was it's a nomadic herd, they're free. There truly are no mad cows with them," he said.