

GLENORA GETS A

Label Makeover

By Leslie Gurland

DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY GIVES NEW LIFE TO AN OLD LABEL DESIGN

Glenora Wine Cellars updated its label image from the 1970s (left) to give the wines a more contemporary look (right).



sketch of grapes and leaves that had adorned Pierce's flagship wines for the past two vintages.

"As an individual label, it looked great, but when you put it on the retail shelf, it got lost," he said of the 2007-2008 label. "It was also hard to define the wine varietals from the label."

The older glue-applied paper labels were also prone to scuffing during handling, and to slipping off on humid days or in ice buckets – a real liability in the steamy summers along the Finger Lakes.

"We attend lots of wine festivals, so we often have a lot of bottles on ice," Pierce said. "After awhile in the coolers, paper labels can slip and peel, but we want them to look good. And with our restaurant accounts, the wine is often put in an ice bucket. Even if



When Glenora Wine Cellars founder Gene Pierce overhauled the labels for his premium varietal wines, he reached back to a graphic that graced his early bottles in the late 1970s – a woodcut-style image of Glenora Falls, which cascade toward Seneca Lake just below his winery in Dundee, N.Y. But it wasn't simply a matter of reusing the old image. Clever design, careful selection of materials and state-of-the-art printing technology added visual impact and performance that was impossible to imagine three decades ago.

Today, the waterfall on Glenora's durable label shimmers with light, glinting on the shelf to grab shoppers' attention. The label took first place in the 2010 International Gallery of Superb Printing competition, produced by the International Association of Printing House Craftsmen.

The bold label was a welcome change from the soft

AT A GLANCE

- Glenora Wine Cellars in the Finger Lakes used a Glenora label design from the 1970s as inspiration for its new labels.
- New materials and printing technologies allowed the winery to add modern impact and performance to Glenora's labels.
- Glenora's labels were printed on a digital press, which offers the flexibility of quick changes.
- Metallic label stock can create a similar look to hot-foil stamping at a lower cost.

the folks are enjoying the wine, the bottle's still got to look good."

Ultimately, performance of a label can impact sales.

"We'd only had a miniscule number of bottles come back because of label problems, but it's an aesthetic thing – how people judge your product on the shelf," Pierce noted. "If people aren't familiar with your wines, they buy at least the first time by the way the bottle looks on the shelf."

PROFESSIONAL ADVICE

At the suggestion of neighboring winemaker Anna Zugibe, Pierce hired label specialist Christine Witte of Classic Impressions in Great Meadows, N.J., and designer Erin Kelly of Warwick, N.Y., to help him develop labels that looked great and stood up to real-world conditions.

"I kind of knew what I wanted, but I had no idea what was out there, or what we could do," Pierce said. "My business is grapegrowing and making wine. I have a couple of restaurants and an inn, but I've no knowledge of the label business."

In addition to frank advice on designs and colors, Witte and Kelly brought insight on the latest technology in the label business, including a vast array of label stock options, adhesives, coatings and printing technology. When the design was finalized, Witte walked Pierce through the production



Christine Witte (left) and Anita Sparrow review Glenora labels fresh off the HP Indigo digital press.

process to ensure that the labels would turn out just right.

Witte worked with Logotech, a New Jersey label printing company that offers, among several printing technologies, digital printing on an HP Indigo press. The digital press offers the flexibility of quick changes with no need to create new plates, Witte explained.

"Digital printing allowed us to do relatively short runs for each varietal, changing the color and the text for each wine without having to go through the expense of creating new plates or cylinders, like we would have had to do with conven-

tional printing presses," she said. "The sharpness and color control on the digital machine are also outstanding – they're as good as offset printing, which is the gold standard in the industry. And we have a great selection of label materials to print on with the digital system."

METALLIC STOCK

The team chose a metallic silver label stock made of bi-axially oriented polypropylene (BOPP) and backed with an adhesive designed specifically to adhere to glass in cold, wet conditions. Kelly intentionally left some areas of her design bare, allowing the metallic stock to shine through. The result is a look almost identical to hot-stamped foil, which is a higher-cost, high-end technique.

To make the most of the capabilities of the press and the performance of the metallic material, Kelly worked closely with Logotech's prepress manager, Anita Sparrow. Sparrow broke Kelly's design into dozens of layers, gently adjusting colors and density to make Glenora's label quite literally shine. Areas of extra white ink created a rich backdrop for text and additional colors. Softer gra-

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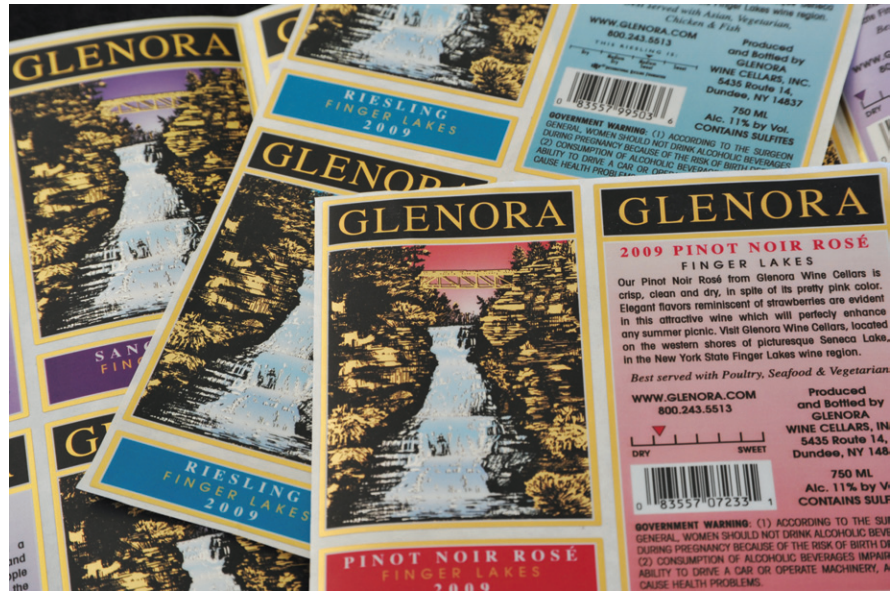
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datations of white and gold let the label material's metallic glint shine through like sunlight on water. A "soft-touch" matte laminate added depth, velvety feel and a 25-micron layer to protect the ink.

"Working on the digital press allowed us to really fine-tune the effects of the ink and metallic substrate," Witte said. "With digital press proofs, we can use the exact materials and inks on the press that will actually be doing the job, so we can see precisely what the label is going to look like. With conventional proofs, there's always an element of guessing involved because you're actually dealing with a different process and different stock than the finished products. Digital proofs are perfectly accurate."

"Lots of times in the past we would get mock-ups, but until you actually printed the label and did the run, you never knew what you'd get," Pierce said. "With this process, we knew exactly what we



Metallic label stock overprinted with rich inks provides glimmers of light and a vibrant palette of colors to differentiate Glenora wines on the shelf.

were going to get before the first label was run. For those of us who are not artistic and a little color-

blind, that was great. I didn't have to look at a PMS chart and guess

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what the final colors would look like.”

FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

Pierce said his new labels perform beautifully in ice buckets and on the shelf, and they also work smoothly on his new pressure-sensitive labeling machine, part of a new bottling line he invested in last year. He’s now working with Witte and Kelly on labels for nearly two dozen branded blends and fruit wines.

“Perception is extremely impor-

tant,” he said. “Everything you do should be top-quality. If I were to give any advice, I’d say don’t just look at the label design, know who’s doing the printing and what options are available to you. We’re grapegrowers and winemakers, not label industry people. We sometimes don’t realize the choices we have now.” ■

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Leslie Gurland is president of Logotech Inc., based in New Jersey. She is treasurer of the Northeast Label Manufacturers Association

(NELMA), and has spoken at several packaging conferences.

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 Comments? Please e-mail us at feedback@vwm-online.com.

DOLLAR FOR DOLLAR

Comparison shopping for labels is a maddening task. Dozens of variables – from the stock it will be printed on to the width of the press and the length of the run – contribute to the price of a label, so it’s rare to find apples-to-apples comparisons. But there are a few considerations to keep in mind that could help you decide which printing technology would pencil-out best for you.

The most significant factors include:

Plates: In traditional printing technologies – offset, letterpress and flexographic presses – each color is represented by its own plate, which has to be etched out of a durable plastic or metal sheet and wrapped around a drum. Plate costs can rack up quickly – on letterpress, each one can cost \$85-\$90, and offset plates can cost even more. Match colors, such as specific PMS colors, require plates of their own.

Sometimes, thick white areas on labels require two plates or silkscreens on the same job – Glenora Wine Cellars’ waterfall label could require more than a dozen. Any change in color or content – including vintage or alcohol percentage – requires replacing one or more

plates. If you have a long run and few changes, however, you can spread the cost of plates across thousands of labels. Shorter runs – 20,000 labels or less – may benefit quickly from plate-free digital printing.

Length of the run: In addition to the cost of plates, short runs on traditional presses can be expensive because of the amount of time required for setup before the run and clean-up afterward. On a short run, a higher proportion of material is lost in the make-ready stage, getting presses aligned and up to speed.

Hot-stamping: Stamping metallic foil to create highlights on a label can be an elegant effect, but it can also be costly. Hot-stamp dies can cost \$1,000 or more, and there are often fees for the time and material the process adds to production. Gene Pierce at Glenora uses a metallic, polypropylene label stock to create the look of hot stamping at a much lower cost.

Creating labels is like creating wine – there are a lot of variables in play, and every winery is going to have its own tastes and approach that suits it best. Sit down with your label supplier and explore the options that best meet your needs. – L.G.

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