

The “Cleanskin” Market – a perspective.

Brendan Hilferty, The Wine Point, Sydney NSW

As we all know the wine market is pretty bloody competitive at the moment so for all wineries, not just small wineries, its time to start looking at different routes to market.

City retailers and restaurants all want some sort of bonus deal, cellar door sales are seasonal and unpredictable, heavy discounting to the majors spells the death knell for your brand. Generating cash flow and moving stock as a cleanskin and might be an option.

As Sydney’s only dedicated “cleanskin” specialist retailer I’m increasingly being approached by wineries looking to move stock – and increasingly I’m seeing wineries being unrealistic in what they are offering me. In essence what I’m doing, and plenty of other independent retailers as well, is rebranding these wines as their own. Any retailer worth his or her salt is not going to sell an inferior wine under they’re own label so here’s a couple of ideas you might consider.

As always in this game it is about the relationships with the customers. Respect that and don’t offer the dregs. I see plenty of bretty reds, oxidised whites and occasionally wines that are just plain scary. I don’t expect your super premium (though don’t discount the option) but I do want a wine that isn’t riddled with faults. I want wines that are of sound quality, reflect the regional style, offer interest to my customers and offer good value. Is that asking too much?

Which brings me to pricing – think about what it has really cost you, and what the options might have been. For example, \$50 a case might not sound like much for your baby, but that’s still \$3.5 k a tonne. Ok packaging, shipping and winemaking is going to take a lump out of it but even then it is probably more than you’re going to get for the fruit on the spot market. And don’t forget the WET rebate, assuming Swanny doesn’t take it off us in the budget there’s another 29%. You might actually make some money out of it, and not have to deal with agents, trade shows and retailers holding out for “supplier support” cash.

And if you look after your customer they’ll keep coming back and you might be able to move some of your branded stock too. So if the option is there don’t label up everything. There might be more sale opportunities than you think.

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