

WINES&VINES

65 Mitchell Blvd., Ste. A, San Rafael, CA 94903 • (866) 453-9701 • www.winesandvines.com

Tips on Buying Labels

The choice of paper used for labels depends in part on the type of equipment used for labeling. For manual labeling, a heavier paper is preferred, usually an 80 lb. stock. A lighter 60 lb. stock is better for automatic equipment. The type of paper is also important. A 70 lb. smooth paper works well on an automatic labeler; a 60 lb. weight is essential for a linen finish because of the grooves.

Paper, like wood, has a grain, and the grain determines which way the paper curls. Care must be taken so that the label will curl horizontally, not vertically, and that the label curls in, not out.

Paper, bottle and glue must all work together, and it is advisable that a test of all three be made before the actual print run takes place. In addition to finding a compatible glue, some bottles may have chemical residues on them that will affect the final choice of glue.

Since paper is an unstable product that can be affected by humidity, temperature and the nature of the paper itself, proper storage of labels is important. Labels should be properly wrapped and kept in a dry place. Labels should be placed in the bottling area at least 24 hours before they will be used.

A variety of coatings are available to help protect the label against scuffing. Labels are susceptible to scuffing and other damage, and you should consider varnish or another protective coating.

When having labels printed, order more than you think you will need: 200 extra if 1,000 are being printed, and 5,000 if 50,000 are being printed. To avoid wasting good printed labels, ask the printer for blank labels to use when starting up the labeling equipment.

Standardizing on one size and shape of label may result in a saving on printing costs. Having two or more labels printed at one time can also mean worthwhile savings. Using a printer with experience in printing labels is a good idea, no matter how knowledgeable you are. A good printer will be aware of the need for government approvals, the compatibility of glue, and paper grain. Above all, the printer is a good double check; it can be dangerous to make all decisions oneself.

Blake Printery in San Luis Obispo, California, has developed a ten-step approach to the label process:

1. Decide on marketing and distribution.
2. Choose a designer.
3. Select a label design and get printing estimates.
4. Select your label printer.
5. Finalize the design and secure tentative approval from BATF or other governmental agency.
6. Test run your label paper, glue and bottles.
7. Check all specifications with winery personnel and the printer.

8. Get final approval from applicable governmental regulatory agency.
9. Proofread the label again and check UPC codes if used.
10. Store labels properly prior to bottling.