

MARKETING

Retro designs unlock US doors

Gemma McCarthy

Two of McLaren Vale's small wine producers have taken a step up and created original wine brands with a distinctly retro feel for US markets.

The team at Shottesbrooke in McLaren Flat have created a new youth-focused brand called the Engine Room, which is targeted at North America's non-wine-focused drinkers.

Winemaker Hamish Maguire says the target market is 21 to 39 year olds who want a quality wine to enjoy with friends, without the wine jargon.

"The Engine Room brand came about because we wanted to focus on developing international markets, and we didn't want to do that with our Shottesbrooke brand, which has a very strong domestic following and consistent sales," he said.

"We chose the name 'Engine Room' because that's where I work as a winemaker and it's really the heart of the whole operation."

The front label of the 2005 Engine Room Shiraz tells the story of a winemaker's day by using a range of facial images in a 1950s style.

Hamish says they decided to remove the traditional back label because the target market is not interested in reading tasting notes. "We want to capture them with the label and the imagery and the quality of the wine without over-powering them with wine-speak," he said.

In the same way, the 2006 Chardonnay Sauvignon Semillon tells the story of the winemaker's wife—the Vintage Widow—who looks very similar to Marilyn Monroe.

The Shiraz label reflects Hamish's individual personality through a clever design that even features a stylised



The original 'Mollydookers', Sparky and Sarah Marquis with Mollydooker's original design for 2006 'The Violinist' Verdelho and Mollydooker's premium 2005 'Carnival of Love' Shiraz.

version of his own face.

"What is in that bottle is my decision because I created the wine. This branding design brings the personality of the winemaker to the public, which gives it that human element. That's what non-wine centric consumers are interested in," he said.

"We wanted the product to have a point of difference and have something that would intrigue consumers."

Hamish believes this will help consumers relate to the wine in a personal way. "You have to pick up the bottle to be able to see the whole story which looks similar to a comic strip, so it grabs your attention. This branding encourages consumers to ask 'What's this all about?' and 'What does it

mean?'," he said.

The branding is in stark contrast to the Shottesbrooke brand, started by Hamish's stepfather Nick Holmes in 1984 and named after Nick's grandfather, Richard, who was the rector at the Shottesbrooke church in Berkshire, England, from 1905 to 1926.

The Engine Room is due for release in March. "We are wholeheartedly behind this label and excited at the prospects and possibilities of where this could go for a family business like Shottesbrooke," Hamish said.

"We see this brand complementing our already successful Shottesbrooke label well into the future. It has invigorated the business because of the injection of specialist knowledge that's come from

consultants on this project."

Another new and quirky wine label gaining attention in the US is Mollydooker, from Sarah and Sparky Marquis.

Mollydooker, which is Aussie slang for a left-hander, was launched last July. "The label design really reflects the trials and tribulations that you go through when you're left handed," Sarah said.

She grew up trying to play the violin with her right hand to fit in with the rest of the orchestra, which inspired the label for the 2006 'The Violinist' Verdelho.

There are similar stories behind the suite of \$20 wines, all featuring individual labels, reminiscent of a 1930s Broadway vaudeville style.

"The 2005 Maitre D Cabernet was named after Sparky because that was his job when I met him; the 2005 Two Left Feet Shiraz Merlot Cabernet

because he always stands on my feet when we're dancing; and the 2005 The Boxer Shiraz just represents the fact that it's a knock-out wine," Sarah said.

Unbelievably, Mollydooker sold 22,000 cases in the US within three weeks of the release, thanks in part to a rave review by Robert Parker. "The success has been a dream come true. The label designs have inspired a cult-like following in the US. We had a newly married couple contact us to say they have a case of Mollydooker but no furniture. People are even ringing us to say they want to frame the artwork," Sarah said.

Sarah says no matter the market, the most important factor is they represent the personalities of the makers.

"It was about being left-handed, and about being a bit different. We wanted the labels to look good, and to have a

personal touch," she said.

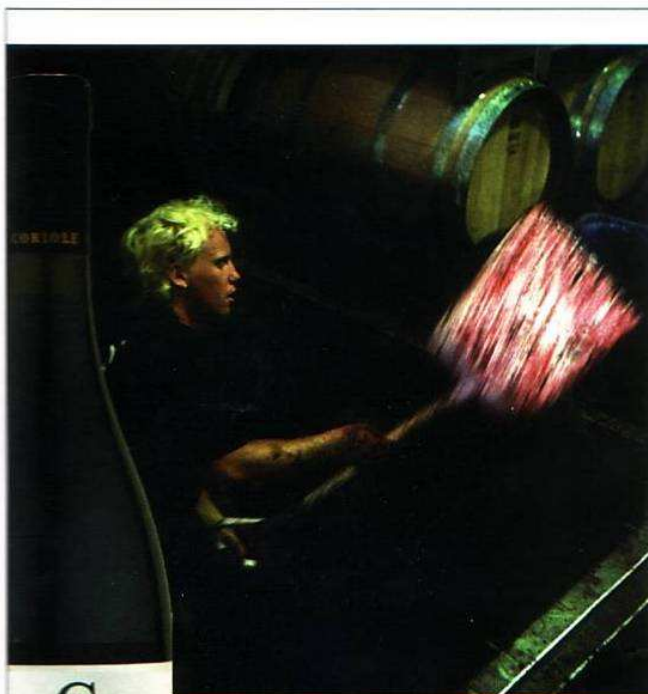
The Marquis have a strong association with McLaren Vale. They previously worked for Shirvington, and Sarah's parents own Fox Creek.

Mollydooker fruit is sourced from McLaren Vale, Langhorne Creek and Padthaway, and the wine is processed at Boar's Rock in the Vale.

Mollydooker recently released two new \$60 premium wines, the 2005 'Enchanted Path' Shiraz Cabernet and the 2005 'Carnival of Love' Shiraz.

In 2007, Mollydooker's 2006 'The Velvet Glove' Shiraz will be released at a retail price of US\$175 per bottle.

Both the Engine Room and Mollydooker brands encapsulate the unique spirit that makes McLaren Vale such a cutting edge region. Is it any wonder the Yanks can't get enough!



a labour of love.

Coriole Vineyards Chaffey's Road, McLaren Vale
shiraz sangiovese chenin blanc



International and domestic trade inquiries direct to sales@shottesbrooke.com.au or 08 8383 0002