

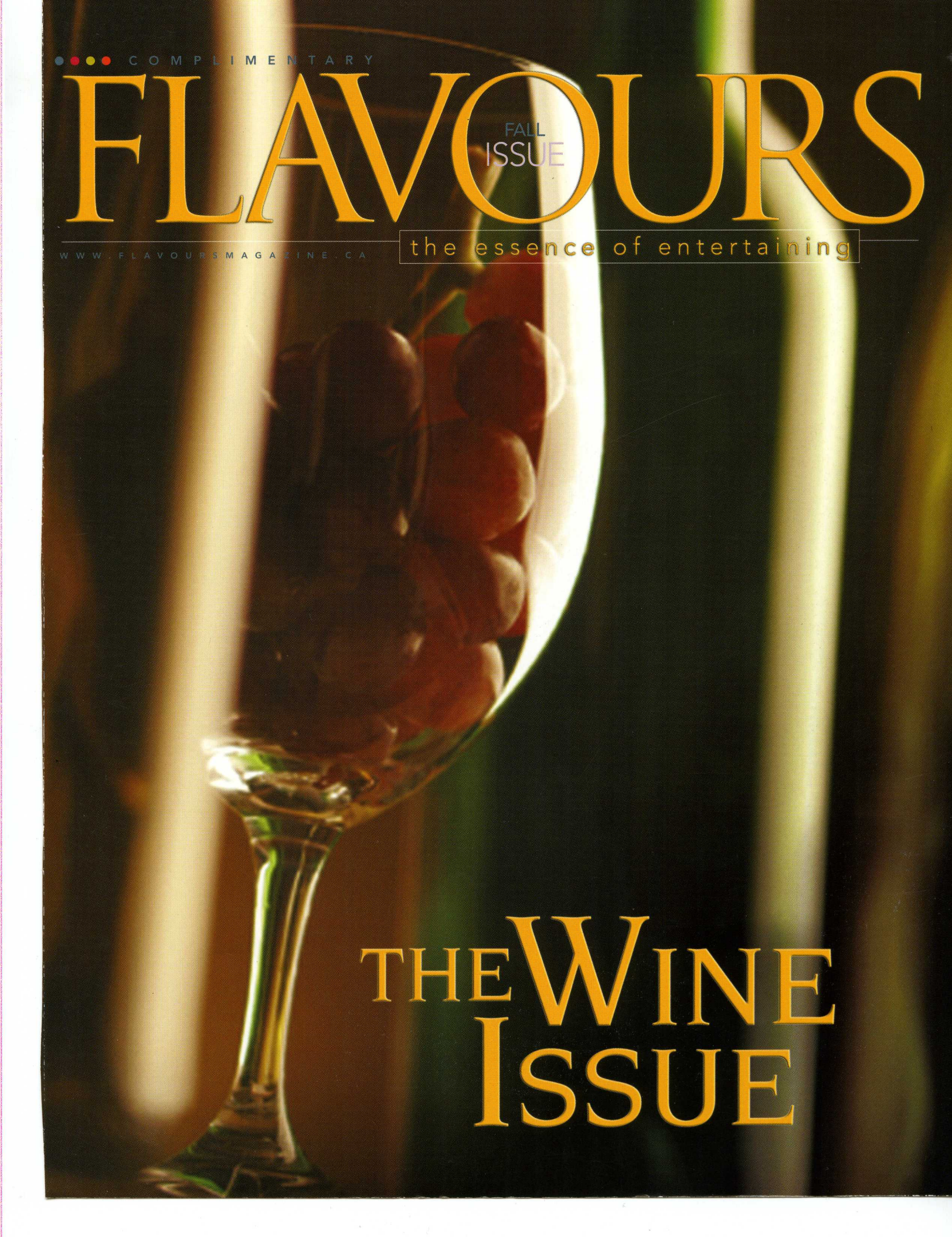
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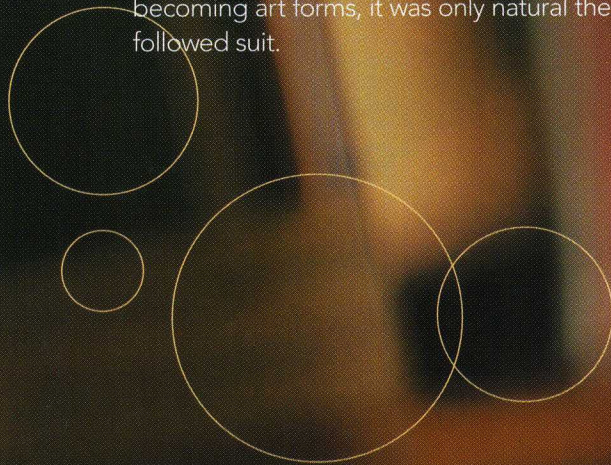
THE WINE
ISSUE

... Art Or Not?



A LOOK AT THE DESIGN
IN FRONT OF THE WINE
By Michelle Greysen

ALTHOUGH ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES
may have had their beginning as an
unintended fermentation of honey or grape juice
more than 5,000 years ago, the art of labelling the
wine bottle has become anything but an accident.
With both wine making and wine tasting truly
becoming art forms, it was only natural the labels
followed suit.



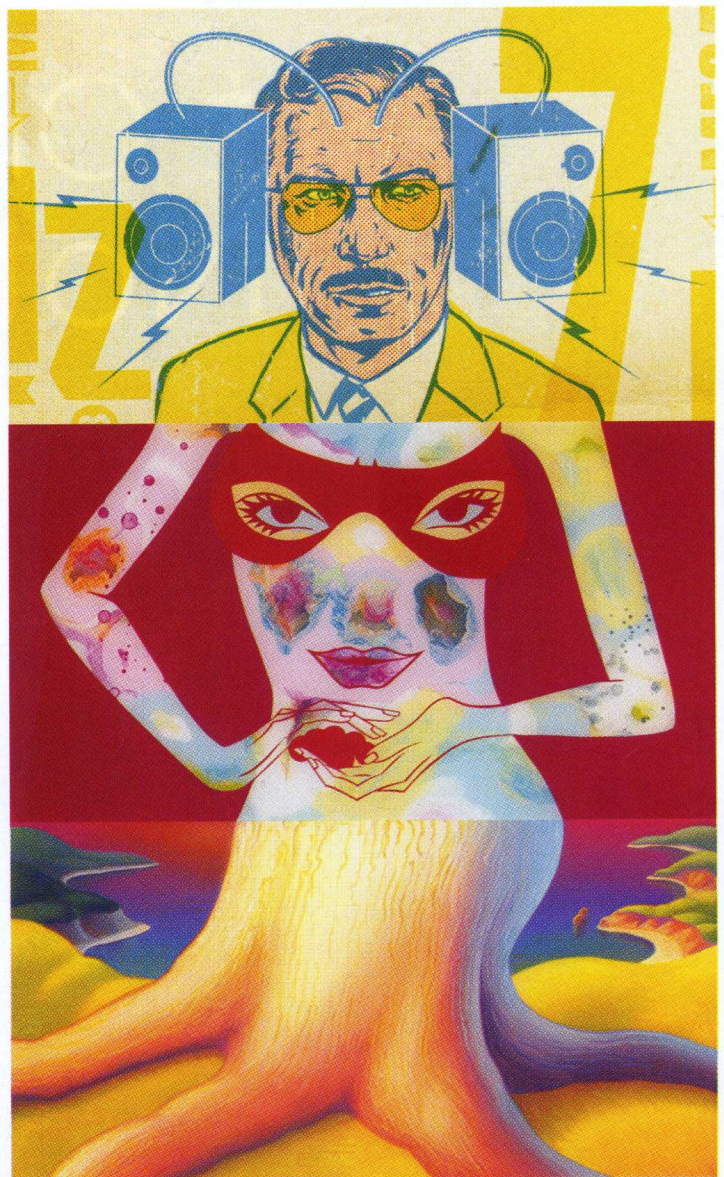
PHOTOGRAPHY: BRIAN GOULD

Art Or Not?

An interesting and attractive label has a huge impact on product promotion and consumer selection, but the ability to marry the bottles' contents with the right label is fast becoming the true art behind the wine. The key to successfully producing a great wine is a marriage of experience, passion and quality ingredients, but the more beautiful the package, the more likely the bottle will beg from the shelf to be taken home.

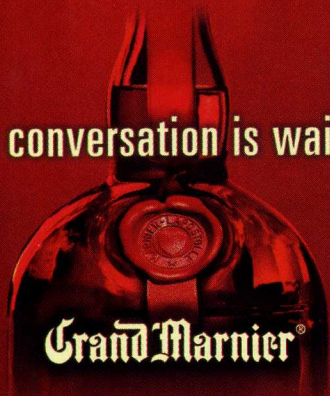
**Shut down
your computer.**

**Restart
a friendship.**

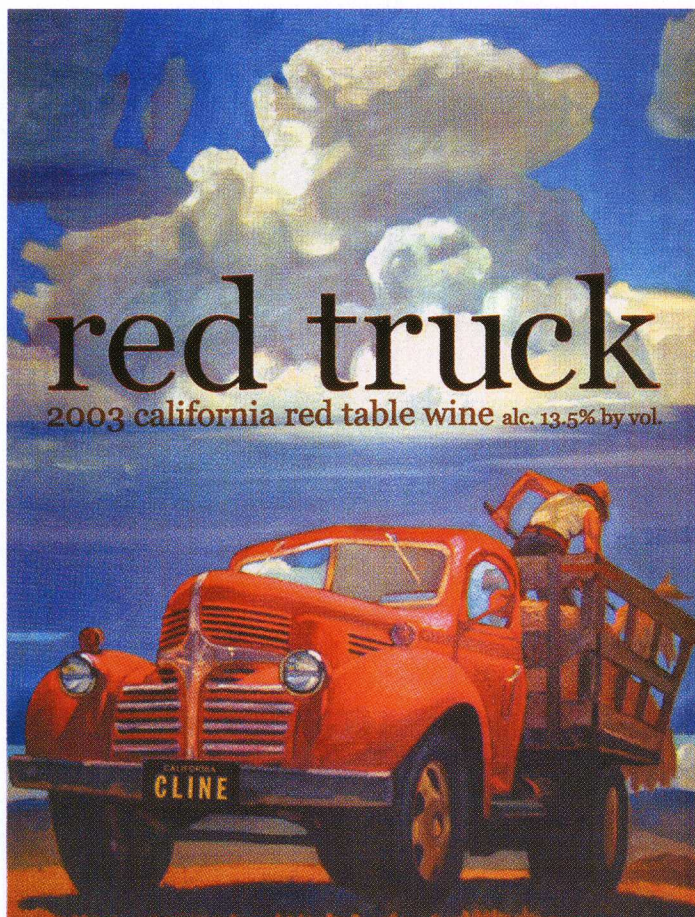


BONNYDOON'S EXQUISITE CORPSE WINE LABEL

The conversation is waiting.™



Art Or Not?



CALIFORNIA'S CLINE CELLARS RED TRUCK WINE LABEL

Is the art commissioned for the wine or is the wine the muse for the art? The answer is both. Although the label has to make the consumer want to pick up the bottle, the wine inside has to make them come back for more. Either method has to produce marketing success as the psychology of labelling heats up worldwide.

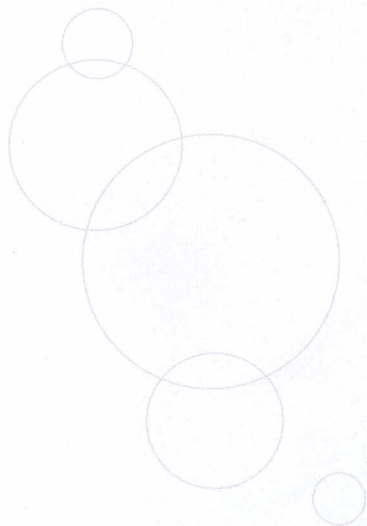
The days of family crests, landscapes or grape clusters are being left behind for labels that capture feelings such as power, love, joy or well-being. The old passé labels of staunch traditional masculinity featuring a wolf or a hawk have been made over. In the new look of the metro-sexual male in the not-to-be-taken-too-seriously category is California's Cline Cellars with its Red Truck wine. Available in both red and white, its reported bright fresh character is not unlike the bright fresh label featuring a vivid red 1947 Dodge Stakeside.

Bonny Doon Vineyard in Santa Cruz, Calif., has to be one of the best examples of whimsical art meets powerful marketing with labels practically shouting out from the bottle "I'm fun—take me home!" The website offers the Doontoons animated story lines behind many of the proclaimed 'Python-meets-South Park' labelling of Bonny Doon's wines. Its self-dubbed 'alternative Dooniverse' works its way off the label and into every aspect of its marketing right down to a published mantra of "Have as much fun with wine as the relevant government agencies will allow."

Bonny Doon's Exquisite Corpse wine claims to have drawn the name from a 1925 Paris parlor game in which a piece of paper was passed from one person to another with each one writing a word on the sheet and folding it over as to conceal it from the next player. Once everyone had written something, the final sentence was revealed. One of the results from its initial playing was "Le cadavre exquis boira le vin nouveau" (The exquisite corpse drinks the new wine), which led to how the game got its name.

The notoriety of the Exquisite Corpse word game was the inspiration for the creation of three images by three different artists illustrating one section each of the head, top and trunk, resulting in the modern abstract label of Exquisite Corpse wine.

A Canadian winery rivaling the visual greats of Bonny Doon is Summerhill Pyramid Winery in Kelowna, B.C. At the 9th Annual British Columbia Wine Label Awards, its Star Galaxy series, which features a '59 Ford Galaxy on a romp through the Okanagan Valley, was a winner in the Domestic Label category. Artist Bernie Hadley-Beauregard, famous for his Blasted Church labels, created this retro art label series. With three wines in the line (a white, red and rosé), The Star Galaxy white label has a lost couple consulting a map, the red has them back on their way passing a colourful billboard featuring Summerhill and finally, the rosé highlights the end of their journey with them enjoying a romantic picnic on the edge of the winery. The labels are fun and bright with deep purples and greens, which captures the feeling of these quaffable wines.



Art Or Not?



B.C.'S SUMMERHILL STAR GALAXY RED WINE LABEL

If you were in a wine store and making your selection based on the label's appeal, the choices would be endless. But for some people, it doesn't matter what's inside the bottle, but rather how much they can impress a host or hostess with a gift beyond the beverage.

A romantic evening can now start with gazing at a pair of seductive legs doing a tango on Argentina's Bodega Norton estate bottled Lo Tongo, billed as the perfect partner to dance the night away with. For the bird lover there are endless choices from Pelee Island Winery including flowers, butterflies, poppies and even lizards. Smoking Loon from Sebastiani actually sports a cigarette-sucking loon, and Australia's Simon Gilbert offers up cats and roosters to compete with Hardy's koalas, kangaroos and cuckoo birds.

Although there is a great deal of thought and purpose that go into the design of a wine label, some of the more traditional wineries in France, Italy and Germany prefer to stick to the purer art found in the classic scenes of picturesque seascapes, valleys and beautiful women.

Short of cracking open a bottle of wine right in the store, it's difficult to tell from the label what you're going to get. Sure, the mandatory information on the front will tell you the grape varietal, alcohol strength and vintage, but the optional tasting notes on the bottle may not always aptly describe what's inside.

In the fiercely competitive industry of wine merchandising, one can only conclude that for the less-savvy consumer buying bottles based on eye-candy, a scratch-and-sniff label can't be that far away! **FM**

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