

THE WINE CLINIC



Craig Phillips

Craig Isbel

Jody Tucker

Running with a dog's tale

Nothing represents Australian farming life more than the working farm dog. A brown kelpie on the back of the ute has long been the visual representation of life on the land.

Increasingly the winery dog is gaining recognition. The book *Wine Dogs* profiled some of the cutest and most well-trained mutts from wineries all over the country, celebrating their contribution to the character of a winery.

But what about a dog on a wine label? Is it an example of a winery creating a brand based around their own interests, with no thought of the consumer? Or is it a clever way to tell the brand story and develop an emotional connection?

This Wine Clinic includes two dog-based brands, Diggers Bluff and Ben's Run. They both use the label to open the door to tell a story about the brand.

Speaking at the Zork stand at WineTech, Booze Brothers director Adrian Saturno gave some advice on building a small wine brand.

"Understand the market, understand the retailer, get close to the retailer. Have a story to tell, keep him informed," Adrian said.

"We can't just stand there and not have a story to tell. You need to give us a story so that we can tell the consumer, 'look, don't buy that bottle of commercial wine, buy this one here, it's a little bit different.'"

Diggers Bluff is a great example of having a story that's quirky, short and full of character.

Winemaker and owner Tim O'Callaghan tells the story better than anyone.

"Diggers Bluff is named after my Rottweiler who passed away last week," Tim said. "He was born on Anzac Day so we called him Digger. His appearance makes people walk on the other side of the road, but really he was as timid and quiet as it gets. Every year for his birthday we gave him a bowl of Kahlua and milk and a PAL birthday cake."

The story takes less than a minute to tell, is easily remembered, full of character, very Australian and is easily represented visually on a label, a fact not lost on Tim.

"I just got back from Singapore and everyone loved the story. People get sick of the technical jargon and probably forget it straight way. Whereas a good little yarn is something that they can take away with them and tell their customers or friends," he said.

The discussion on the merits of telling a story took place at The Manse Restaurant in North Adelaide. Joining regular panellists Craig Phillips, sommelier and wine buyer for The Manse Restaurant, Farina and the Queens Head Hotel, and Jody Tucker of Tucker Creative, was Craig Isbel, winemaker for Torbreck and creator of the funky new label Isways.

Ben's Run 2004 Shiraz

RRP \$13

Presentation: Premium looking bottle and design. Moody image that demands closer attention.

Wine style: Hints of blackberry, mocha and tobacco that follows through to a well balanced palate.

Value for money: A bargain.

Summing up: A professional package that overdelivers, could easily sell for \$3 to \$5 more.

Temple Bruer 2007 Cabernet Merlot (Organic and Preservative Free)

RRP \$19.50

Presentation: There is nothing organic looking about the label. Highlighting the fact that it is preservative free is a good idea, but by making it red it looks more like a warning.

Wine style: Fruit driven and varietal with a touch of chocolate, cassis and blackberry.

Value for money: Excellent.

Summing up: A good preservative free wine, but the label could do with a refresh.

Angove's Nine Vines Rose

RRP \$14

Presentation: Feminine and approachable package suited to a young female market. The photo however is not great quality.

Wine style: Confectionery fruit, rose water and white flowers characters, very sweet.

Value for money: Good.

Summing up: Made, packaged and priced well to suit a target market.

Mount Riley Sauvignon Blanc

RRP \$17

Presentation: The image provides a good sense of place. Linking the brand directly with Marlborough by having them close together is clever. Unnecessary to highlight the words 'New Zealand' in gold, makes it hard to read and looks overdone.

Wine style: Varietal with cut grass, passionfruit and tomato bush aromas. Crisp and clean with good length.

Value for money: Good.

Summing up: A good overall package, but too much bling.



THE WINES

Oyster Bay 2006 Pinot Noir

RRP \$24.99

Presentation: Traditional, strong brand, however the image looks a little gloomy in these colours.

Wine style: Bright varietal nose that carries through to a spicy, savoury and focused palate.

Value for money: Good—fits in well with other Pinots in this price point.

Summing up: A safe package and a safe wine.

Diggers Bluff 2004 Stray Dog GSM

RRP \$16

Presentation: Good earthy colours and a great image that ties into a fun story. For a simple label the image has great depth. Label colour doesn't quite match the colour of the closure.

Wine style: Smoky bacon fat and mint aromas. Spicy palate with some mint, a hint of eucalypt and firm tannins.

Value for money: Excellent.

Summing up: A strong package, could develop into a cult wine.

Printhe 2006 Merlot

RRP \$17

Presentation: A well laid out label, but a non-descript image. The back label goes part way to explaining it, but ultimately it's a little puzzling. Black on red is hard to read.

Wine style: Fruit driven with sour cherry, blackberry and a hint of mint.

Value for money: Good.

Summing up: A good bottle shape and an interesting label helps give it a point of differentiation.

Steeple Jack Cabernet Sauvignon

RRP \$11

Presentation: It's bright, attention grabbing, non traditionalist and fun. Good branding on the closure. Not crazy about the colour though.

Wine style: Upfront fruit with blackcurrant and stewed fruit characters.

Value for money: Appropriate.

Summing up: A good entry level package that doesn't take itself too seriously.

To submit your wine for review in The Wine Clinic, post your bottle, tasting note and RRP to WBM Wine Clinic, 58 Rundle Street Kent Town, SA 5067. For further information phone WBM on (08) 8362 3122.