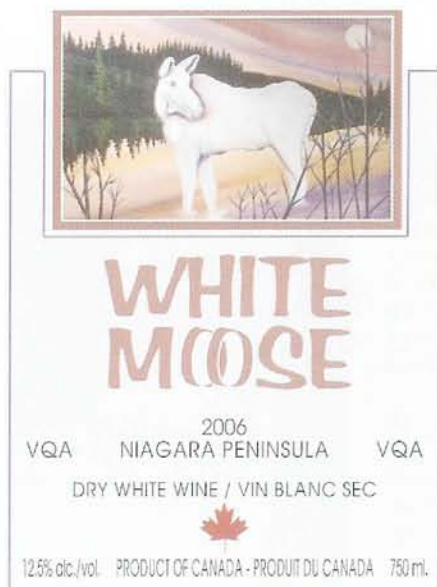




The Ministry of Tourism liked the Konzelmann Winery Red Moose label so much it is using it as part of a poster series to promote Canada around the world.



A CREATIVE ADDITION TO ANY WINE RACK

Tania Fera-VanGent discovers the changing face of Niagara wines

NIAGARA'S NEWEST WINE LABELS SHOULD READ – beware: not for the faint of heart.

SonOfaBitch, Vainglorious, Coldhearted, Narcissistic – these are not insults but Niagara's newest funky wine labels identifying a Pinot Noir, Merlot Cab, icewine and Riesling. These labels, part of the John Howard Cellars of Distinction Megalomaniac line, are changing the face of wine in the Niagara Region. And the man behind the new kitsch wine labels is Vancouver's Bernie Hadley-Beauregard of Brandever Strategy Inc.

Hadley-Beauregard believes the wine industry in Niagara is conservative, and most wineries opt for a more classical aesthetic. He compares the Niagara market to Vancouver five years ago when wine labels emulated the Old World. The Vancouver market has since changed significantly, and Niagara is heading in the same direction.

Today in Niagara, "consumers are open to new and exciting ways to brand wine ... in fact, they demand it," says Hadley-Beauregard. Wine labels are progressing with time and in doing so they are becoming less snobby and more approachable.

For all marketing, Hadley-Beauregard takes a fun, fresh approach. This mandate made Brandever a perfect match for Niagara College's Teaching Winery as the two

have recently paired to create new original labels. Niagara College labels are colourful, flirty and hip and feature Niagara-on-the-Lake buildings strategically placed while students are socializing and working. The latest labels take a different turn. Symbolizing the strong connection between the wine industry and student learning, the labels are report cards and the wine scored by a wine critic – the first vintage is being graded by Tony Aspler, wine critic and acclaimed author.

The uniqueness central to Brandever's marketing strategy is reinventing the wine industry in Niagara, and the catchy label is key. This movement away from old world traditionalism marks a turn in history for Niagara wines. Industry leader, Jansin Ozkur, Director of Marketing at Konzelmann Winery, is following suit with unique, jazzy labels. Ozkur agrees that wine labels should be a subject of conversation at the table. He has witnessed the importance of marketing first-hand when introducing their new wine, Zweigelt. An Austrian grape variety, Konzelmann used a traditional label to market the wine. (Zweigelt is a cross between Lemberger and St. Laurent grapes with a deep ruby red colour while being soft and velvety.) It is not a common wine to the area so most consumers were unfamiliar with it.

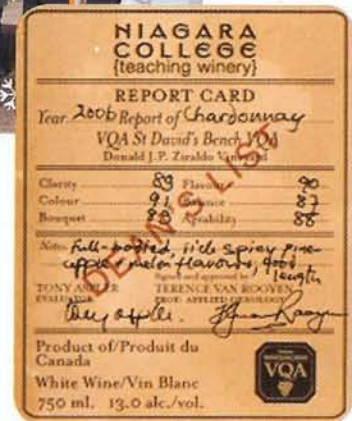
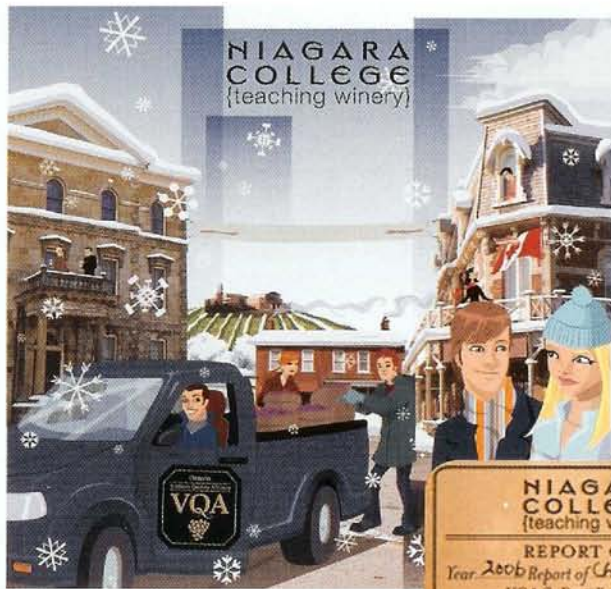
When it continued to be passed over by consumers for the more common Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon, the marketing team at Konzelmann decided to change the label. After careful deliberation, they decided upon a Red Moose – chosen because the moose is a Canadian animal and the wine goes well with game or beef. Once the Red Moose label was launched, Zweigelt began to fly off the shelves.

Ozkur, both a photographer and graphic designer, today is creating his newest funky label – The White Moose. After the success of the Red Moose, the Konzelmann team wanted to have a mate for the moose, and so the White Moose was born, a female white moose for one of their white wines. "I had heard that white moose existed in Ontario and several people have claimed to have seen them ... after a little research I came across a painting by native artist Betty Martin, she had sanctioned a painting of a white moose from a photograph someone had given her, and following several discussions we purchased the painting and the rights to use it on our wine labels," explains Ozkur.

The painting and Martin's story will be displayed on the White Moose wine label (due for release shortly) and the Konzelmann Wine Boutique will house Martin's White Moose artwork. Ozkur believes the White Moose to be even more special than the Red Moose, "[it's] a unique Canadian animal, painted by a Canadian native artist and the wine is made in Canada."

Who knows what we will see popping up on shelves in the future?

It is a groundbreaking time for wine labels in the Niagara Region. So while walking by Cat's Pee On A Gooseberry Bush...and a Fat Bastard – watch out for a White Moose. NMI



The man behind the face of both the Megalomaniac line and the Niagara College's Teaching Winery labels is Vancouver's Bernie Hadley-Beauregard of Brandever Strategy Inc.

