



The Front Burner

**YOU MAY BE LOOSING CUSTOMERS
AND NEVER KNOW IT**

(page 6)

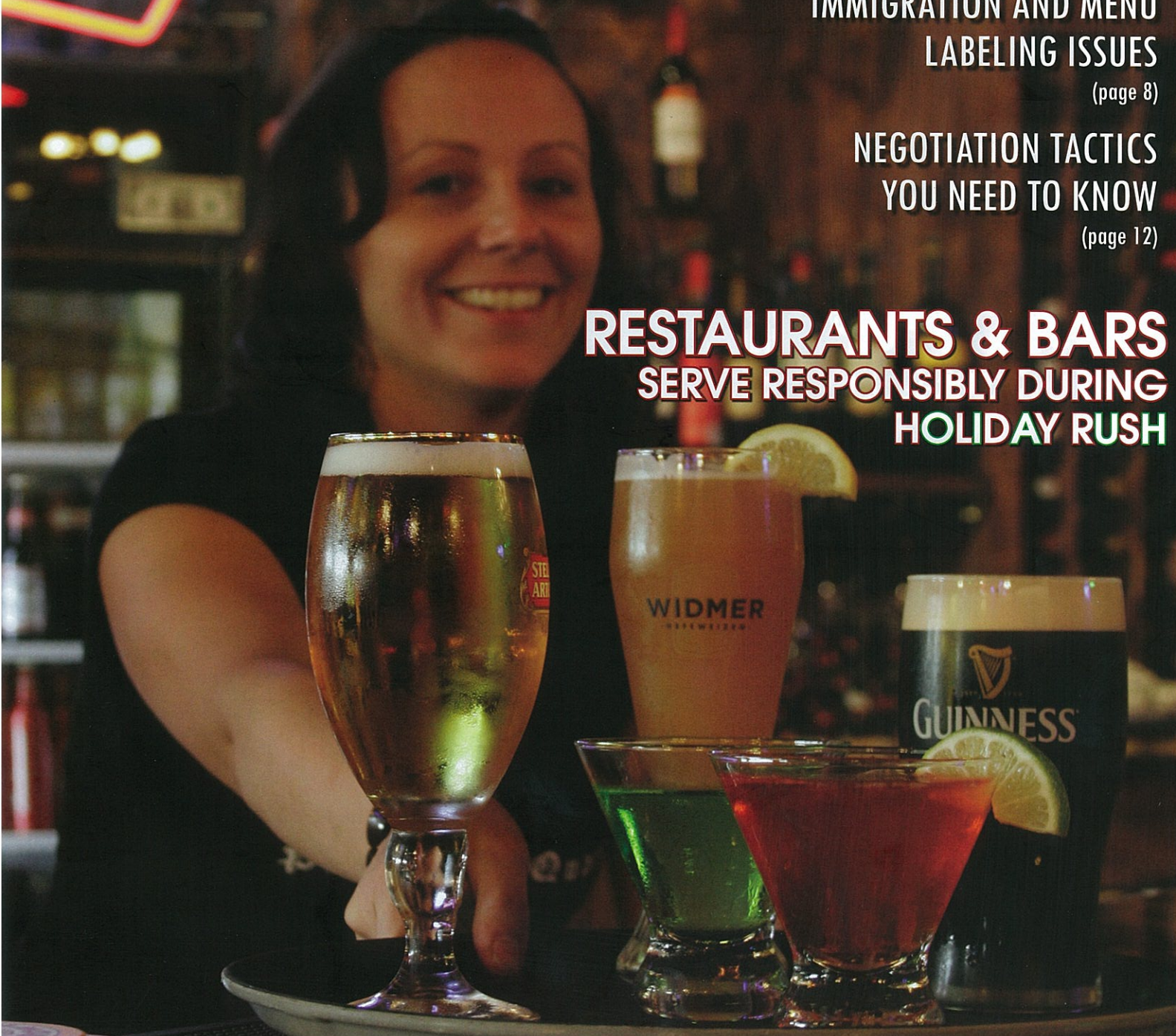
**IMMIGRATION AND MENU
LABELING ISSUES**

(page 8)

**NEGOTIATION TACTICS
YOU NEED TO KNOW**

(page 12)

**RESTAURANTS & BARS
SERVE RESPONSIBLY DURING
HOLIDAY RUSH**

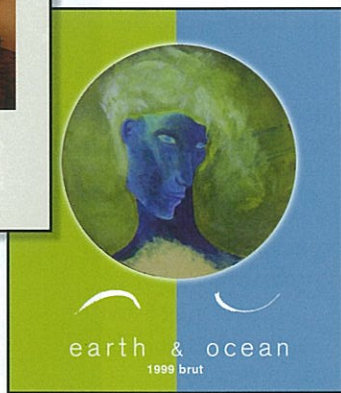
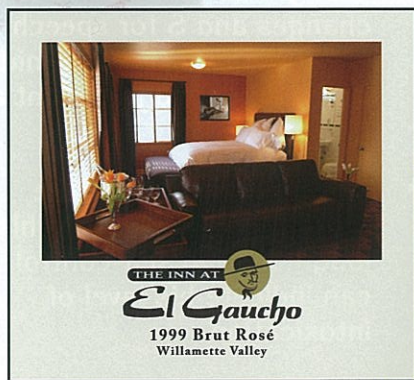




Custom label wine

Lure customers,
secure profits
now... and into
the new year

By Bob Delf



Can serving a custom label wine boost your restaurant's profits? Some of the top restaurants across the state say the marketing benefits are priceless.

"In the long run it makes a profit," says Sandra Wright, Mackay Restaurants' director of sales and marketing. "But it's really about lifetime loyalty of the customer, which you can't put a price on."

Mackay Restaurants offer Northwest Cellars Brut and Brut Rosé sparkling wines. Each custom label is tailored to the character of its distinctive restaurants and hotels: El Gaucho and Inn at El Gaucho, Seattle; Waterfront Seafood Grill, Seattle; Troiani Ristorante Italiano, Seattle; and Sea Grill, Tacoma.

Northwest Cellars, based in Kirkland, Wash., specializes in creating high-quality, affordable wines with private labels. Its client list includes about a dozen restaurants in the Pacific Northwest.

"When we were making a decision about this product, we did a side by side tasting with Billecart-Salmon (champagne)," said Dominique Calle, Inn at El Gaucho manager. "The Northwest Cellars Brut Rosé actually paired better with El Gaucho's food. I felt very comfortable putting our logo on this quality product."

El Gaucho, winner of two Wine Spectator "Best of Awards of Excellence," uses its custom label for celebrations and special events.

Last Christmas, Mackay Restaurants sent its custom label wine to over 100 VIP guests, in each of its restaurants, including Waterfront Seafood Grill, the Washington Wine Commission's 2007 Restaurant of the Year.

"Our guests were impressed with the quality," said Christian Sparkman, Waterfront Seafood Grill general manager. "Another great thing is, we're in their house. The wine is in the fridge, in front of them, and so is Waterfront Seafood Grill."

Northwest Cellars works with several of the top winemakers in Oregon and Washington. The process begins by barrel tasting hundreds of wines to select the best. Then the winemakers go to work, creating custom blends that often can be found only through Northwest Cellars.

"It's a remarkably good value," Sparkman said. "It's high quality with accessibility of price. It makes good fiscal sense."

Red blends from Northwest Cellars typically include Cabernet, Merlot, Syrah or Cabernet Franc. White blends are most often made from Chardonnay, Viognier, Semillon or Sauvignon Blanc.

Sparkling wines, made in authentic champagne style, are usually blended from Chardonnay and Pinot Noir. Wholesale prices range from \$7.95 to \$15.50 per bottle.

The unique, personal touch of a private label drew the attention of the W Hotel, Seattle, Wash. Designing a label for its Earth and Ocean restaurant was an inside job. A bartender at the restaurant created the label artwork. The Brut and Brut Rosé are sold by the glass as the house sparkling wine, and are blended into some specialty cocktails.

“A private label sets us apart,” said April Pogue, Earth and Ocean sommelier. “You can’t get this wine anywhere else. It makes it more personal, and it’s great that one of our staff is the artist behind it.”

W Hotel also uses their signature label wine as a room amenity. Pogue says the restaurant and hotel have used as much as four cases per week at times.

Northwest Cellars charges a onetime, \$75 set up fee for a private label. Artwork can be taken from a photograph or any high-resolution PDF or jpeg image.

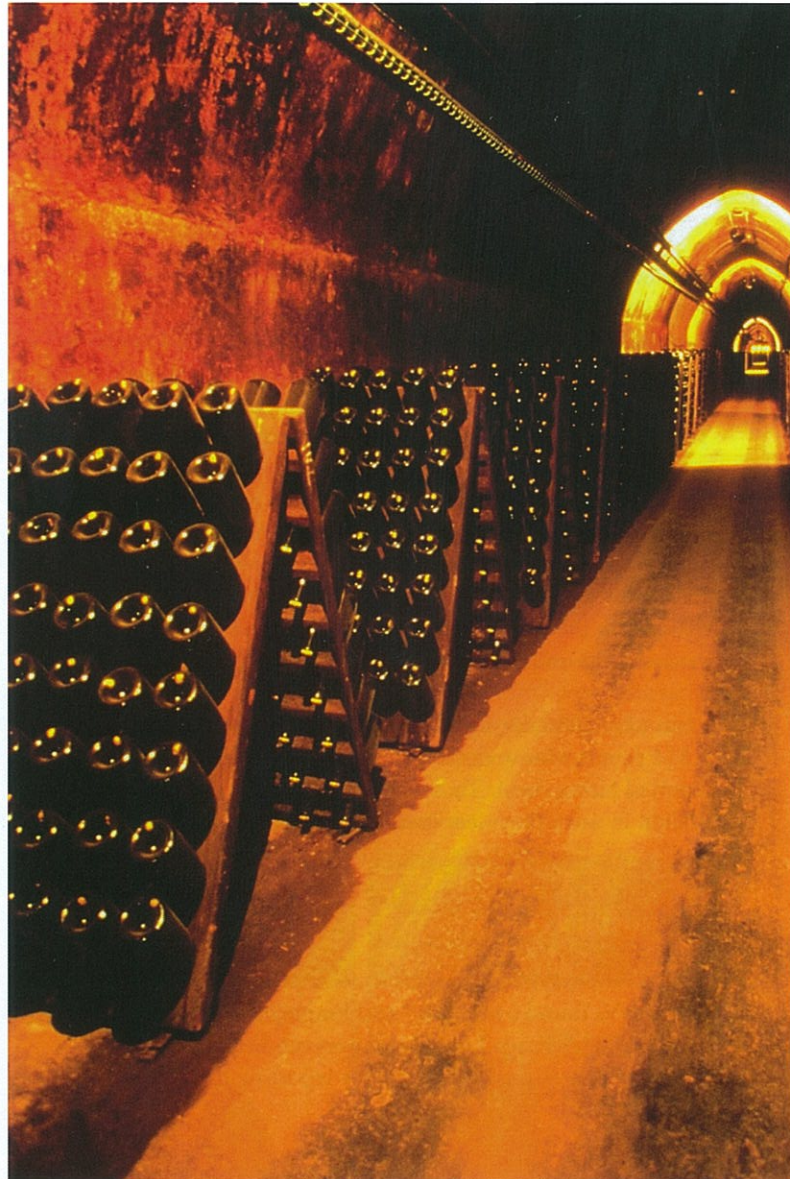
Aaron Burks, owner of Monterosso’s Italian Restaurant in Richland, Wash., was looking for a way to celebrate the 12-year anniversary of his restaurant. He found Northwest Cellars on the Internet and ordered some samples.

“When I tasted it, I knew I wanted to use it right away,” Burks said. “I wanted something special to give to my customers, family and friends. Then, I thought it would be a good promotional opportunity to build name recognition with my customers.”

Burks serves the Northwest Cellars Red Blend and Chardonnay-Viognier as Monterosso’s house wines. His private label was created from a photo he shot while visiting his favorite city in Italy, his restaurant’s namesake. For a year, he’s relied on his custom wine as part of his marketing strategy.

“It’s one of the key ingredients to my overall marketing plan,” Burks said. “The promotional aspect is where the profit comes in. It’s something unique I can offer my customers and gives the restaurant more character. Our sales have been going up in the last year.”

Bob Delf, founder of Northwest Cellars, is a food and wine lover. His vision for Northwest Cellars is to provide high quality wine at reasonable prices for a wide variety of special occasions. Northwest Cellars produces and distributes high quality, affordable wines with custom-designed labels. They barrel taste and carefully



select the best wines available, then create custom blends. The wines are ideal for special events, hotels, restaurants, private clubs, non-profit fundraisers and personal, corporate and unique promotional gifts.
www.northwestcellars.com