



▲ Visual highlighting in the wine department by curved shelf decks

Photo: Wand Lädenbau

BRUNO REIFERSCHIED

## Now that puts you in the mood

Many food retailers are turning their wine department into a means of creating a distinct image. What ways are there of standing out from the competition? Here is how shopfitting and goods presentation can help them establish a reputation for viticultural expertise.

▷ The wine department at every food store makes a great contribution to giving it a distinct image. The quality of the selection and successful presentation can make the wine department act as a draw for the entire store. "Wine stands for enjoyment, as well as for nature," says Bernhard Schweitzer, Managing Director of Schweitzer AG from Naturns in South Tyrol. Although it is an everyday product, wine can also exude glamour, believes Schweitzer, adding that, being a natural product, it fits in perfectly with the current trend towards organic products.

"Unlike many other product categories that are strongly driven by brand articles and managed by producers, wine is made by a large number of smaller producers and so is ideal in helping retailers create their own distinctive image," notes Indra Collini, Managing Director of the wine shelf supplier Xi Covini based in Klaus, Austria.

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### Orientation plus emotion

The rules for successfully presenting wine are clear: Good visibility of the articles in an emotional ambience, easy orientation for customers who do not have a great amount of knowledge about wine, and "gentle separation of wine gourmets and customers whose main criterion is price," in the words of Harald Boerger, Head of Sales at Storebest, Lübeck. Ideally, the shelf's appearance is varied by different forms of presentation. "That increases customers' attention, guides them and stimulates them to buy," is the conviction of Indra Collini.



▲ An atmospheric wine department, here at Kaufhof Berlin Alexanderplatz



▲ The wine department is now always one where a store establishes its reputation for expertise

Customers should be informed of where a particular wine comes from, how it is made and what is special about it. "The image of the department is then enhanced and that impinges on the other areas," is how Bernhard Schweitzer puts it. And above all: Customers stay longer at the store.

The role of shopfitting here is to make the expertise of retailers visible and tangible by designing and choosing the right material for floors and display units. "The department can be made to stand out visually from the rest of the store by using different flooring and shelving," says Peter Wetzstein, Divisional Head at Wanzl Ladenbau, Leipheim. He adds that wood is not a must – there are also solutions with natural stone, laminate with a stone appearance, a cork look and a mix of materials. Most wine departments now have wire racks because they have a higher-quality impact, according to Linde Ladenbau, Bad Hersfeld. As a wall presentation, the display units for wine are usually special items of furniture, while the front screens and paneling often have a real wood veneer or are made of solid wood. According to Detlef Rohlender, Managing Director of ITAB Germany, Cologne, wine tradition plays a crucial role in that: "Wood and wine have always been inextricably linked. Just think of wine barrels, which are traditionally made of oak, or solid wood crates."

Ingo Meckbach, who is in charge of Corporate Project Planning and Merchandising at Linde Ladenbau, observes a trend towards whitewashed materials, spruce with its characteristic knotholes, rough, stained woods and in general rustic looks and a cellar-like character. In the view of Meck-

bach, that accords with the spirit of the age, where the focus is on topics such as nature, down-to-earthness and an affinity with local roots.

The form of shelf also plays a role. Otto Kind from Gummersbach, offers rounded mid-room furniture with convex or concave shelf decks, along with integrated LED lighting that generates little heat and so is gentle on the goods.

#### Need for action

Despite the potential from a cogent wine presentation, this area is precisely where

the shopfitting industry believes that there is the most to do. "It's not enough to put a table in the department and put up a sign with 'Please try' on it," says Harald Boergler from Storebest.

Indra Collini from Xi Covini recommends greater differentiation by price ranges: "Wines priced seven euros and above should be presented with the bottles lying on their side." Retailers can demonstrate their wine know-how to connoisseurs by observing the right rules for storing higher-quality products.

Peter Prisching, Head of Design at the shopfitter Assmann from Leibniz, Austria, believes

#### REAL

## Wine tasting station

Since it was opened in 2008, Real's Future Store in Tönisvorst has offered a wine tasting station. The machine is not intended as a substitute for professional degustation by a sommelier, but fits in excellently with Real's concept of a modern self-service department store. "At the terminal we always offer customers the chance to sample eight different red and white wines," states company spokesman Markus Jablonski. "The 16 different wines we present are intentionally not promotional items, but instead specialties that our customers are less familiar with."

The bottles are open, but under a vacuum so that their content does not go off. Directly next to the wine tasting station, customers can find a touch screen, offering an interactive wine lexicon containing information on wine-growing regions and recipe tips, etc. Only customers aged 18 and above are given the wine tasting list at the information desk. "Very many customers now like to use this service. We can tell that from the frequency with which we need to replace empty bottles and the number of wine tasting lists we issue to our customers," is Jablonski's conclusion.



talk is about "modern departments offering expertise, professional advice and the opportunity to relax and sample items" as well as integration of information displays. Wanzl's Managing Director Wetzstein names further options to enhance how wine is presented in future:

- + No run-of-the-mill pictures on the wall above the shelves showing things like vineyards, but motifs that stimulate shoppers to make "vertical purchases", such as wine plus olives, bread and cheese, etc., or ones of vineyards from a surprising perspective, close-ups and particularly emotional images
- + Self-service areas where shoppers can sample items and fill their glasses from a barrel
- + Advice from terminals or employees with specialist know-how
- + Chilled white wines ready to drink.

**New technologies**

One interesting topic is the use of digital technologies such as touch screens and barcode scanning at the wine shelf



Photo: Xi Covini

▲ Modules for space-saving, high-quality wine presentation

- including with a mobile phone. The aim is to enable access to additional product information stored in a database. "That could even allow allergy sufferers to find out what the wine contains," says Assmann's manager Prisching looking into the future. In this connection, Assmann is experimenting - under the title "Smart Shelf" - with an "origin check" that could also be used for wines.

Digital signage will definitely be used in wine departments as an interactive means of informing customers. "Wine is something where communication is needed. By using

digital signage, retailers will increase customer loyalty and ultimately their sales," is the conviction of Ulrich Schulte, Head of Sales at Otto Kind. Moving images arouse emotions and create stimuli that, when associated with the right contents, have a positive impact on purchasing behaviour, according to ITAB Germany. After all, they are particularly well suited to conveying topics like origin, organic produce or sustainability.

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**schweitzer**