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MUNICIPAL
LIQUOR STORE

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE
MINNESOTA MUNICIPAL BEVERAGE ASSOCIATION
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On The Cover

In 2008, Miller Brewing Company and Coors Brewing Company entered into a joint venture to form MillerCoors.

As the new company moves forward, all of their planning, promotions, and marketing will be developed and born from the consumer's perspective. In fact, the logo shown on the cover says it all. The image to the left of the logo is a pint of beer – from the consumer's perspective.

MillerCoors has many programs on tap this summer to help MMBA members connect with customers and generate more profits. In addition, state manager Jon Chance is already working on plans for the second annual MMBA Food Drive!

For more information on these exciting programs, go to page 12.

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MMBA President's Message



Tom Agnes
President

We learned, we had fun, we laughed and we met new people.

Every year, the MMBA conference brings many people many different things. One of the greatest functions of this event is the ability to associate with people from all over the state who do what you do. You can give them information that they can use and hopefully you get things to take back and use in your organization. One thing I learned from Scott in Apple Valley was how their new store was designed entirely with energy saving LED lights, even down to the beer neons.

The classes are the greatest around. Tom Shay showed us pricing strategies, merchandising ideas and management styles. We had our first ever wine blending seminar, and we learned all about brandy. The vendor contact is so important to your stores and to the vendors. They do a great job at the showcase in laying out information for you to take home, and they are there to answer any questions. E-cigarettes and e-cigars were one of many new items, and there were many questions about them. A special thanks to all of our commercial members. They make this conference fun and very economical for all of us to attend.

With the conference comes our annual meeting where we discuss the organization news for the year. Gary Buysse spoke during a part of this program and he delivered some great information to take home with us. Gary has served as our president for two years now and his term has come to an end. However, he will serve as a past president for a year

on our board. He will truly be missed, I have learned much from his leadership. We also lost and gained some directors. Please use the list on the right to contact any of us any time. Also, Paul Kaspszak deserves a huge attabooy from us all. He works very hard to make sure everything runs smoothly.

Remember that the MMBA puts on several events every year, in the fall we do regional luncheon meetings all around the state. Shortly after the first of the year we have a boot camp for new managers and for seasoned managers who are looking for new ideas. We also do a day at the capitol where everyone should come down and talk to their legislators about laws that effect every one of us pertaining to our industry.

And last but certainly not least is the Annual Conference. This is where we can bring managers, city staff and council members together to be educated about industry events and trends. It is also a great networking opportunity to learn what happens in cities with municipal liquor all around the state, whether they are a larger or

smaller than your facility there are always opportunities to learn how to do things better.

I encourage managers who have not attended in the last 5 years to step out of your comfort zone and attend the conference next year, you will not be disappointed. If you are a city manager or administrator and you know your liquor managers have not attended ask them why not?

Feel free to contact people like Eileen from Lindstrom, MN who said she was very impressed with her first time to the conference and would absolutely return, she said she never realized how much the MMBA did state wide until she was able to attend one of our events.

This conference continues to be a place where we learn and also have fun. Thanks to all who acted in a professional manner, so everyone could enjoy themselves.

Tom Agnes
MMBA President

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How Consumers Shop Differently Today

By Sean Gregory

The American shopper is dazed and confused. What do I really want, versus what do I really need? Sure, I can afford the plasma television now, but should I save that \$2,000, in case I get laid off tomorrow? Can I really tell my snobby friends that I now shop at — egads — Walmart? To gauge the mindset of the American consumer, and the state of shopping during this recession, TIME checked in with respected retail expert Paco Underhill, the CEO of Envirosell, a consulting firm, and author of *Why We Buy: The Science of Shopping*.

Give us a snapshot of the American consumer landscape.

We can divide the American consumer into thirds. There are a third of us who are in immediate danger of being downwardly mobile. And this stretches across all classes. It's the hedge fund manager who lost his job, and was making a healthy seven figures. It's the GM retiree whose middle class benefits are being cut. So it's a spectrum of people who have basically slammed their wallets shut. And that effect is not only on luxury, it's on basics, it's on everything.

There's a second group that isn't in danger themselves but knows somebody that is. They feel reasonably secure, but they have slammed their wallets shut out of choice. And they are spending money much more carefully than they ever have. This results from the fact that there are lots of American who don't really know how much disposable income they have. They've just been spending it. And all of a sudden they've woken up and found, 'I have \$20,000 in credit card debt. All of a sudden I need to face consequences that are acute.' It's fundamentally healthy over the long term, but it's painful over the short term.

Then there's a third group, stretching across all classes, and they have very real piles of money. They range from hedge fund people who have stored it away, to trust fund babies, to a generation of Americans that have paid off their mortgages, and don't owe anybody any money. This group has learned that conspicuous consumption is bad maners. Also, there's an entangling of consumption and morality. I just heard a story about somebody saying, 'I can afford a new car, but I'm not going to get one, because I just had to lay a bunch of people off.' It's an interesting issue, just in the same way that green was political issue, and then it became a moral issue. There's the fundamental realization that Americans have woken up. Their bellies are too big, their cars are too big, their homes are too big, their debts are too big, and they have to go on some kind of a diet. The era of "bling" is over.

What's going on inside the psyche of the American consumer.

People are choosing not to go to the mall at all. Why invite temptation? The second thing we're seeing here, which is really curious, is that as people shop in store, they are putting things in their basket as they move through the store, and then taking them out when they get to checkout. 'I put that cute blouse that I saw in Target into my basket, and I'm going... 'nah, maybe not.' Someone picks something up from their basket, takes it to another section, and then discards it. So the stores are just messier. And a basic rule of retailing is that you have to have a clean store. Another key thing we are finding is that there are people in the parking lot of Trader Joe's and ALDI, and Goodwill and the dollar stores, that were never there three years ago. The demographic profile of people willing to shop down is expanding.

Also, the amount of label reading is going up. There is a basic concern with health issues. It used to be that label reading was linked to income and education. The more likely you were to have a degree from Princeton, the more likely you would be to read labels in a store. And now that's linked to literacy. Everyone is doing it.

Is consumerism forever changed?

First, I think there is a certain access to consumer information. Particularly as I shop durable goods, I can go down the aisle of a consumer electronics store and check the prices on my web enabled phone. So the whole pricing issue here is going to have to get much more transparent because consumers have much more access to information than they ever used to have. And that information isn't something that they need to get at home. They can get it on the fly. This is both exciting and frightening for the merchant.

One of the things I've seen over the last couple of years is the rising popularity of the vintage clothing store. This relates to the changing concept of secondary markets — whether it's EBay, whether it's goodwill industries, whether it's selling a previously owned Mercedes Benz — the perception is changing. There's a willingness buy used, rather than necessarily buy new. You'll never sell used underwear or used socks. But the number of things that people are considering buying used, or buying previously owned, is considerable.

What are some implications of all this for retailers?

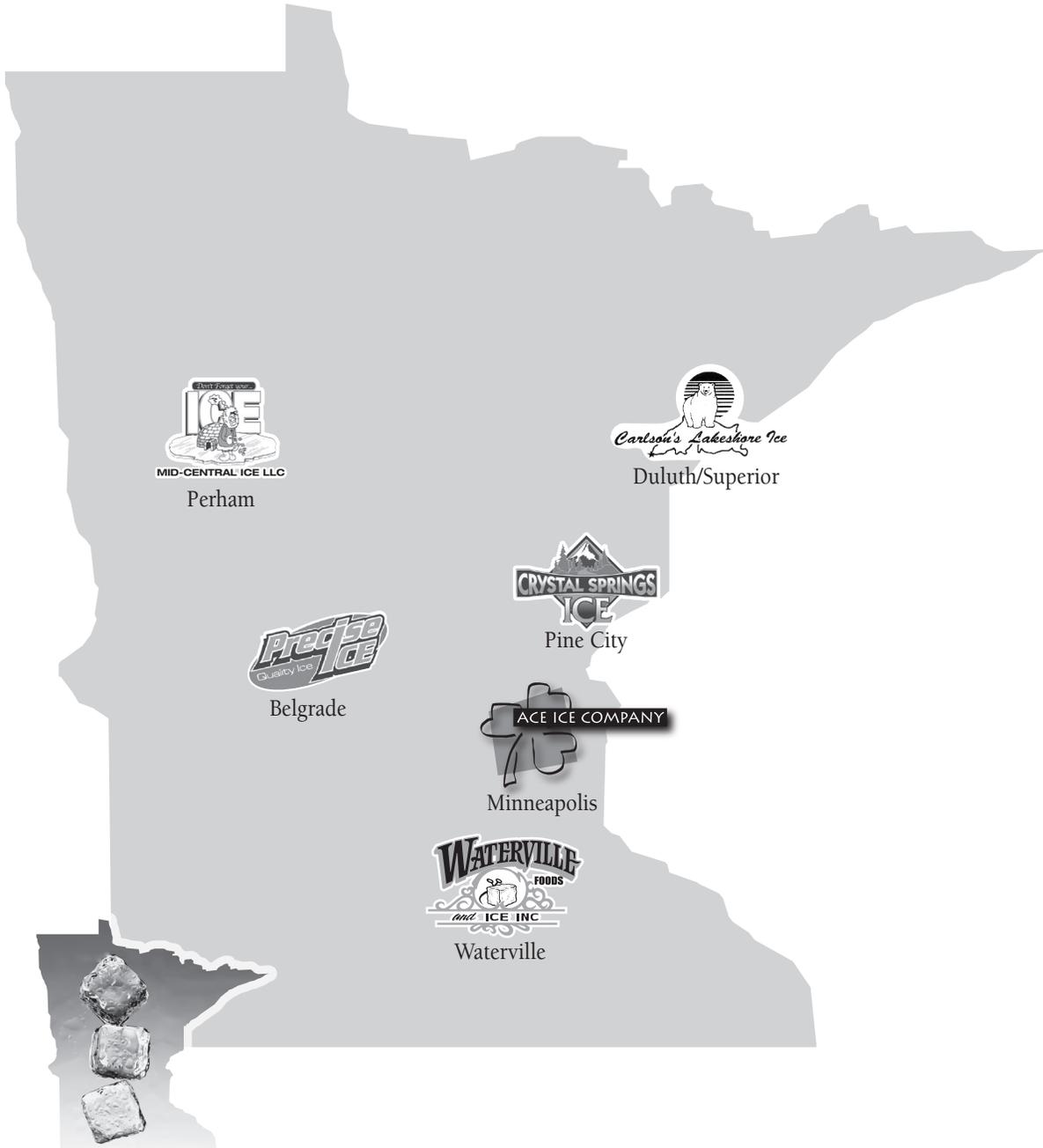
I believe we have reached the apogee of the big box. Growing the store any bigger does not translate into the customer spending any more time or money. It is actually starting to be

(Continued on page 8)

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HOW CONSUMERS SHOP

(continued from page 6)

counterproductive. Walking into Home Depot and seeing 28 coffeemakers, ranging in price from \$16.99 to \$116.99, is an overwhelming sense of choice. So that the merchant is going to have to edit.

As some retailer put it to me the other day, 'we acquire these 40,000 square foot stores, yet our ideal format is 25,000. And it means that in the 40,000 square-foot store, I have to keep that store filled.' That is counter-productive, because it's money [i.e., inventory] that is not turning. Stores on steroids will start making some choices.

Retailers will also have to be more female friendly. The retail world has historically been one owned by men, designed by men, and managed by men. Yet, we expect women to shop in these stores. If women are the engines of consumption here, the purchasing agents for the family, whether I'm hardware store, whether I'm an Exxon station, being female friendly is important.

Is the era of "chic" over?

Well, at *Fashion Week* (in New York City), there's been a universal sense of horror at the diamonds and furs on the runway. We get to that basic theme — conspicuous consumption is bad manners. But chic isn't gone. If anything, conservative chic is back, because looking good is often a real part of keeping your job or finding your job. So you may not spend money on Armani suits, but there are lots of people who are much more conscious of looking good. I have a neighbor who was laid off four months ago. I saw him walking out of our building yesterday and I knew he was going out to look for a job. Every hair was in place, there was a little gel, his shoes were polished, his accessories were there. I looked at him, and he said, 'yeah, I'm off to Washington.'

If you were launching a retail concept in today's economy, how

would you approach it?

I think, as a culture, we are over-stored. All store chains would be healthier if they were smaller. If I were to act on a new retail concept today, I would ask, "how do I marry the idea of a physical asset with an online world?" So rather than saying 'I'm going to have Victoria's Secret and then have victoriasecret.com, can I stand back and conceive of an online business which has a physical manifestation that drives it?'

The cutting edge of retail has left North America. Look at the retail thinking that happens outside the US. For example, people are thinking about what it means when a customer uses public transportation and then shops. So there's a Swedish supermarket chain where you can shop at lunchtime, and put your purchases in a refrigerated locker. When you go home after work, you just stop off, pick up

your bags, climb on the train and go home.

So is retail as miserable as it appears?

Everybody has to eat. Everybody has to put clothes on their back, and drive to work, and take care of their homes and go about their routine stuff. They are still interested in products that save money. People are still going to be buying flat screen TVs, because they think it's a tradeoff with going to the movies, and it keeps the family at home. So I think there's a basic level of consumption out there that isn't going to change. I credit our President for giving a sense of confidence that something is happening. I don't think people are watching the stock market on a minute-to-minute basis like they were in the fall. I think there's a basic sense that yes, it may get worse, the market may go down, but the dust is settling. The dust is settling.

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Tipping A Few Back to Gauge Alcohol Breath Testers

So you have had a few drinks and wonder how high you might register on a breath alcohol test. Officers in the field use a device called a personal breath test, or PBT, when they stop a suspected drunk driver. But there are also over-the-counter devices anyone can buy at drug stores or online.

The big question is how accurate are the commercial ones that cost anywhere from \$10 to \$50?

The Lakeville Police Department agreed to host a “party” and put them to the test. The “guests” included WCCO reporter Caroline Lowe and a group of men and women from the community who agreed to sip alcohol and eat pizza on a recent afternoon at the police station.

Lowe supplied the party-goers with the Ken Roberts testers she found on sale at Herbergers for less than \$10. She also brought three AlcoHawks which sell at drug stores and online

for about \$50 a piece.

After two glasses of wine, Lowe registered almost the same on the police PBT as she did on one of the AlcoHawk models. However, a second AlcoHawk model was way off when Lowe blew into it.

Lakeville Officer Greg Jensen administered the police and commercial PBT tests.

The Ken Roberts model will show if someone had consumed alcohol but did not give a precise measurement.

“If you want to use it just to see if your kid’s drinking or to see if a student’s drinking, these would be good because it would show that there’s alcohol there,” said Jensen about the Ken Roberts model.

“There’s alcohol in the system?” asked Lowe.

“Yup. But as far as once you get above a .05 it would show the same on these if you were a .20 or .30,” said Jensen.

“Just shows you’re over?” asked Lowe.

“Right,” said Jensen.

Bottom line from Jensen on the over-the-counter alcohol testers: There are guarantees.

The only way to be sure if you are thinking about getting behind the wheel: “I always tell people if you don’t think you are okay to drive, don’t.”

“To be responsible, if you’re going to be drinking and you don’t know if you are OK to drive and you have got to put a tube in your mouth to tell you if you’re OK, you probably shouldn’t be driving,” said Jensen.

Think Like a Customer

Thinking like a customer is very hard to do.

Retailers tend to think like retailers and forget why customers buy what they buy. Retailers are more concerned with the features of products than the true benefits to the customer.

To be a successful retailer, you must change your way of thinking and stand back from our store and your employees – look at them in the same way your customers do.

Thinking like a customer means you must shop for products the way your customers would shop. To be a good retailer, you need to be a good customer – so shop!

Shopping at your competitor’s stores or other stores in your category – even different kinds of stores – can give you lots of new ideas and fresh approaches to merchandising.



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MillerCoors In Minnesota: Highlights of the Summer Selling Season

By Jon Chance

Hello MMBA Members! Paul K has given me the opportunity to walk through the programming that MillerCoors has on tap this summer to help you connect with your customers, sell our products and at the same time, bring you more profits.

Let me start by thanking all of you for your continued support of all of our MillerCoors brands. To return that support, we have decided to increase our membership level with the MMBA to the Platinum Membership. We fully support your association at all levels and look forward to many more years of partnership.

As many of you are aware, Miller Brewing Company and Coors Brewing Company entered into a joint venture in 2008 to form MillerCoors. A new company formed with a revived and consistent focus on our business ... and yours. Actually, our new logo says it all. The image to the left of the logo is a pint of beer "from the consumer's perspective". As our new company moves forward, all of our planning, promotions, and marketing will be developed and born from the consumer's perspective.



As we step into the summer selling season, I wanted to give you a peek under the tent of our summer marketing and what we have available to help you sell more beer. I'll walk through each of our priority brands individually.

As you see on our television ads, Miller Lite is all about Great Taste. You'll see all of our marketing revolve around communicating Great Taste to our consumers. Studies show that 81%

of consumers site "Great Taste" as the #1 attribute they are looking for in beer. Our TV ads will call out Triple Hops Brewing as the reason behind Miller Lite's great taste. To protect that great taste, you'll see Taste Protector Lids on all of our can packages that protects the beer from that "metal can" taste. We also have Taste Protector Cap on all of our bottle packages to lock in the Great Pilsner Taste of Miller Lite. Also available from your wholesaler are glass 16oz pint glasses that feature etched bottoms releasing CO2 bubbles that maintain a foamy head as long as there's Miller Lite in the glass, further delivering the Great Pilsner Taste. We'll continue to feature the new Aluminum Pint package in both the on- and off-premise. This package has proven to be a true incremental volume opportunity as consumers prefer the wide mouth bottle feel in a package that looks like a can. Lastly make sure you talk to your wholesaler about the We Fest 24/16oz can package. This package connects with country music enthusiasts all over Minnesota and makes for a great eye-catching display.



"Refreshment as Cold as the Rockies Mountain Cold Refreshment" will continue to be at the heart of everything Coors Light does this summer. Minnesota consumers have connected to "cold" over the past 3+ years so much so that Coors Light is now the 3rd largest brand in the state, according to AC Nielsen MN Liquor. I'm positive you have seen the growth in your stores as well. Cold Activated Cans that turn blue when your beer is "As Cold as the Rockies" are now hitting the market. This follows our Cold Activated Bottle from last summer. Please be sure to ask your wholesaler about our Cold

Activated Pints and Pitchers as well. These on-premise glasses also turn blue when filled with cold Coors Light and help deliver that "cold refreshment" message. If you have customers that who are softball players, you'll want to display Coors Light this summer. We are offering a "Full Ride" to one lucky MN softball team... a \$5,000 package that allows a team to get bats, balls, jerseys, league fees, etc. Check with your local rep for details.



In 2008, new MGD 64 replaced MGD Light. With only 64 calories and 2.8 ABV, it is as light as it gets.

This is the perfect product for consumers who want to have a few beers, without the calories, carbs or the heaviness that can come with the other beers. This brand has legs as many MN markets are up +30% where they have gained the support of retail. For those of you with stores near Life Time Fitness facilities, talk to your wholesaler about the LTF sweepstakes and build displays so your consumers can win free memberships!



Summer is a great time to feature Blue Moon! With its unique color and orange accent, just seeing

Blue Moon pints on a server's tray is an outstanding way to up sell all of your customers. Talk to your wholesalers about Blue Moon glassware that showcase this Artfully Crafted beer. Here is a new idea... Try freezing your orange slices and serving Frozen Orange wedges in Blue Moon this summer! We'll also be holding a

contest in which consumers log on to help us pick our "Next Twist" on beer. Blue Moon Honey Moon Summer Ale is another great way to capitalize on sales this summer. Seasonals are driving the growth in the craft category and if displayed with Blue Moon, Honey Moon will help drive bigger rings. One more heads up. Start planning for December, because on New Years Eve we are going to be celebrating an actual Blue Moon! Seriously. I wouldn't make that stuff up.



New to the Leinenkugel's Family this year was is "Classic

Amber" - available in 6pks, 12pks, and draft. This launch of a "Classic" style was greeted with open arms by all of you and we truly appreciate your continued support with all Leinie's brands. Remember that it is Shandy season! This seasonal will be gone before you know it. Be sure to get yours as consumers are looking for it now as the weather heats up. If you find your self in downtown Minneapolis this summer, check out Block E on Hennepin

Ave. We'll be transforming the entire walkway into a Leinenkugel's Northwoods adventure. If you would like to check out the brewery, Chippewa Falls, WI, is only a short car ride away. I'd be more than happy to set up a tour for you and your staff. Everyone leaves with a great appreciation for the history of Leinie's as well as some tips and stories to help you sell more!



It's a little known fact, but Keystone Light is kind of a big deal. According to AC Nielsen, Key Light is the #2 volume gaining brand YTD in MN, second only to Coors Light. It is up 51% this year! The scary thing is that it only has on average 1.6 placements per liquor store. This brand has tremendous continued growth potential and your support is essential in making sure additional packages are placed in your stores so all of us can capitalize on this brand's strength.

Thanks to your help, High Life is 1 of 2 brands in the top 10 MN brands that



are growing YTD! The brand's message of "A Tasty Beer at a Tasty Price" really

hits home for many beer drinkers today. Ask your wholesaler about grilling display pieces and, of course, "Windell" display pieces (our beer driver personality), who delivers "Common Sense in a Bottle" with attitude.

I am excited for the programs we've created for MillerCoors brands this summer and I hope that after reading this sneak peek, you will see a consistent focus on the consumer in many of those programs. We are truly looking forward to working even closer with the MMBA in 2009 and beyond. Remember to also keep October on your calendar for the second annual MMBA Food Drive! We'll be there to support you in an even bigger and better way. I suggest we target 40 tons this year!

Most importantly, thank you all for your support over the years and as always, give me a call if I can help you with anything, 952-920-6862.



The Omnibus Liquor Bill has Been Signed by the Governor.

Three of items to note:

Effective immediately, it is now legal for an exclusive liquor store to sell "multiple use bags designed to carry purchased items." In other words, the increasingly popular recyclable shopping bags.

Effective immediately, wine tastings conducted by an exclusive liquor store may be held at an establishment that has an on-sale wine license, as long as the establishment carries dram shop insurance.

Effective immediately, it is now legal for an exclusive liquor store to sell devices designed to ensure safe storage and monitoring of alcohol in the home, to prevent access by underage drinkers. These products are sold by new MMBA Commercial Member *Just Encase Products*. They can be reached at:

Bob Schmitt
Just Encase Products, Inc.
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The entire legislation can be found at:

<https://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/laws/?id=120&doctype=chapter&year=2009&type=0>

E-Cigs Are Legal



E-Cigs, smokeless nicotine or non-nicotine inhalers that pretend to be cigarettes or cigars, including the lighted red tip, are legal for use indoors.

Doug Schultz, a spokesman for the state Department of Health said the department studied the devices after getting a few calls during the past year from people wondering whether their use is permitted inside public places.

"It's not smoking," Schultz said. "They're not ignited. They don't use tobacco or a plant product. Our interpretation of the statute would be that these types of devices are allowable."



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11 Wine Questions – Answered

Source: WSJ

With the 11th anniversary of this column around the corner, we realized we have answered thousands of questions from readers, but the same ones keep coming up. So today we offer answers to our 11 most-asked questions, in condensed form.

In each case, the answer could be far more extensive, with all sorts of to-be-sures and howevers -- in fact, in every case we have written at least one entire column on the issue over the years. But if we had to answer in about 100 words or less, this is what we'd say. They are listed from the 11th-most-asked to the most asked. Don't peek.

11. What's the best glass? We prefer a large glass -- around 20 to 22 ounces is good -- because it feels generous in our hands and we can swirl around the small amount we pour into it. Look for clear, thin glass; a long stem; and a slight curve inward at the top. We prefer inexpensive glasses so we don't worry about breaking them. Over the years, we have found good glasses at a wide variety of stores, including Pier 1 and Costco (though we haven't seen our favorites at either place recently). Vino Grande Burgundy from Spiegelau, which is owned by Riedel, is our everyday glass.

10. Where are the best values coming from these days? This has leaped onto this list in the past year, for obvious reasons. If we had to answer in one word, it would be this: Chile. Look especially for its Cabernet Sauvignon and Sauvignon Blanc. But Argentina (especially Malbec), New Zealand (especially Sauvignon Blanc) and South Africa (also Sauvignon Blanc) are good bets, too.

9. What wines should I serve at a party (or to any large gathering)? For a white, Chilean or New Zealand

Sauvignon Blanc is a winner. For a red, we used to recommend one of the cru Beaujolais (such as Fleurie) and we still like that advice, but Argentina's Malbec is so popular right now and so widely enjoyed that we'd recommend that instead. If you are looking for an affordable bubbly for a group, it's hard to go wrong with Cava from Spain.

8. How do I remove labels? We're thrilled to be asked this so often because it means people are drinking wines they want to remember. You could take a digital picture, of course. But if you want to remove the actual label (as we do), most labels these days work with the oven method: Heat oven to 350 degrees. Turn it off. Put the empty bottle in for a few minutes until it gets really hot. Wearing serious oven mitts, carefully remove the bottle, lift a corner of the label with a fingernail or a knife and peel right off. (Some labels still need to be boiled off, so we try that next, after the bottle has cooled. If all else fails, many wine stores sell large, sticky strips that basically peel the label off.)

7. Should I decant? Generally, no -- at least, not at first. We enjoy tasting a wine from the first sip to the last and it will get plenty of air in those big glasses while we swirl. If we taste a wine and it's so tight that it needs decanting, we can decant; if we decant first and then find that the wine lost some fruit to the air, there's no going back. (Of course, if a wine needs to be separated from sediment, that's another matter.)

6. Do I have to store my wine in a temperature-controlled cellar? If you simply want to keep a mixed case of wine around the house for a short time -- and you should -- find a place in the dark with a fairly constant, moderate temperature. The bottom of

a closet is often fine. If you have fine wine you want to store for longer, get one of those wine refrigerators. They are more affordable, available and space-efficient than ever and they're worth it. If you want to lay down a bottle in that temperature-controlled cellar for your newborn -- and this is also a question we're often asked -- we'd suggest Sauternes.

6a. What is the correct cellar temperature, and do whites and reds need to be different? Classic cellar temperature is about 55 degrees. We keep reds and whites at about 57 because we find that it's a good starting point for serving both. Most reds are served too warm and most whites are served too cold, especially at restaurants. We might want to chill our whites a bit more or warm our reds by leaving them on the table as we sip them, but 57 is a good starting point.

5. I want to find a bottle I had at a restaurant (or that I read about); how do I get it? Try wine-searcher.com, wineaccess.com and winezap.com. Chances are you will find it. Even if it is not listed for sale at a local wine shop, you might be able to have it delivered from a faraway store. If you can't do that, perhaps because of local laws, try calling a store that has it and asking the merchant to look at the label and give you the name of the distributor, whom you can call. This is one of many reasons you should have a good local wine merchant, because he or she can help find it.

4. I love X wine; what do you think of it? We're surprised how often we are asked this. Our answer is: It doesn't matter. We think you should drink the wines you love and love the wines you drink. Don't let anyone, including us, tell you what's good and what isn't. In fact, though, this does touch on a very good and much more important question, one that you should regularly

pose to that helpful wine merchant you need to find: I love X wine; what else do you have in your store that I might like at around the same price? That's how great wine journeys get started.

3. Why does wine give me headaches; sulfites, right? Wrong.

Sulfites cause very severe allergic reactions in a small number of people, even death in extreme cases, which is why there's a warning on the bottle, but sulfites don't cause headaches. Wine headaches are a serious issue, but the causes are highly personal. Some people get headaches only from red wine and some get them just from, say, German wine. It has to do with histamines and all sorts of other complex science. It really is best to talk with your doctor about this.

3a. But wines in Europe don't have sulfites, right? Wrong. All wines contain sulfites (it's a natural byproduct of the winemaking process) and almost all wines contain added sulfites, all over the world. It's just that the U.S. has required a sulfite warning for many years and Europe started doing that more recently.

2. I'm going to a wine region; what wineries should I visit? Whether you are going to Napa, Piedmont or Châteauneuf-du-Pape, our advice is the same: Drop into the little places you've never heard of. You are more likely to meet the actual owners or winemakers and have a better time. Not only that, but these are the wines you could never buy at home, so here's your chance.

1. I have this one old bottle; how much is it worth? As we were working on this column, we received, within 26 minutes of each other, two notes. In one, a woman told us that she and her husband had been given a bottle of 1974 Lafite Rothschild to celebrate the birth of their son. "Any idea what it is worth?" she asked. In the second, a woman said she and her husband had been given a bottle of 1976 Lafite many years ago and her husband had died. "How much is it worth?" she asked. We get similar

notes every single day and the answer is always the same: Your bottle is worthless -- and priceless. In terms of selling it for money: While it's always possible that someone will buy anything, the likelihood of a merchant offering to buy a single bottle from an individual is small at best. For example, Ben Nelson, senior vice president of consignments at Chicago-based Hart Davis Hart, a wine auctioneer and merchant, told us his firm is looking for bottles in excellent condition, with clear provenance, that have been well-cellaried as part of a larger collection. His general advice about a single, special bottle is the same as ours: Open and enjoy. These bottles are priceless because of what they hold inside -- not the wine, but the memories. Which brings us to...

1a. When will this wine be at its peak?

First, remember that most wines are made to drink when they are released. In terms of fine, ageable wines, there are all sorts of online sources that will give you a ballpark idea of theoretical peak readiness. But every bottle is different and there are many variables, such as storage conditions and personal taste. Open a special bottle when the moment seems right to you. If you have an old bottle like those old Lafites, make a special meal, open the bottles and celebrate the memories.

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Getting Information About The Customer

Who Shops With You (And Who You Are Missing)



By Tom Shay

You can expect that when a new chain store is putting one of his stores in your area, it has hired a company to perform a demographic study on the neighborhood. The study can be quite complex as well as expensive. With the data they have purchased, your competition will learn about the customers in the area: How many residents are there? How many live in each house? How much do they earn? What do they do for a living? How long have they lived in the neighborhood?

The list can go on and on. Of course, the information is useful only if they have also determined what type of customer shops in their store. With this information, the competition can determine if there are enough available dollars in your neighborhood for them to have a profitable business. In the case of your business, however, you are already there and have been for many years. In all likelihood, you are not going to engage some company to go out and gather this information for you. But if you know more about your customers, you can make more money. Let's look at how to do this.

Begin by creating a pin map that you will display near the checkout of your store. The pin map starts with your using a street map of your community; make sure it covers an area large enough to include the homes of all your customers. The

map is mounted on a cork board on a tripod with a large red dot positioned to denote the location of your store. You will also need to buy several boxes of the pins that have different colored plastic tops.

As customers are leaving your business, the employee having the last contact with them asks the customers to use the pins to mark where they live. As you have different colors of pins, give the customer who has made no purchase a pin with a white head; to the customer whose purchase is less than \$25, give a pin with another color. To the customer making a purchase in the range of \$25 to \$100, give a pin with a third color, and purchases in excess of \$100 a fourth color.

Over several days, you will probably see a pattern. The pins will be segregated somewhat by color. This will be your indicator of where your most valuable customers live. In gathering this information you may want to do the survey to see how the weekday shoppers differ from the weekend shoppers. You could also do the survey before you advertise, and then again after your advertisement has reached the customer.

What have retailers found from this information? One auto parts store found out there were a lot of older cars in his area and that he needed to stock more accessories for these vehicles. A retailer who had been utilizing a direct-mail piece for his advertising, found a heavy concentration of customers along the outer

border of his direct-mail distribution area. When he purchased more flyers to extend the boundary, he found a market area from which he could easily pull customers.

For the business that uses broadcast and print advertising, you can ask what newspapers customers read, or what radio or television stations they listen to and watch. Imagine the possible uses of this pin map study technique! Almost anything you want to know about a customer, you can ask and get the answer just by handing out pins and asking customers to tell you where they live.

As for the people walking in the front door of your business, they are telling you they like and have a need for your goods and services. Your efforts and success in understanding this smaller, but potentially loyal, group of shoppers is the key to your success. Your question at this point is to ask, "Where do you live?" And, "Are there more like you in your neighborhood?"

Your cost for this research is minimal. After you have gone shopping for the few supplies you need, the only involvement you have with this research is deciding what you want to know, how to word the question, and then documenting the information. The customer and your employee at the front of the store will do the rest of the work. Armed with this information, you are capitalizing on your demographic studies and using the knowledge to enjoy the benefits (and profits) of your efforts.

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