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ON THE COVER

Ménage à Trois Wines is a Napa Valley-based winery that produces four of America's most popular Californian wines. Sourced from premium California vineyards, the Ménage à Trois wines have grown from a small uniquely clever label to an internationally recognized brand with loyal consumers and a roster of awards.

Since purchasing the brand, Trinchero Family Estates has grown Ménage à Trois from under 25,000 cases to well over one million cases, with Ménage à Trois Red becoming the number one selling red wine in the country.

For more on the brand, see page 10.

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MMBA President's Message



Tom Agnes
President

Craft Beers!!

In a down beer market these guys are the "little train that could." Seems the past few years consumers can't get enough good craft beer. I started in the beer business over 20 years ago when G Heileman was number 1 in Minnesota beer sales, which included brands like Schmidt's, Blatz and don't forget Pheiffer's famous beer.

When it came time to start introducing above premium priced beers like Weinhard's and the Leinenkugel's craft line, it was a tough sell for a lot of people. Fast forward to today where stores like Edina municipal liquors have more than 80% of their coolers space dedicated to products that are above premium beer pricing.

Even with the economy still struggling to get back on its feet you will find people who still search out and spend good money on something they really like.

In Minnesota the craft beer up swing has been going strong for many years, in fact I just read an article that put Summit Brewing, as the 17th largest craft brewer in the country. Wisconsin and Chicago are producing some great micro beers as well. Of course the west coast is producing a ton of great ones right now!

With many of the small craft brews today there is limited availability so have a section in your store where you can move new item in and out with ease. Remember that not every single

beer item needs to demand a spot in the cooler doors, try doing a warm shelf area for short term beers and others that may be slower movers.

Beer Styles:

Remember at our MMBA conference in the spring where we talked about Craft Beers and then discussed the different styles of beer? What are popular styles?

IPA's and Stouts seem to be leading the charge right now but remember there are so many different versions of these styles. There is a lot of difference between a Oatmeal stout and a Russian imperial stout, and when it comes to IPA's check on your IBU's (International Bitterness Units). They say the tongue cannot differentiate an IBU over 100 but there are some producers going over that number just because they can.

Fun Fact: IPA is an India Pale Ale beer style named from the ruler of India many years ago who liked the

European Pale Ales. But the producers had a hard time shipping the product around the horn of Africa to India, many times it would spoil on the ship so the by adding more hops they could extended the life of the product. Thus a new style of beer was produced.

If you would like to learn more about craft beers hit up your local book store, seems like there is one being released every week. A couple that I have found helpful are: The Naked Pint and Michael Jackson's Beer Companion (No, not the one from the Thriller Video). You could also look at websites like MNBeer.com. Try and capitalize on this good beer trend and adjust your operations around offering customers a better choice.

Tom Agnes
MMBA President

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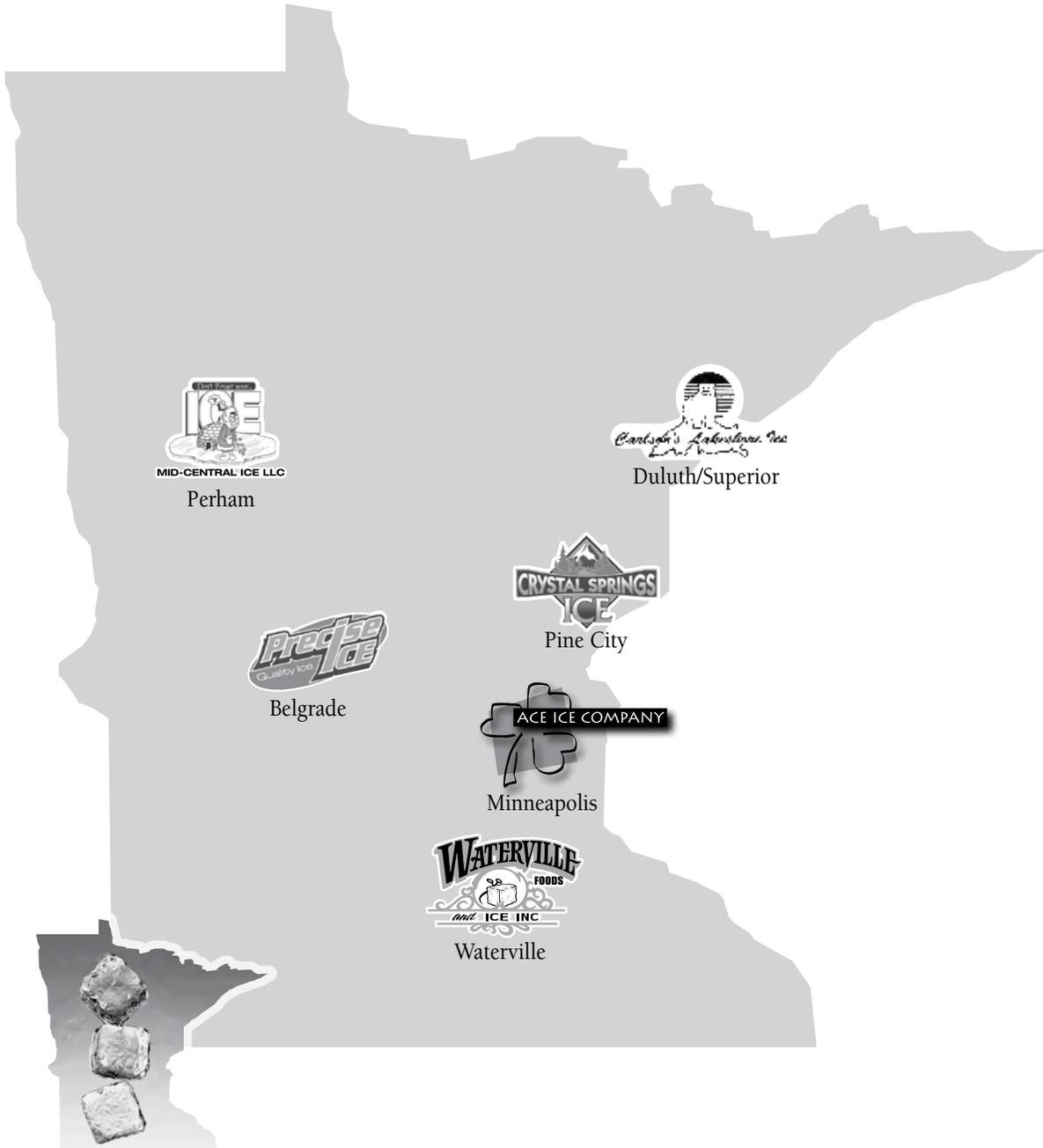
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Gift Packs

October 12, 2011

To: The Minnesota Municipal Beverage Association

From: The Minnesota Department of Public Safety Alcohol & Gambling Enforcement Division

With the Holiday Seasons Approaching now is a good time to address the subject of alcoholic beverage combination packages (gift packs). Gift packages are packages that contain an alcoholic beverage product and a gift item such as glassware. These packages may only be assembled at the supplier level, a properly licensed alcoholic beverage manufacturer, importer or wholesale distributor.

Recently, there have been questions at all levels of the alcoholic beverage industry in Minnesota related to whether or not suppliers can charge a retailer more for a gift package than they would for the alcoholic beverage

itself. The answer is yes.

The current policy of the Minnesota Department of Public Safety, Alcohol & Gambling Enforcement Division is to only allow/approve combination packages that market alcoholic beverage products with items that may legally be sold in exclusive off-sale liquor stores in Minnesota under the provisions of Minnesota Statute 340A.412 subdivision 14.

In the past the policy of the former Liquor Control Division at one time was to allow any item to be packaged with an alcoholic beverage as long as there was no upcharge for the package to the retailer. This policy had no basis in statute and was reversed when the agency merged with the Gambling Enforcement Division in the mid 1990's

So, an alcoholic beverage supplier may upcharge for a combination package containing items such as glassware due

to the glassware may legally be sold in an exclusive liquor store under the provisions of the statute. A wholesaler and in turn retailer may also charge more for the item should they so desire.

Gift packages may not contain for example, golf balls, clothing or food items due to for the most part these items may not be sold in exclusive off-sale liquor package stores in Minnesota under the provisions of Minnesota Statute 340A.412 subdivision 14.

If anyone has further questions they may contact our office.

Signed,

Michael T. McManus
Alcohol Enforcement Administrator
Minnesota Department of Public Safety
Alcohol & Gambling Enforcement
Division
(651) 201-7502

Ice Bag Labeling

If your establishment makes and sells bags of ice to the public, certain information must be indicated on the bag.

According to the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, Dairy and Food Inspection Division:

- The bags need to be labeled on the front with the common name of the contents (i.e., "ICE").
- Somewhere along the bottom, the net weight must be listed (i.e., "5 lbs.")
- The **name and address** of either the manufacturer, or if more appropriate, the packer or distributor.

In the case of an outbreak, (they have occurred with ice) they need to be able to conduct a trace-back.

Elk River Liquor Funds Help Pay for Public Works Facility

by Joni Astrup, Star News

An expansion of Elk River's public works facility is planned, and profits from the city's liquor operation will help pay for it.

Elk River owns the Northbound and Westbound liquor stores, and intends to spend \$2.75 million in liquor store profits to help pay for the public works expansion.

While costs are still preliminary, total cost of the public works expansion is estimated at \$10 million.

Not having to bond for the full cost of the project over 25 years is expected to save the city a little more than \$1 million in interest, according to Finance Director

Tim Simon. "If anybody would ever question why you would be in the liquor business, this is why,"

Dave Potvin told the council Sept. 19. Potvin is operations manager for the liquor stores. Potvin said liquor store profits have also paid for an ice resurfer at the Elk River Arena and a fire vehicle, paid debt on City Hall and made regular transfers to the city's general fund. So far this year, for instance, \$270,000 in liquor store profits was transferred to the city's general fund in 2011 and \$95,000 to parks.

"It's very gratifying to my staff and myself," Potvin said. "This is why we exist and this is why we work so hard for the city."

Without Municipal Liquor, Lakeville Property Taxes Would Increase

By Troy Thompson, Lakeville Patch

Lakeville's City Council got its first look at a highly anticipated liquor study during a recent work session, and the results were pretty clear.

Without the municipal liquor stores, property taxes would go up, more private liquor stores would fill the city, in some cases popping up near residential areas, and municipal liquor is not costing the city retail opportunities.

Representatives from the Minneapolis-based Shenehon Company were on hand to share the results of the comprehensive liquor study, and Mayor Mark Bellows said he hopes the community can come together and unify on the issue since the liquor operations first came under the microscope last fall.

"This is still a contentious issue, but I agree the outcome is pretty clear," said Bellows.

Killing retail development

The council chose to review the city's involvement in the liquor retail business in part due to perceptions that high-profile retailers such as Costco and Trader Joe's had spurned the city due to the exclusivity of municipal liquor, as well as to analyze the possibility of expanding the operation.

The Shenehon Company was selected to perform the first phase of the analysis at a cost of \$25,000 and representatives from the company wasted no time during their presentation Monday evening in putting to bed the notion of municipal liquor costing the city retail opportunities.

"Based on our analysis, municipal liquor stores do not impact retailers locating to the city," said Scot Torkelson, Shenehon Company's Director of Special Projects. "The most important driver of retail location is demographics."

Torkelson said the company looked at the top 15 retailers nationally, and of those, seven were already located in Lakeville.

"The reason we pick top retailers is that they are the ones more likely to have a formalized site location plan," said Torkelson.

Torkelson also pointed out that all 15 of those companies have locations in cities that operate municipal liquor.

Costco, the nation's No. 3 retailer, had been rumored to be favoring Lakeville for a new location last year. But Torkelson said that due to Lakeville's geographic location and surrounding demographics, the city would have been less than ideal for the company. Costco ultimately decided to set up shop in Bursville.

"When I studied Costco's site criteria,

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I found they want to be on-center of a super-regional demographic,” said Torkelson. “Lakeville would be an off-center location and their site criteria would preclude them ideally from locating in Lakeville.”

Likewise, Torkelson also pointed to Trader Joe’s site preferences as the possible main reason for choosing another location when they were rumored to be considering Lakeville for a new location.

Torkelson said Trader Joe’s prefers to go deep into neighborhoods and areas where the average household makeup is 2.6 or lower. Lakeville has an average of 3 people per household. Torkelson also said Lakeville’s heavy family demographic was outside the company’s “dual-income, no kids” preference according to his research.

Looked at from a different angle, Torkelson said the city was currently above other “edge communities” in the metro area when it came to retail square feet per capita. Lakeville currently has 19.1 square feet of retail space per person according to the 2010 census of a 55,954 population. Other edge communities looked at for the study came in at 16.7 square feet per capita, another indicator that retailers weren’t shying away from Lakeville according to Torkelson.

Private versus municipal

The study also analyzed square feet per capita of communities with private liquor stores versus municipal stores and found that overall communities with private liquor stores averaged more locations but smaller stores.

“Private liquor stores are smaller and more numerous,” said Torkelson. “You’re going to have more stores, smaller stores and stores closer to residential areas.”

Torkelson said his findings indicated that Lakeville could expect to wind up with a total of nine private liquor stores averaging about 5,000 square feet each

if operations were privatized. That compares to three municipal locations of approximately 10,000 square feet each currently.

More importantly, the study findings concluded that any new private businesses would most likely be located in existing retail shopping centers rather than build independent buildings, a move that wouldn’t help to broaden the tax base.

Of six other south metro cities studied with private liquor stores, 84 percent were located in shopping centers with only 16 percent free-standing.

Taxes

The tax implications were perhaps the biggest nail in the coffin for any privatization movement.

Given the above scenario, Lakeville could expect only \$15,215 annually in property taxes from private liquor operations. Currently, the city’s Galaxie and Kenrick Ave. locations contribute \$66,931 as Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT). The city’s Heritage location is

leased.

That reduction, coupled with the loss of approximately \$1.2 million in net profits annually would mean the city would need to see \$112 million in new construction and expanded tax base to offset the loss of revenue, and that, said Torkelson, just isn’t likely to happen.

The resulting revenue vacuum would have to be made up by the current tax base at an estimated average increase of \$46 per residential household and \$233 per business.

The company also looked at selling the liquor businesses and said the city could expect \$6.49 million for the entire operation. If invested at a projected 1 percent annual return, the city could expect only \$64,903 per year. Torkelson estimated the city’s liquor businesses currently provide about an 18 percent rate of return.

Not a bad situation given the current economy and regulated lack of options for municipalities when it comes to where they can invest their money.

Patrons Say Promotions Matter

Consumers say promotions attract them to a particular bar or restaurant. According to a survey of 500 adult patrons of casual restaurants conducted in February by Next Level Marketing:

- 59% visited a bar or restaurant based on a promotional offer, up from 46% a year prior.
- 72% say Special Promotions are very-to-somewhat important when deciding what restaurant to visit, and this is higher for females and younger consumers.
- Consumers are equally interested in beer, wine and spirits promotions; males are more interested in beer and females are more interested in spirits and wine.
- 67% of consumers clearly prefer promotional offers with a fixed price vs. an offer of \$1 off an unspecified price.

Ménage à Trois: A Recognized Brand With a Roster of Awards

Ménage à Trois Wines is a Napa Valley-based winery that produces four of America's most popular Californian wines. Sourced from premium California vineyards, the Ménage à Trois wines have grown from a small uniquely clever label to an internationally recognized brand with loyal consumers and a roster of awards.

The Ménage à Trois wines were originally created at Folie à Deux winery as delicious, everyday wines blended from top Napa Valley and California grapes. When the founders of Folie à Deux—two psychiatric professionals—told their friends they planned to fulfill a mutual dream by starting a winery, it was jokingly suggested that the couple was exhibiting the classic symptoms of Folie à Deux, a psychiatric term defined as a shared fantasy of two close friends. Appreciative of the lighthearted nature of their friends' responses, the couple

could not imagine a more appropriate name for their new venture and opened the St. Helena winery in 1981. In June 2004, Folie à Deux was purchased by Trinchero Family Estates, a Napa Valley wine company owned and operated by the Trinchero family. The family has made wine in Napa Valley for over 50 years and has deep roots in the winemaking community.

The original three wines produced under the Ménage à Trois labels were the Red, White and Rosé varietals. Each wine is a balanced blend of three different grapes. The exotic, flowery and silky White Blend explores the promising relationship between Moscato, Chardonnay and Chenin Blanc. The Red Blend, with its rich, forward profile, shows what happens when you introduce Zinfandel to Merlot and Cabernet. There's neither pretension nor pretense in the Rosé blend of Merlot, Syrah and

Gewürztraminer—just a fruit-laden roller coaster ride. In 2008, Ménage à Trois winemakers ventured across California to find the three best Chardonnay regions and selected fruit from vineyards in Monterey, Santa Barbara and Mendocino. The result of bringing the best of each appellation into one bottle was an approachable Chardonnay to add to the Ménage à Trois portfolio. These four wines are the outcome of bottling some passion, fun and a little excitement—all without breaking the bank.

Since purchasing the brand, Trinchero Family Estates has grown Ménage à Trois from under 25,000 cases to well over one million cases, with Ménage à Trois Red becoming the number one selling red wine in the country. Ménage à Trois wines are available nationwide in top retail stores and restaurants. The wines are also poured in the Folie à Deux/Napa Cellars tasting room located in Oakville, California.

The Power of Suggestion

By BarOwnerTips.com

Recent findings from the Beverage Consumer Trend Report found that nearly a quarter (23%) of customers would consider trying a new drink if their server suggested it.

Among "heavy beverage users" (a.k.a. your good customers), 30% said that a suggestion from a server or bartender would impact their purchase.

This means that it's more important than ever for your staff to take an active role in recommending beverages to customers - especially items that are specialty drinks or limited time beverages.

Start training your staff to make recommendations and give them the information they need to make knowledgeable suggestions.

Make sure staff has tasted the drinks on your menu and explain why suggestions should be made.

When they understand that beverage suggestions are welcomed by customers (per the report) and that often making a recommendation can increase their tip (because suggested drinks might be more expensive and their customers will appreciate the extra service), they won't be so hesitant to make suggestions

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Bartender Mistakes That Make Management Cringe

By: Robert Plotkin

It's hard to imagine someone excelling behind the bar without making mistakes along the way. Bartending is a detail-oriented job and the clientele can be exceedingly demanding and unforgiving. Throw in the debilitating effects of working in a high-pressure environment and even the most stalwart of individuals is going to screw up. However, keeping the learning curve shallow and mistakes to a minimum will lessen the amount of collateral damage bartenders inflict on guests and the establishment.

To that end, we've compiled a list of the bartending mistakes that elevate a manager's blood pressure.

- **Disregarding specified serving portions.** The notion that great tips result from pouring "heavy" drinks is a costly one. Over-pouring liquor jacks up costs, increases liability and hurts the other bartenders on the staff who pour according to the rules.
- **Transferring stress.** Crank up the pressure and even common courtesy can quickly disappear. Nevertheless, bartenders must maintain their composure and control their emotions at all times. Stress and frustration must be internalized, not vented onto the clientele or co-workers.
- **Serving inferior product.** Whatever the reason, if a drink isn't up to quality standards, don't serve it. Make sure that mixes are well prepared and juices fresh. Fruit garnishes should be cut daily and be used only in good condition. Don't take short cuts.
- **Cash-handling impropriety.** Handling a steady stream of cash has its temptations, but depositing all of

the bar's cash proceeds must be done without hesitation. Bartending is stressful enough without stealing and attempting to avoid detection. Running an honest till is a conscious commitment.

- **Unjust treatment.** The distinction between guests and customers is crucial. Guests are catered to and should be made to feel welcome and appreciated. Customers are warm bodies with money in their pockets. Treat the clientele like guests, and they'll return another night.
- **Being an order taker.** Don't be complacent just filling orders — make things happen. Energize the guests by suggesting new drinks and products. Recommend the daily specials or inquire whether guests would like to try an appetizer or two. There's no more effective form of marketing than the enthusiastic efforts of servers at the point of sale.
- **Lax professional standards.** From a pressed uniform to a positive attitude, professionalism matters. Establish personal standards and refuse to settle for anything less. Along the same lines,

bartenders must develop the ability to recall customers' names and what they're drinking.

- **If there's time to lean, there's time to clean.** There is more at stake to keeping the bar clean than just passing health-code inspections. The bar's cleanliness also reflects on the establishment's overall sanitary condition — if the bar is dirty, imagine what the kitchen must be like.
- **Scattered priorities.** Working a high-volume bar requires the ability to take care of first things first, e.g., waiting on guests before washing a load of glasses or preparing drink orders for servers before chatting with a friend. Prioritizing tasks according to their highest and best use of time is a proven method of wrenching order out of chaos.
- **"We don't make those."** Saying no to a drink request is bad form. Regardless of whether the guest orders a Mojito or Long Island Iced Tea, if the ingredients are available somewhere on property, make the drink. Saying no is not an option.

Sales Tax on Rental Equipment

An MMBA member asked if sales tax should be charged on rental equipment (i.e. beer tap).

According to the Minnesota
Department of Revenue:

Most retail sales are taxable in Minnesota. A "retail sale" means any sale, lease or rental of tangible personal property for any purpose other than resale, sublease or subrent.

Sales, leases and rentals are taxable regardless of quantity or whether the item is new or used, unless an exemption applies. Some services are also taxable.

Bar Owner Illegally Purchases for Resale

From: StarTribune

A former east metro bar owner haunted by business woes pleaded guilty Thursday to buying beer from a Wisconsin retailer for resale at his White Bear Lake bar.

Michael W. Ogren, 43, admitted in Ramsey County District Court to aiding and abetting a liquor violation.

According to charges, Ogren as well as employees of the Stadium Bar, which Ogren owned at the time, purchased beer kegs and liquor from a store in Hudson, Wis. The alcohol was then resold at the bar in White Bear Lake.

Charges show that he told an employee that the purchases were legal.

Stadium Bar was on a list of businesses delinquent in paying state sales taxes, meaning that wholesalers could not sell or deliver alcohol to the bar. It is also illegal for alcohol licensees to buy alcohol from another retailer for resale.

Ogren made 13 trips to the Wisconsin store to buy alcohol between October and December 2010, charges said. Ogren admitted that he had purchased from other retailers, too.

Ogren is also the former owner of Maplewood's Myth nightclub. He

pleaded guilty last week in Anoka County District Court to failing to give accurate information while applying for a bank loan. He is awaiting sentencing on that charge.

He was charged in Anoka County with felony theft by swindle over \$35,000 for obtaining a \$600,000 loan using Myth stock as security. He told the bank he had not previously pledged the stock as security, but it was later found that the stock had been pledged as security twice.

Myth closed in 2009 under Ogren and reopened under different management.

Bartender/Clerk Interview Questions

Recently an MMBA member asked for some bartender / clerk interview questions.

Here are some ideas:

- Describe your customer service experience.
- What would you do to make a good impression on a customer?
- Because each day presents new challenges and priorities, if you are asked to quickly handle another job task, how does it affect your mood?
- How did you fill the slow time in your last job?
- Give an example of when you did something without being asked? Can you give me another example?
- How would you handle a spoiled customer?
- How have you responded in the past when you found another employee stealing?
- Think about the last time a manager critiqued your work. How did you respond?
- Describe a recent problem you had with one of your manager's decisions. Listen to response then ask how did you handle it?
- How much income per month are you looking to make working here?
- What is the minimum amount of monthly earnings you would be happy with?
- Can you work any shift?
- Can you work weekends?
- How late each evening can you work?
- How will you get to and from work? Is this transportation reliable?
- What do you feel is an acceptable amount of days to be absent from work in a calendar year?
- If selected, what do you expect from this job?

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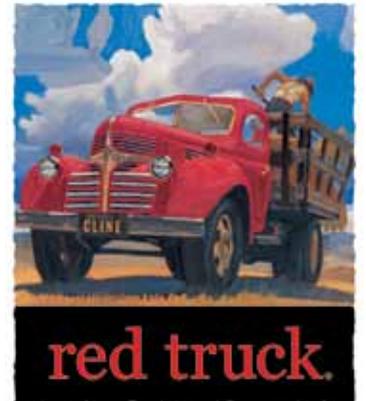
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