



OPINION

The art of the wine label is all in good taste

There's more to the art of wine than just stomping grapes
[Vine Street Imports \(http://www.vsimpports.com\)](http://www.vsimpports.com)

is a Mount Laurel, N.J.-based, family-owned wine importer and distributor. The company has quite an accomplishment under its belt – it represents wineries who have 20 of the approximately 200 wine labels that are on display at the "Label Wall" in the [San Francisco Museum of Modern Art \(http://www.sfmoma.org\)](http://www.sfmoma.org)'s (SFMOMA) newest exhibit, "How Wine Became Modern: Design + Wine 1976 to Now."

The exhibit explores the development of modern wine culture over the past three decades and the role that architecture, design and the media have played in its astonishing transformation.

The exhibition, on view through April, is organized as a suite of galleries, including the "Label Wall" by Diller Scofidio. This section explores the unique challenge of creating a label that has to provide a sense of the wine before the bottle is opened.

Around 200 recent labels are showcased and organized within narrative categories, including "Good Guys Bad Guys," "Cheeky," "Sex," "Femme" and "Truth or Consequences." Nearly 10 percent of these labels are from Vine Street Imports – more than any other importer represented in the exhibit.

"We set out about ten years ago to really change the way wine packaging is viewed," said Vine Street Imports CEO Ronnie Sanders. "Vine Street Imports sees wine as a lifestyle, and we strive for our labeling to be provocative and edgy; something that will pique our customers' interest and lead them to something special inside the bottle."

Sanders explained that the company often tries to tell a story through its packaging, usually about the winemaker. Vine Streets' three Shinas Estate labels, featured under "Good Guys Bad Guys" on the Label Wall, are titled "The Verdict," "The Innocent" and "The Guilty." All are named after the winemaker George Shinas, who is also a judge.

Small Gully labels, which fall under the "Good + Evil" and "Science" categories, are titled "Black Magic Shiraz" and "The Formula Robert's Shiraz 2005." Both were named after winemaker and former chemist Stephen Black.

Owned and operated by the brother and sister team of Ronnie and Lori Sanders, Vine Street Imports focuses on selling wines that are regionally specific and represent the *terroir* of each growing site.

"For a long time, wine was viewed as a stodgy beverage which catered to an older demographic," said CFO Lori Sanders. "We really aim to attract that new, different demographic by taking a more unique approach and focusing on up-and-coming wines and wine-making talent. That's what we're about as a company, and I think that's why you may see that we're so heavily represented in an exhibit like this."

"How Wine Became Modern" marks the first exhibition to consider modern, global wine culture as an integrated, yet expansive and richly textured set of cultural phenomena. The exhibit opened to the public on Nov. 20, 2010, and will run until April 17.

Three of Vine Street's wines are available locally. Visit the Wine & Spirit Shop at 2014 Old Arch Road (610-270-1136), and give the PLCB code numbers.

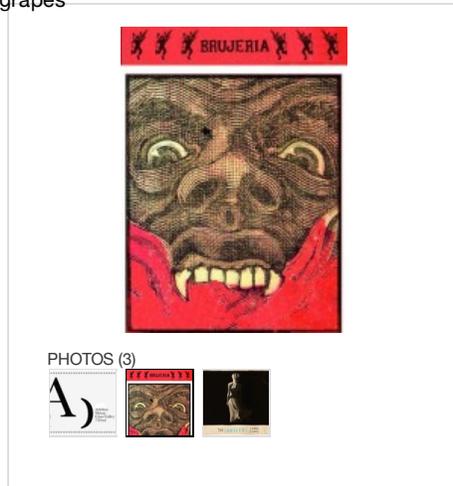
Misfits Brujeria 2007 (PLCB Code 53530; \$16.09) from southwestern Spain. A blend of 66 percent Shiraz, 17 percent Cabernet Sauvignon, 11 percent Garnacha and 8 percent Tempranillo.

Shinas Estate The Innocent Viognier 2008 (PLCB Code 56565; \$20.39) from Milduraa, Victoria, Australia. This is a single vineyard white wine made from 100 percent Viognier grapes.

Adelina Shiraz 2008 (PLCB Code 53375; \$29.75) from the Clare Valley, Australia. Only 163 cases were made! The wine is made from old vines, which creates a very intense flavor.

Cheers!

Have you tried any of these wines? [Tell us in the comments.](#)



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About this column: Phillip Silverstone is a radio and TV “Wine-tertainer” in the US and the UK. He hosts wine events for corporate and private parties. He can be contacted at winechap@thesilverstonecollection.com.

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