



Drink'n'box for Grown-ups

In Canada, Tetra pak moves into new territory

The idea isn't new in countries like Australia, Argentina, France, Spain, Italy and Sweden. But in Canada, Ontarians were the first to sample wine in a tetra pak.

The wine is called French Rabbit and it's from French winemaker Boisset. The LCBO, Tetra Pak Canada Inc., Corby Distilleries Limited and Boisset America were on hand in August to launch three wines under the new label: Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Chardonnay.

According to Danièle Gauvin, the LCBO's manager of corporate communications, LCBO president and COO Bob Peter "had a chat with quite a few of our suppliers last summer and said: 'we want you to come up with something innovative, something that will help the environment.'" The first to respond was Boisset.

The package is called Tetra Prisma Aseptic and it launched in 1996. It comes with a resealable screw cap, called Stream-Cap, which first launched in 2003. It might be new to us, but Jaan Koel, communications and environmental affairs manager for Richmond Hill, Ont.-based Tetra Pak Canada Inc., says: "We've seen this trend growing in other countries around the world steadily over the last several years and we think that it'll appear more and more in Canada as well."

In fact, says Gauvin, Vendange from the U.S. is already in stores in tetra pak (having launched shortly after French Rabbit) and this month Bandit, from Three Thieves in California, also appears on store shelves. And more new non-bottle products



The pros of wine in tetra pak

- recyclable
- lightweight, compact
- easy to carry
- shatterproof
- impervious to UV light
- collapsible packaging (you can squeeze out the excess air as you consume the wine)
- no cork taint
- lower processing and transportation costs
- less packaging (according to the LCBO, a carton has less packaging than an egg: a carton weighs only 4% of the total weight; an eggshell weighs 7% of the total weight of an egg)

from countries around the world are expected to launch this November, and in the spring and summer of 2006.

But what do the wine connoisseurs think? Mark Shipway, a wine instructor in the Dubrulle Culinary Arts program at the Art Institute of Vancouver, thinks it will work in certain situations – the outdoors for one. It'll be ideal for camping, picnics, hiking or boating, he says, because of the fact that it's lightweight and easy to pack. "And people aren't going to be so concerned in those kinds of situations

with presentation because if you're out in the wilds, you're probably drinking out of plastic glasses anyway."

Master sommelier, John Szabo, also the founder of Szabo & Szabo Drinks Trade Consultants and The Centre for Vine Affairs, thinks Canada is ready for wine in tetra pak. But winemakers will have to overcome "the general impression of anything in a box, whether it's bag in box or tetra pak," he says, "it's always been associated with low-quality wine or very average quality table wine."

What tetra pak does do, however, is offer a new way to tap into a new market. Szabo suggests winemakers use tetra pak to draw new drinkers to the category. "Swing them away from beer, soft drinks or spirits into wine by making the package lively, very fun, very colourful," he says. "Appeal to a younger market, remove all the snobbism and all of that pretension out of the wine world and marketing message. You wouldn't, in your advertisement, show the white tablecloth and the candles scenario – that just wouldn't jive."

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