

WHAT THE WINE LABEL TELLS YOU

As consumers become more adventuresome in their wine selections, they look to the label for more information. What makes one wine different from another? What is the dominant grape in the wine? Where were those grapes grown? Although TTB consumer protection regulations only apply to wine of at least seven percent alcohol by volume, this pamphlet contains enough basic information to assist the consumer in making an informed choice when buying wine. This pamphlet discusses wine made from grapes, although wine may also be made from other types of fruit and agricultural products. TTB regulations can be quite detailed in regard to the production of a wine and the information appearing on the bottle; not every possibility is presented here, but this guide will give you a good grasp of the fundamentals. For more detailed information please see the regulations listed on the back of this pamphlet.

VINTAGE DATE

A vintage date on the label indicates the year in which the grapes were harvested. If a vintage date is shown on the label at all, an appellation of origin smaller than a country must also be shown. If an American or imported wine uses a State or county, or the foreign equivalent, as an appellation of origin, 85 percent of the grapes must be from that year; if a viticultural area or the foreign equivalent is used, the percentage is raised to 95 percent.

ESTATE BOTTLED

"Estate Bottled" means that 100 percent of the wine came from grapes grown on land owned or controlled by the winery, which must be located in a viticultural area. The winery must crush and ferment the grapes and finish, age, and bottle the wine in a continuous process on their premises. The winery and the vineyard must be in the same viticultural area.

APPELLATION OF ORIGIN

Appellation of origin is another name for the place in which the dominant grapes used in the wine were grown. It can be the name of a country, State, county or geographic region called a viticultural area, or their foreign equivalents.

A country, State, or county appellation or their foreign equivalent on the label means that at least 75 percent of the wine is produced from grapes grown in the place named.

VITICULTURAL AREA

An American viticultural area is a defined grape-growing region in the U.S. with geographic features (such as soil and climate) that set it apart from the surrounding areas.

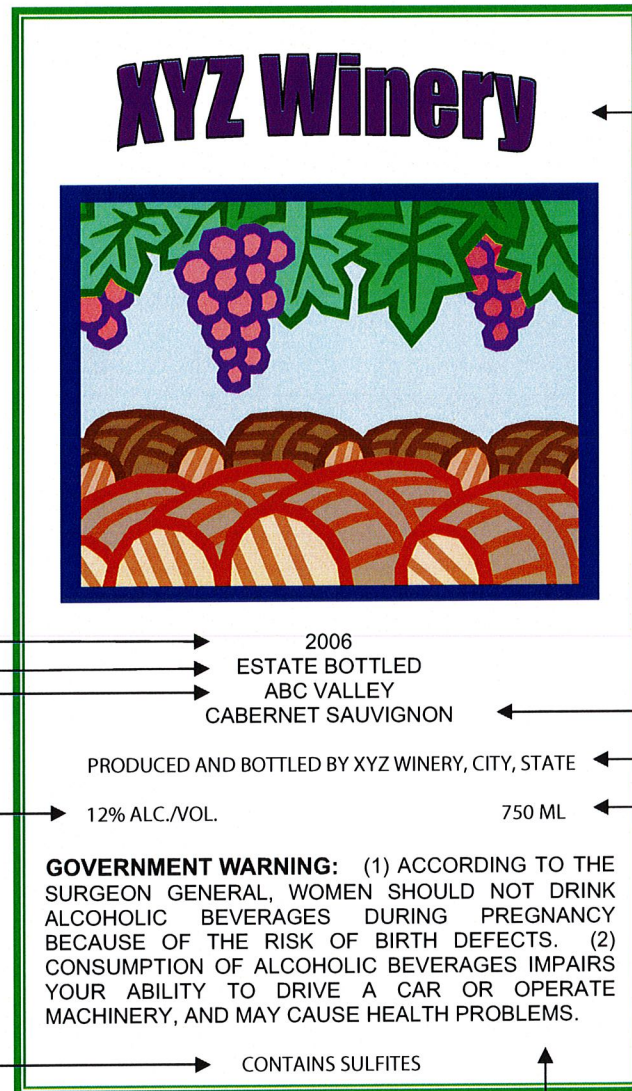
A viticultural area appellation on the label indicates that 85 percent or more of the wine was produced from grapes grown in the named area.

ALCOHOL CONTENT

A statement of alcohol content in percent by volume appears on most labels. As an alternative, some bottlers may label wine with an alcohol content from 7 to 14 percent as "Table Wine" or "Light Wine."

DECLARATION OF SULFITES

Required on any wine intended for interstate commerce that contains 10 or more parts per million of sulfur dioxide. Not required for wines only sold in intrastate commerce.



BRAND NAME

The brand name is used to identify and market a wine. A brand name may not mislead the consumer about the age, identity, origin, or other characteristics of the wine.

VARIETAL DESIGNATIONS

Varietal designations are the names of the dominant grapes used in the wine. Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay, Zinfandel, and Merlot are examples of grape varieties. A varietal designation on the label requires an appellation of origin and means that at least 75 percent of the grapes used to make the wine are of that variety, and that the entire 75 percent were grown in the labeled appellation (except "Vitis labrusca" grapes, such as Concord, which require at least 51 percent).

OTHER DESIGNATIONS

Wine labels are not required to bear a varietal designation. Other designations may be used to identify the wine, such as Red Wine, Rose Wine, White Wine, Table Wine (if no more than 14% alcohol by volume) or Dessert Wine (if over 14% alcohol by volume).

Some imported wines are designated with a distinctive name which is permissible only on specific wines from a particular place or region within the country of origin, for example, Asti Spumanti from Italy and Bordeaux from France.

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

Pursuant to regulations issued by U.S. Customs and Border Protection, a Country of Origin statement is required on containers of imported wines. Acceptable statements include "Product of (insert name of country)" or "Produced in (insert name of country)."

NAME AND ADDRESS

The name and address of the bottler or importer must appear on the container. It is also permissible for a bottler/importer to use a duly authorized trade name in place of its usual operating name.

Domestic wines may have this statement further qualified with terms such as "Produced," meaning that not less than 75 percent of the wine was fermented at the stated address, or "Vinted," which means that the wine was subjected to cellar treatment at the stated address.

NET CONTENTS

The net contents of a wine container must be stated in metric units of measure. Wine must be bottled in 50 ml, 100 ml, 187 ml, 375 ml, 500 ml, 750 ml, 1 L, 1.5 L, or 3 L sizes. Containers over 3 L must be bottled in quantities of even liters. No other sizes may be bottled.

HEALTH WARNING STATEMENT

By law, this statement is required on all alcohol beverages containing 0.5 percent or more alcohol by volume.