

Single-Serve Delivery

Wine sampling website Tastingroom.com launches wines-by-the-glass program

Ordering a glass of wine just got a whole lot easier for consumers who have an Internet connection with the launch of Tastingroom.com's Wines by the Glass program. The website, which offers samples of wines from all over the world, unveiled its new single-serve program in March. In addition to the 50-ml. size bottles that the company already sells, Tastingroom.com has introduced a 100-ml. size bottle that contains the equivalent of one 3.4-ounce glass. CEO Tim Bucher developed the new program to allow consumers to enjoy a glass of a super-premium wine without having to open an entire 750-ml. bottle. With wines by the glass in restaurants accounting for 50 percent of total wine sales, Bucher saw the opportunity to expand his original goal of creating "the world's largest tasting room."

To launch the program, Tastingroom.com partnered with Napa Valley winery Silver Oak, which is celebrating its 40th anniversary this year. The first wine to be available in Tastingroom.com's Wines By the Glass program was the 2007 Silver Oak Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon, priced at \$19 a 100-ml. bottle, or \$70 for a set of four 100-ml. bottles. The wine, which retails for \$100 a 750-ml. at the winery and is not available by the glass in any on-premise accounts, was the only label available in this format through Tastingroom.com for the first three weeks of the program.

At the end of March, Tastingroom.com added four new luxury labels to the Wines By the Glass program. The selections include 2007 Duckhorn Vineyards Howell Mountain Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon; the 2009 Alpha Omega Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley and Proprietary Red Wine Napa Valley; the 2009 Patz & Hall Hyde Vineyard Carneros Chardonnay and Pisoni Vineyard Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir; and the 2010 Williams Selyem "Westside Road Neighbors" Pinot Noir. Each by-the-glass wine is available in 100-ml. single servings (\$12 to \$18) or four-packs (\$45 to \$65). Premium tier offerings from wineries like Francis Ford Coppola, Dry Creek, Fess Parker, Hess Collection and Peter Lehmann (\$6 to \$12 a 100-ml. bottle) followed in April, with additional wines planned as well.

Founded in 2009, Tastingroom.com is able to provide samples and wines by the glass through its patented T.A.S.T.E. Technology, a reformatting process that transfers



Tastingroom.com has expanded its selection to include 100-ml. bottles of super-premium wines, allowing consumers to drink one glass without opening a full bottle.

wine from 750-ml. bottles to 100-ml. or 50-ml. bottles in a zero-oxygen environment. The smaller bottles are exact replicas of their larger counterparts. The company offers various sample packages, such as California Zinfandels (\$27.99 for six 50-ml. bottles) or A Tour of Spain (\$27.99), and celebrity packages like the best-selling Mario Batali Selection (\$32.99), featuring hand-picked labels from California, Washington and Australia. Customers may also buy full 750-ml. bottles of any wine that's available in the sample packages.

Tastingroom.com is growing rapidly, and Bucher has big plans for 2012. "We had an amazing 2011," says the long-time Silicon Valley entrepreneur who has worked for Apple Inc. and owns Sonoma County-based Trattore Estate Wines, as well as an olive farm. "We exceeded revenue goals and saw the number of unique customers hit well into the six figures." Demographics for Tasting Room skew young and female, and gifting is a large part of the business. The company has offered 1,000 SKUs in the last 12 months, and full bottles comprised the majority of sales in January of this year. In late 2011, Tasting Room debuted its Taste Explorer Wine Club—which has two tiers, The Trailblazer Club (\$29.99 per shipment) and The Adventurer Club (\$59.99 per shipment)—and Bucher says the company plans to start powering the wine clubs of other businesses in the future. **mw**

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