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Wine > Learning About Wine > Wine Book Review: 99 Bottles of Wine by David Schuemann

Wine Book Review: 99 Bottles of Wine by David Schuemann

By [Joe Roberts](#)

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"99 Bottles of Wine: The Making of the Contemporary Wine Label" (Val De Grace Books; \$35) is a coffee-table style book that showcases the stories behind the creation of several modern wine labels. The book is written by David Schuemann, the creative director for CF Napa Brand Design, and includes only labels designed by that company (whose clients include well known wine brands Fetzer, Duckhorn, Santa Margherita, and Joseph Phelps Vineyards).



An impressive and heartfelt foreword

Despite having beautiful photography of - and well-written (but brief) stories about - many of the labels designed by CF Napa Brands, the most interesting aspect of "99 Bottles of Wine" is the Foreword, penned by winemaking legend Agustin Huneeus, who founded the Quintessa and Casillero del Diablo brands. Huneeus' thoughtful treatise on the connection between a fine wine's image and the spirit with which the beverage itself is made is a joy to read, and might get you thinking more deeply about how a wine's label can at times act as more than just a eye-catching sales vehicle.

An excellent design showcase

"99 Bottles of Wine" is primarily a showcase for the artwork created by CF Napa Brands, and so the book wouldn't work if the designs and the photography weren't of high quality. Fortunately, both come together nicely in "99 Bottles of Wine" with some of the images, such as the Alphonse Mucha inspired label that adorns the **Scarlett brand of Cabernet Sauvignon** from McGah Family cellars in Rutherford, California, being striking enough to act as conversation starters.

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According to winemaker Agustin Huneeus (who founded Quintessa and Casillero del Diablo, and who provides the Foreword for "99 Bottles of Wine"), "in the 1960s, the label was not as important as it is today, because only about five percent of our wine in Chile was sold in glass bottles."

design process for each of his clients' labels, his stories are too short to have a lasting impact, and they lack the verve and "I was there behind the scenes" feel that might appeal to those who do not have an art or designer background.

"99 Bottles of Wine" is a pretty book and most wine lovers will find a brand or two with which they're familiar showcased in it. Its limited scope, and its focus on the design process, may leave those without a design background wondering what the fuss is all about. Similar but more extensive collections of wine labels and stories written from the layperson's perspective, such as "The Art and Design of Contemporary Wine Labels" by Tanya Scholes, will probably appeal more to you if you're a wine lover who doesn't have a deep interest in the brand design trade but is interested in the stories behind some of the wine world's more striking labels.

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