WINE LABEL COVER APPARATUS AND METHOD

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ABSTRACT

A wine label covering device includes a piece of material having a width corresponding to the width of a label on a bottle and having a length longer than a circumference of the bottle. The piece of material includes a first major surface, and a second major surface. The wine label covering device also includes an adhesive on one end portion of the piece of material on both the first major surface and the second major surface. A wine tasting kit includes a plurality of wine label covering devices or sleeves, response materials, and an instruction set including instructions for covering the wine bottles and for using the response materials.
WINE LABEL COVER APPARATUS AND METHOD

CLAIM OF BENEFIT OF PRIOR-Filed APPLICATION

[0001] This patent application claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application Ser. No. 60/952,274, entitled “Wine Sleeve Apparatus and Method,” filed on Jul. 27, 2007, the entire specification of which is incorporated herein in its entirety.

TECHNICAL FIELD

[0002] Various embodiments described herein relate to a wine label cover apparatus and method associated with using the wine label cover apparatus.

BACKGROUND

[0003] Recreational wine drinking continues to gain popularity. In some instances, several different varieties of wine are opened and tasted as part of a party. The attendees of the party are asked to vote for their favorite wine. Some are more serious and have score sheets that party participants fill out in order to evaluate the various wines. In some instances, the various brands are kept secret until all the scores are tallied or all the participants have voted. Part of the fun is to see if there are any surprises in the winner’s circle.

[0004] In the past, paper bags have commonly been used to cover the label of the bottle. Part of the fun of attending a wine tasting party is that it can be a bit of a classy affair. Using paper bags, like the ones from a liquor store, do not seem in keeping with the classy aspect associated with most wine tasting parties.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0005] The invention is pointed out with particularity in the appended claims. However, a more complete understanding of the present invention may be derived by referring to the detailed description when considered in connection with the figures, wherein like reference numbers refer to similar items throughout the figures and:

[0006] FIG. 1 is a perspective view of an uncovered wine bottle.

[0007] FIG. 2 is a perspective view of a wine bottle having the covered, according to an embodiment of the invention.

[0008] FIG. 3 is a perspective view of a wine bottle having two labels covered, according to an embodiment of the invention.

[0009] FIG. 4 is a top view of a wine label cover, according to an example embodiment described herein.

[0010] FIG. 5 is a bottom view of a wine label cover, according to an example embodiment described herein.

[0011] FIG. 6 is a top view of a wine label cover for covering the throat of a wine bottle, according to an example embodiment described herein.

[0012] FIG. 7 is a bottom view of a wine label cover for covering the throat of a wine bottle, according to an example embodiment described herein.

[0013] FIG. 8 is a view of a stylized wine label cover, according to an example embodiment.

[0014] FIG. 9 is a view of a conformal wine label cover, according to an example embodiment.

[0015] FIG. 10 is a schematic view of a kit for a wine tasting party, according to an example embodiment.

[0016] The description set out herein illustrates the various embodiments of the invention and such description is not intended to be construed as limiting in any manner.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0017] FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a wine bottle 100 which is uncovered. The wine bottle includes a first label 110 which includes information related to the type of wine and the source of the wine in the bottle. The label 110 is generally put on with a very strong adhesive so that it will not come off easily. The wine bottle 100 also includes a label 120 around the throat of the bottle 100. In some instances the label 120 may be difficult to remove. In many instances the label 120 is formed from a plastic or vinyl that can be easily removed. A portion of the label 120, for example, may have to be removed in order to uncrest the wine bottle 100. The present subject matter is not limited to wine, and other beverages are possible, such as vodka, beer and coffee. Further, the label as disclosed herein can be a piece of paper applied to a wine bottle, and in further embodiments it can include printing on a bottle, etching on a bottle and the like.

[0018] FIG. 2 is a perspective view of a wine bottle having the label 110 covered with a wine label cover 400 according to an embodiment. The wine label cover can circumscribe the wine bottle, or it can extend around less than than the circumference of the wine bottle. The wine label cover can have a sleeve shape. In some sleeve shaped embodiments, the wine label cover is formed of a continuous piece of material (i.e., the wine label cover does not include a seam). In further embodiments, the wine label cover includes a seam. In various embodiments, this seam is formed before the wine label cover is applied to a bottle of wine (e.g., the wine cover is provided as a preformed sleeve).

[0019] In various embodiments, the wine label cover 400 wraps around the bottle and attaches to itself. This wrapping is to cover the label 110 to keep any identifying information that might be printed on the wine label obscured from view. In one method of conducting a blind wine tasting, a wine label cover user wraps each of a plurality of wine bottles with a respective wine label cover. In some examples, each wine label cover includes an identifier to distinguish it from other wine label covers. The identifier can be a pattern or a code, such as an alphanumeric code. It could also be a cut, punch or notch in an edge of a wine label cover 400.

[0020] In this way wine tasting can be done using the bottle 100 without the participants knowing the source or even the type of wine. This is known as a blind wine tasting. A blind wine tasting will include several wines that have labels that are covered with a wine label cover, such as wine label cover 400. Each of the wine label covers can include a decorative pattern or can even be provided with printed information specific to the social party or wine tasting being attended. The labels can include an identifier so that participants can record the identifier when they vote for or score various wines. The identification can be recorded on a response card, for example.

[0021] As shown in FIG. 3 there is a second wine bottle 100 that includes a wine label cover 400 and a wine label cover 500. The wine label covers 400 and 500 would include separate identifications that would allow people to discern which bottle of wine they are voting on as they taste them.

[0022] FIG. 4 is a top view of a wine label cover 400, according to an embodiment of the invention. FIG. 5 is a bottom view of the wine label cover 400 according to an
embodiment of the invention. The wine label cover 400 has a height H₂, that is sufficient to cover the label of a wine bottle, such as wine label 110 (shown in FIG. 1). The wine label cover 400 also includes a length dimension, Cₚ. In some embodiments, the length dimension Cₚ is sufficient so that the label will go all the way around the circumference of the bottle. In some instances, the length Cₚ is the circumference of the bottle or the circumference of a bottle plus an additional length since the label as applied overlaps slightly. With wines that have labels that extend around their circumference, this can provide for coverage of the full wine label.

[0023] In several embodiments, the wine label cover 400 is dimensioned so that it can be applied to many different bottle types (i.e., it is “universal”). In this wine seller can suggest any number of wines for a wine tasting party and sell a number of corresponding wine label covers that can be applied at a later time. The wine label covers can be used to disguise or shield the identity of the wine to be tasted or tested. The wine label covers can be used to identify a wine that is being scored. The wine label covers may include an identifier, such as a letter, that does not reveal what type of wine is being tested. The wine label covers can optionally include an identifier that indicates which wine a wine label cover is to be affixed to. The wine label covers are removable so that a wine being evaluated can be unveiled at a later time during the party. In various embodiments, fasteners, such as adhesive, used to adhere the wine label cover is of such a tack that the wine label cover may be removed without damaging the wine label to which it was adhered.

[0024] The wine label cover 400 includes a first major surface 410. The first major surface, as shown in FIGS. 4 and 5 in use defines an exterior surface and includes an identifier 412. The second major surface 420 is opposite the first major surface 410 and faces the bottle. As shown in FIG. 4, the identifier is the letter “A.” The identifier 412 does not have to be a letter or a number but could also be a particular pattern or color of the major surface 410. The wine label cover 400 also includes a second major surface 420. The major surface 420 can be blank or can include printing as disclosed herein.

[0025] In some examples, the wine label cover 400 includes an identifier indicating whether the wine label cover 400 is intended for use with a red wine or a white wine. The identifier could be a cut, such as a V notch in an edge of the wine label cover 400, or could include printing. In some examples, labels intended for use with a white wine are constructed to resist being damaged by condensation associated with a white wine being chilled and then tasted in a warm, humid environment.

[0026] In some optional embodiments, the wine label cover 400 includes printing relating to regional facts, varietals facts, facts about vineyard or vintages, or other information relating to a particular wine to which it may be applied. This information can be printed on the surface that faces the bottle, in various embodiments, so that it is not easily viewed by wine tasters during the wine tasting. Such information enhances the enjoyment users experience at a wine tasting event because after tasting has ended, the users may be provided with the labels and they can read the labels and learn more about the wines they have just tasted. The wine label cover 400 optionally include information about a wine retailer or a wine distributor.

[0027] The wine label cover 400 can include printing such as marketing and advertising. Additionally the wine label cover can include an order code that includes information about the wine label cover 400 such as size information and material type. This order code could be alphanumeric or it could be a bar code or some analog thereof. The order code can optionally include wine information so that a wine taster can remove the label and take it home and order the wine they tasted.

[0028] In some examples, the wine label cover 400 includes a website address. In various embodiments, this website address can be used to order further wine label covers and/or wine. In some examples, customized wine label covers can be customized.

[0029] In some embodiments, a user can access a website associated with the website address by using a client computer. The client computer includes a processor, memory, and instructions such as software in the memory to be executed by the processor to direct a browser to access a website associated with the website address. The client computer includes input devices, such as a keyboard and a mouse that can be used to input information into the client computer, such as the website address, as well as information relating to a wine label cover 400, such as desired size, patterns, graphics or words to be printed on the wine label cover 400. Over a network such as the internet the user can use the client computer to access a remote computer such as a server including a server processor, a server memory, and server instructions such as software in the memory to be executed by the server processor. The web server can collect information relating to the wine label cover 400 and store it that information. A wine label cover 400 manufacturer can access the collected information to create new custom labels.

[0030] The major surface 420 may include an adhesive strip 440 at one end of the wine label cover 400. The major surface 410 also includes an end which is a strip of adhesive 430. The adhesive used to form the strips 430, 440 can be the same adhesive or they can be different adhesives. The adhesive strip 440 may include an adhesive that can attach to the wine bottle itself and yet be releasable at a later time. The adhesive strip 430 may attach to a portion of the interior surface 420 of the wine label cover 400.

[0031] Wrapping the bottle in some examples includes depressing an adhesive 440 on a first end 450 of a wine label cover 400 to a wine bottle to adhere the wine label cover 400 to the wine bottle. A person applying a wine label cover 400 can align the first end 450 with an end of a label on a bottle of wine to ensure that the first end 450 is vertical. This can help assure that the wine label cover 400 extends around the bottle in a generally straight fashion.

[0032] The user should ensure that the height H₂ of the wine label cover 400 is aligned with a height H₁ of a wine label so that the label is obscured from view. Various methods include wrapping the wine label cover 400 around the wine bottle. Various methods can include depressing a further adhesive 430 of the wine label cover to the wine label cover to adhere the wine label cover to itself. Optionally, adhesive strip 470 can be used to secure the wine label cover 400 to itself. Some embodiments use only adhesive strips 440 and 430, while other use 440 and 470, and still others use 430, 440 and 470. In some embodiments, the length of the wine label cover 400 is less than the circumference of the wine bottle, and adhesives strips 430 and 470 allow the user to adhere the wine label cover 400 to a wine label on a bottle. Instructions can be printed on the wine label cover 400 detailing how to apply the wine label cover.
In one embodiment, the adhesive strip 440 is applied to the right of a label on a bottle, and the label is wrapped around the bottle in a counter-clockwise fashion when viewed from the top of the bottle. The wine label cover can then be adhered to itself using adhesive strip 430 or 470 or both 430 and 470. In some embodiments, aligning the label so that edge 450 is parallel to a vertical edge of a wine label can assist in aligning the edge 480 to the edge 450.

The wine label cover 400 can be made of any type of material such as paper, vinyl, or the like. In some embodiments, the paper has a water resistant coating such as wax. Such a coating is useful when tainting white wines that are chilled and thus form condensation on their bottles during the wine tasting. The present subject matter is not limited to adhesive and other fasteners, such as hooks and eyelets, are possible without departing from the present scope.

In embodiments include a wine label cover that is to be wrapped around a bottle, wrapping includes depressing an adhesive 440 on a first end portion 450 of a wine label cover to the wine bottle to adhere the wine label cover to the wine bottle. This method then includes wrapping the wine label cover around the wine bottle. This method can include depressing a further adhesive of the wine label cover to the wine label cover to adhere the wine label cover to itself.

FIG. 6 is a top view of an optional throat label cover 500 according to several embodiments of the invention and FIG. 7 is a bottom view of a throat label cover 500 according to an embodiment of the invention. The throat label cover 500 is used to cover the throat of the wine bottle. In some embodiments, the throat label cover 500 has a different dimension than the wine label cover 400. The height of the throat label cover 500, Hₚ, is sufficient to cover the throat label of the wine bottle. The circumference or the length dimension of the throat label cover 500, Cₚ, is sufficient to wrap around the throat of many wine bottles.

The throat label cover 500 also includes a first major surface 510 and a second major surface 520. The first major surface 510 is an exterior surface and generally will coordinate with another wine label cover exterior surface 410 (as shown in FIGS. 4 and 5). Such coordination can be via an identifier such as a pattern or an alphanumeric code. The interior surface 520 can be blank or include optional printing such as information relating to the wine to be covered.

The throat label cover 500 also includes an adhesive area or adhesive strip 530 on the first major surface and an adhesive strip 540 on the second major surface 520. An optional strip 570 is also illustrated. The adhesives used for the adhesive strips 530 and 540 may have the same characteristics as the adhesive strips 430 and 440 (discussed above with respect to FIG. 4 and FIG. 5). The throat label need not carry any identifiers.

FIG. 8 is a view of a stylized wine label cover 800 according to an example embodiment of the invention. Stylized wine label cover 800 includes an exterior surface 810 having an identifier of some sort 812. The identifier 812 can be a letter, a number or a pattern on the exterior surface 810 of the wine label cover 800. The wine label cover 800 also includes an adhesive strip 830. Also the interior surface has a corresponding adhesive strip (similar to those shown in FIGS. 5 and 7). The stylized wine label cover 800 has a height Hₑ to cover the main label on a wine bottle, such as label 110 (shown in FIG. 1) and the wine label cover also includes a length Cₑ sufficient so that the wine label cover will extend all the way around the circumference of the bottle. The wine label cover 800 also includes a tail 850. The tail 850 can be shaped in a stylized fashion. In one embodiment the tail is adapted to extend upward in an arc such that when applied to the wine bottle, the tail 850 covers the through wine label cover.

FIG. 9 is a view of a conformable wine label cover 900, according to an embodiment of this invention. The conformable wine label cover 900 has an exterior surface 910 and an interior surface 920. The wine label cover 900 is formed in a tube shape out of conformable material. For example, the tube 900 slides into place over the main body of the wine bottle 100 (shown in FIG. 1) to obscure viewing of the label 110. The length of the tube is sufficient to cover the identity portion of a wine label 110. A similar wine label cover could be made for the throat of the wine bottle and would have a slightly different dimension. The wine label cover 900 could be made of any conformable material such as corrugated cardboard or an elastomeric material. In various embodiments, the material of the tube 900 is conformable such that it fits tightly over a label 110 so that people cannot cheat or have the wine label cover prematurely revealed.

FIG. 10 is a schematic view of a kit 1000 for a wine tasting party, according to an example embodiment of the invention. The kit 1000 may or may not include wine in bottles 1010, 1012, 1014. The kit includes at least a first plurality of wine label covers such as wine label covers 1020, 1022, 1024 and a set of instructions on how to conduct a wine tasting party 1030. The instructions 1030 may also include instructions related to how to attach the wine label covers 1020, 1022, 1024 to an example label 1032 or labels, such as the labels on the set of bottles 1010, 1012, 1014. The instructions 1030 can also instruct as to how to use response materials to score wines being tasted. In various embodiments, the instructions 1030 include printing associated with ordering a further plurality of wine label covers. For example a wine kit order code and an address to send an order to. The address could be a website.

The response materials can include a response card 1060. They can also include a pencil or a stylus for marking a response card. In some embodiments, the response card includes a flavor profile (e.g., “bitterness”) 1061 and response bubbles that a respondent can fill. Some embodiments include a note taking section 1062. Some embodiments include a flavor profile with yes or no bubbles. Other response forms are possible without departing from the present subject matter. In some embodiments, the response card includes a space where a respondent can record an identifier associated with a particular wine label cover. The instructions 1030 can include a description of how to do this.

The wine label covers 1020, 1022, 1024 can be set up in various ways. For example, they may have a theme. For example, there might be California wines and all the labels may have exterior surfaces that reflect various aspects of California or the California lifestyle or California vineyards. Other wines come from Australia so you might have an Australian theme to each of the various wine label covers 1020, 1022, 1024. Of course, other wines come from other regions of the world and may have different themes that are all types of wines as well and each of these types of wines could be dealt with as a theme. The idea is that by selling the wine label covers in a kit form with a number of the wine label covers available and various themes liquor retailers will be able to sell increased amounts of wine for wine tastings. In addition,
the wine label covers 1020, 1022, 1024 will be made up so as to add to the fun of having a wine tasting party.

[0044] As mentioned before, the kits can also include the wine so manufacturers of wine may bundle various types of wine for wine tastings. In some of these embodiments, each of the wine label covers 1020, 1022, 1024 includes an identifier 1021, 1023, 1025. Each of these identifiers 1021, 1023, 1025 matches an identifier 101, 1013, 1015 on respective labels 1050, 1052 and 1054 of wine bottles 1010, 1012, 1014.

[0045] A wine tasting party in a kit form might also be able to increase the margin on particular sales of different types of wine. In one embodiment, all the wine label covers are made of disposable material, such as paper or some thin walled opaque plastic or vinyl. In this way the host of the party can merely dispose of the wine bottle and the wine label cover wrapped around the label. Of course if it is the last bottle of a particular type of wine the label can be removed from the bottle to reveal the type of wine it is or the winery responsible for the wine.

[0046] Various options for the kits are possible. In some options, a kit includes a plurality of wine label covers, with each including printing associated with a particular wine. For example, this printing could include the type of wine, the vineyard and/or the vintage. This information could be printed on the side of the label that is intended to face the bottle in use, so that it would be difficult to view by wine tasters.

[0047] In some examples, the response materials include an identifier associated with a particular wine or wines. For example, in some embodiments the identifier on the response card includes patterns which match wine label cover patterns, so that wine tasters know which response card to use for which wines. Numbers, letters, shapes or other graphics could be used as an identifier.

[0048] In various embodiments, the kit further includes an invitation 1040 or invitations, with each invitation 1040 including information about a wine tasting party. Such information could include location 1041, directions 1042, times and/or names of invitees. The invitation could include an RSVP. The invitation can optionally include a blank spot where respondents can request one or more wine types. Some invitations are sent as part of a kit that also includes wines, and the invitations include information relating to the wines. Some invitations include a field that can be completed by hand. The invitations can be coordinated with wine label covers of a kit, such as by including a pattern that matches the wine label covers.

[0049] A wine label covering device includes a piece of material having a width corresponding to the width of a label on a bottle and having a length longer than a circumference of the bottle. The piece of material includes a first major surface, and a second major surface. The wine label covering device also includes an adhesive on one end of the piece of material on both the first major surface and the second major surface. A wine tasting kit includes a plurality of wine label covering devices or sleeves, response materials, and an instruction set including instructions for covering the wine bottles and for using the response materials.

[0050] The foregoing description of the specific embodiments reveals the general nature of the invention sufficiently that others can, by applying current knowledge, readily modify and/or adapt it for various applications without departing from the generic concept, and therefore such adaptations and modifications are intended to be comprehended within the meaning and range of equivalents of the disclosed embodiments.

[0051] It is to be understood that the phraseology or terminology employed herein is for the purpose of description and not of limitation. Accordingly, the invention is intended to embrace all such alternatives, modifications, equivalents and variations as fall within the spirit and broad scope of the appended claims.

[0052] The Abstract is provided to comply with 37 C.F.R. § 1.72(b) to allow the reader to quickly ascertain the nature and gist of the technical disclosure. The Abstract is submitted with the understanding that it will not be used to interpret or limit the scope or meaning of the claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A wine tasting kit comprising:
   a plurality of wine label covers, each of the wine label covers sized to cover a label on a wine bottle;
   response materials comprising at least one response card; and
   an instruction set including instructions for covering an example label with one of the wine label covers and for using the response materials to score a covered wine.

2. The kit of claim 1, wherein the wine label covers include means for affixing the wine label cover to a wine bottle and to itself.

3. The kit of claim 1, further comprising a plurality of wine bottles, each of the wine label covers including an identifier that matches an identifier on a label of at least one wine bottle.

4. The kit of claim 1, wherein each of the wine label covers includes a wine identifier, and the response materials include a scoring identifier associated with the wine identifier.

5. The kit of claim 1, wherein the plurality of wine label covers each include printing associated with a particular wine to which the respective wine label cover is to be applied to.

6. The kit of claim 1, wherein an order code is printed on each of the plurality of wine label covers, the order code to identify a particular wine to which the respective wine label cover is to be applied to.

7. The kit of claim 6, wherein a website address is printed on each of the plurality of wine label covers, the website address associated with a website to receive the order code and a web server to store the order code.

8. The kit of claim 1, wherein the instruction set includes an order code associated with ordering further wine label covers.

9. The kit of claim 1, further comprising invitations.

10. A wine label covering device comprising:
    a piece of material having a height that is at least as great as the height of a label on a bottle and having a length longer than a circumference of the bottle, the piece of material comprising:
    a first major surface, and
    a second major surface; and
    an adhesive on one end portion of the piece of material on both the first major surface and the second major surface.

11. The wine label covering device of claim 10, wherein the piece of material is to wrap around the bottle with the second surface facing the bottle, with the adhesive adhered to the bottle, and with the adhesive being disposed on the second major surface to adhere the piece of material to itself with the
adhesive disposed between the one end portion of the material and a portion of the material that is to overlap the one end portion of the material.

12. The wine label covering device of claim 11, further comprising a website address printed on the second major surface, the website address associated with a website to order a further wine label covering device.

13. The wine label covering device of claim 11, further comprising a website address printed on the second major surface, the website address associated with a website to order further wine that is substantially the same wine as the wine in the bottle.

14. The wine label covering device of claim 10, wherein advertising printing is disposed on the material.

15. The wine label covering device of claim 10, wherein the material includes paper.

16. The wine label covering device of claim 15, wherein the paper is wax coated.

17. A method for conducting a blind wine tasting, comprising:

- wrapping each of a plurality of wine bottles with a respective wine label cover, with each wine label cover including an identifier to distinguish it from other wine label covers, the wrapping comprising:
- depressing an adhesive on a first end portion of a wine label cover to the wine bottle to adhere the wine label cover to the wine bottle, wrapping the wine label cover around the wine bottle, and depressing a further adhesive of the wine label cover to the wine label cover to adhere the wine label cover to itself;
- distributing response cards to wine tasters, the response cards each including identifiers that match each response card to at least one wine label cover, and recording responses on at least one response card.

18. The method of claim 17, further comprising:

- wrapping at least one white wine bottle with a wine label cover including a white wine identifier; and
- wrapping at least one red wine bottle with a wine label cover including a red wine identifier.

19. The method of claim 17, wherein wrapping includes wrapping a wine of a particular brand and vintage with a wine label cover including a unique identifier associated with a particular wine brand and vintage, and wherein the response card includes the unique identifier.

20. The method of claim 17, further comprising distributing the wine label covers after the responses have been recorded, with each of the wine label covers including information associated with the wine that was covered by the wine label cover.

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