

LIFESTYLE

Have you heard of Winesocks?

by Sherwin Lao

Socks are very versatile products. I have seen baby socks used as cellphone protective cases, and sports socks used to cover golf clubs, and so on, aside from its usual purpose of comforting our feet. But socks for wine tastings? Here is a concept the Herbert Agency of Deurle, Belgium, created with their winesocks. Yup... one word, and very literal. Herbert Agency is a company engaged in customized textile products. The company imports textile products, mostly shirts, socks, towels and underwear, and offer it to corporate clients with personalized logos, at flexible quantities. Check them out at www.herbertagency.be.

How was winesock invented?

According to Bernard Herbert, owner of Herbert Agency `his being a textile importer and a wine enthusiast at the same time, made this Winesock project a natural realization.

"In Europe, we use aluminum foils to cover wines during blind tastings, and it is extremely environment unfriendly. So, I created the Winesocks specifically for blind tastings."

Not only are Winesocks functional in blind tastings, they look aesthetically better too. Being a wine lover, Bernard would even exchange his winesocks for good wines from wine-importer clients, a smart win-win situation. But what started as more of a personal campaign, is now serious business.

What are winesocks?

Winesocks are socks contoured to the different wine bottle shapes, from the most common Bordeaux bottles to even Burgundy and Rhine

bottles in regular 75cl. formats. The socks conceal completely the labels of the wines being blind tasted, and fit snugly to the bottles. Winesocks also come in different colors, are reusable and washable. The Herbert Agency sells these socks in generic six-packs, or six Winesocks, numbered from one to six—ideal for small group six-bottle blind tastings. The company can also do customized orders with special logos (but non-numbered), for a reasonable minimum of only 100 units. Since the socks are light and thin, the orders can fit a small package and be shipped to anywhere in the world.

The validity of winesocks

The winesocks made its first major impact on wine competitions, when it was initially used in the very prestigious Monde Selection International Wine Contest held annually in Brussels, Belgium a few years ago. This wine contest of Monde Selection is the only Belgian wine competition that is endorsed by OIV, International Organization of Vine and Wine. Participation is open to all wine-producers, dealers, distributors, exporters, importers, auctioneers, etc.. Monde Selection is very proud of the international reach of the participating wines. Annually, the organizers of this event receive wine samples from over 20 different countries. Present Winesocks clients also include Central Washington University, Dale Robertsons, and several known hotel schools and wine education programs in Benelux. "Winesocks are also great novelty gift items for wine importers" says Herbert.

While the target customers of the winesocks obviously are institutions

into wine education, wine training and wine competitions, I firmly believe that these Winesocks can be excellent unique gifts for just about any wine lover, regardless of degree of appreciation. Wouldn't it be fun to do blind wine tastings in parties? Whether it be Chateau Margaux or a [yellow tail] you are tasting, the Winesocks are much cooler than the usual brown paper bags we see locally. I tried them out myself already, and the Winesocks look great!

For inquiry on Winesocks, you may contact directly Bernard Herbert at Bernard.herbert@gmail.com, telephone number +3292827090, or visit their Web site at www.winesock.com.

For comments, inquiries, wine event coverage, wine consultancy and other wine related concerns, please e-mail me at protegeinc@yahoo.com. You can also follow me on twitter at www.twitter.com/sherwinlao.

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