

# LAYERS ADD UP

**WHILE DIRECT SOURCING ENSURES QUALITY, A NEW CAMPAIGN IS SET TO POWER THE FAST-GROWING BRAND**

BY W. R. TISH

**W**ine is no stranger to fanciful names, but one in particular may take the cake. Layer Cake, after a humble start as a single Australian Shiraz, has expanded and extended, both varietally and regionally. Coming off ten straight years of double-digit growth, it was tagged in 2016 by Nielsen as the #7 wine brand overall and #2 import in the U.S.

Like many fast-rising brands, the original concept was simple: Jayson Woodbridge, who had already taken a place among Napa Valley Cabernet elite via his Hundred Acre label, took aim at everyday drinking with a Shiraz from McLaren Vale and Barossa Valley. The name Layer Cake was a double-entendre, communicating the promise of rich, flavorful textures and the concept of layered vineyard soil—richness and complexity either way.

Jayson Woodbridge



But Layer Cake caught on and grew thanks to its intriguing label, generous texture, and fruit-driven profile overdelivering in the \$12-\$15 category, the fastest-growing in the industry right now. And the brand has proven especially appealing to Millennials.

Expansion was done purposefully, sourcing each wine in the country of origin, where the grape varieties grow best (including 80+ year-old vines in Australia, Argentina and Italy). Layer Cake added Primitivo from Puglia; Chardonnay and Cabernet from California; Malbec and a Red Blend from Mendoza. Each wine is handmade by Jayson Woodbridge, working with the same vineyards and farmers every vintage. (Layer Cake is fully-owned by Jayson Woodbridge; Hundred Acre Wine Group had worked with Vintage Point, based in Sonoma, for sales and marketing but as of March 2016 took full control of the portfolio.)

## Eye on Imports, High on POS

With a decade of solid growth and a portfolio that hits on multiple popular wine types, Layer Cake is gearing up for even greater success. Of special note: the Sea of Stones Red Blend, from a single Mendoza vineyard of Malbec, Cabernet, Syrah and Petit Verdot now complementing the otherwise 100%-varietal line.



Layer Cake's memorable label and overdelivering quality in the red-hot \$12-\$15 price range ensured that fans quickly embraced the range beyond the original Shiraz.

"Sea of Stones fits right into the heart of the 'red blend' category," notes Lori Green, Director of Marketing. "It checks off a couple of boxes for anyone interested in the category—easy-to-drink red blend and an import from Argentina—making it a great transition into the category for anyone who is a fan of Malbec or just wants something different than your typical California, bulk wine blend."

Green adds that Layer Cake is now rolling out the brand's most ambitious POS programming yet, the "Drink Different" campaign, focused on the imported reds. Elements include case cards, shelf talkers, table tents and neckers with coupons or DropStops.

Plus, in states where legal, customers that buy a bottle of Layer Cake wine can receive a stemless, use-anywhere GoVino glass. "The brand pairing matches the spirit of adventure and don't-follow-the-typical-rules attitude of Layer Cake with the free-yourself empowerment of GoVino," explains, Green. "We're getting incredible feedback from our distributors about this program and we're excited to get it into market." The program will be supported with advertising and social media, further keeping the Layer Cake brand front of mind for adventurous wine lovers eager to "think different and drink different." ■

