

## Grooner' is a wine (and marketing) hit

Edward Deitch shares how a wine label sells it by helping you say it

By Edward Deitch

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**TODAY**

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It's a fact of life in the wine world that many people buy a bottle of wine because they like what's on the label, whether it's an animal, an appealing name, a coat of arms, an old pickup truck or even an image of Marilyn Monroe, to cite just a few icons that readily come to mind.

There is, of course, no correlation to what's inside the bottle, which would be readily apparent if you tried all these wines with attractive labels in blind tastings. You would like some and turn your wine nose up at others. Still, labels often help seal the deal when buying a wine.

A new wine called Grooner is one of them, and as I stared at it the other day on a shelf at Gotham Wines & Liquors in New York City, a sales manager came over and pitched me on the fact that the wine itself was quite good. Sold.

It turned out he was absolutely right. Grooner is a first-rate \$10 white wine from Austria. And guess what? The name and the label art actually have something to do with the wine. Grooner is the pronunciation of the first word in grüner veltliner, the top Austrian white variety whose acceptance here has no doubt been held back by its complicated name. It doesn't roll off the tongue quite like "merlot," does it?

Grüner veltliner (the other word is pronounced velt-leener), is known as grüner for short, and so Monika Caha, a native Austrian who represents a number of Austrian producers in the U.S., decided to capitalize on it. She branded it for the U.S. market with Grooner. Smart idea.

Not only is Grooner one of the best attempts at wine branding I've seen, it's also a great wine value. It's instantly enjoyable and unmistakably grüner, with signature notes of herbs, white pepper and minerals that punctuate a green apple core, along with a touch of pineapple. There's good balance and a long finish. Alcohol is a modest 12 percent.

This is an excellent wine for food, especially spicy or strongly flavored foods. We enjoyed it with fish — sole fillets roasted with a simple coating of coarse Dijon mustard and vermouth, accompanied by asparagus sautéed in olive oil with chopped garlic.

At the \$10 level, you're often in for big-production, generic wines with little individuality. The 2007 Grooner, on the other hand, is estate bottled by one of Monika Caha's producers, Meinhard Forstreiter in the Niederösterreich region (Lower Austria). It's imported by Frederick Wildman and Sons, New

York.

This is one that I'll be drinking often with everyday meals, taking to parties and enjoying right into the summer months. Grooner, along with [an exciting red that I reviewed recently](#), will give you a perfect introduction to Austrian wines.

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