

Premium packaging for The Wine Caverns' Wonderfully English Wine

The Wine Caverns pour their heart into producing premium, home-grown English wines. The end result is stunning; not only is the wine delicate and delicious, but every detail, down to the finish of the bottles, is perfectly curated.

The bottles themselves have a vintage feel; they wouldn't be out of place in a grand manor from the 1920s, or perhaps in Versailles – they'd certainly be a match for Marie Antoinette.

They're a premium brand and their customers expect the best – which means their packaging has to go beyond function but reflect the quality of the wine within. Selling their collection of wonderful wines online via their eCommerce website, they needed a packaging supplier who understands the intricacies of working with wine.

We know that when it comes to wine, packaging needs to be carefully considered to make sure the product not only arrives in one piece, but reflects the values of the brand and the quality of the products that they so proudly supply. So when The Wine Caverns reached out to Smurfit Kappa, having seen their eBottle portfolio on their website.

After speaking with the team at their Smurfit Kappa Chelmsford site, they were reassured that every single bottle pack in their eBottle portfolio had been rigorously tested and had passed the ISTA 3A testing procedure. This gave The Wine Caverns the reassurance they needed to take the leap and Smurfit Kappa Chelmsford got to work.

What is ISTA testing?

ISTA Testing is a process which ensures packaging performs to the required standards. It particularly focuses on how packages behave in transit; the tests include drop trials from increasing heights and atmospheric experiments to ensure that the packaging can withstand changes in temperature and humidity.

A range of simulation tests are performed to recreate the most extreme conditions a parcel of this type is likely to encounter.

This particular set of tests are designed especially for fragile and liquid products – so an expensive wine housed in delicate glass fits the bill.

Passing ISTA tests means clients can be sure their packaging can withstand any common shipping mishaps. It's particularly important for eCommerce businesses who rely on their product arriving safely to create a positive first impression.

Smurfit Kappa's new Packaging Hub in Northampton combines an ISTA Lab with a Smurfit Kappa Experience Centre. This means that both the design and testing of eCommerce packaging can both be done on-site, rapidly accelerating lead times.

Designing the packaging

Whilst – unusually for Smurfit Kappa – there was a pre-existing design that The Wine Caverns wanted to use from the range, it still needed to be customised for their needs.

Corrugated packaging was a new venture for The Wine Caverns and so they relied on the Smurfit Kappa Chelmsford team's wealth of experience to guide them through the process. From resizing the pack and assembling any samples to defining print finishes and ink colours, the Smurfit Kappa team were there every step of the way to offer advice and guidance.

Smurfit Kappa Chelmsford were excited to get to work on this project: "We love supporting our clients throughout the design process, making sure that their every need is considered and met." Dominic Price, Sales Director, Smurfit Kappa Chelmsford.



The team started by resizing the single bottle gift packaging from the existing eBottle range. The Wine Caverns' wine bottles are a unique size and it was important that the packaging fits perfectly in order to prevent any breakages.

Once that was taken care of, it was time to talk about the aesthetics. The Wine Caverns wanted the gift packaging to be printed double-sided (both the interior and exterior), showcasing their strong branding and creating a more premium experience for their customers.

The Smurfit Kappa team suggested using a substrate of corrugate that retained some of its natural feel; a nod to the rural nature of The Wine Caverns' products. Onto that was a flexo-printed elegant design, created collaboratively by The Wine Caverns and Smurfit Kappa.

The exterior is minimal; twisting purple vine leaves caress the brown substrate, The Wine Caverns' logos marked out in black.

Open it up, however, and there's a rich, deep blue; a colour which evokes images of elegant dining rooms and evening soirées. It truly captures the grace of The Wine Caverns' wines and creates a luxurious unboxing experience for the customer.

The result

One thing that drew The Wine Caverns to Smurfit Kappa's eBottle designs was the fact that they were a sustainable packaging solution. Though entirely paper-based, the packages are sturdy and protective. They allow The Wine Caverns' customers to recycle the boxes once opened – a key concern for their clientele.

The feedback has been incredible; The Wine Caverns' carrier, who has stringent packaging requirements, happily signed off the design. Meanwhile, The Wine Caverns were delighted with the end result:

“What a process! Our bottles are now housed safely in boxes which deliver on both the functional side and the experience side, and we couldn't be happier. With the goal to make the move towards more sustainable packaging solutions, Smurfit Kappa were the perfect partner to steer them through the process, advising and supporting them every step of the way.

Emma Clark,
Marketing Manager for The Wine Caverns.

For more information visit smurfitkappa.com