

# Wine Label Tips : Mandatory Label Information

**Alcohol Content** - A statement of alcohol content in percent by volume appears on most labels. As an alternative some bottlers prefer to label wine with an alcohol content between 7 and 14 percent as "Table Wine" or "Light Wine."

**Appellation of Origin** - Appellation of origin is simply another name for the place in which the dominant grapes used in the wine are grown. It can be the name of a country, state, county or geographic region called a viticultural area. A country, state or county appellation on the label means that at least 75 percent of the wine is produced from grapes grown in the place named.

**Brand** - The brand name is a name used by the bottler to identify the product. Any brand name is acceptable if it does not mislead the consumer.

Country of Origin - A country of origin statement is required on all imported wines. For example, "Product of (insert name of country)";

**Declaration of Sulfites** - Required on any wine intended for interstate commerce that contains 10 or more parts per million (ppm) sulfur dioxide. Not required for wines only sold in intrastate commerce.

**Estate Bottled** - "Estate Bottled" means that 100 percent of the wine came from grapes grown on land owned or controlled by the winery, which must be located in a viticultural area. The winery must crush and ferment the grapes, finish, age, process and bottle the wine on their premises.

**Health Warning Statement** - Required on all alcoholic beverages containing .5% or more alcohol by volume. "GOVERNMENT WARNING" must appear in capital letters and bold type. The remainder of the statement may not appear in bold type. The statement reads as follows:

## **GOVERNMENT WARNING:**

(1) According to the Surgeon General, women should not drink alcoholic beverages during pregnancy because of the risk of birth defects. (2) Consumption of alcoholic beverages impairs your ability to drive a car or operate machinery, and may cause health problems.

**Name and Address** - The name or trade name and address(es) of the bottler or importer must appear on the label. Domestic wines will state "Bottled By:" followed by the name and address of the bottler. Imported wines will state "Imported By:" followed by the name and address of the importer.

**Net Contents** - The net contents of wine are stated in the metric system of measure and is the amount of product in the container.

**Other Designations** - Wine labels are not required to bear a varietal designation. Other designations may be used to identify the wine. Examples are Red Wine, White Wine, Table Wine. Designations such as Chablis, Chianti, or Burgundy include wines similar to those originally made in the geographic regions indicated by those names but now produced elsewhere. Such wines must include an appellation of origin to indicate the true place of origin. For example, "California Burgundy." Some wines are designated with distinctive names, which is permissible only on specific wines from a particular place or region within the country of origin, for example, Asti Spumanti from Italy and Bordeaux from France.

**Varietal Designations** - Varietal designations are the names of the dominant grapes used in the wine. Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay, Zinfandel, and Merlot are examples of grape varieties. A varietal designation on the label requires an appellation of origin and means that at least 75 percent of the grapes used to make the wine are that variety. (Except "Vitis labrusca" grapes such as Concord which require 51%.)

**Vintage Date** - A vintage date on the label indicates that 85 percent or more of the wine is produced from grapes grown in that year. If a vintage date is shown on the label, an appellation of origin, smaller than a country, must also be shown.

**Viticultural Area** - A U.S. viticultural area is a defined grape-growing region with soil, climate, history and geographic features, which set it apart from the surrounding areas. A viticultural area appellation on the label indicates that 85 percent or more of the wine is produced from grapes grown in the particular area.