

FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions

What is Private Label?

With the Sonoma Wine Company Private Label program, the client develops the Brand concept and owns the intellectual property. The client must invest in product development, including all licensing and registration costs. Private Label clients assume the cost of design, printing and delivery of labels to the winery (although we help facilitate the process) and then we label the unfinished goods with those labels. The cost of labeling the product is included in the pricing.

Who are your Private Label clients?

Our Private Label clients are retail customers, distributors, négociants and importers. While many of our clients are well known, well-regarded producers, we respect their confidentiality and do not disclose program specifics publicly.

What varietals do you stock?

We hold in inventory a wide variety of California and appellation varietals including Cabernet, Chardonnay, Merlot, Sauvignon Blanc, Zinfandel, Pinot Noir, Pinot Grigio, Petite Sirah, and Napa Valley Cabernet. We also produce custom private label projects for orders of 1,000 case or more per SKU. Please inquire about varietals not on our inventory list.

Do you handle distribution and/or resale of private label wine for your clients?

No. While Sonoma Wine Company provides finished goods to our clients at ex-cellar pricing (FOB), billed at bottling, we do not handle distribution, resale or fulfillment of private label wine orders to consumers. Our clients arrange for shipment and distribution of the wines they produce through us.

How are you different from your competitors?

The advantage to working with Sonoma Wine Company is that we are the producer, not a middleman. Since we are specialists in contract bottling and custom wine production, you benefit from our resources, buying power and technical expertise.

At Sonoma Wine Company, we produce between 3,500,000-4,000,000 cases per year that service our contract, branded and private label programs. As Sonoma County's largest contract bottling facility, we have the depth of experience to produce large and small runs correctly, efficiently and on time. However, we are nimble enough to be able accommodate the custom needs of many programs.

In contrast to major producers seeking to dispose of their own surplus wine inventory through private labels programs, we source wine specifically for our private programs. This ensures that the wine reflects a consistent stylistic and quality profile.

The needs of our diverse group of clients and the experience of our bottling crew allows us to be flexible and speedy, which permits us to label small runs for our private label shiner program. This allows our customers to buy in pallet increments rather than forcing them to make large quantity/financial commitments up front. At the same time, we are large enough to accommodate and expand with programs that undergo growth.

How do I begin the process to develop a private label?

The very first requirement is that you hold some type of license to produce, distribute or sell alcoholic beverages. You will also need to consider distribution channel strategy and network. Once you have your license and distribution plan in place, you are ready to begin the private label process, starting with a brand/label concept and name, annual volume projections by varietal, and target price point in the market. Once you have licensing and label design in place, you would fill out a credit application to establish an account at Sonoma Wine Company. You would then contract to purchase wines from SWC generally in the form of a purchase order. Next, you would work with our Compliance Department to obtain TTB approval for your label. As soon as TTB approval is received, you can arrange for label printing. Once the label is produced and shipped to SWC, we schedule labeling on the bottling line. Once labeling is completed, you can arrange for pick-up of your wine through our Shipping Department.

How long does it take to create a new label?

The timeline is approximately 8-12 weeks, subject to wine availability and finalized package design.

What is the minimum order?

For the Private Label Program, the minimum order is 168 cases per order (with no less than 56 cases per SKU) and a 560-case (10 pallets) annual volume. We are able to serve both those clients who order 56 cases per SKU as well as those clients who order container loads/truckloads per SKU or varietal.

What if I require custom packaging or varietals outside the custom label program?

There is some flexibility with the use of custom packaging within the Private Label program. Please inquire about specific custom packaging requests.

How do I initiate an order?

A first order is initiated with approved credit application, deposit and purchase order and/or purchase contract. For subsequent orders, a purchase order is required a minimum of 2-3 weeks in advance of desired pick-up date.

Are special payment terms available?

Our terms are Net 30 days from labeling date for private label wine, and Net 30 days from shipment for control label wines. We do currently accept credit cards as payment. A fee of 2.5% will be added onto total if a credit card is used.

Who owns the wine?

For private label wines, ownership transfers at the time of production (labeling) and is subject to warehouse storage fees. Payment for contracted wine is due within 30 days of labeling. Warehouse storage fees apply after 30 days from production.

Are taxes included?

Private label wine pricing does include Federal, but not State Excise Tax unless otherwise arranged between client and SWC.

Do I need insurance for my merchandise?

A certificate of insurance is required from the client from the date of labeling until the date the wine is picked up by the client, since ownership technically transfers to the client upon labeling.

How do I arrange for pick-up of finished goods?

For Private Label wines, you would also need to fax/send a Case Goods Order Form to Gina M. Elam, authorizing release of the merchandise.

Can I visit?

Sonoma Wine Company is not open to the public. We are available for visit to the trade by appointment only during general business hours. Please contact Joe Joffe at 707-829-6135.

Where are you located?

Address: 9119 Graton Rd., Graton, CA 95444 / Phone: 707-829-6100
From San Francisco it is approximately 1-1/2 hour drive:

Directions:

Take North 101 through Petaluma to downtown Santa Rosa. Take the Hwy 12 interchange off 101, west toward Sebastopol. Continue approximately 5 miles west on 12 to the first stoplight. This is the Fulton Rd intersection, turn right and take an immediate left onto Occidental Rd. Continue approximately 3 miles to the next stop light, North Gravenstein Hwy (116), and turn right onto 116. Continue to the next light, Graton Rd., turn left, proceed down the hill to the town of Graton. We are the big blue-grey industrial building on the far left corner at the intersection of Graton Rd and Bowen Ave. Park in front and enter through the double glass doors.

What type of facilities do you have?

With a state-of-the art custom crush winery, six highly flexible, efficient, quality-oriented bottling lines and a separate, 120,000 square foot temperature-controlled public case goods storage warehouse, we are considered California North Coast's leading full service contract wine production facility.

Can you assist me with shipping arrangements?

We have a fully staffed shipping and receiving department, accepting long haul and intra-state carriers, for both full and partial truckloads (LTL). If needed, we can make recommendations of preferred carriers to our clients.

Can you assist me with packaging?

We can assist with a wide range of packaging needs, from closures to glass to label design. For private label we will recommend packaging designers and approved label printers. We can provide storage of packaging components for an extra monthly fee.

What packaging options are available?

Packaging options include capsule selection, label, and label application to the case carton (additional \$.25/case). Aglica stock corks, mid-push up glass and content shipper are all standard for custom label program wines. Upon special request, for runs >2500 cases, screwtop and other alternative closures and glass are available.

Can you provide me with compliance and registration support?

We offer the following in-house compliance and registration services: additions to our basic permit for clients, trade name additions, Sonoma County fictitious business name statements, federal label approvals and government reporting for export. Additional fees apply for these services. State label registrations and trademark registrations may be obtained through outside providers.

Who makes the wine?

Our winemakers have extensive experience in all varietals across several continents with wines ranging from estate and limited production to large-volume, mass market producers. They are masters at sourcing and blending wines to our client's specifications. Under the direction of Alex Cose, private label wines are headed up by David Elliott, Richard Castle and the Sonoma Wine Company winemaking team.

Where do you source your wine?

We do not own vineyards nor do we store large amounts of bulk wine for prospective clients. However, we purchase a substantial quantity of wine on the bulk market and enter into both long and short term contracts for grapes and finished wine. Due to our buying power, knowledge of the grape and bulk market, and skill in blending, we are in a position to take advantage of supply and demand situations to our clients' benefit.

Joe Joffe
Director of International and
Domestic Private Label
707.829.6135



Northern California's
Premier Custom Winery