



Looking for Your Point of Difference

Taking the opportunity to focus displays using locally produced wines can identify a unique market niche for your liquor store. There are many examples of this like Barry Entwistles huge range of Yarra Valley wines in his Seville IGA. For Barry it has seen a rise in traffic and in particular makes his store a destination for Yarra Valley wine customers, offering them a one stop shop.

Similarly this has been done with great effect in Rutherglen, with IGA's best liquor store promoting a huge range of local wines all only metres away from the actual wineries

With wineries being developed all over the country it is virtually possible to do some form of this type of differentiation in most stores, the degree of investment will depend on tourism opportunities, but locals could also be very interested in their regions wines.



If you don't have much experience in this area of wine, it may be a good idea to speak to the local wineries and gain their knowledge and experience to venture into local wines, after all they will become one of your suppliers and they will welcome the added exposure and sales.

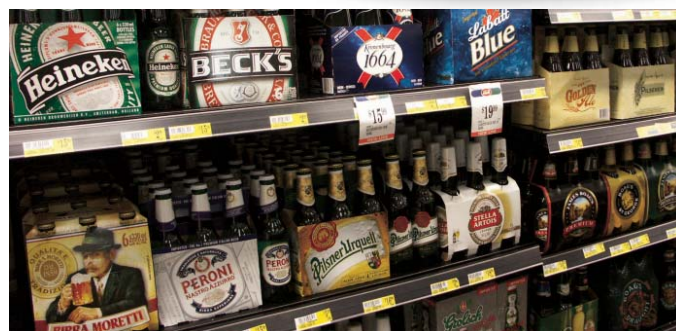
Another area of expertise can be imported beers or spirits from around the world, or for the store focusing on fine foods it may be the best range of sticky wines, each of these could seriously set your store apart from the pack.

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Complimentary products like chocolates, good cheeses and deli lines or seasonal gifts can also make a huge difference to the appeal of your store.

Capitalise on any specific area of expertise to any unique feature, either product related, exceptional staff, store locality or even the building you are located in. Older buildings with cellars may make a great promotional gimmick even if they aren't always a practical selling space, they would be great to use for a wine tasting or special events held in-store or just add to the feeling that the store has a long held retailing history.

Above all your team must learn about the products they sell, this may be a challenge due to the changes in staff, however simply by focusing on a range of wines each week, researching the product on the web or via sales material and in-store tasting, there is no excuse for lack of selling knowledge.

The IGA and FoodWorks stores with liquor departments also have an advantage over the stand alone stores, regardless of the size of the department, your stores have a greater potential to increase sales by appealing to your grocery customers. Don't overlook cross selling liquor offers to your grocery customers as they shop much more frequently than liquor shoppers in general, this gives you way more scope to increase sales.

As in the case of Sams IGA in Richmond, there are opportunities even if you are over the road from Dan Murphys. In Sam's case it is better trading hours and a quicker shopping visits, means he can still develop a good one stop shop.

Your challenge in the "Era of the big liquor retailer", is to plan your future, develop your own unique offer, look at revamping your store with better displays, newer refrigeration, clean and modern cash register booths and a range that is proven to cater for your store.

It won't just happen, you need a planned approach when fighting against the billions of dollars at the disposal of your competition to develop their particular retail liquor offers.

Just opening the door everyday and wacking stock on the shelves and in the cool room no longer gives you the right to a profitable business.

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