

# Keith Haring, Dolce & Gabbana and More: Bottles That Embrace Pop-Culture Design

BY ANNE WALLENTINE



*Photo by Tom Arena*

Though bottle labels have existed since ancient Egypt, the advent of lithography in the late 1700s allowed mass-printed labels to rely more heavily on images to express a wine's character or origin. Over the years, art has expanded the role of labels from purely informational to aspirational and even collectable, and they now convey more about a wine than language could alone.

After all, wine, like art, is a sensory experience, and a bottle's label "has to be beautiful," says Elaina Leibee, wine director for Erewhon Market, a specialty grocery chain in California.

Here, five label projects that demonstrate the ways art and wine can intertwine.

## Donnafugata Rosa rosé encapsulates Sicilian style and terroir

Donnafugata's collaboration with fashion house and fellow Italian brand Dolce & Gabbana (D&G) relies on art to help express its history and terroir. A blend of Nerello Mascalese and Nocera, two indigenous Sicilian grapes harvested from around Mount Etna, the wine is emblazoned with a D&G design inspired by Sicily's characteristic folk art.

It features energetic, geometric bursts of color that recall the vibrant patterns of the island's traditional carts and portray a strong sense of culture and place to many, yet also read as playful and approachable to those unfamiliar with the region's iconography.

## Castellani Tenuta di Ceppaiano commemorates Keith Haring

Tuscany's Castellani family has forged several relationships that blend art with wine, most predominantly through its non-profit artist sanctuary, Materia Prima.

In 2019, they released a bottling to commemorate one of their more famous friends: Keith Haring. Its label features a sketch the artist had given to the family, who were instrumental in the creation of his final public mural in Pisa, Italy, back in the 1980s. The work depicts one of Haring's characteristic figures fleeing an onslaught of grapes and the wine's profits benefit the Castellanis' Materia Prima.



From left to right: Donnafugata Rosa; Castellani Tenuta di Ceppaiano; St. Reginald Parish; Stolpman Vineyards; and Las Jaras Wines / Photo by Tom Arena

## Art moves beyond the labels of St. Reginald Parish

Some labels exemplify the synergy of art and wine. In 2020, photographs by Catherine Opie appeared on a two-bottle collaboration between [Willamette Valley](#) producer [St. Reginald Parish](#) and Los Angeles wine shop [Domaine LA](#). Given the wines’ concept and styles, Opie created pensive sunset scenes that complemented the colors of the orange and white wines. Wine is “an aesthetic experience and a sensory experience, and the visual nature of the bottle is part of that,” says Domaine LA’s owner, Jill Bernheimer.

To extend the art’s impact beyond the bottles, Opie’s photos were also produced as limited-edition prints to benefit Los Angeles venues [The Underground Museum](#) and [Summaeverythang Community Center](#).

## The medium becomes the message for Stolpman Vineyards’ Para Maria

In some cases, labels prioritize art over information, or even replace words entirely with an eye-catching image. [Stolpman Vineyards’ Para Maria](#) labels are a great example.

Used for both a red wine and a rosé, they do not contain any text and instead allow the face of an owl to fill the space. They were designed by Kari Crist, the winery’s creative director, in honor of their namesake, Winemaker Maria Solorzano.

The tecolote, or night owl, is both a nickname for residents of Solorzano’s hometown in Jalisco, [Mexico](#), and a nod to the nocturnal harvest season that she leads. The label may not inform consumers about the wine within either bottle, but it does provide a compelling visual.

## The labels of Las Jaras Wines are fun, fresh and forward

Modern label designs can wholeheartedly counter the formality of traditional wine labels notorious for depictions of historic chateaus and elaborate cursive. Producers in comparatively young winemaking countries like America and Australia have often led this charge.

These makers rely on playful graphics to convey their more approachable and experimental attitude toward wine. California’s [Las Jaras Wines](#), for instance, has been known to choose bright colors and designs made by artists like [Chloe Wise](#) and [Jen Stark](#).

Rather than adhere to a single theme or statement, the labels resonate across several movements of contemporary art to convey the energetic character of the producer’s minimal-intervention bottlings.



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# The Endless Possibilities of Non-Alcoholic Drinks

BY [SYDNEY GORE](#)



*Photo courtesy of Minu Han / Reception Bar*

For me, it's never been about the buzz, but the tang of the drink. I remember my last glass of wine perfectly: I went to dinner at an Italian restaurant in New York City's East Village with a few friends, where we split a delicious bottle of [Merlot](#). After our feast, we went to a concert in the Lower East Side where we drank a few more glasses of the house red.

By the time I got home, the wine was completely out of my system. While tending to my irritated bowels the next morning, I decided to try drinking other things for a while.

When you're writing about culture somewhere like [New York](#), the social scene does not always cater to your lifestyle choices. It wasn't until I became a regular at [Reception Bar](#) that I saw the possibilities of non-alcoholic drinks. It was there I realized that I could still taste for structure, balance and finish. Every ingredient counts.

**It's so refreshing to pop one of these bottles to make the most ordinary meals feel like a special occasion.**

The growing availability of nonalcoholic wines and wine alternatives transported me to a whole new world that tastes better than I could have ever imagined. I've come to appreciate innovative brands like [Ghia](#), [Yesfolk Tonics](#), [Tart Vinegar](#) and [Acid League](#), which provides sophisticated takes on the red, white and orange wines that I miss.

My personal favorite is the [Cuvée Zero](#), which is bursting with the succulent flavors of beets, blueberries and red fruits that mimic the taste of [Pinot Noir](#). The floral notes are balanced out by herbs and spices, so the sweetness doesn't overpower such a multilayered blend.

It's so refreshing to pop one of these bottles to make the most ordinary meals feel like a special occasion—I have even converted my very pro-wine drinking parents to sometimes share the Proxies with me.

Non-alcoholic wine clubs get you a rotation of new flavors, and something you can't put a price on: the feeling of being part of a community again. My social life has been reawakened with every pour.

Embarking on this sobering journey has shown me that you can still have an elevated experience that invigorates all the senses without alcohol. My glass isn't half empty, it's full—of vinegar, and juices and teas, that is.



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