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Yellow Tail Sparkling Wine Ready To Pop the Competition

September 04, 2007

By Eric Newman

NEW YORK -- Careful Korbel. Look out Asti. Yellow Tail is coming. The unpretentious Australian wine brand that is now the third largest seller in the U.S. is entering the sparkling wine segment this week.

Much like it did with its wine brand, which used fun packaging and color-coding, Yellow Tail is looking to demystify the sparkling wine/champagne category. "Sparkling wine is a very unapproachable category [in the U.S.] and filled with confusing nomenclature, so when you bring the Yellow Tail personality into that category it makes it a lot more fun," said Mark Lyle, group brand director at W.J. Deutsch & Sons, White Plains, NY.

Print and outdoor ads show New Yorker-style cartoon characters holding onto bottles of the new sparkling wine while being lifted into the sky. The sparkling message also is driven home by the logo, which shows its jumping wallaby icon surrounded by effervescent bubbles. Cramer-Krasselt, New York, handles.

While Yellow Tail's entry into the market might not be fretting to such premium-positioned champagnes as LVMH's Moët & Chandon, or Veuve Clicquot, it could be a force to be reckoned with for price-point colleagues such as Martini & Rossi Asti and Freixenet, according to Tim Pollak, partner at Reason, a New York-based marketing and brand strategy firm. "They could be formidable," he said. "They'll get people to try the product, because they've got the strength of being a mass product that people consider a good, consistent wine at their price point."

The product is a blend of 72% Semillon wine with "Muscat-like aromas" and "the flavors of tropical fruits." It retails for \$10.99.

Yellow Tail grew 12% last year to become the third top-selling wine among domestic and imports at 8.4 million cases, passing Gallo's Livingston Cellars, per Impact, New York.

To keep its core brand's sales bubbling, it will begin testing TV this month in Portland, Ore., and Birmingham, Ala. It also is boosting its ad budget 8% to roughly \$13 million to launch the bubbly and extend its "Tails you win" campaign. TV ads extend current creative, which highlights the yellow tail of familiar objects.

Yellow Tail also is adding another dimension to its print and outdoor advertising. 3-D inserts—including one that features fireflies that light up—will appear in October issues of *Vanity Fair*, *New Yorker*, *Outside* and *Real Simple*. A new series of 3-D billboards in New York, San Francisco, Los Angeles and Chicago will feature an interpretation of the classic Kit Kat Clock Cat with a yellow tail.

"We're no longer the brash upstart on the sales front, but we want to continue to be the brash upstart on the marketing front," said Lyle. "[These campaigns] engage the consumer and bring the Yellow Tail campaign to the next level."

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