



POP THE CORK
Jeb Howell makes
wine to unwind

EXECUTIVE PROFILE
6B

March 18-24, 2011

Section B

L'chaim!

United Distributors rolls out new wine line

By Randy Southerland
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

When you have a product portfolio that already includes 3,500 items you might think one more would hardly matter. When beverage wholesaler **United Distributors Inc.** decided to introduce a new wine it took more than a year to select the right one and roll out an educational process to convince its extensive network of restaurant owners, liquor stores, and specialty wine shops they needed to add a newcomer to their inventory.

In this case the goal was to introduce varieties produced by Teperberg 1870 — Israel's oldest privately owned winery. The vintages made by this award-winning company are not only kosher, but designed for discerning tastes.

"The goal first and foremost was to have a modern-style wine coming from arguably one of the world's oldest wine-growing areas," said Michael A. Venezia, corporate director of education for United Distributors. "Atlanta is now one of the most sophisticated wine markets in the country. It's come a long way in a relatively short period of time. Today's wine consumer has traveled, had experiences in fine restaurants and they look at wine as liquid food in the glass to complement solid food on the plate."

This wine drinker is always looking for new and different experiences. To meet those demands restaurants and stores — the gatekeepers — often ask United Distributors' sales agents for new products to sample. The goal is often to replace a wine that is not selling as well as expected or add a new niche to the menu, such as wines from a lesser-known wine-producing country. More than 80 percent of all wines consumed in America come from the West Coast states of California, Oregon and Washington. The other 20 percent of consumption originates in Europe, South America and other nations.

Launching a new product of any kind is always a complicated process that requires planning and sometimes a little daring. New products are launched to appeal to a wider audience by either diverting from the current offering or extending the brand.

"The two [approaches] are very different," said John Sheppard, > See **UNITED DISTRIBUTORS, 4B**

Israeli wines by the numbers

Export of Israeli wines:

- ▶ 2008: \$26.7 million
- ▶ 2007: \$21.1 million
- ▶ 2006: \$14.8 million
- ▶ 2005: \$14.6 million
- ▶ 2004: \$13.7 million
- ▶ 2003: \$11.3 million
- ▶ 2001: \$8.01 million

Main Importers
of Israeli wines:

1. United States
2. France
3. Holland
4. United Kingdom
5. Canada
6. Germany

Source: "Wines of Israel," The Israel Export and International Cooperation Institute



New world wine: Michael Venezia chose Teperberg 1870 from Israel as a new product for United Distributors Inc., calling it a "new world wine made in a new world way."

DANN VITELLI

LOOKING TO LEASE?

Expert tenant reps can put market to work for you



HOW TO
2B

WIN MORE FRIENDS

People who like people are themselves easy to like

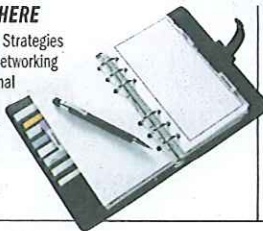
HARVEY MACKAY
4B



GET OUT THERE

Check out the Strategies Calendar for networking and professional enrichment opportunities.

CALENDAR
5B



PROSPECTING

Dig around in our records listings.

LEADS
8B



United Distributors

Continued from 1B
who launched a wide variety of new products over the years in positions ranging from president of **Coca-Cola Europe** to CEO of **Cott Corp.**, the world's largest private-label bottler of soft drinks.

When Coca-Cola launched a diet version of its flagship product, it was an extension of the existing brand. When another one of Sheppard's companies decided to add a drink to its line of protein bars, it represented a significant change.

Deciding on a new addition to a sales line can be fraught with danger. One of the biggest examples of a new product misstep was Coca-Cola's attempt to replace its "classic" brand with New Coke.

"There's always the damage that a bad product can do to the brand itself,"

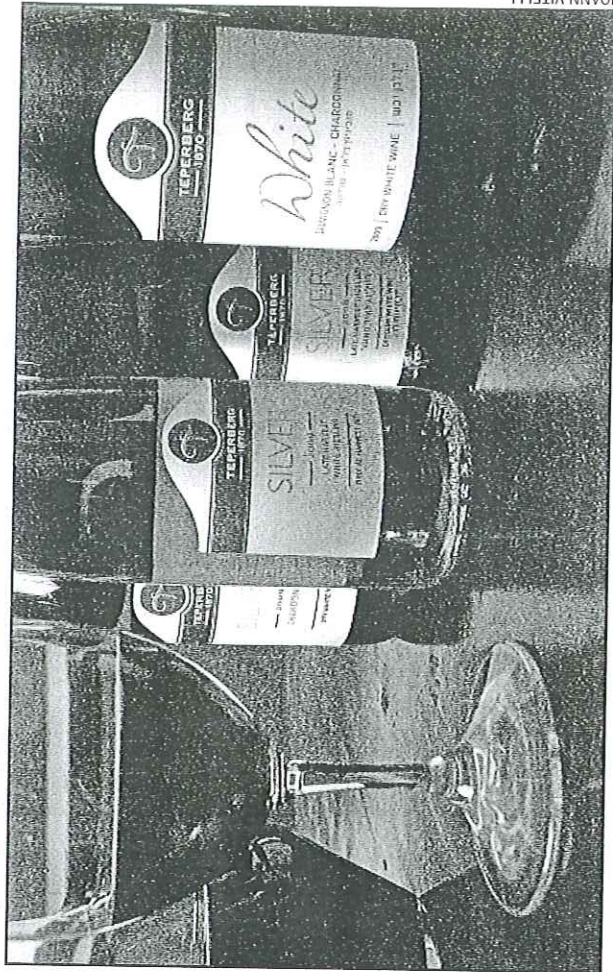
Sheppard said. "If that product has either a bad reception or research shows it's causing people to run away from the brand, there's a real risk associated with it."

To avoid bad receptions companies engage in extensive consumer research. "It's all consumer-driven," he said.

In the case of Teperberg 1870, the process began when United Distributors' team of salespeople began educating buyers on the virtues of the product.

"We have to sit down and do the tasting," Venezia said.

From the private offices of buyers, the company will move to larger events such as a tasting at the Atlanta History Center for more than 600 clients. Among the wines set up on tables will be this new entry. The company also plans to introduce the wine into Atlanta's Jewish



community with other special events.

Venezia's search for a new wine began when he traveled to Israel as part of an international wine expo attended by distributors, wine managers and wine writers from around the world.

"It was a coming-out party to introduce the new face of Israeli wine-making," he said.

This eastern Mediterranean region is one of the world's oldest wine-making areas, having produced grapes since ancient times. In recent decades, a new generation of wine-makers — trained in the U.S. and Australia — have returned with modern methods and substantial investments in technology to produce high-quality wines for an international market, Venezia said.

The company was looking for such a product to fill a niche that was currently empty — kosher Israeli wines.

When company officials discussed the

market, they realized they needed a wine that would appeal to the kosher, observant Jewish consumer, according to Venezia. It also needed to attract a more sophisticated consumer who wanted a better wine to drink.

"This is a new region that is being presented as a proposition to the retailer to say here is a fine wine that is coming from the Eastern Mediterranean," Venezia said. "This is not your father's kosher wine. This is a new world wine made in a new world way under strict rabbinic codes."

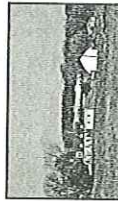
Priced at around \$20 a bottle, the Teperberg wines are not expected to be big sellers for a company that moves more than 1.5 million cases a year. In fact, if they sell 100 cases it will be considered a success, Venezia said.

"This is a niche product that is going to be introduced to that consumer by a retailer who prides himself on being on the cutting edge," he said.

EXECUTIVE MARKETPLACE

REAL ESTATE AUCTION

370± TOTAL ACRES • MORGAN COUNTY (MADISON), GA.
FRIDAY, MARCH 25, 2011, 10:00 AM EST



PROPERTY #1: 5± ACRES
• PRIME COMMERCIAL PROPERTY
• EXCELLENT INVESTMENT PROPERTY
• OFFERED DIVIDED OR AS A WHOLE
• SELLING FROM PROPERTY #2



PROPERTY #2: 365± ACRES
• POND, TIMBER, PRIME COMMERCIAL PROPERTY
• EXCELLENT INVESTMENT PROPERTY
• OFFERED DIVIDED OR AS A WHOLE
• SELLING ON SITE

10% BUYERS PREMIUM
OFFERED IN CONJUNCTION WITH BRECO REALTY & INVESTMENTS LLC
VIEW PROPERTY @ www.barfieldauctions.com
www.brecorealty.com

CALL 1-229-679-2223 FOR BROCHURES

BARFIELD AUCTIONS, INC.
P.O. BOX 370 • SHELLMAN, GA 39886
229-679-2223 • GAL #2663