



From Cues to Choices: A Study on Extrinsic Packaging Cues for Bag-in-Box Wines in Finland

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ABSTRACT

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From Cues to Choices: A Study on Extrinsic Packaging Cues for Bag-in-Box
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This thesis was commissioned by Blend Maker Oy to support the development of its new 3L Bag-in-Box (BiB) brand *Staffi* for the Finnish alcohol monopoly Alko. BiB wines contribute an increasing and significant role in the sales of wine in Finland. The success of the wine does not only depend on the intrinsic attributes but also on whether the extrinsic attributes, such as packaging, match the category expectations of the consumers while differentiating from the crowded shelves.

The objective of the research was to determine which extrinsic BiB packaging cues increase the Finnish consumers stated purchase likelihood the most, how these preferences differ by wine type, and how the results can be applied for Blend Maker Oy's future BiB packaging. The study's goal was to translate these findings into an evidence-based guide assisting in the design process of current and future BiB products.

The research was conducted through a quantitative, image-based online questionnaire. The questionnaire gained 74 eligible respondents who completed two types of questions: pairwise A/B comparisons about typography, colour, award presence, eco-certifications, and back-label density, as well as ranking questions on holistic front-label styles per wine type. The pairwise question data were analysed with odds ratios, 95% confidence intervals, and Win Indexes, while ranking questions were analysed using the Borda score and choice percentages.

The results show clear preference differences on wine types alongside a few strong cross-category preferences. Sans and Sans-serif fonts were preferred for white wines, Serif performed the best for red wines, and Script was strongly preferred for rosé wines. Colour preferences followed category prototypes. Light green performed the best for whites, red-based palettes were preferred for reds, and higher contrast darker pink accents outperformed pale palettes for rosés. Across all wine types, the holistic style that incorporated a landscape illustration ranked highest, showcasing the importance of familiar and schema congruent designs. Packaging that included award badges was chosen roughly five times more often, and eco-certifications roughly twice as often compared to otherwise identical designs without these markings. Back-label designs that were more concise and had low information density were clearly preferred over information-dense designs.

This thesis does not compare the weights of different cues against each other, but the different styles of a specific cue to each other. Based on these findings, the thesis proposed an updated *Staffi* packaging concept and a practical design guide that assists Blend Maker Oy's future BiB efforts.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Wine has accompanied people for thousands of years, both as a necessity and as a source of pleasure. Over time, the packaging surrounding wine has changed almost as much as the drink itself. Bottles, labels, and more recently, Bag-in-Box formats have evolved along with new technologies and increasingly sophisticated wine marketing. As a result, packaging and its visual attributes now play an important role in how wines are evaluated, interpreted and chosen on the shelf.

Yet wine remains a product of uncertain quality, because many of its key attributes become known only after consumption (Aqueveque, 2008, p. 34). At the point of purchase, consumers therefore operate with limited intrinsic information and often fall back on extrinsic evidence such as label style, colour, typography, awards, eco-marks and back-label content (Alvino et al., 2021, p. 1–2). In Finland, where wine culture is less established than in many other European countries and general wine knowledge is relatively limited, these signals become especially important for in-store decision making and marketing (Tigerstedt et al., 2020, p. 613–614). This is particularly true for Bag-in-Box (BiB) wines, as their large size and printing area turn the package into a visual “canvas” on which producers and marketers can create distinctive, creative, and eye-catching designs.

In Finland, the BiB format represents a large and growing share of wine sales volume, making visually aesthetic BiB packaging an important element for wine importing and marketing companies (Alko, 2020, p. 30). For these companies, winning Alko’s tenders and making retail sales do not only depend on the wine’s quality, but also whether the packaging matches consumers’ expectations for each wine type while differentiating from the crowd.

This bachelor’s thesis examines how different extrinsic packaging cues influence stated purchase likelihood of BiB wines in Finland, and later, translates the results into an actionable evidence-based design guide for current and future packaging efforts for the case company. Using realistic BiB label mock-ups, the study isolates the effects of font, colour, front-label style within red, white and rosé wine blocks. The study also evaluates the impact of awards symbols, eco-certifications

and back-label density across these different wine types. Preferences are measured through pairwise A/B tasks and style rankings, of which results are summarised with odds ratios and confidence intervals for the pairwise tests, and Borda scores for the style rankings. The scope of the thesis is limited to only a specific group of extrinsic attributes. Price- and origin-related qualities are out of scope as including them would have significantly expanded the workload and complexity of the study beyond what could be accomplished within the thesis constraints.

There are two purposes for this thesis. Firstly, to provide evidence-based design guide for the case company Blend Maker Oy's future packaging efforts, with insights on which extrinsic cues on BiB packaging have the biggest impact on stated purchase likelihood. Secondly, to improve the company's upcoming *Staffi* red wine's packaging by utilising evidence gathered from the research.

2 THESIS PLAN

This thesis plan explains what the thesis is about, the topic, purpose, objectives, why it is important and how it will be carried out from start to finish. It describes the goals of the study and links it to the practical needs of Blend maker Oy. It also gives a brief introduction to the research's scope and concepts, and explains the methods, data, and schedule of the thesis.

2.1 Thesis topic

This thesis analyses how extrinsic cues on Bag-in-Box wine packaging influence Finnish consumers' purchase decisions in the Finnish alcohol monopoly Alko. The case company Blend Maker Oy is launching their own BiB products and are pursuing to release a red wine BiB called *Staffi*. This thesis is going to provide an evidence-based design guide for future design efforts and based on the research an improved redesign for the Staffi brand.

2.2 Thesis scope

In this thesis, only the extrinsic cues of a wine are examined. Extrinsic cues refer to those visible at the point of purchase including front-label style, price, origin, colour palette, imagery, typography, ratings, awards, sustainability markings and back-label information density (Olson & Jacoby, 1972, p. 30–31; Zeithaml, 1988, p. 4–6). Intrinsic qualities of the wine including flavour, aroma and body are important to customer satisfaction and long-term preference, but they are beyond the scope of this thesis. The extrinsic cues that were chosen to be evaluated are the font, colour, holistic style, award label presence, eco-certification presence, and back-label density. Price and origin related qualities were excluded because including them would have significantly increased the workload and complexity of the study beyond what was feasible within the thesis constraints. This set of cues was chosen as it included key cues that impact choice while keeping the workload manageable.

There are plenty of research done that suggests that packaging and design affect the consumers purchase decisions meaningfully. Research done by Agnoli et.

al., (2016) suggests that packaging and graphic design act as quick signals that form a perception of quality and can affect the customers willingness to buy. Experimental and neuroscience studies also show that packages graphical design captures the consumers attention very early in the evaluation process, which can influence the consumers preferences even before more detailed reasoning takes place (Alvino et al., 2021, p. 1-2, 11-12). The Finnish retail context provides solid evidence that consumers make purchase decisions based on the visual images of a product. Nyblom's (2020) master-thesis, analysing coffee package preferences among Finnish consumers, demonstrates that visually attractive coffee packaging is appealing and assists in shaping purchase decision. Furthermore, Finnish ValuePack project suggests that professionally created packages increase perceived value and increase willingness to pay (Korhonen & Jokinen, 2016, p. 39).

The Finnish wine market is especially suitable for analysing extrinsic cues because Bag-in-Box wines account for a disproportionately large share of total wine volume. According to Alko's Annual Report, BiB formats represent approximately 40–50% of still wine sales (Alko, 2020, p. 30). This means that a significant percentage of Finnish consumers are exposed to wine primarily through BiB packaging rather than individual bottles, therefore the packaging has become an important point of contact between the product and the consumer. In Finnish context, where the purchasing of wine is concentrated in one monopoly operator and many customers have limited prior knowledge about specific wines, the impression created by BiB packaging becomes especially influential. As a result, the Finnish market offers a particularly relevant setting for studying how different extrinsic design cues on BiB wine packaging shape stated purchase likelihood.

2.3 Objective, purpose, and research questions

The objective of the thesis is to determine which extrinsic Bag-in-Box packaging element most affect the Finnish consumers preference to choose a wine in Alko. The goal is also to assess what elements are preferred based by different wine types (red, white, rosé).

The purpose is to apply the findings of the thesis into an evidence-based packaging guide for Blend Maker Oy, that they can utilize for their *Staffi* brand as well as future brand and packaging projects. The guidance will specify on 3L Bag-in-Box wine packaging element such as, front- and back-panel design, colour, badges and other visual information and assess which elements are the most effective by wine type. This is done to support design choices in the tender submission process and increase the probability of differentiation and success in Alko's vast and competitive product range.

Research question:

Which extrinsic packaging elements of Bag-in-Box wines increase the likelihood of purchase most in Finland, and how do preferred elements differ by wine type?

Sub-questions:

1. Which front- and back-label elements have the biggest impact on the customer's choice on the shelves?
2. How the impact differs between wine types?
3. How these results can be applied to improve *Staffi's* packaging?

2.4 Concepts and theory

Explaining Concepts and theory utilised in the analysis and implementation segments of the thesis.

2.4.1 Cue utilization theory

Cue utilization theory in the context of consumer behaviour was introduced by Jerry C. Olson and Jacob Jacoby in 1972. The theory explains how consumers perceive and judge quality by detecting different cues at the moment of choice (Oude Ophuis et al., 1995, p. 179). The theory suggests, there are two types of cues: intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic cues refer to the physical attributes of the product itself (Aqueveque, 2008, p. 35). In the context of wine that means the aroma, flavour or body of the wine. Extrinsic cues on the other hand refer to attributes that are linked to the product, but are not physically part of it, such as brand, price and package design (Oude Ophuis et al., 1995, p. 178). According

to the classic theory, people often utilize cues that are predictive of quality in their opinion and that they feel confident using. Commonly people make the most meaningful choices when the cues they utilize are both high on predictive value as well as confidence value (Rao et al., 1988, as cited in Bredahl, 2004, p. 66). Meaning that when the cues help you predict the quality of the product (predictive value) and you feel confident in interpreting them (confidence value), your choices are more accurate and meaningful. In retail context, studies show that consumers rely more on intrinsic cues when they are familiar with the product category, they are choosing the product from. On the other hand, extrinsic cues have been found to be relied more on when the quality of the product is perceived as difficult to evaluate (Zeithaml, 1988, as cited in Bredahl, 2004, p. 66).

An important factor of the theory is that the weights of the cues are not fixed, they vary based on the consumer knowledge, perceived risk, and the buying situation. For example, when a consumers' knowledge is low or the decision-making time is limited, the choice is often based on simpler signals such as price and other extrinsic cues. In categories with limited pre-purchase information, credible extrinsic cues can substitute for missing intrinsic evidence and reduce perceived risk (Zeithaml, 1988, p. 10).

In the case of packaged goods, the primary extrinsic cues that attract our attention are the packaging itself and its elements. Package design works as a communication tool that combines graphic and structural elements into a set of quality signals (Yuan et al., 2023, p. 3). Visual identity, imagery, colour and typography can act as fast, high-confidence cues, while third party markings such as awards or sustainability markings function as uncertainty reducing signals if the markings are credible or difficult to obtain (Schroback et al., 2023, p. 1; Clement, 2007, p. 918-919). It is also very important to look at the packaging elements holistically, because consumers subconsciously analyse the overall style rather than single isolated details.

In a retail context where tasting is not possible and time is limited, consumers rely on extrinsic cues at the point of purchase (Zeithaml, 1988, p. 10). This is exactly what cue utilization theory predicts, therefore the questionnaire manipulates

these extrinsic packaging cues and evaluates the attractiveness of different elements in a holistic setting.

2.4.2 Signalling theory for awards & eco-markings

Signalling theory explains how a company can improve their marketing and packaging by reducing information gaps. This is done by sending observable and credible signals about qualities that consumers cannot verify before purchase (Spence, 1973, p. 356-357; Connelly et al., 2011, p. 39-40). A good example of this is found on food and beverage packaging, where third party certifications and labels turn complex information into easily assessable information, provided the signals are credible (Caswell & Mojduszka, 1996, p 1250). Meaning, the addition of awards such as medals and eco-certifications serves as credence signals, which help the customer to make choices more effectively in situations when it is difficult to judge the intrinsic qualities of the product (Schroback et al., 2023, p. 1).

Research has shown that especially in the case of wine, credible certifications and awards have the potential to increase the likelihood of purchase and, in some instances, willingness to pay (Delmas & Lessem, 2017, p. 319–321). Eco-labels in wine have been linked with reducing uncertainty and are considered as value signals when the standards they are evaluating are recognised and enforcement is perceived as strong. On the other hand, when labels and standards are found weak or unfamiliar, they do not have the same effects and can even harm the packages credibility (Delmas & Lessem, 2017, p. 319–321).

Since medals and eco-labels are credence signals whose value is based on credibility and costliness, both are tested on simple presence/absence questionnaire using identical base labels so that the signal is isolated from the rest of the design. Results give us information on whether adding a credible marking is likely to raise the packages purchase likelihood and if so, by how much. This directly guides *Staffi's* packaging material, when to include a medal/eco mark and when to avoid clutter that could reduce credibility.

2.4.3 Processing fluency & Dual-process choice

Processing fluency explains how easy a specific stimulus is to perceive and understand. When a design is fluent, meaning it has a clear layout, easy to understand text and a coherent colour, they are processed faster and feel better. These attributes can make the packaging more liked, increase quality expectation and therefore steer consumers choice (Reber et al., 2004, p. 364-366; Lee & Labroo, 2004, p. 151). In research on processing fluency, the “fluency is good” heuristic often holds. Visuals that are smooth, familiar, or well-structured are processed more easily and are therefore judged more trustworthy and less risky, while low-fluency visuals are perceived as less attractive and as carrying greater risk (Reber et al., 2004, p. 364-366; Song and Schwarz, 2009, p. 986-988). Another factor that plays a part on fluency is category expectations, as more expected cues are also more accessible in memory, enhancing fluency and resulting in more positive evaluations (Lee & Labroo, 2004, p. 153).

The theory of dual-processing helps to understand when fluency matters the most. In the interpretation by Kahneman (2011, p. 14-15) there are two distinct systems that determine one’s decision making. System 1 is fast and automatic which handles quick, low-effort judgements and often used fluency cues to make those decisions. If a package looks familiar, easy to read and coherent, System 1 tends to interpret this as a sign that the product is good, safe or appropriate. System 2 on the other hand is a slower, more reflective system that requires effort and conscious attention. When it is used, people can stop, compare options, read back labels and sometimes override the initial impressions generated by System 1 (Shleifer, 2012, p. 1082-1083). Which system dominates depends on factors such as time pressure, cognitive load, interest in the decision and prior knowledge. On Alko’s shelves, where there is a plethora of options to choose from and often a limited time, System 1 likely takes charge, meaning fluent packaging can have a large effect the choice. In other contexts where shoppers have a lot of time to analyse and System 2 is utilised, fluency still helps the decision making but may be weighed alongside other cues such as awards or back-label content (Clement, 2007, p. 918–920; Kahneman, 2011, p. 22–24).

To test the “fluency is good” prediction in the context of the thesis, the questionnaire evaluates the attractiveness of different fonts and colour palettes in different categories for each wine type and looks at the cues in the light of processing fluency. For example, a clear sans-serif may be processed more favourably on a light white wine, whereas high-contrast heavier typography may or may not help on a darker or “more serious” red wine. The study is designed to evaluate these differences in a simulated System 1 setting. The ranking of holistic styles complements the pairwise tests by examining which complete label styles are approachable at first sight. Therefore, the theory of processing fluency is applied in the research process in both questionnaire design and analysis process to make the context as close to Alko’s shelves as possible and link the findings with existing literature.

2.4.4 Holistic label style & design congruity (schema congruity)

Consumers rarely evaluate a package by evaluating single elements of its design in isolation. They usually consider the overall composition of the design that represents a combination of colour, typography, imagery, shape and layout. Research on holistic package design has shown that holistic packaging styles and visuals reliably influence brand impressions and preference, over any single design cue (Orth & Malkewitz, 2008, p. 64-65). When evaluating packaging, customers early visual processing is biased towards fluent and well-organised designs, which tend to feel better and are more liked (Reber et al., 2004, p. 365-366).

A key principle of successful design is congruity, which implies that the label style should be aligned with the product category and positioning. A good example of well-established design congruity is done by Apple on its minimalist hardware and packaging, which match a premium, modern, and most importantly user-friendly positioning. Apple considers packaging as an important part of the product’s “story” and applies coherent and high-standard packaging to suit its brand (Isaacson, 2011, p. 347). Perceived quality and credibility are improved when a design fits customers’ expectations of a category or brand. On the other hand, when the fit is poor, customer evaluations suffer (Veryzer & Hutchinson, 1998, p. 374). Another term used to describe the connection between design and

consumer expectations is called schema congruity. Studies on the subject adds that slight deviations from the norm can help the image of the brand, if the overall style remains coherent and easily interpretable. However, when the level of incongruity becomes too pronounced, it is likely to produce negative effects, reducing perceived credibility and weakening consumer evaluations (Meyers-Levy & Tybout, 1989, p. 39-40). Because consumers read the overall style rather than isolated parts of a design, the study does not only evaluate single elements in isolation but also includes a style ranking question per every wine type. This allows us to see which style-category combinations feel the most attractive and which ones to avoid.

2.5 Methods and data

This thesis utilises a quantitative approach since the aim is to estimate the average effects of specific packaging cues on the purchase likelihood across wine types in a controlled and comparable way. The quantitative design used is a self-administered, image-based questionnaire utilising realistic BiB packaging mock-ups to gather data about the preferences of respondent. The questionnaire utilizes two question designs, pairwise A/B questions and ranking questions. Both designs are comparative tools that translate visual preferences into countable data that is suitable for detailed analysis (Pacuit, 2019 §2.1, para. 1-2).

An online self-administered questionnaire is appropriate for this study because the task is fundamentally visual and benefits from a standardized, identical set of questions for all respondents, which reduces interviewer effects and social desirability bias and can encourage more honest responding (Dillman et al., 2014, p. 7–9, 94–95; de Leeuw, 2005, p. 237–239). The online aspect of the questionnaire also allows for easy distribution for gathering the greatest number of respondents as possible. The survey is designed to isolate extrinsic packaging cues while keeping intrinsic cues constant and put them up against each other in a pairwise and rating scenarios. This structure requires the participants to do quick, System 1 decisions, making the experiment more relevant in the context of Alko's shelves.

2.5.1 Data preparation and analysis plan

All responses are exported from Google Forms to a spreadsheet and checked if they are complete and eligible for the analysis. Ineligible cases where the respondent is under 18 years old or is not a resident of Finland are eliminated before the analysis process. Responses containing clear indicators of inattention such as visible patterns, are marked and set aside for further analysis to check if they can be used for data.

Forced-choice questions are interpreted with the letters A and B, with the answers to the left being A and the answers to the right being B. Pooled pairwise questions such as awards, eco-markings and back-label density are also marked as A and B, further analysed pooled across wine types.

The pairwise questions measured the winning cues performance against the losing cue. The pairwise questionnaire answers are summarized as simple choice shares and afterwards calculated into odds ratios (ORs) with 95% confidence intervals (CIs) in the standard log-odds method (Bland and Altman, 2000, p. 1468). The OR of our answers is calculated as $OR = \text{number of winners} / \text{number of losers}$. This is done to keep the OR always ≥ 1.00 , allowing for easier interpretation and analysis. For example, an OR of 2.00 means the winner received twice as many selections as the loser. The CI gives a range of plausible values that we can be 95% confident contain the true average for a given parameter. Meaning if the study was repeated 100 times and compute a 95% CI each time, about 95 of those intervals would contain the true parameter. The goal of the interval is to measure how well a single question represents the population studied, a larger gap between the CI values indicate a bigger variance and a tighter gap indicate a smaller variance (Cumming, 2014, p. 8–10).

In addition, each font and colour within a wine type is analysed with a Win Index, calculated as the proportion of times that a cue has won across all its appearances in the A/B questionnaire ($\text{wins} / \text{total appearances for that cue}$). In a paired comparison setting, this empirical method is a straightforward way to summarize the relative preferences, directly measuring the proportion of times a cue is chosen over another. Because every cue is exposed in the survey an equal

amount and every cue go against each other the same number of times, this frequency-based index provides a comparable rating of cues within a wine type. The index is reported as a percentage from 0-100.

The Borda method is applied to evaluate the style rankings for each type of wine, with a respondent awarding a specific number of points to the labels based on their rankings (1st = 5 points, 2nd = 4 points, 3rd = 3 points, 4th = 2 points, 5th = 1 point). Points are averaged across respondents to give an average score out of five for each of the styles. The Borda method is used as it is a well-established rank-aggregation method that converts complete rankings into one informative score without losing the order information (Pacuit, 2019 §2.1, para. 1-2). Also, simple descriptive measures were utilised to analyse the first-choice share and top two share qualities of each label along with the average Borda points to further examine the strength and extent of the preferences.

2.6 Thesis process

The thesis starts with the introduction. Chapter 2 explains the thesis plan and the topic, objective, scope, and purpose of the thesis, followed by the theory utilised in the thesis process. The remainder of the thesis continues as follows. Chapter 3 introduces the case company, product and Alko context relevant to Bag-in-Box packaging. Chapter 4 discusses the survey findings and analyses them. Chapter 5 adapts the results into the *Staffi* brand, introduces a set of guidelines for future packaging and presents the redesigned version of *Staffi*. Chapter 6 includes the conclusion of the thesis, suggestions for future research and reflections.

3 CASE COMPANY AND THE WINE MARKET

This chapter describes in detail the case company Blend Maker Oy and the market it operates in. Secondly, this chapter explains the strategic importance of Bag-in-Box wines for the company, as well as the current efforts regarding it.

3.1 Blend Maker Oy and the Staffi concept

Blend Maker Oy is a Finnish wine importing and marketing company that was founded in 2018. Before the summer of 2025, Blend Maker sold exclusively to Alko, the Finnish alcohol monopoly. As Alko oversees all the retail sales of wine in Finland, the decision proved successful. The founder of the company had been running the company a solo entrepreneur from 2018 until 2025, when he hired his first employees. The decision supported Blend Maker's expansion into the HoReCa (hotel, restaurant, and catering) market, where there is potential for additional revenue. The new employee's roles were to help with the shift to this segment and begin to design the new Bag-in-Box (BiB) brand *Staffi*.

The *Staffi* concept was conceived by the founder, inspired by his own Staffordshire terrier. The dog breed is a large part of the branding of the packaging and is illustrated in the logo in black and white. The brand style is modern but classy, supported by classic wine label elements, with modern colours and style. This makes the current branding a good mix of both familiarity, modernity and fun by combining all these elements. Although the design was perceived positively within the company, this internal approval does not guarantee that the package would perform well in Alko's shelves. This thesis helps to give evidence-based changes to the *Staffi* package design to further improve its chances of being selected in Alko's tenders and perform well on the shelves.

3.2 Importance of the Bag-in-Box industry in Finland

Bag-in-Box (BiB) wine accounts for a large share of Nordic wine sales. In Finland, BiB sales represented about 38% of total wine volume of Alko's sales in 2021. Respectively, in Sweden and Norway the share was approximately 51% and

52%, over the same period (Alko, 2020, p. 30). Recent data also show upward trend in BiB usage in the Nordics. For instance, Norway's BiB share has risen to around 55% in 2021, and Alko states that they continue a shift toward carton/BiB formats as increasingly more wines appear in these packages in their most recent trend report (Alko, 2024). Together, these aspects show the growing importance of having a competitive BiB offer, which is exactly what Blend Maker aims to do with the *Staffi* brand.

The business objective of *Staffi* is to compete in Alko's tenders and win, gaining a place in Alko's regular shelf selection. The judging process of the tenders does not only focus on the taste of the wine, but also on the uniqueness, concept, packaging and sustainability, which means that developing a unique and innovative brand has become increasingly important (Alko, 2025).

4 RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Study design and overview

The questionnaire was conducted via Google Forms and was identical for every respondent. The questions were in Finnish as all the respondents had to be Finnish to be eligible. The questionnaire had six specific content blocks that had different questions related to: eligibility, white wine, red wine, rosé wine, pooled cues and demographic. Within each wine block, respondents completed comparative forced choice questions based on font and colour. After that, they evaluated different label styles such as landscape, crest and illustration, which they had to rank from best to worst. In the pooled cue block, respondents completed comparative forced choice questions regarding award medals, eco-markings and back-label information density that applied to all wine types. Lastly the respondents were asked to answer simple questions regarding demographic like age, gender and wine preferences.

4.2 Stimuli designed for the questionnaire

The stimuli were designed to interpret real world BiB packaging designs. To isolate the weight of a specific cue, such as a font, all other elements of the mock-up would remain the same while only the font would be changed in the comparative designs. Three base templates were created for white, red and rosé wines with identical brand name, dimensions, and markings. Based on these templates, the participants compared the following variants:

Fonts: serif, sans-serif and script.

Colours:

- White wine: Light blue, light green, light yellow.
- Red wine: Black white, red white, blue, red black.
- Rosé wine: Pink (white accents), pink (dark pink accents), light pink (white accents).

For the questionnaire examining different packaging styles, new label designs were created to represent each style. Participants were asked to evaluate these by ranking them from best to worst (1-5). The designs were custom made to suit each wine type. For rosé wines, two additional concepts in a modern abstract style were included to examine whether Finnish consumers are interested in new and unconventional wine packaging.

Styles: Crest, landscape, geometric, typographical and illustration + (modern abstract for rosé).

Lastly, respondents answered a set of pooled-cue questions. These questions were independent of any particular wine type and were designed to test the effect of signalling cues and information density on BiB packaging preferences generally.

Pooled cues:

- Award presence: present, absent
- eco-marking presence: present, absent
- back-label information density: low, high

4.3 Sampling

The questionnaire (Appendix 1) used a sample of adult respondents living in Finland. In total there are 74 eligible respondents gathered from 13th of October 2025 to 28th of October 2025. Convenience sampling was chosen for speed and feasibility. The achieved sample was heterogeneous with a variety of different types of respondents, although there were specific types of people that responded more frequently. For example, the questionnaire gained a lot of responses from younger people, with 43 (58.1%) of the respondents age being 18-24 (Figure 1). Also, the gender composition was slightly more female focused with 43 (58.1%) of respondents being female and 31 (41.3%) being men (Figure 1). A large percentage (73.4%) reported that their Alko purchase frequency was either “less than monthly” or “about monthly”, making the purchase frequency of the respondents moderately constant (Figure 2). There were ten respondents that reported their purchase frequency to be “never”, whose answers were retained

since evaluating the packaging still gives valuable information about the preferences of the population. The most purchased wine type leans towards white wine with 57.3% of consumers stating it as their most purchased wine type (Figure 3). This percentage is significantly higher than Alko has stated with their statistics which show white wine having only a slightly higher purchasing percentage than red wine (Alko., 2020).

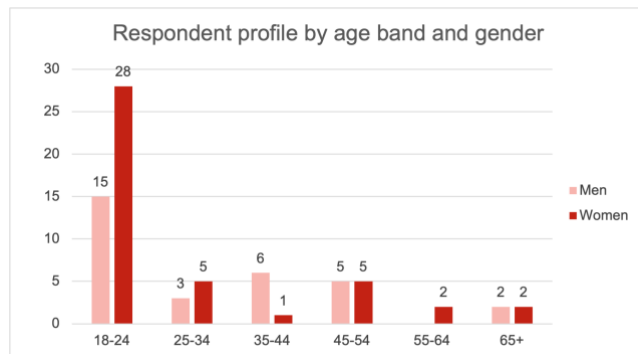


Figure 1. Respondent profile by age band and gender.

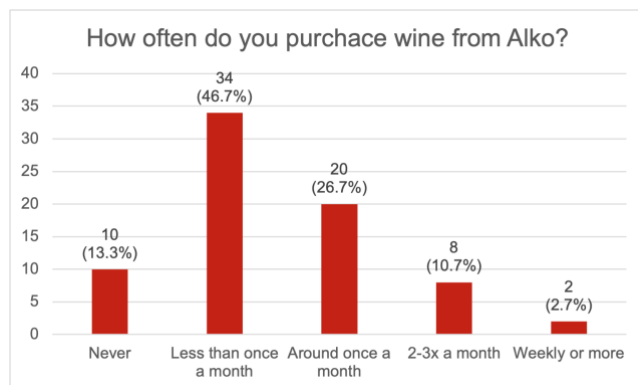


Figure 2. How often do you purchase wine from Alko?

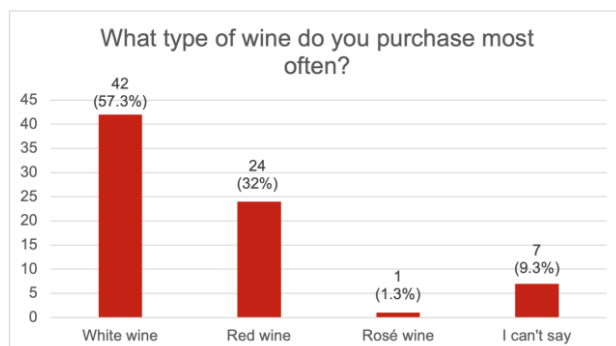


Figure 3. What type of wine do you purchase the most often?

4.4 Limitations

The A/B tasks used standardised mock-ups and a balanced round-robin so that each cue faced every alternative an equal number of times within its own wine block. However, Google Forms did not allow randomisation of option order, which may have introduced position or sequence effects known to occur in self-administrated surveys (Stern et al., 2007, p. 121). Within blocks, the winner/loser odds ratio summaries and Win Index results were averaged across many matchups. That averaging makes the results less dependent on the randomness of the cue option order, however they were not eliminated thus the effects of it cannot be ruled out. To make any imprecision more noticeable, confidence intervals are reported for every comparison.

When the respondents were answering pairwise questions, they evaluated the changes on only one cue with all other cues remaining constant. When evaluating style, this wasn't possible. Style is holistic by definition, so a fully controlled style analysis was impossible as changing style implies changing multiple graphical elements. This is an inherent constraint of style research which means that the goal is to evaluate the style in its entirety rather than single elements. The problem appears in the design of these styles, as there can be an infinite number of different designs of styles. For example, if the Geometric style for white wine would have a slightly different design, it could have performed differently. This applies to all the styles cues in all blocks.

Respondents viewed standardised 2D mock-ups on their own devices, Screen size, colour, and viewing distance can vary across respondents and does not fully reproduce standard shelf like conditions. Especially the pairwise images concerning low vs. high back-label density may be amplified due to this fact. When the respondents were asked to evaluate the two cues, the labels were viewed withing the Google Forms interface as relatively small images. At this scale, detailed elements of the high-density label could have been harder to interpret than the simpler and larger elements of the low-density label. This may have affected the fluency of the low-density layout. At the same time, this presentation approximates the real-world retail experience where shoppers often evaluate multiple packages from a distance with limited attention. Eye-tracking

research in wine packaging shows that designs which gain consumers attention more quickly tend to be evaluated more positively, especially in visually complex contexts (Alvino et al., 2021, p. 3, 11-12).

Because the sample was collected through convenience sampling, which is a non-probability method, and consisted primarily of younger respondents, together with the relatively small sample size, the findings should not be interpreted as representative of the broader population (Etikan et al., 2016, p. 1–2). The primary goal is internal and comparative, meaning the aim is to identify which extrinsic cues outperform others within this task environment, rather than estimating population shares. This approach aligns with the research that states that experimental evidence can justify theory or practical decisions, but it should not be used to predict population parameters when the sample is not designed to be representative (AAPOR, 2013 p. 108-110). In reporting results, the chapter therefore emphasizes effect sizes, interval estimates, and methods such as Borda and Win Index to analyse preferences while reducing the effects of the above-mentioned limitations, including the non-randomised option order (Cumming, 2014, p. 8–10).

A further limitation of this thesis is the scope of the extrinsic attributes examined. The experiment focused on a restricted set of extrinsic packaging cues, even though consumers rely on a larger range of extrinsic information. Cues such as price, brand name and region of origin shape consumer preference when evaluating and selecting wines at the point of purchase (Lockshin et al., 2006, p. 168; Sáenz-Navajas et al., 2013, p. 44). Including these extrinsic attributes alongside the tested elements would have required significantly more complex research design and a larger sample size than was feasible within the constraints of this study, so they were deliberately excluded from the analysis.

4.5 The effects of different fonts by wine type

Previous studies have shown that typography on packaging is not a technical or aesthetic decision but an important element that influences the processing and assessment of information. Easy to read and fluent fonts are processed easier, faster and with less effort, and can increase likability and approachability.

Whereas less fluent typefaces slow processing and can change effort and risk judgements (Song and Schwarz, 2008, p. 986-987). This chapter evaluates the weights and compares the effects of three different fonts: Serif, Sans-serif, and Script in all wine types (Picture 1). The results are discussed separately per wine type, then analysed together to form a holistic perspective on what fonts are preferred per wine type.



Picture 1. White wine font stimuli.

4.5.1 Font questionnaire results for White wine

Across all three head-to-head comparisons, Serif and Sans-serif fonts outperformed Script, which is demonstrated by their Win Indexes, with Serif winning 65% of its head to head comparisons, Sans-serif winning 55%, and lastly Script only winning 30% (Figure 5). In addition, odds ratios indicate a clear preference for both Serif and Sans-serif over Script, with the CI clearance laying above 1,00 in both Script comparisons (Figure 4). The difference between Serif and Sans-serif remained small and not decisively separated in confidence intervals, although there was a slight preference towards Serif, indicated by the higher Win Index and an OR of 1,242 over Sans-serif.

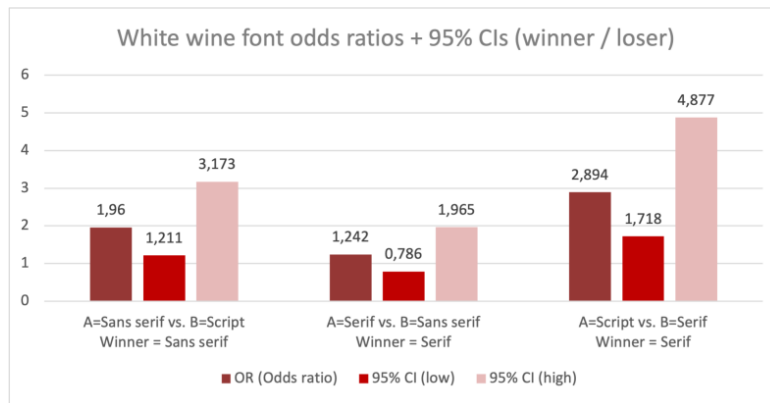


Figure 4. White wine font odds ratios + 95% CIs (winner / loser).

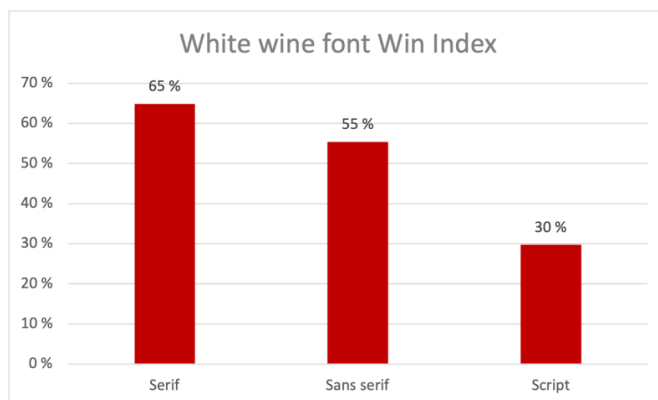


Figure 5. White wine font Win Index.

4.5.2 Font questionnaire results for Red wine

Like in the white wine block, Script performed weakest across all font comparisons. Both Serif and Sans-serif meaningfully outperformed Script, as reflected by ORs above 2,50 and CIs that did not cross 1,00 (Figure 6). In addition, Script had the smallest Win Index with just 26%. While the white wine results showed only a subtle separation between Serif and Sans-serif, the red wine block demonstrates a more meaningful distinction. Serif performed visibly better than Sans-serif, supported by an odds ratio above 1.7 and a confidence interval remaining above 1.00 as well, with a strong 70% Win Index compared to the 50% Win Index of Sans-serif (Figure 7).

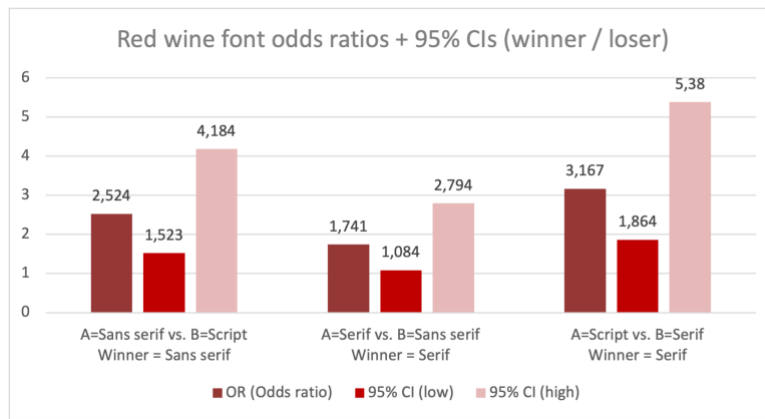


Figure 6. Red wine font odds ratios + 95% CIs (winner / loser)

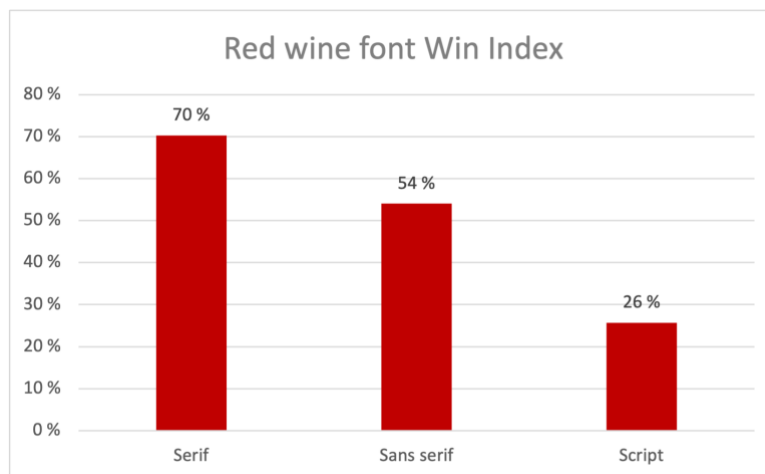


Figure 7. Red wine font Win Index.

4.5.3 Font questionnaire results for Rosé wine

Typography preferences in the rosé block differ significantly from other wine types. Whereas Script was consistently the weakest option in the previous wine categories, in the rosé category the font showed a clear and meaningful preference. This is proven by a Win Index of 78% and ORs of 5,818 over Sans-serif and 2,524 over Serif (Figure 8, 9). Serif came second with a win Index of 53% and having an OR of 3,353 over Sans-serif. Sans-serif performed the weakest in both odds-ratio and Win Index scores where the font only managed to win 19% of its appearances.

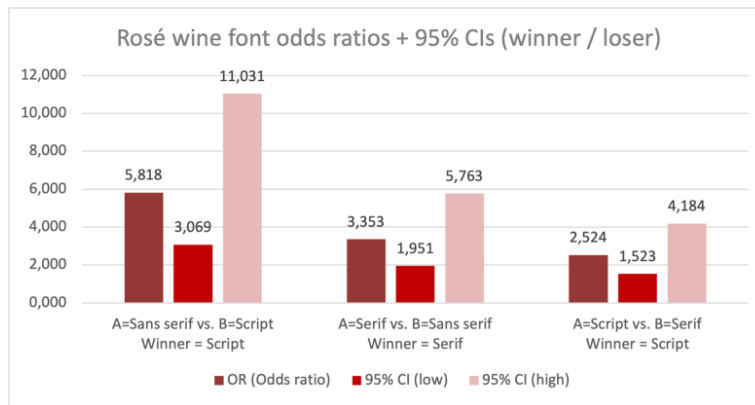


Figure 8. Rosé wine font odds ratios + 95% CIs (winner / loser)

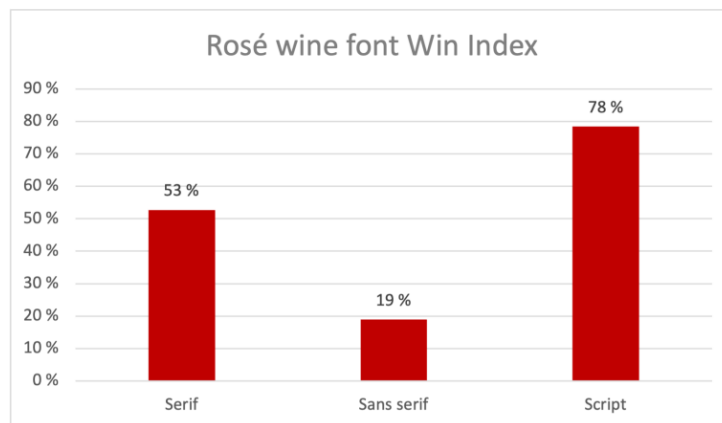


Figure 9. Rosé wine font Win Index.

4.5.4 Analysis and interpretation of different fonts

Across wine types, the results showed both similarities and category specific patterns. Together, these results indicate that typographic preferences are not the same for each wine type but align with each category's specific expectations. The theory of schema congruity gives cues why this is the case. Consumers evaluate visual cues against learned category prototypes, which causes familiar visuals to enhance preference, while unfamiliar visuals can cause extra cognitive effort (Meyers-Levy & Tybout, 1989, p. 39–40). For red wine, these established prototypes are more connected classical wine packaging, with imagery of winding vineyards and serif typography often found in classical French wine labels. This prototype enhances the desirability of the Serif font over Sans-serif and Script (Celhay et al., 2017, p. 56). For white wine, traditional wine schemas also apply, but not as strong as for red wines. Both Serif and Sans-serif typefaces fit this schema, which explains their strong performance in white wines as well. In

contrast, Script is more loosely linked to these prototypes and can therefore be perceived as less typical for white wines, which can be seen as incongruent with the more traditional and modern cues typically associated with white wine labels. Rosé's schema differed from other wine types with its lifestyle oriented and less serious schema. This difference in schemas led to Script having the best performance over other fonts. The handwritten and expressive character of Script fits the more relaxed, occasion driven prototype of rosé, where personality and style can be emphasised over tradition. Sans-serif's performance in the context of rosé wines can also be explained by schema congruity as the font can be seen as too plain and simple for the expressive and more playful rosé prototype.

Processing fluency theory further refines the findings, stating that simpler and more conventional visuals are processed more easily, thus resulting in better evaluations (Reber, Schwarz, & Winkielman, 2004, p. 364–366; Song & Schwarz, 2009, p. 986–988). In white and red wines, the legibility and conventional structure of Serif and Sans-serif support the processing fluency of the packaging, while Script may cause additional effort to process due to its less common and intricate letterforms. In this sense, schema congruity and processing fluency work together, as designs that match the expected category prototype are not only more familiar but also easier to process. Similarly, dual-processing theory states that visual cues such as fonts act as meaningful attributes which affect the decision-making process in System 1 conditions when time and ability are limited (Kahneman, 2011, p. 14–15, 71). In such states, familiar and credible cues are weighted more, which can magnify more familiar and congruent cues performance.

4.6 The effects of different colours by wine type

It has been found that the colour of a label is not only a decorative element but one of the most influential design cues that can shape the consumers expectations regarding the taste and aroma of food and drinks, including wine (Joshi et al., 2024, p. 15-16). This chapter evaluates the weights and compares the effects of different colour palettes per wine type. The results are discussed separately per wine type, then analysed together to form a holistic perspective on what colour palettes are preferred per wine type.

4.6.1 Colour questionnaire results for white wine

For white wine, three different colour schemes were evaluated: Light blue, Light green, and Light yellow (Picture 2). The colour pairwise questionnaire produced a clear structure for white wine packaging. Based on the ORs, Light green performed the best over Light yellow and Light blue in all the pairwise comparisons, with Light green having ORs of 4,214 over Light blue and 6,400 over Light yellow (Figure 10). Light blue ranked second in both OR and Win Index, having an OR of 1,679 over Light yellow with a CI value just above 1.00. The Win Index results reinforce these findings, with Light green achieving the highest Win Index of 83%, and Light blue coming second with a Win Index of 43%, which is high considering the dominance of Light green (Figure 11). Light yellow is trailing behind with a Win Index of just 25%.



Picture 2. White wine colour stimuli.

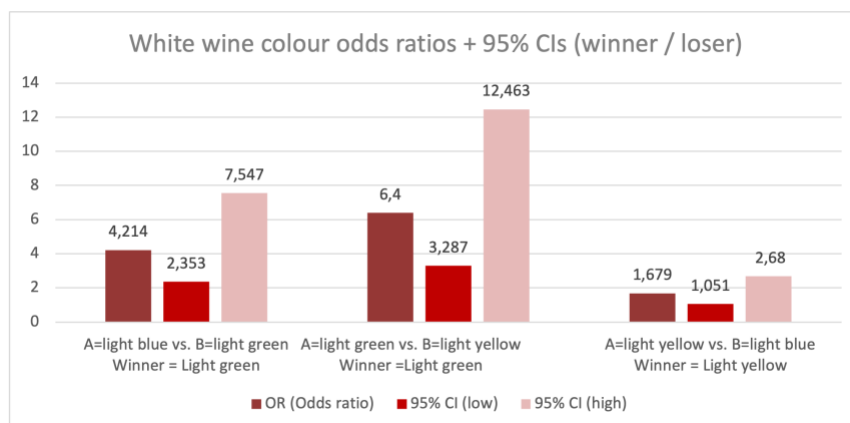


Figure 10. White wine colour odds ratios + 95% CIs (winner / loser).

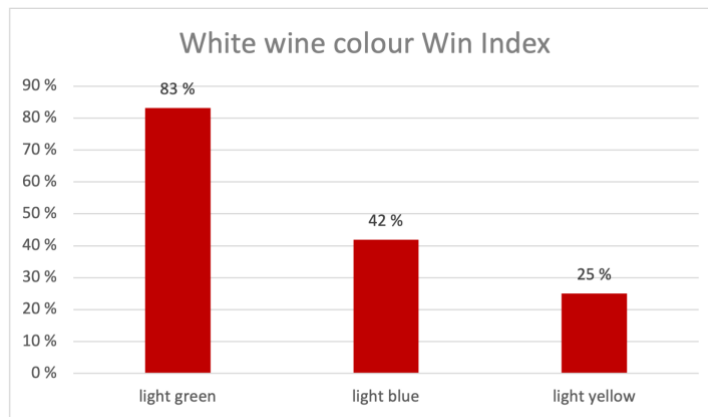


Figure 11. White wine colour Win Index.

4.6.2 Colour questionnaire results for red wine

For red wine, four different colour schemes were evaluated: red white, red black, black white, and blue (Picture 3). The preferences in the red wine block showed a clear pattern towards warm and traditionally proven colour palettes. Palettes that incorporated reds and contrasting tones consistently achieved higher odds ratios and Win Indexes, with red white winning 69% of its comparisons, followed by red black winning 62%, and black white winning 48% (Figure 12, 13). In contrast, blue performed weakest depicted in both Win Index and ORs with a Win Index of 22%. Although individual pairwise values differ slightly, the overall pattern shows red-based and deep-coloured palettes are favoured, whereas blue tones are not.

Red wine colour stimuli



Picture 3. Red wine colour stimuli.

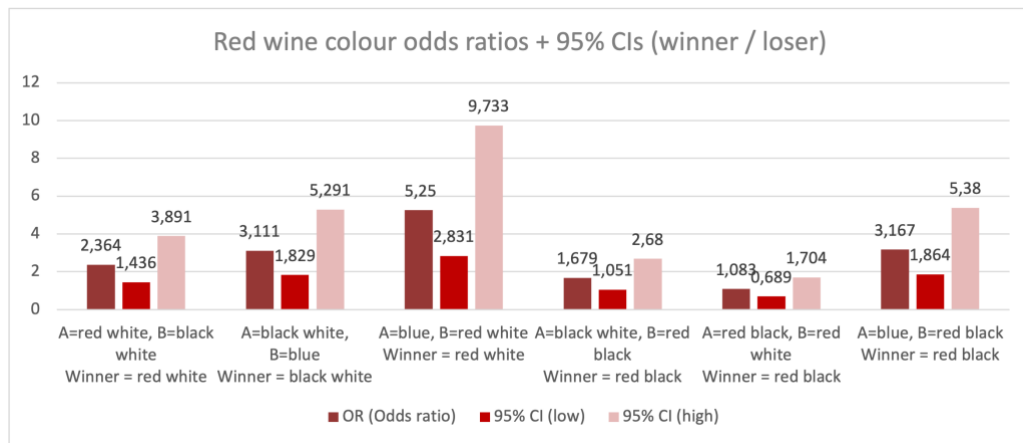


Figure 12. Red wine colour odds ratios + 95% CIs (winner / loser)

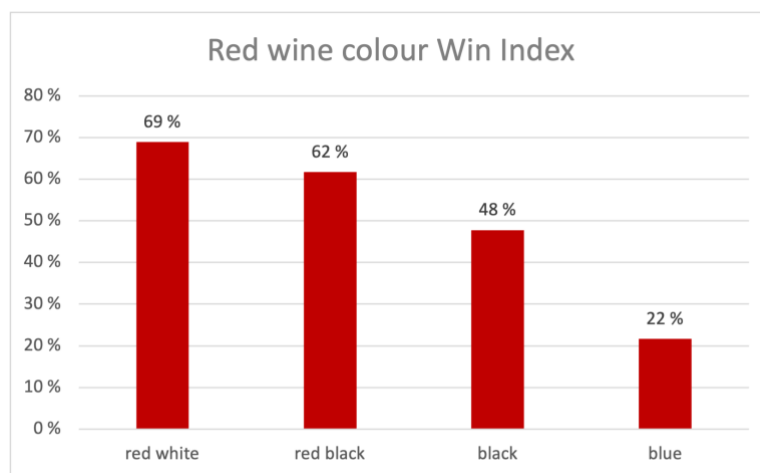


Figure 13. Red wine colour Win Index.

4.6.3 Colour questionnaire results for rosé wine

For rosé wine, three different colour schemes were evaluated: Pink with white accents, White with pink accents, and Pink with dark pink accents (Picture 4). The rosé colour comparisons were less pronounced. The dark pink-accented palette performed strongest, white a Win Index of 67% followed closely by white with pink accents with a Win Index of 62% (Figure 15). In contrast, the light pink foreground with white accents was noticeably weaker, ranking last with only a 21% Win Index. The ORs indicate a small preference over Pink with dark pink accents compared to white with pink accents, with an OR of 1,176 (Figure 14). The CI lies over 1.00, meaning the statistical difference between the colours is not significant. The A/B comparisons show consistent preference against pink with white accents, which lost both of its head-to-head matchups with a large margin, indicated by the ORs.

Rosé wine colour stimuli



Picture 4. Rose wine colour stimuli.

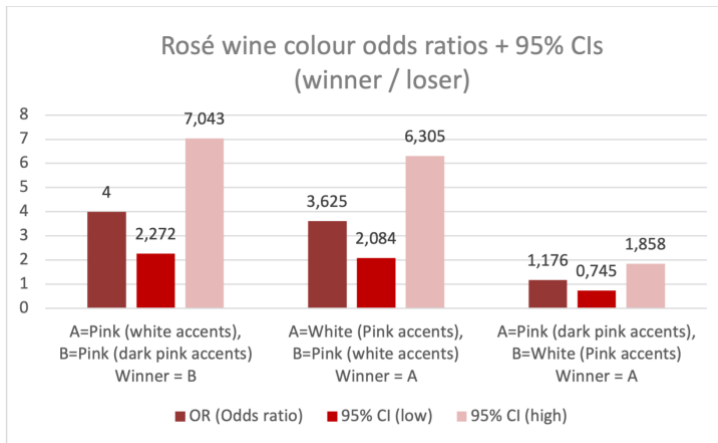


Figure 14. Rosé wine colour odds ratios + 95% CIs (winner / loser)

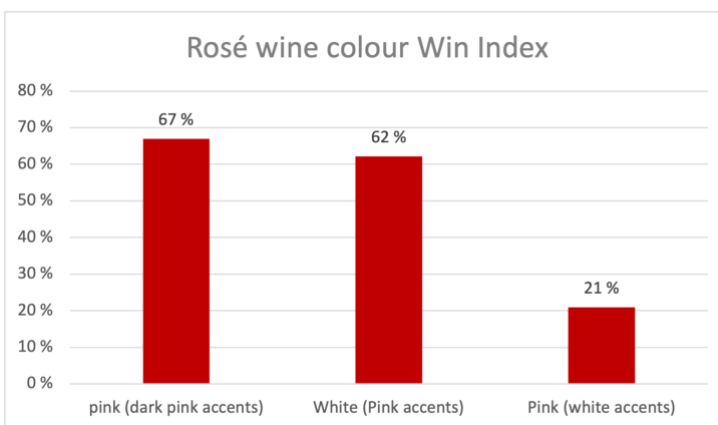


Figure 15. Rosé wine colour Win Index.

4.6.4 Analysis and interpretation of different colours

In the perspective of processing fluency, these results reflect how easily interpretable cues are preferred in low-effort situations typical to Alko's shelves (Reber et al., 2004, p. 364–366). In the context of white wine, Light green likely benefits from strong associative fit with the consumers expectations, as the colour is widely adopted in white wine packaging, which is proven by the current product listings in Alko (Alko, 2025). This reduces the cognitive effort needed to classify the product at first sight, thus improving its fluency and desirability. Processing fluency also effected the results of red wine. The category prototype for red wine, is associated with quality, seriousness, and elegance, which are represented as deeper, darker and more serious packaging styles, often found in traditional wine packaging (Celhay et al., 2017, p. 53). In our data this translates into a preference towards darker and deeper palettes, whereas cooler and atypical hues are punished having a weaker schema fit and lower processing fluency.

White and red wine are associated with strong prototypes that have been shaped for hundreds of years. Iconic classical labels have shaped consumers prototypes trough marketing and pop culture, which makes them less susceptible to change. When looked through the lens of schema congruity, the more the colour represented these prototypes, the better they performed. As blue palettes are not often associated with red wines and only occasionally appear in high end bottled wines, their schema is incongruent with the category expectations for BiB packaging, why they did not perform well in the questionnaire. For rosé wine, research has found that darker tones on rosé wine can be associated with a fruitier and enhanced flavour, leading to more positive consumer responses (Jaud et al., 2025, p. 1, 5). This aligns with our results that indicated palettes incorporating darker tones, and higher contrast to performed better, showcasing the palettes schematic fit within the existing prototypes of consumers.

Dual-processing theory helps to explain why these colour cues carry so much weight. Under fast, intuitive System 1 processing, when motivation and ability to elaborate are low, packaging colour acts as a strong indicator to evaluate if the product is "fitting" for them. Consumers use colour as a quick signal of whether a product feels appropriate and what quality it implies, without engaging in analytic evaluation or requiring detailed product knowledge (Fung et al., 2025, p. 104; Kahneman, 2011, p. 20–21). Warm or saturated colours can be associated with

richness and intensity, whereas the light or cooler colours can be associated with freshness and lightness. These opinions are made in fractions of a second and usually determine which alternatives are given a closer consideration in the first place. Even when a consumer later slows down and thinks more carefully, the initial impressions formed by System 1 can influence the choices that follow. As a result, colour does not only attract attention but also influence the early expectations against which other cues are interpreted.

4.7 The effects of different holistic styles by wine type

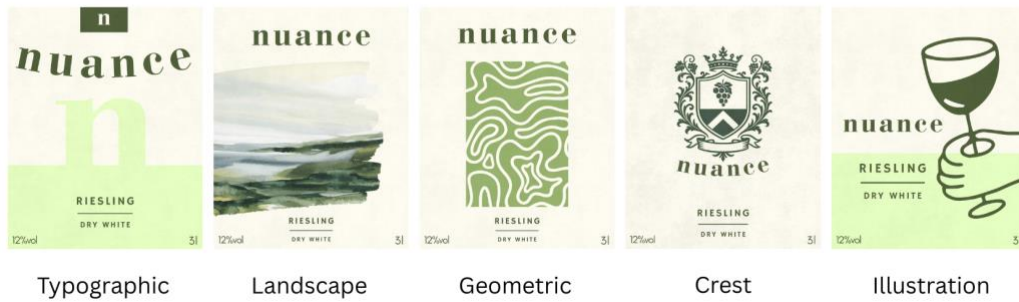
Beyond individual elements such as colour or typography, prior research suggests that the overall packaging design style strongly shapes the brand image and how easily a product differentiates itself on the shelf (Orth & Malkewitz, 2008, p. 66–68; Celhay & Trinquécoste, 2015, p. 218–219). For wine specifically, studies show that the holistic impression of the label can drive perceived typicality, quality and purchase intention even when consumers know little about the product itself (Celhay & Trinquécoste, 2015, p. 218–220). This chapter evaluates the weights and compares the effects of different holistic styles per wine type. The results are discussed separately per wine type, then analysed together to form a holistic perspective on what styles are preferred per wine type.

4.7.1 Style questionnaire results for white wine

To analyse the Finnish consumers preference of white wine styles, respondents ranked five front-label style styles: Landscape, Geometric, Typographic, Illustration, and Crest. Landscape achieved the highest mean Borda score (3.35) and the largest share of first choice percentage (31.1%), which indicates a clear preference towards the style (Figure 16, 17). Geometric style performed almost as well, with Borda score of 3.26 indicating only a small difference to Landscape. On the other hand, Geometric style got the largest share of top two votes (50%), indicating that although it may not always be the first choice, it ranks among the most preferred designs styles and can appeal to a large consumer segment. Crest style placed third on Borda points (3.09) with a slightly bigger gap to second place, but it received the second highest number of first-choice votes (28.4%). Typographic and Illustration styles scored lowest in both Borda scores and choice

percentages, with Borda scores being 2.72 for Typographic and 2.58 for Illustration.

White wine style stimuli



Picture 5. White wine style stimuli.

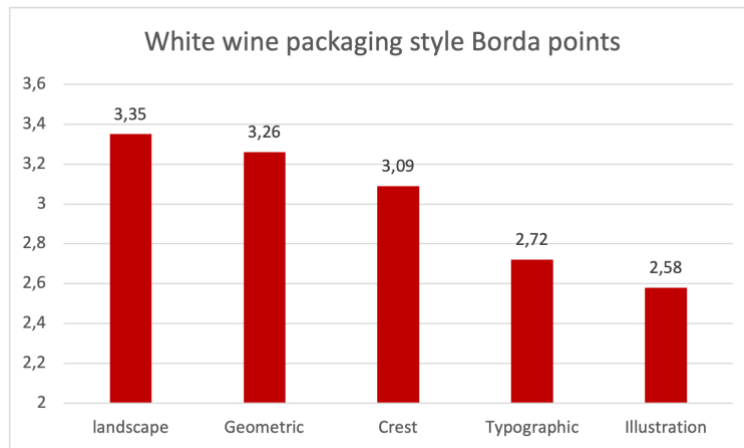


Figure 16. White wine packaging style Borda points.

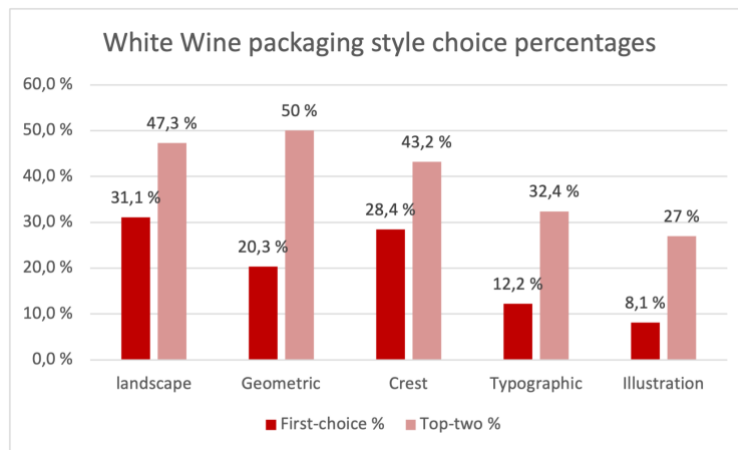
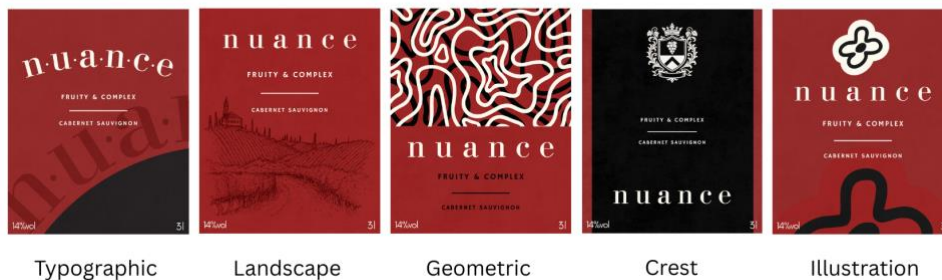


Figure 17. White wine packaging style choice percentages.

4.7.2 Style questionnaire results for red wine

Red wine front label style results generally follow white wine results, with Landscape and Geometric Performing the best. Landscape has the best Borda score of 3.51 as well as the best choice percentages with a first-choice percentage of 29.7% and a top two percentage of 55.4% (Figure 18, 19). The Geometric and Typographic styles performed almost equally well, with Geometric style having a Borda score of 3.07 and Typographic having a score of 3.01. Crest and Illustration styles had the lowest Borda score, with Illustration again being the least preferred, with a Borda score of 2.65. The Crest style produced the most mixed evaluations, as it received the second highest number of first-choice votes (20.3%), yet ranked fourth overall on the Borda score with a score of 2.76.

Red wine style stimuli



Picture 6. Red wine style stimuli.

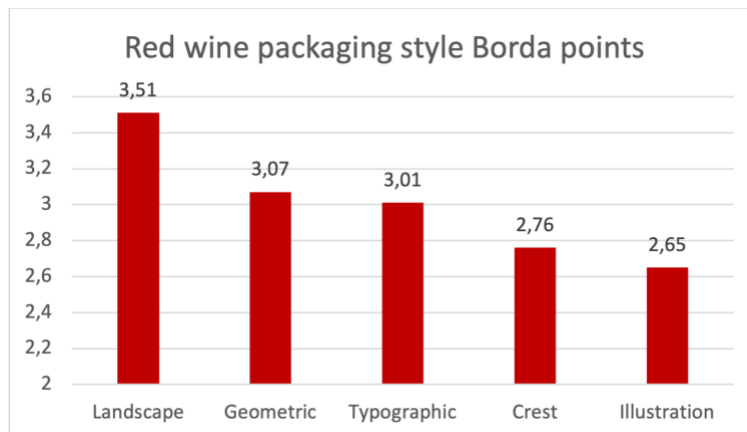


Figure 18. Red wine packaging style Borda points.

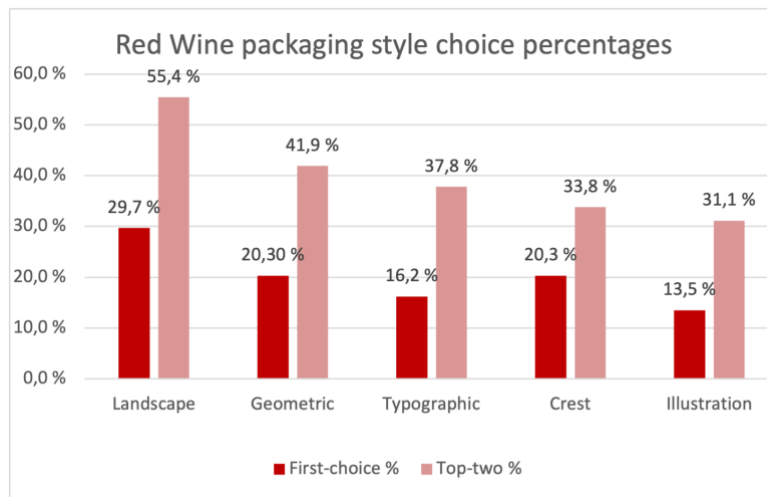
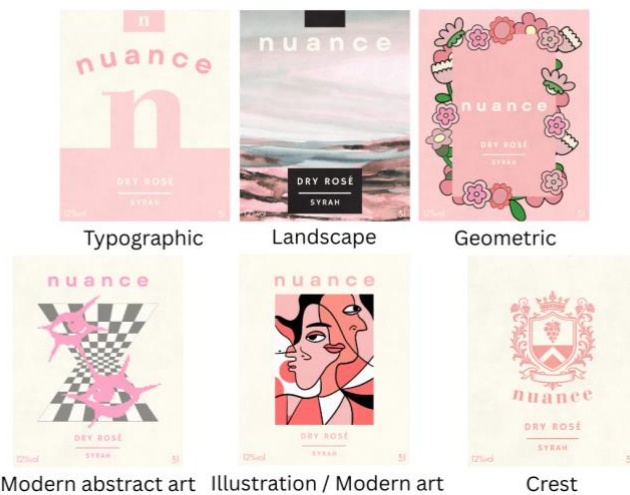


Figure 19. Red wine packaging style choice percentages.

4.7.3 Style questionnaire results for rosé wine

The style rankings for rosé show a more balanced performance at the top compared to the other wine types. Landscape was the most preferred style with a large margin, with the highest Borda score of 3.97 and the highest first choice share percentage of 36.5% (Figure 20, 21). Based on the Borda score the gap to the next two styles is narrower than in previous wine categories, with Crest and Typographic styles behind just under 0.3 Borda points (Figure 20). But when evaluating the choice percentages, Landscape is clearly preferred. Below Typographic is Geometric, which performs moderately with a Borda score of 3.39, followed closely by Illustration/Modern art with a score of 3.36. The least preferred style was Modern abstract art, which clearly performed worst based on all metrics, with a Borda score of 2.8, and a first-choice percentage of 2.7%.

Rosé wine style stimuli



Picture 7. Rosé wine style stimuli.

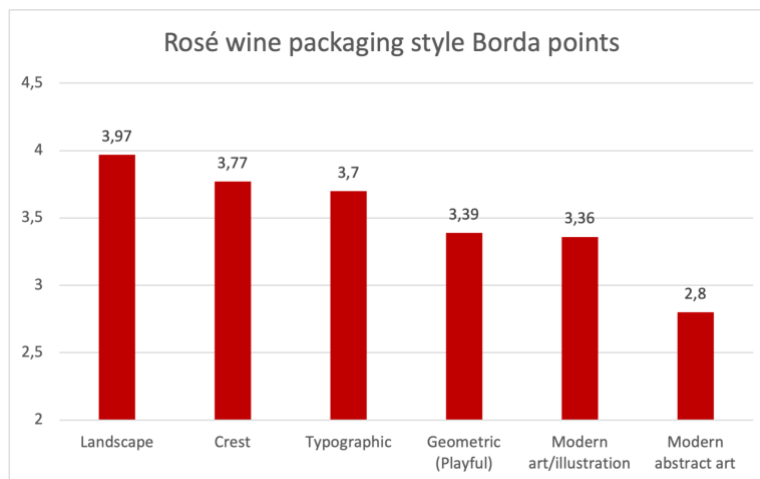


Figure 20. Rosé wine packaging style Borda points.

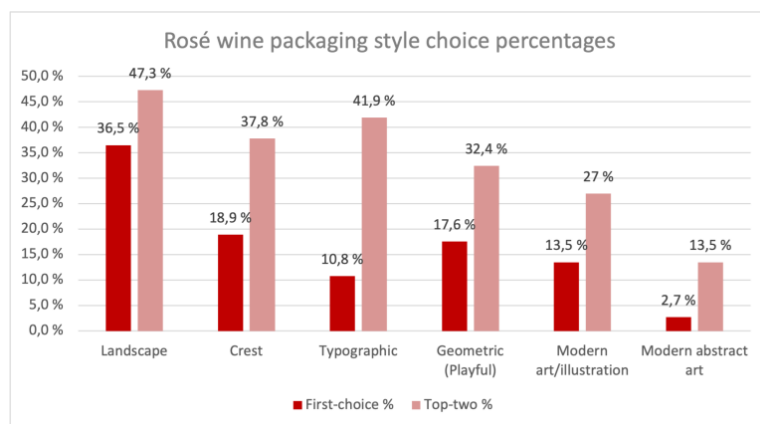


Figure 21. Rosé wine packaging style choice percentages.

4.7.4 Analysis and interpretation of different holistic styles

Landscapes first place position across all three wine types fits the theory of schema congruity. The winding hills and landscapes depicted in all of the Landscape designs are a conventional wine symbol that have been utilised for a long time in wine labels, commonly found in high end wines around the world (Celhay et al., 2017, p. 58). This congruity makes the connection to wine easier while giving the packaging a more premium and trustworthy appearance. This linkage relates to cue utilisation which suggests that consumers rely most on cues they perceive as credible, trustworthy, and predictive of quality (Rao et al., 1988, as cited in Bredahl, 2004, p. 66). In red wine, where heritage and seriousness are a part of the prototype, Landscape fits especially strong. In white wine, the style might support qualities related to authenticity, terroir and quality. In rose, the style may act as familiar cue that ties the more playful colours and typography choices together to form a more congruent and legible label. The style therefore can function as a reliable tool that improves the baseline fluency of the label and reduces the needed cognitive effort across wine styles.

Geometric style's high placement in red and white wine can be due to the symbolic quality of the geometric elements. The modern and minimalistic lines depicted in both styles can represent fluid or wine, improving the congruity of the overall design by implementing a visual cue about what the package contains. The effect of this is especially strong in fast, System 1 environments when motivation or ability to process are limited (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986, p. 125–127). In rosé wine, the package is different, with a playful design containing a geometric floral pattern. This style decision can be interpreted as less congruent to wine related expectations as the fluid motif, which may have affected its positioning in the questionnaire negatively. The Typographic style was also represented as a minimalistic, modern and structured take on BiB packaging, and it was shown with a strong Borda score just behind the Geometric style. This minimalistic style that almost exclusively incorporated typographic elements may be perceived as stylistically ambiguous and weaken category signalling by removing imagery traditionally associated with red wine. This can explain the fact that, although it had a strong Borda score in the red wine block, the style performed poorly in choice percentages and Borda scores in the context of other wine types.

The Crest style gained a high first choice share compared to its Borda score in every wine type, which depicts heterogeneity on how these signals are interpreted. The results indicate that for some respondents, a crest is a credible cue that can symbol status, craftsmanship and quality, and for others it may feel dated or too formal on a BiB, reducing fluency and broad appeal. crest style motifs are historically tied and familiar, they can act as symbolic signals of status, craftsmanship and quality (Jeffries & Major, 2015, p. 132). This phenomenon is found in signalling theory, where specific cues can convey strong meaning to some individuals but do not always engage the larger, more diverse audience (Connelly et al., 2011, p. 39-40).

The weaker performance of Illustration styles can also be tied to schema congruency, as the illustrations depicted in the questionnaire are not commonly associated with wine. For red wine, The Illustration style incorporated a stylised floral illustration on the top and the bottom of the package, which introduces novelty, but does not align with typical red wine schemas. Such floral cues might evoke lightness or freshness, which are more typical of white, and rosé wines and not typical associations that are preferred when purchasing red wine. According to schema congruity theory, this deviation from the typical schema means consumers need to increase processing effort which can affect the consumer's opinion negatively (Meyers-Levy & Tybout, 1989, p. 39–40). For white wine, the wine glass motif did form a connection to wine but still was still the least preferred in the white wine block. This can be tied to the overall fluency of the design, even though the imagery on the packaging was easily interpretable, the other elements of the holistic label were not. The font of the wine name was the smallest over all other style, increasing cognitive effort to interpret compared to other styles next to it. This seemingly small difference can make a big impact on the desirability of a package if it is compared to similar packages in a fast paces low-effort environment.

For rosé, styles that relied heavily on visual experimentation such as Illustration/Modern art and especially Modern abstract art performed less effectively. When abstraction becomes too detached from the recognisable wine cues, schema congruity decreases and consumers must use increased cognitive

effort to interpret the design (Meyers-Levy & Tybout, 1989, p. 39–40). The results demonstrate this well, as the two stylistic directions had no correlation to wine related schemas, which clearly reduced consumers' willingness to buy drastically.

4.8 Analysis of cues not dependent on wine type

The pooled A/B comparisons evaluate packaging cues that were kept consistent across wine types. The evaluated cues were the presence of an award symbol, the presence of an eco-certification mark, and the level of back-label information density. These cues were analysed separately from typography, colour and style because their representative value is not restricted to a single wine category.

4.8.1 The effects of award presence

Award presence showed strong, statistically significant results in both red and white wine types, with the award-labelled version having an OR of 5.73 in white wine, and 4.69 in red wine, with both result's lower CIs clearly over 1.00 (Figure 22). These effect sizes indicate that respondents were several times more likely to choose package including the award badge over the one that didn't have it in both wine categories.

From a theoretical perspective, the findings are consistent with signalling theory, where awards function as quality signals that help consumers evaluate credibility under situations of uncertainty and low confidence. Awards are classic extrinsic cues, and their impact is especially strong in low-elaboration decision environments, where consumers rely heavily on the heuristic attributes of the product rather than detailed product evaluation (Spence, 1973, p. 355–359; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986, p. 124–126).

These results differ from earlier findings in some markets where award cues have gathered mixed signals from customers, for example, in the work conducted in U.S. by Delmas & Lessem in 2017. Despite that, our results align with studies showing that consumers in lower-information environments often rely heavily on simple, credible quality indicators to form their choices (Jacoby et al., 1971, p. 571-573).

Red wine award label stimuli



Picture 8. Red wine award label stimuli.

White wine award label stimuli



Picture 9. White wine award label stimuli.

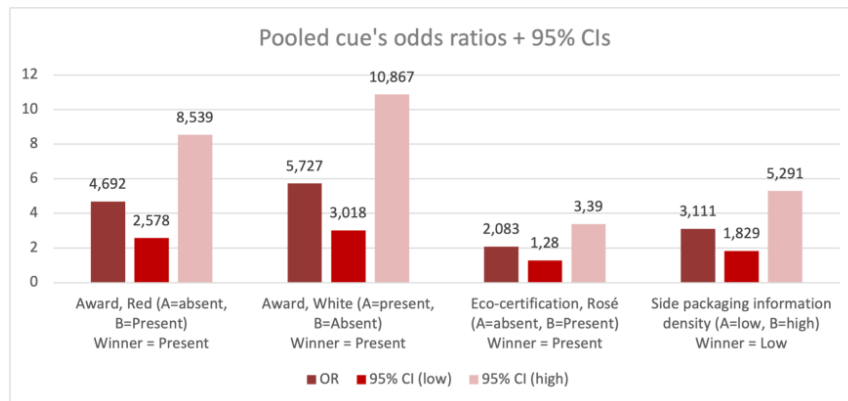


Figure 22. Pooled cue's odds ratios + 95% CIs.

4.8.2 Eco-certification

Eco-certification also had a detectable positive effect, though smaller compared to awards, with a OR of 2.08 (Figure 22). Meaning, respondents were approximately twice as likely to choose the eco-certified package over the non-

certified one. The 95% CI also lies above 1.00, indicating a meaningful preference towards eco-labelled packaging.

The size of this effect is consistent with research on the subject. Eco-labels are used as credence signals by the customers, meaning their underlying quality benefits cannot be directly verified by the customer and therefore must be presumed.

The overall weight of the marking depends on the familiarity and credibility of the marking to the customer, if they haven't previously seen the marking, they might have less credibility, thus reducing its weight, and vice versa. Research shows that such signals generate heterogeneous consumer responses, where some buyers perceive eco-certifications as valuable and responsible, while others associate it with lighter flavours or reduced craftsmanship (Delmas & Lessem, 2017, p. 319–321). The OR observed in this study reflects this mixed pattern, which suggests that eco-labels are beneficial overall but are not as universally strong as award symbols.

Another point that needs to be considered is the wine type the eco-certification was tested on, rosé wine. This result fits within the existing schema of rosé wines, which are often linked to relaxed, lifestyle-oriented consumption and associated with informality and approachability (Velikova et al., 2015, p. 3, 15). Eco-labels may therefore be more fitting into this schema compared to other wine types, as the label can reinforce perceptions which fit inside consumers' expectations.

Rosé wine eco-certification label stimuli



Picture 10. Rosé wine eco-certification label stimuli.

4.8.3 Back-label information

When respondents were asked to evaluate back-label information density, they clearly preferred the low-density back-label version with an OR of 3.11 (Figure 22). This result shows a strong preference towards minimal and well-structured information on Bag-in-Box packaging. The confidence interval lies comfortably above 1.00, indicating a statistically meaningful effect.

This can be seen as a demonstration of processing fluency, where simpler layouts are easier to interpret and therefore easier to evaluate more positively, especially in a fast-paced environment (Reber et al., 2004, p. 364–366). High-density back-labels demand additional cognitive effort, which reduces fluency and damages consumer preference even if they contain more information and content.



Picture 11. Back label density stimuli.

4.9 Summary

Overall, the findings indicate that category specific preferences are strong, although there are some similarities as well. For red and white wines, respondents prefer the more classical fonts (serif and sans-serif), and colours typical to category expectations. On the other hand, rosé packaging benefits from the more expressive script font and deeper pink palettes. Across all wine types, landscape labels, award badges, eco-certifications and low-density back labels increased the stated purchase likelihood. This showcases the value of familiar, credible and fluent signals on BiB packaging. A summary table of the main findings and relative weights of the cues is presented in Appendix 4. These findings form the basis for the implementation choices and packaging guidelines presented in Chapter 5.

5 IMPLEMENTATION

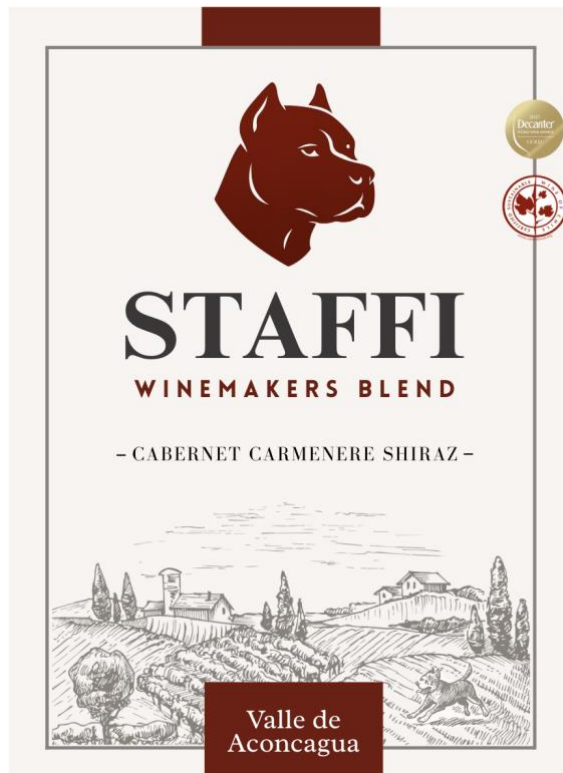
This chapter translates the empirical findings into practical recommendations for the *Staffi* 3L Bag-in-Box red wine packaging for future Alko tender submissions. Whereas the previous chapter focused on analysing the consumers responses, this chapter combines the most influential elements and shows how they can be implemented into a holistic packaging concept that is relevant to the Finnish BiB market. The recommendations are based directly on the strongest effects observed in this study and integrates them with relevant theoretical perspectives. The goal is to propose an updated visual identity for *Staffi* that enhances perceived quality, strengthens shelf impact and fits the expectations of Alko's retail environment.

5.1 Updated *Staffi* packaging concept

The original *Staffi* concept incorporated strong features, including a Serif headline typeface, good design structure, clear elements, and a dark red background, consistent with red wine prototypes (Picture 12). The design also benefitted from the white border around the packaging, and a legible eco-marking enhancing structure, clarity, and processing fluency. However, some elements, such as a faint repeated dog motif background might have a negative impact on the packages overall design congruity thus reducing processing fluency. The updated redesign addresses these issues by introducing a visual language that draws more directly from classical red-wine conventions while maintaining *Staffi*'s distinctive brand character (Picture 13). The following section describes the changes made to the updated design in the light of the empirical data and theory.



Picture 12. Staffi red wine previous design.



Picture 13. Staffi red wine updated design.

5.1.1 Label background

The most substantial improvement in the updated design is the addition of a solid beige background, replacing the previous dark red and decorative dog-pattern background. Beige labels have a long visual heritage in red wine packaging, especially on traditional Bordeaux-style labels, therefore can act as a strong category prototype (Celhay et al., 2017, p. 53). This shift increases the schema congruity, helping consumers immediately recognise the product as a classical red wine while improving contrast for all other elements in the design. The more neutral background also gives a more suitable canvas for the redesigned logo, typography and illustration. Therefore, beige acts as a category prototype for traditional red labels, improving the stated purchase likelihood of the product, which is supported by earlier research which states that under low-elaboration shelf decisions, congruent, fluent layouts are preferred (Meyers-Levy & Tybout, 1989, p. 39–40; Reber et al., 2004, p. 364–366)

At the lower portion of the label is an illustration of a vineyard landscape, which aligns directly with the best performing label style identified in the study. Landscape imagery consistently received the highest Borda scores and top two placements, especially in red wine where it was the most favoured style by a large margin (Figure 18, 19). The design is widely associated with authenticity and quality, which enhances the wines perceived quality, strengthens the label's schematic fit, and provides a more premium visual style for the package (Barbierato et al., 2023, p. 367).

As mentioned earlier, the colour of the design was changed from the red-based colour palette a palette that more emphasizes the colours black and white. Based on the empirical findings, black and white packaging performed well, but not as well as red-based palettes, which improve association to red wine, hence improve fluency (Figure 12, 13). To take advantage of this, a deep red coloured rectangle was added to the bottom portion of the label, visually signalling the wine's colour category. This same geometric shape was utilised in the Landscape style that performed the best in the rosé style comparison (Figure 20, 21). This geometric element adds structure and modernity without disrupting the classical foundations established by the landscape artwork.

5.1.2 Logo and typography

The *Staffi* logo has been redesigned from a playful, rounded dog-face illustration into a more refined and classier, single colour silhouette. The logo has been reduced in size drastically, making it fit in the package without overlaps, further improving the design's fluency. To further assist with the schematic fit to red wines, the new logo adopts a deep red tone and a minimalistic structure, giving it a classical appearance that works in harmony with the more traditional label style. This redesign preserves the brand image with the *Staffi* motif while improving the visual maturity of the design, ensuring stronger alignment with premium category cues.

Typography has also been adjusted to reflect the empirical findings. The STAFFI headline remains in serif type but is changed to a more elegant and premium font with dark tones contrasting well with the light background. This change can enhance readability thus strengthen its fluency. The Serif typeface is preserved as the primary font following the empirical findings that suggest Serif to be significantly superior over other Sans-serif and Script in red wine packaging (Figure 6, 7). This supports both processing fluency and the premium cues associated with classical wine aesthetics.

To create more contrast and further contribute to the design congruity, the "WINEMAKERS BLEND" description beneath the headline now used a sans-serif font in the same deep red tone as the logo. This pairing maintains the design's hierarchy, making the text more distinguishable from the STAFFI headline by differentiating with both font and colour.

The grape-variety text has also been changed to reflect a more elegant and classy serif font to maintain coherence across the label. The original line bordering the label has been kept, only its colour has been changed to a soft grey to contrast appropriately with the beige background. The new result is more restrained and polished which does not overpower the design as much. Lastly, the "RED WINE" and "WINES OF CHILE" markings were also removed to reduce clutter and reinforce the effect of other design elements of the packaging.

Although the markings were removed in the mock-up, the final version will have to follow the requirements set by the country that the wine is manufactured in.

5.1.3 Awards and eco-markings

Extrinsic communication cues were also updated. A placeholder for an award symbol has been integrated into the concept design, which reflects a strong effect that the cue has on stated choice likelihood. Although, the current *Staffi* product has not yet earned an award, this placement serves as a clear location for possible future use. The eco-certification mark, present in the original design was a strong element proven by the empirical data, so it is kept in the updated design, although it has been recoloured and repositioned to a more prominent position to coexist better with the award symbol and avoid visual crowding near the bottom of the label (Figure 22).

5.1.4 Conclusion

The effect of all these changes makes a packaging concept that is classy, elegant and stylistically aligned with red wine category expectations. The redesign is justified with observed effect sizes from the study and established theory to produce a label that strengthens processing fluency through the implementation of schematically fitting imagery, clearer contrast, and improved visual hierarchy through the new colour palette. Although, the new design changed a lot, the main distinctiveness of the design was maintained. The resulting design offers a more polished and competitive packaging design that aligns better with consumer expectations in Alko's retail context.

5.2 Packaging guidelines for future projects

This chapter compiles the empirical findings into a modular packaging system for 3L Bag-in-Box wines for Alko's retail setting. The guide identifies what packaging elements to focus on for each wine type and what cross-category cues are most effective to incorporate across wine types. Recommendations prioritise the cues that produced the largest and most reliable effects in the A/B ranking and rating

scale tasks. The guidelines are tied to theoretical findings and frameworks to further increase the accuracy of the tool.

5.2.1 Cue suggestions by wine type

For white wine packaging, serif or a clean sans font should be used for main headings and key information, and script style fonts should be avoided. Serif and sans-serif fonts align with the more traditional schema associated with white wine and remain easy to interpret from further viewing distances, increasing the fluency of the packaging. A light green palette is recommended, which displays typical white wine related qualities like freshness and lightness. A light blue palette can be used as well if a more modern and expressive outcome is preferred. Light yellow palettes are not recommended for the main colour palette, as they tend to be less associated with white wines and do not stand out as well on the shelf. In terms of holistic style, a landscape-based design should be the default option, as it is a well-known stylistic design in wine packaging. It can be associated with familiarity and category fit, while working on both affordable and mid-tier white wines. If a more contemporary and unique style is preferred, a geometric style can be utilised, as long as the most important category cues are kept identifiable. Crest style layouts can be reserved for packaging that aims to emphasise on a more premium and high-end positioning.

For red wine BiB packaging, serif typography should be used as the primary headline and brand font. It aligns well with consumers' expectations of red wine while supporting the perceptions of quality. Sans serif fonts can also be used as a secondary typeface, for example in small information blocks. For a more modern and minimalist look, sans serif can also be used as the main headline font, provided that the rest of the packaging schematically aligns with the font. The colour palette for red wines is recommended to utilise red or burgundy tones while pairing them with contrasting secondary colours. This can be done with combining reds with white or black tones together. This combination of congruity and fluency both reinforces the classical red wine schema and helps the package stand out from the shelves. Black and white based palettes can also be utilised as long as the package incorporates other identifiable category cues. Landscape and geometric styles are again the most versatile holistic options and should be

used for the majority of red wine BiB designs. Similarly to white wines, the crest-style design can be used for more premium products, where a smaller but more quality-focused segment is targeted. In these cases, it is very important that all other elements like font and colour also support the same premium schema to avoid mixed signals.

For rosé wines, the typographic elements that should be used differ a lot from other fine types. Script fonts can be used as the main headline typeface, as they fit the more relaxed, lifestyle-oriented schema of rosé and add expressiveness and personality. Serif can work as a secondary font option, for example in sub-headings or descriptive text blocks, where it is a legible and classical form of typography that can work well with the script headline. Sans serif should be used less often, as it has the possibility to appear too plain and simple for the expressive and playful schemas associated with rosé wines. Colour palettes for rosé should prioritise more darker and saturated pinks in combination with clear contrast. An example of this would be a dark pink on a light pink or a white background, that would increase contrast and retain the familiar colours expected with rosé wines. These colour palettes can convey quality signals related to rosé while improving the packages identifiability and legibility as a rosé. In the other hand, pale or low contrast palettes like pink and white should be avoided as they can appear too washed out or difficult to read, reducing fluency.

5.2.2 Suggestions across wine types

Award badges produced one of the largest increases in stated choice. All future BiB packaging should therefore be planned with a dedicated “award zone” on the front panel, so that medals or competition awards can be added without effecting the overall layout negatively. If the wine has yet to win an award like in the case for *Staffi*, this area can temporarily host another secondary cue, for example a short claim or a taste note, but should remain visually distinct so that it can be easily converted if an award is later obtained. It is very important that only reputable and verifiable awards should be used to protect long-term credibility.

Eco-labels also had a positive effect, although of smaller magnitude than awards. The label should always be included if the product has met the relevant criteria

and has obtained a label. It is also important that the label is credible, but more importantly recognised in the Finnish market. The recommendation is to use one or two credible certifications rather than multiple less relevant symbols, to avoid clutter and confusion. The label should be placed close to other quality-related cues such as awards, so that sustainability can be seen as a part of the overall value of the product rather than an isolated detail.

Low-density back label designs were clearly preferred over high-density labels. For future BiB designs, back labels should focus on a small number of high-value elements for example, short and concrete product description, essential technical information such as grape, style and sweetness level, and one or two simple icons or bullet points that support usage occasions or food pairing. Long story texts or visually dense technical descriptions should be avoided to reduce unnecessary clutter. The layout of the back packaging should prioritise clear visual hierarchy, generous line spacing and a large enough font size so that the text remains readable in quick and low-involvement retail situations.

6 CONCLUSION

The main objective of the thesis was to examine how extrinsic packaging cues on Bag-in-Box wine packaging influence Finnish consumers' purchase decisions in the Finnish alcohol monopoly Alko, and translate the evidence into actionable design guidance for Blend Maker's brand *Staffi*, and other future packaging efforts. Using realistic mock-ups incorporated in a quantitative study with pairwise A/B tasks and style ranking questions, the study isolated the effects of typography, colour, and holistic style within wine type and award labels, eco-certification labels, and back label density across them. The results were analysed with analytical tools that gave detailed insight on the different cues perceived weight and effects on stated purchase likelihood.

The main research question was, "*Which extrinsic packaging elements of Bag-in-Box wines increase the likelihood of purchase most in Finland, and how do preferred elements differ by wine type?*". The sub questions were "*Which front- and back-label elements have the biggest impact on the customer's choice on the shelves?*", "*How the impact differs between wine types?*", and "*How these results can be applied to improve Staffi's packaging?*". The answers to all of these questions were answered in chapters 4 and 5.

The thesis will help Blend Maker in the present by presenting them an improved version of the *Staffi* brand with theoretically and analytically driven design proof. This design improvement can assist with Alko's tender process, thus increasing the chances that the product would get on the shelves. Most importantly the new design can help the products performance in Alko's shelves, provided it is selected in the tenders. The thesis will help Blend Maker in the future by giving them a tool to assist with their future packaging by showcasing the elements that have the biggest impact on the shelves, thus improving the chances of future wines to win tenders and perform well in Alko's retail context.

Future work can be done to deepen the scope of analysis in several ways. Firstly, a larger, more homogenous sample and randomised presentation would allow for tighter confidence intervals and analysis of different subgroups like age and purchase frequency. Secondly, adding price framing and occasion cues would

test interactions that are more realistic in Alko's environment. Design-wise, more detailed A/B tests on more nuanced cues such as multiple font types, different red palettes, and logo/name locations would improve the scope of the research. Together, these improvements would shift the guideline from strong estimates to more optimised patterns that could be utilised more confidently.

Overall, this thesis turns a complex design problem into a usable playbook. The guidance is practical enough to apply on the future designs of the company, yet flexible enough to evolve. The best way forward for Blend Maker is to use the rules, measure what happens in tenders and on the shelf, and keep refining based on the data. The thesis should be simple guideline along with real world data to form evidence-based cues that should help current and future BiB projects move faster, look better, and sell more.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Survey questions.

General

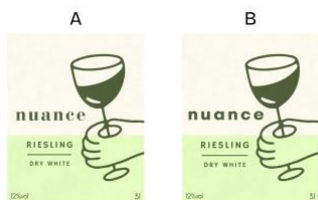
1. Oletko yli 18-vuotias? (Are you over 18 years old?)
2. Asutko Suomessa? (Do you live in Finland?)
3. Kuinka usein ostat viiniä Alkosta? (How often do you purchase wine from Alko?)
 - En ikinä (Never)
 - Vähemmän kuin kerran kuussa (Less than once a month)
 - Noin kerran kuussa (Around once a month)
 - 2-3x kuussa (2-3 times a month)
 - Viikottain tai useammin (Weekly or more often)

White wine block:

4. Kumman viinin ostaisit mielummin Alkosta? (Which wine would you rather purchase from Alko?)



5. Kumman viinin ostaisit mielummin Alkosta? (Which wine would you rather purchase from Alko?)



6. Kumman viinin ostaisit mielummin Alkosta? (Which wine would you rather purchase from Alko?)



7. Kumman viinin ostaisit mielummin Alkosta? (Which wine would you rather purchase from Alko?)



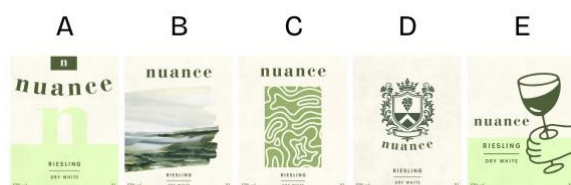
8. Kumman viinin ostaisit mielummin Alkosta? (Which wine would you rather purchase from Alko?)



9. Kumman viinin ostaisit mielummin Alkosta? (Which wine would you rather purchase from Alko?)



10. Arvioi pakkaukset ostohalukkuutesi perusteella, 1=paras, 5=huonoin.
(Rate the packages based on your willingness to buy, 1=best, 5=worst)



Red wine block:

11. Kumman viinin ostaisit mielummin Alkosta? (Which wine would you rather purchase from Alko?)



12. Kumman viinin ostaisit mielummin Alkosta? (Which wine would you rather purchase from Alko?)



13. Kumman viinin ostaisit mielummin Alkosta? (Which wine would you rather purchase from Alko?)



14. Kumman viinin ostaisit mielummin Alkosta? (Which wine would you rather purchase from Alko?)



15. Kumman viinin ostaisit mielummin Alkosta? (Which wine would you rather purchase from Alko?)



16. Kumman viinin ostaisit mielummin Alkosta? (Which wine would you rather purchase from Alko?)



17. Kumman viinin ostaisit mielummin Alkosta? (Which wine would you rather purchase from Alko?)



18. Kumman viinin ostaisit mielummin Alkosta? (Which wine would you rather purchase from Alko?)



19. Kumman viinin ostaisit mielummin Alkosta? (Which wine would you rather purchase from Alko?)



20. Arvioi pakkaukset ostohalukkuutesi perusteella, 1=paras, 5=huonoin.
(Rate the packages based on your willingness to buy, 1=best, 5=worst)



Rosé wine block:

21. Kumman viinin ostaisit mielummin Alkosta? (Which wine would you rather purchase from Alko?)



22. Kumman viinin ostaisit mielummin Alkosta? (Which wine would you rather purchase from Alko?)



23. Kumman viinin ostaisit mielummin Alkosta? (Which wine would you rather purchase from Alko?)



24. Kumman viinin ostaisit mielummin Alkosta? (Which wine would you rather purchase from Alko?)



25. Kumman viinin ostaisit mielummin Alkosta? (Which wine would you rather purchase from Alko?)



26. Kumman viinin ostaisit mielummin Alkosta? (Which wine would you rather purchase from Alko?)



27. Arvioi pakkaukset ostohalukkuutesi perusteella, 1=paras, 6=huonoin.
(Rate the packages based on your willingness to buy, 1=best, 6=worst)



Pooled cues block:

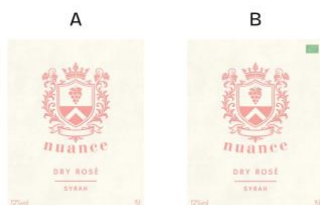
28. Kumman viinin ostaisit mielummin Alkosta? (Which wine would you rather purchase from Alko?)



29. Kumman viinin ostaisit mielummin Alkosta? (Which wine would you rather purchase from Alko?)



30. Kumman viinin ostaisit mielummin Alkosta? (Which wine would you rather purchase from Alko?)



31. Kumman viinin ostaisit mielummin Alkosta? (Which wine would you rather purchase from Alko?)



Additional information block:

32. Mitä viiniä ostat eniten? (What type of wine do you purchase the most often?)

- Valkoviini (White wine)
- Punaviini (Red wine)
- Roseeviini (Rosé wine)
- En osaa sanoa (I can't say)

33. Ikä (Age)

- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65+

34. Sukupuoli (Gender)

- Nainen (Female)
- Mies (Male)
- Muu (Other)

Appendix 2. Survey data.

Figure 1. Respondent profile by age band and gender.

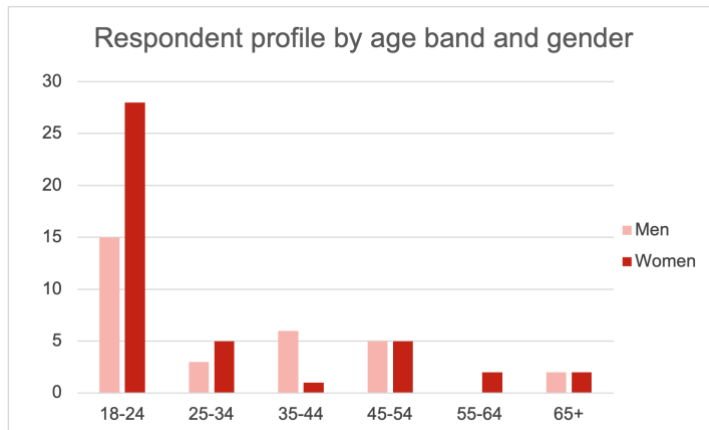


Figure 2. How often do you purchase wine from Alko?

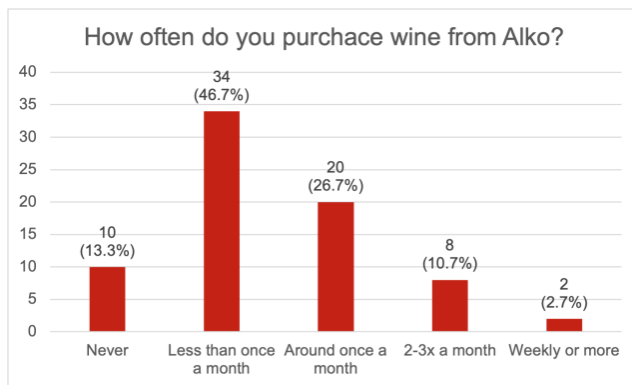


Figure 3. What type of wine do you purchase the most often?

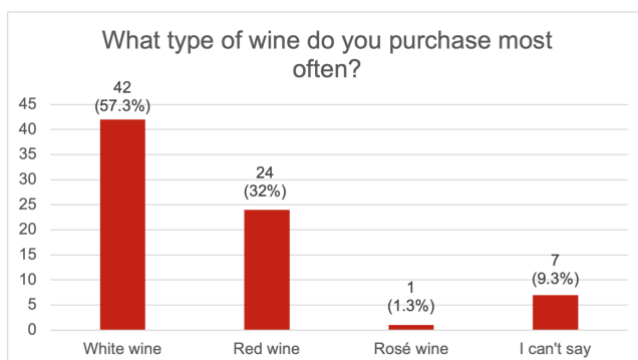


Figure 4. White wine font odds ratios + 95% CIs (winner / loser).

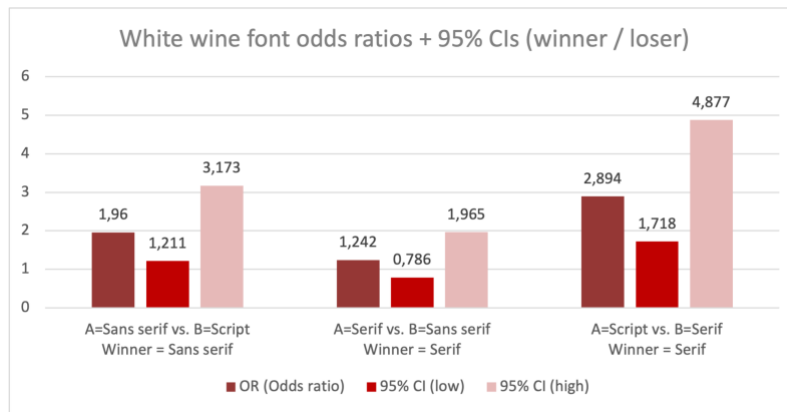


Figure 5. White wine font Win Index.

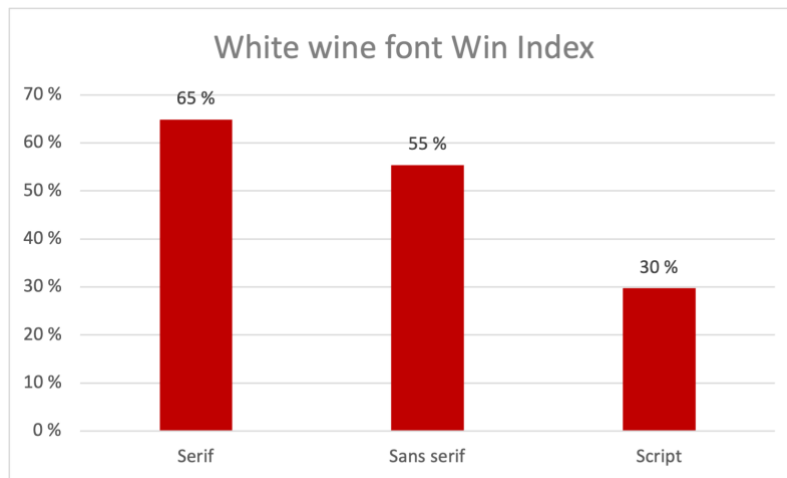


Figure 6. Red wine font odds ratios + 95% CIs (winner / loser)

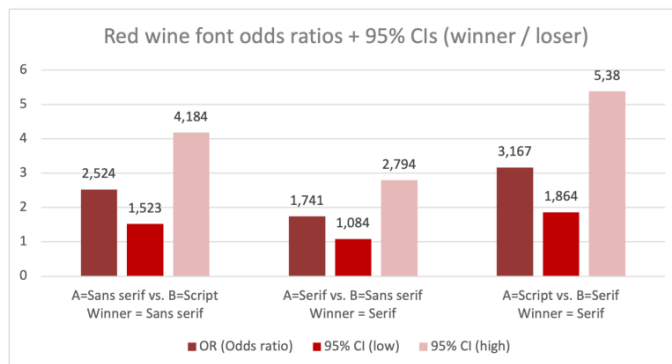


Figure 7. Red wine font Win Index.

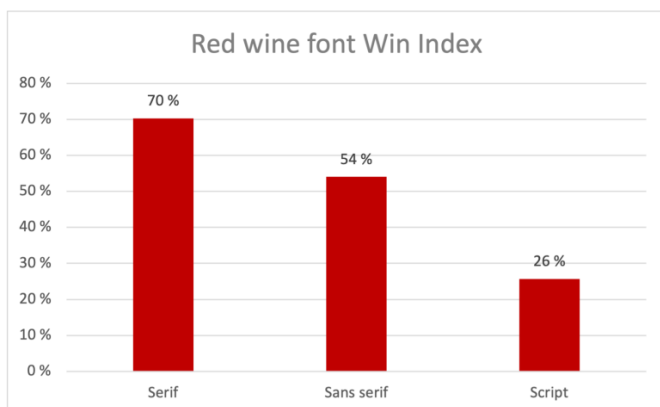


Figure 8. Rosé wine font odds ratios + 95% CIs (winner / loser)

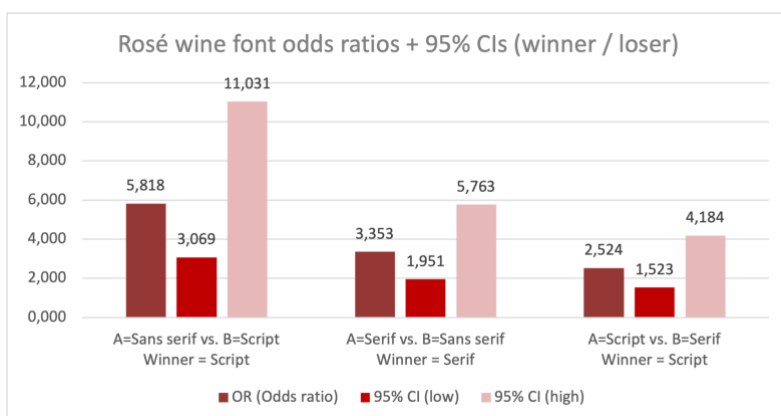


Figure 9. Rosé wine font Win Index.

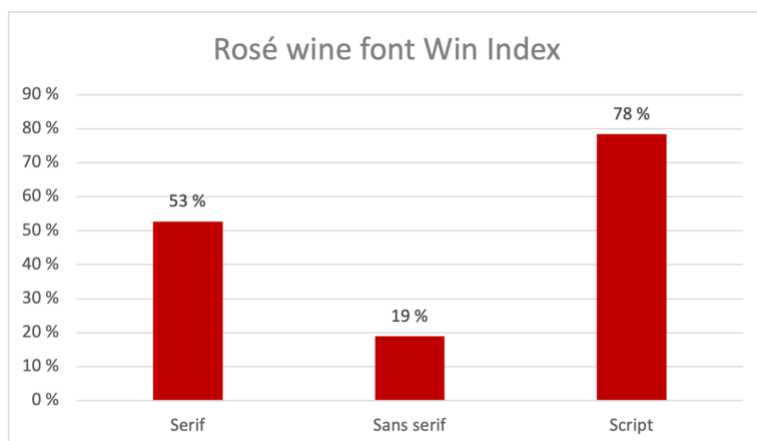


Figure 10. White wine colour odds ratios + 95% CIs (winner / loser).

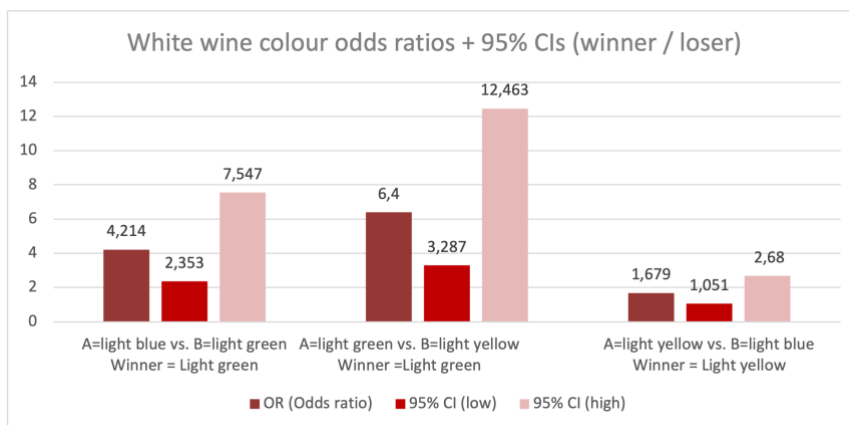


Figure 11. White wine colour Win Index.

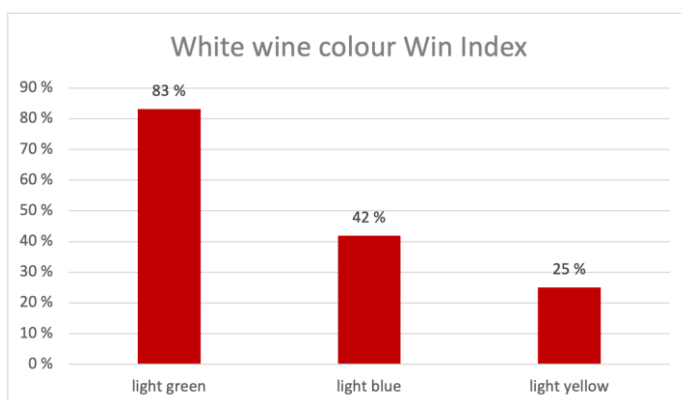


Figure 12. Red wine colour odds ratios + 95% CIs (winner / loser)

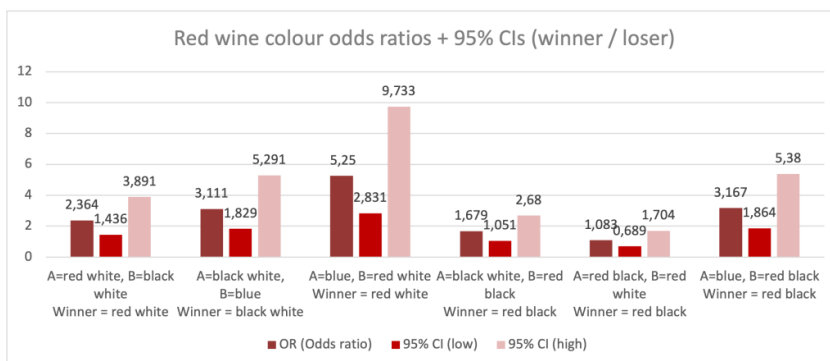


Figure 13. Red wine colour Win Index.

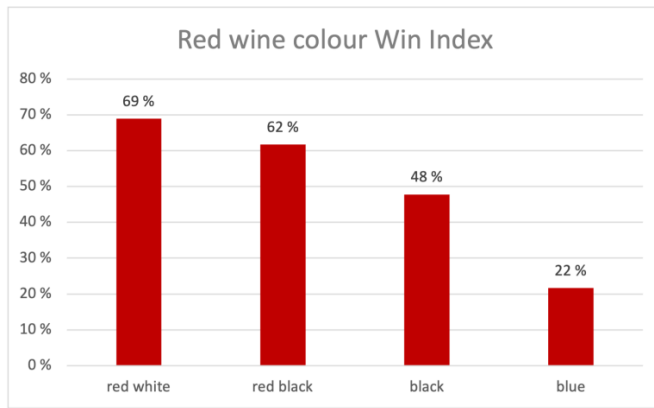


Figure 14. Rosé wine colour odds ratios + 95% CIs (winner / loser)

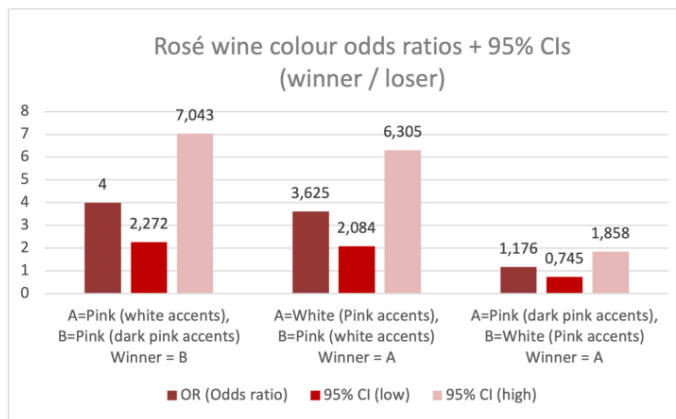


Figure 15. Rosé wine colour Win Index.

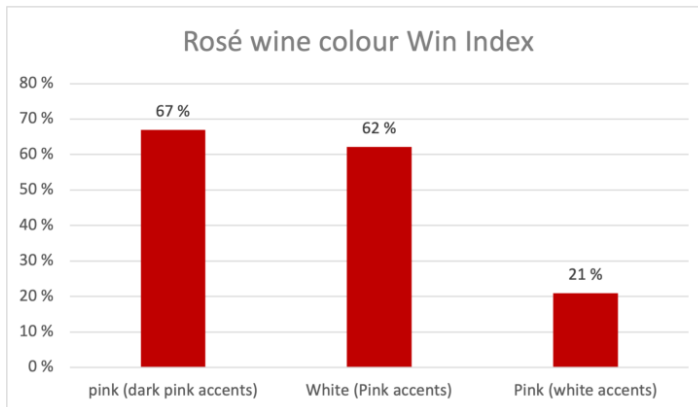


Figure 16. White wine packaging style Borda points.

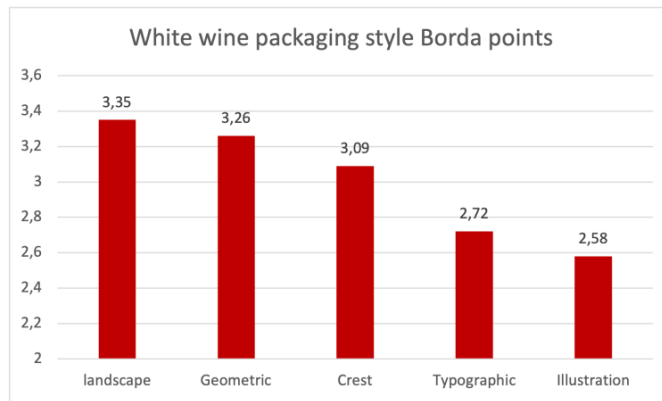


Figure 17. White wine packaging style choice percentages.

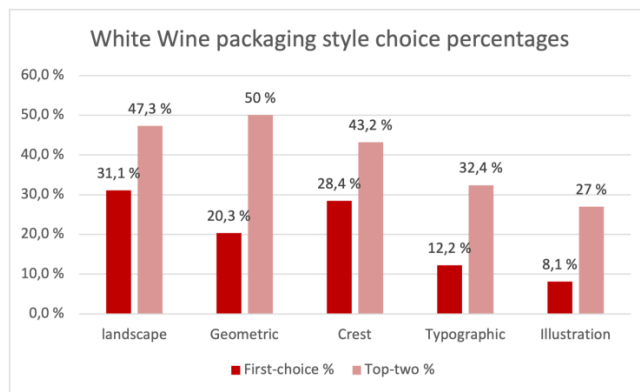


Figure 18. Red wine packaging style Borda points.

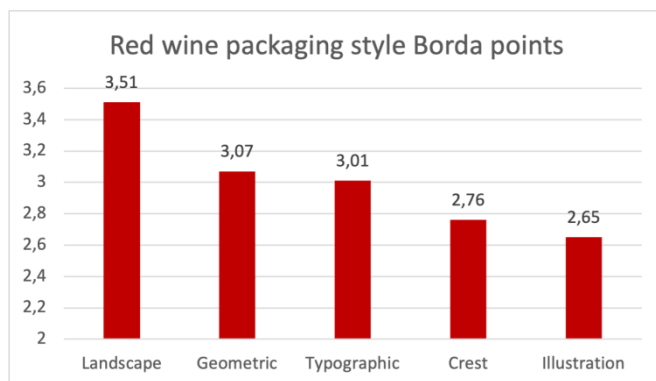


Figure 19. Red wine packaging style choice percentages.

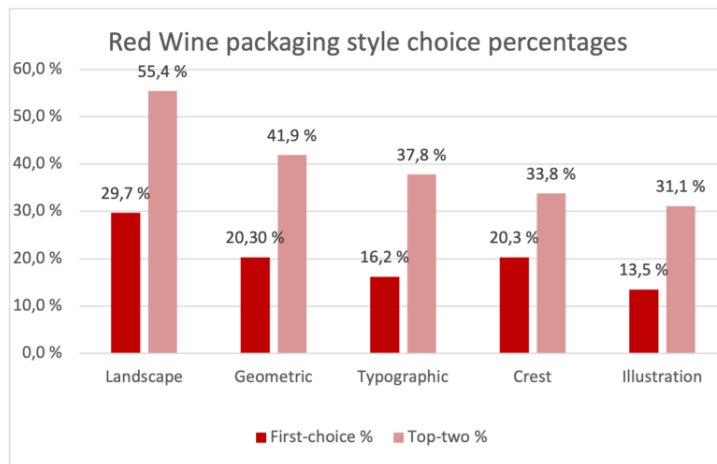


Figure 20. Rosé wine packaging style Borda points.

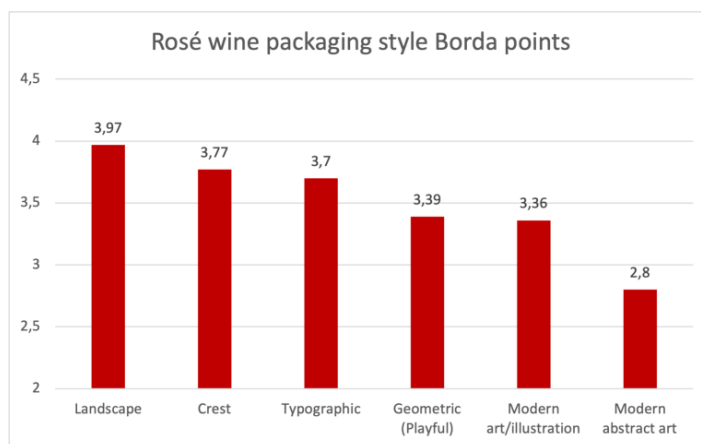
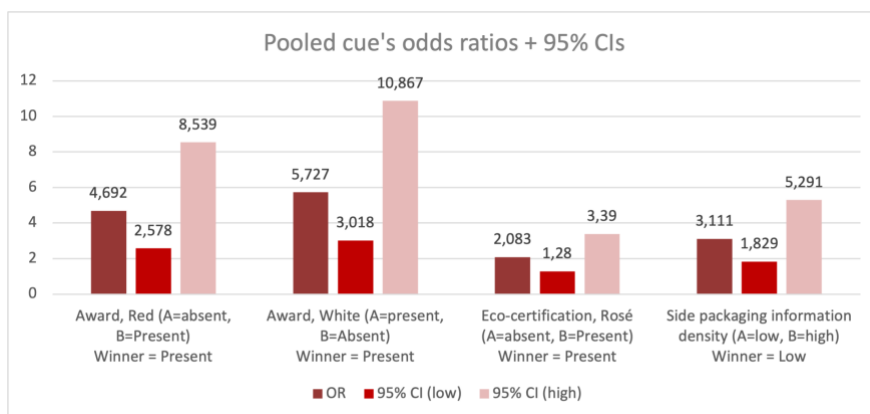


Figure 21. Rosé wine packaging style choice percentages.



Figure 22. Pooled cue's odds ratios + 95% CIs.



Appendix 3. Pictures of questionnaire stimuli.

Picture 1. White wine font stimuli.



Picture 2. White wine colour stimuli.



Picture 3. Red wine colour stimuli.



Picture 4. Rose wine colour stimuli.



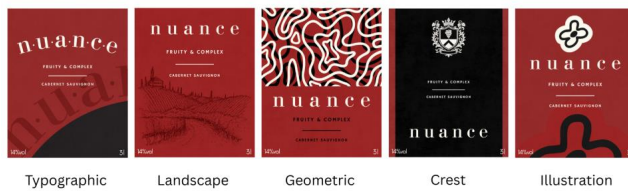
Picture 5. White wine style stimuli.

White wine style stimuli



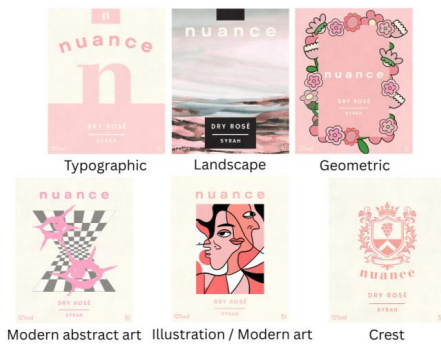
Picture 6. Red wine style stimuli.

Red wine style stimuli



Picture 7. Rosé wine style stimuli.

Rosé wine style stimuli



Picture 8. Red wine award label stimuli.

Red wine award label stimuli



Picture 9. White wine award label stimuli.

White wine award label stimuli



Picture 10. Rosé wine eco-certification label stimuli.

Rosé wine eco-certification label stimuli



Picture 11. Back label density stimuli.

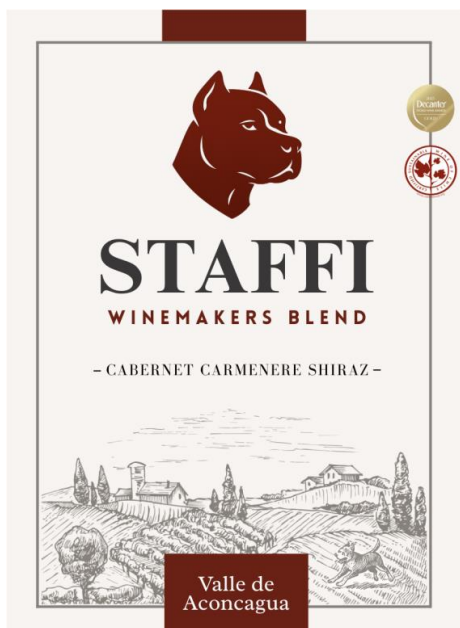
Back label density stimuli



Picture 12. Staffi red wine previous design.



Picture 13. Staffi red wine updated design.



Appendix 4. Cue strength summary per wine type.

Wine type	Cue strength	Font	Colour	Style
White wine	#1	Serif	Light green	landscape
	#2	Sans-serif	Light blue	Geometric
	#3	Script	Light yellow	Crest
	#4			Typographic
	#5			Illustration

Wine type	Cue strength	Font	Colour	Style
Red wine	#1	Serif	Red white	Landscape
	#2	Sans-serif	Red black	Geometric
	#3	Script	Black white	Typographic
	#4		Blue	Crest
	#5			Illustration

Wine type	Cue strength	Font	Colour	Style
Rosé wine	#1	Script	Pink (dark pink accents)	Landscape
	#2	Serif	White (pink accents)	Crest
	#3	Sans-serif	Pink (white accents)	Typographic
	#4			Geometric (Playful)
	#5			Modern art/illustration
	#6			Modern abstract art