

# Case Study | Eccentricity Wheat Wine

How we used our **LUXURY BEER PACKAGING SYSTEM** to ensure that Driftwood Brewing's Eccentricity got noticed, commanded a premium price, and sold out.

In early 2020 [Driftwood Brewing](#) was planning to release a big, strange beer: a wheat wine aged on amburana wood. Amburana is a Brazilian hard wood often used for aging cachaca, and not well-known in the BC market. The beer was a big (11.5%ABV), malty, boozy, spicy riff on a barley wine style that brought forth confectionery aromas of baked goods, and a palate that ranged from macadamia nuts to cinnamon, and even marzipan. The beer was costly to produce so the retail price would be higher than any beer they had ever released.

Driftwood was concerned that it would be difficult to convince customers to try this unique and expensive beer. Our solution was to design a label that truly stood out on a retail shelf and elevated the perceived value of the product by using three of the eight techniques in our...



# LUXURY BEER PACKAGING SYSTEM:

1. Unique die-cut\*
2. Foil\*
3. Textured label stock
4. Embossing
5. Wax dipping\*
6. Bottle decoration
7. Secondary packaging
8. Custom bottle design

\* techniques  
we used for  
the Eccentricity  
packaging

Driftwood decided to call their new beer “Eccentricity,” which is technically defined as “the deviation of a curve or orbit from circularity.” An exploration of this concept led us to create a streamlined, glyphic map of the cosmos and a custom typeface built from nodes and lines like constellations. Gold lines intersect in overlapping patterns around points of starlight and planets to create a central diagram. Orbital eccentricities lead the viewer beyond the planets and moons of our solar system and into the great unknown. These patterns transform outward into circuitry against the bright turquoise frame and a matching wax dip adds a capstone touch of elegance to this futuristic design.

With the design language and colour scheme defined, we turned to our **LUXURY BEER PACKAGING SYSTEM**. We discussed the techniques with the brewery and settled on three of the eight that we thought would work for this project.



# 1. UNIQUE DIE CUT

We've been creating unique die-cut shapes for each of Driftwood's labels since 2014 so creating a unique die for Eccentricity was a no-brainer. (We're up to 30 unique die-cuts for them so far - check out the [full set here.](#))

For breweries who stick with a consistent die for all of their labels, **creating a unique die can be a great way to catch customers' attention and indicate that the beer is something special.**



*The die for the Eccentricity label includes a completely vertical leading edge on the right-hand side. This is where the label is peeled off the roll by the label applicator. The rest of the die is designed so that it comes off the backing roll smoothly and is easily applied on their bottling line.*



## 2. FOIL

Just like unique die-cut label shapes, foil is something we've used on all of the Driftwood labels. But making great use of it on a special, high-end release is essential. In fact, **incorporating foil elements is probably the easiest way to elevate ANY beer label design.**

Luckily for us, the synthetic BOPP label stock makes using foil for design elements quite easy because the stock itself is shiny and comes in metallic options. We specified that the label printer (shout out to [West Key Graphics!](#)) should use a metallic gold "BOPP" label stock and then we left the parts of the design that we wanted to appear as gold foil knocked out all the way to the metallic stock below. The shiny gold elements you see on the Eccentricity label are essentially bits of un-printed label stock showing through.



*Other label stocks require different approaches to incorporating foil, such as hot foil or cold foil stamping. Those techniques can result in more luxurious foils but are more expensive and are not able to be used for heavily detailed design elements such as small text or very fine line*



### 3. TEXTURED LABEL STOCK

For Eccentricity Driftwood wanted to stick with the same “BOPP” label stock that they use on all of their other bottled beers. BOPP is a synthetic stock that performs very well on beer bottles. But it’s very smooth, rather than textured.

Textured label stock is often used on more expensive wine and spirits bottles. It’s often used in conjunction with embossed details and unique die-cuts to enhance the tactile experience of the product. If you watch customers shop in a liquor store (as we do) you’ll often see a person notice a bottle, pick it up, and then run their thumb or finger over the label. **The tactile experience of holding a well-designed beverage should not be overlooked.**

### 4. EMBOSSING

Embossing is a printing technique where design elements are raised to bring a 3D element to the label. Any part of a label can be embossed, as long as it’s not right up against the edge. You can emboss printed areas, foil-stamped areas, or even parts of the label that don’t have any printing or foil (called a “blind” emboss.)

As mentioned earlier, embossing is often used in conjunction with a textured label stock and custom die-line to improve the tactile experience of a label. **While it’s a very common technique used to elevate wine and spirits labels, embossing is not very common on beer labels.**

Unfortunately, the metallic “BOPP” label stock selected for the Eccentricity label doesn’t hold an emboss particularly well, so we gave embossing a pass here.



## 5. WAX DIPPING

The tops of beer bottles are occasionally dipped in wax to help with cellaring. The wax impede the ingress of air into the bottle, preventing oxidation while the beer matures over several years in your cellar. There is some debate as to how effective wax actually is for cellaring, **but there's one thing for certain: wax dipped beer is an effective flex on the brewery's part.** It's an additional expense, both in terms of the cost of the wax and the labour involved to hand-dip every bottle. But wax dipping is a sure-fire way to communicate that a beer is special.

Driftwood has two annual special releases that they dip in wax, so they were familiar with the cost and overall pain in the ass of wax dipping. We suggested a very specific bright turquoise colour for the wax. We also recommended that the brewery obtain a physical sample of the wax and then pass it along to their label printer so the printer could match the bright turquoise of the label to the wax. At the time this seemed a bit unnecessary but since they weren't in a rush to launch this beer, the brewery opted to take that extra step. Launching the beer with a wax and label that didn't quite match would have been fine. But taking that final extra step to ensure consistency across the entire package was just one more way to elevate the perceived value of the beer.



## 6. BOTTLE DECORATION

As with other techniques outlined in our [LUXURY BEER PACKAGING SYSTEM](#), bottle decoration and screen printed labels are most commonly used in spirits and sometimes for wine. But **bottle decoration shouldn't be overlooked as an effective way to increase the perceived value of a special beer release.**

Bottles can be frosted or coated (fully or partially) with a solid colour. You can take a label design and have it screen printed directly onto the bottle instead of onto a removable label, although you're limited to a small number of colours. You can decorate part of a bottle and then apply a paper label to a different part of the bottle. (This approach can be particularly useful for a series of special releases where the brewery's branding and the name of the series are printed directly on the bottle and then paper labels are used for the name and details of each beer in the series.)

## 7. SECONDARY PACKAGING

One final technique that can be used to elevate a beer label design is to put the entire bottle into a box or tube. This is often done in spirits, especially in whisk(e)y. **Secondary packaging provides a much larger canvas that can attract a customer's attention and make the product immediately feel more special, more gift-like.** However, the additional cost of box or tube is usually prohibitive for breweries. And, like wax dipping, there's an additional labour cost involved to package each bottle into a secondary container. For this reason, it's not something that many breweries have done.



## 8. CUSTOM BOTTLE DESIGN

If you really want to go all-out for your special release, a custom glass bottle is the ultimate flex. It's rare to see special beer released in custom glass because of the cost and minimum order quantities involved. **But if you've got the volume and the cash to spend, a custom-designed bottle can set your beer apart from your competition.** Just make sure you don't make the bottle shape too weird or retailers won't be able to stock it in the same shelves or coolers as your competitors. You don't want to end up with a product that doesn't sell because retailers can't figure out where to place it.



## CONCLUSION

Our **LUXURY BEER PACKAGING SYSTEM** allowed Driftwood Brewing to launch a new, weird, expensive beer into the saturated British Columbia retail market at a premium price with confidence that it would sell out... which it did.

The design of this bottle did exactly what it needed to do: it got noticed by consumers and convinced them to take a risk on an expensive, strange style of beer that most people had never heard of.

As an added bonus, the Eccentricity packaging design won a gold in the "Best Bottle Design, North Americas" category of the 2021 Craft Beer Marketing Awards, which provided a feel-good moment for the brewery and extra confirmation that our **LUXURY BEER PACKAGING SYSTEM** resonates not just in the BC market, but across North America.

**Do you want to ensure that your next special release gets noticed, commands a premium price, and sells out quickly?**

**Get in touch with us for a free recommendation on how our **LUXURY BEER PACKAGING SYSTEM** could be used for your next high-end beer release: [hiredgunscreative.com/contact](https://hiredgunscreative.com/contact)**

