



Paumanok Vineyards Protecting Consumers Against Counterfeit Wines

By Lenn Thompson, Editor and Publisher

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Today, Paumanok Vineyards and Applied DNA Sciences announced a partnership created with the goal of protecting consumers against the growing problem of counterfeit wines.

From the press release:

“Counterfeiting is a problem known to have a significant impact in the wine and spirits trade,” said Applied DNA Sciences CEO James Hayward. “We are delighted to be working with Paumanok to ensure that their products continue to be enjoyed and valued by retailers and consumers.” “Paumanok, wines are highly valued around the country due to high demand and limited availability,” said Charles Massoud, Proprietor, Paumanok. “The problem of counterfeiting has become more prolific worldwide. Authenticity definitely matters and our new wines will have a unique label that can be authenticated. We are proactively doing everything we can to ensure, from vine to bottle, that the Paumanok name represents exceptional quality.”

The Massoud family feels that “guaranteeing quality wines helps small wineries to be competitive in today’s market.”

They’ve designed new labels, which include Applied DNA Sciences’ botanical SigNature DNA markers. These labels will initially be used for the launch of Paumanok’s newly released 2008 Late Harvest Riesling, 2007 Tuthills Lane Vineyard Merlot (due out in late 2009) and 2007 Apollo Drive Vineyard Petit Verdot (due out in 2010). Apparently, SigNature DNA is a botanical mark that can be added to ink and used to authenticate products in a unique manner that essentially cannot be copied. Maybe [a scientist out there](#) can tell me a bit more about it?

I emailed with Charles this morning about this, asking him if they’ve had to deal any instances of counterfeit Paumanok Vineyards wines. He told me, “While we have not had, to our knowledge, such an incident, there have been, as you know, many documented instances of such fraud. We have used Signature DNA on our most expensive wines for now, but eventually, because it is a non-intrusive authentication device, we would like to include it in all our labels. It is an additional measure to protect the consumer and our brand. And given that Applied DNA is another Suffolk County-based business, we liked the idea of being with them at the forefront of innovation.”

Paumanok was the first local winery to convert part of their bottling to screwcap closures (others have since invested in the equipment). Maybe they’ll be the first again with this technology, though I’m not sure that many local wineries consider fraud a problem.

They probably wish their wines were in enough demand that that were the case.