

## Fetzer launches new label to revive sagging wine sales

### \$1 million ad campaign planned to introduce Valley Oak brand, emphasize organic production

Friday, August 27, 2004

By Bob Norberg

THE PRESS DEMOCRAT

[bnorberg@pressdemocrat.com](mailto:bnorberg@pressdemocrat.com)

With revenue from its core wine brands remaining weak, Fetzer Vineyards has launched a new label and \$1 million ad campaign in an attempt to bolster sales.

"It has been a long time in coming," said Erik Jepson, Fetzer brand manager. "We thought it was time to update the packaging. We needed to put a fresh face out there."

The weakening sales of Fetzer and Bolla Italian wine imports were singled out Thursday by Brown-Forman Corp. in its quarterly earnings report Thursday.

Fetzer owner Brown-Forman, headquartered in Louisville, Ky., reported sales of \$578 million for the quarter ended July 31, a 9 percent increase over the previous year, and net income of \$51.9 million, a 67 percent increase. The growth was driven by sales of Brown-Forman staples Jack Daniel's and Southern Comfort.

But the company said sales of its wines were weak.

"Results for the company's core wine brands, Fetzer Premium Varietals and Bolla, remain soft due to the intensively competitive retail price environment in the United States," the company said in a statement.

Brown-Forman produces 4 million cases a year at the Fetzer winery in



Quality control is done on the newly labeled Valley Oaks Gewurztraminer on Thursday at Fetzer Vineyards' Hopland facility. Fetzer is spending \$1.5 million in rebranding its wines with the new Fetzer Valley Oaks name. (CRISTA JEREMIASON / The Press Democrat)

[Zoom Photo](#)

Hopland.

In attempt to bolster sales, the company 18 months ago began a redesign of its Fetzer line of wines. The current label had been used since 2000, Jepson said.

The company spent more than \$500,000 on research in focus groups in 10 cities and in the United Kingdom, and worked with six different graphic artists before settling on a design by Stephen Black of Seattle, who also has offices in Santa Rosa.

The new label is a traditional design featuring a vineyard with oak trees, an attempt to give the consumer a sense of the organic Mendocino County vineyards that provide some of the Fetzer fruit, Jepson said.

"We wanted to convey the sense of the natural underpinnings for Fetzer. We wanted to convey the Valley Oaks as unspoiled piece of California's North Coast, untainted by tourists, untainted by chemicals," Jepson said.

Fetzer Valley Oaks will also be the name on all of its varietals, replacing Sundial and Eagle Peak on some of the varietals, Jepson said.

Wine with the new labels is now starting to appear on retail store shelves, and Fetzer's delivery trucks will also get new paint jobs in the next several weeks.

Jepson said next month Fetzer will also launch a new billboard, print and broadcast advertising campaign, at a cost of more than \$1 million.

"This is the most exhaustive project that Brown-Forman has undertaken," Jepson said.

Brown-Forman entered California's wine industry with the purchase of Fetzer in 1992 and Sonoma-Cutrer in 1999. It also distributes Korbel Champagne.

It stock closed Thursday at \$46.32, up 12 cents.



**Get home delivery of The Press Democrat -- the North Bay's news source.  
Rates start at \$0.50 per week Thurs.-Sun.!**

[Grape growers keep eye on weather](#)

08/24/2004

[Mondavi giving up control of winery](#)

08/24/2004

[Better wine in a box](#)

08/16/2004

[Gallo workers demand end to election delay](#)

08/11/2004

[Geyser Peak Winery crush surprisingly early](#)

08/10/2004

[A vintage to remember?](#)

08/05/2004

[Gallo, UFW to sit down at bargaining table in SR](#)

08/04/2004

[New bid in town](#)

08/01/2004

[Sebastianis transferring Viansa to children](#)

04/27/2004

[2003 wine exports set record at \\$643 million](#)

04/27/2004

## Navigation

- [PRESS DEMOCRAT](#)
- [ENTERTAINMENT](#)
- [WINE COUNTRY GUIDE](#)
- [COMMUNITY](#)
- [HEALTH](#)

Search article



[Advanced/archive search](#)  
[See all of today's stories](#)

- [HOME](#)

- [NEWS](#)

- [BUSINESS](#)

  - [Stories](#)

  - [Stocks](#)

  - [Outlook 2004](#)

  - [Columns](#)

  - [Motley Fool](#)

  - [Local Business Resources](#)

  - [Newsletters](#)

- [SPORTS](#)

- [OPINION](#)

- [HOME DELIVERY](#)

- [MARKETPLACE](#)

  - [Classifieds](#)

  - [Homes](#)

  - [Autos](#)

  - [Jobs](#)

  - [Newspaper Ads](#)

- [Advertise](#)  
[Contact us](#)  
[About us](#)  
[Work for us](#)  
[Site map](#)



[2002 Lincoln LS 4dr Sdn, AT, 8cyl, ...](#)

[1998 Ford Mustang Convrt, AT, 8cyl, ...](#)

[1999 Toyota 4Runner SR5, low miles,...](#)

[2003 LEXUS ES300 11,190 mi, immacul...](#)

[2001 Lincoln Navigato...](#)

[2002 Ford Focus 4dr, PW, AC, CD \\$10...](#)

[View All Top Autos](#)

---

[View All Top Jobs](#)

[View All Top Homes](#)

pressdemocrat  
com

THE PRESS  
DEMOCRAT



JOBCLIPS

**CATCH a PREVIEW of your NEW CAREER!**

