

# Enowine

Written by **Frank Coles**



The off-licence is evolving. Since the introduction of the smoking ban and the fear of declining bar sales, the drinks trade is finding new ways to entice the consumer to buy, with wine fast becoming the most important drink sold to the take-home market.

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In this issue of Forma Interiors we interview two different design groups on their most recent commissions and discover what ideas different designers can bring to a project when presented with similar briefs; In this case to display and sell wine for a new breed of wine merchant and a wider yet more discerning clientele.

Enowine is a quietly emerging brand that already has boutique outlets in the US and Germany. This Italian company began as a vineyard and then grew into a retailing concept through the creation of its unique wine dispensing machines that allow the customer to taste and try wines before they buy. It is this wine tasting technology that is the key to the retail concept. Using pre-paid chip cards the customer can taste as few or as many of the 120 wines on offer as they like. This takes the fear of the unknown away from the consumer and allows them to decide which wines they really like while taking the cost of tasting away from the retailer and placing it directly on the customer.

Ronan Carton of John Duffy Group is the creative mind behind Enowine's first Irish incarnation in Dublin. He explains how they approached this innovative retail model for a new market. "We had the Italian concept, but we obviously had to fit it to the Irish market. The idea behind it is kind of Italian industrial, it is almost like a warehouse."

The multi-hued European styling is first glimpsed in the exterior branding of the shop front that uses titanium for the signage on a background fascia of Spanish tiles. The eye is naturally drawn down onto the playful element of the bottle-shaped door handle spanning the shop's double doors and carried over onto the branded boxes in the windows.

The exterior titanium coloration is applied inside through the medium of copper and zinc on the shop counter itself, "We didn't use copper on the outside because copper in an exterior situation just mottles and we wanted to keep it punchy, sharp and glossy." The industrial specification, high-shine floor was designed to dull down with use and is chemically, and therefore presumably, wine resistant.



COSTA DI BUSSIA

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GRAND VIN  
MAY 1990

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The warehouse concept is continued throughout the unit. Emphasis is placed on the high ceilings and the industrial galvanized steel employed to disguise the inner workings, while the walls are lined with beautiful prints of cavernous wine cellars from around the world taken by the English photographer Mick Rock. The storage and shelving also extend this warehouse theme with cases stocked out on the floor. "In terms of getting access to the product it's all out in front of you."

The dispensing machines are individually positioned along the vertical axis of the shop using the natural foreshortening to draw the eye into the retail space. John Duffy Group worked closely with the manufacturers of Enowine's dispensers in Verona to create a consistent palette of materials for use throughout the shop. A combination of lively composite stones, Spanish and Italian tiling, the cooling tones of titanium and the warm colours of oak and copper persist throughout. The net effect is a calm and stylish atmosphere. Carton elaborates, "I could say that it was an Italian palette that we were looking at, but is there such a thing anymore? As the colours we have used traditionally have changed, he observes "everyone is mainland European with regard to colour."

The lines of shelving and dispenser units draw the eye deeper into the recesses of the unit and to the crystal clear glass partitioned section at the rear of the shop. Inside the partition there are more wines in locked cupboards along one wall. The back wall is covered in delicate tumbled Italian tiles made by Alfredo Salvatore. More wine is on display in the nearside pane of glass resting on custom-built

shelving made by Pro Stainless in County Louth. Angled at the optimum viewing angle for the customer to view the wine without having to venture into this higher end enclave. The sensation of stepping into somewhere more exclusive is encouraged by regulating the temperature of the glass room to between 10 and 15 degrees and segregating you from the bustle of wine tasting outside in your own personal wine cellar.

Phase one of Enowine's design is complete and "I think that initially Irish people might be a little bit reticent because it is a new idea," but once the concept takes over and because there is more involved, the customer will hopefully keep coming back. **FI**

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