Europe gives Americans their “Licensed To Chill” With Beaujolais wines and European Olive Oil

Riding high on the success of its debut in 2005, “Licensed To Chill” (www.licensedtochill.org) takes Beaujolais and European olive oil into phase 2 of their 3-year promotional campaign, the largest ever in the U.S. Partly financed by the European Union, France, and Italy, the campaign features two great European agricultural products and places them into the daily lives and habits of Americans. Although it is a national effort, the campaign focuses on three key markets for each phase of the program through advertising, promotions, and public relations methods. The central theme of the campaign is “casual entertaining”, referring to the laid-back American lifestyle.

Considered a launch campaign, “Licensed To Chill” seeks a fresh approach to Beaujolais. Incorporating it into the healthy alternative lifestyle of urbanites, together with the richest and purist dietary fat: olive oil. The campaign targets a younger generation of wine drinkers—the fastest growing segment of the market—who, for the most part, are being introduced to Beaujolais for the first time. The objectives were to reposition Beaujolais wines in the U.S. and create a new image for Beaujolais that was more in tune with the American way of life, ultimately leading to an increase in sales and brand awareness.

The total budget of 4.09 million Euros provided by the respective producing regions plus the EU, France, and Italy has been divided over the course of the 3-year campaign. Fifty percent (50%) was allocated for the first year, thirty percent (30%) for the second year, and twenty percent (20%) for the third. A large portion of the first year’s budget was spent on creating and showcasing 3 visuals for print and web advertisements (Rooftop party/Casual at home dinner party/A drink at a corner cafe) to launch the campaign. The models featured in the ads were chosen for their healthy, natural looking beauty that better reflects the “normal”, everyday type of Beaujolais drinker.
“Licensed To Chill” focuses on three different markets for each phase of the program. During Phase 1 the markets were: New York, Chicago, and San Francisco. For Phase 2, the campaign will open one new market, Los Angeles, and continue efforts in New York and Chicago.

Our promotional team of “Beaujoladies”, all wearing their colorful American Apparel Beaujolais and olive oil T-shirts, trained on the 12 Beaujolais appellations and all olive oil varieties, was put in place to help support advertising efforts, reaching places where traditional media cannot. A series of on-premise, off-premise, and alternative promotional events have been organized to encourage direct experience of the products, create word of mouth, drive traffic to the “Licensed To Chill” website, and develop strong relationships with accounts. This summer, promotions in New York start on Memorial Day weekend and end Labor Day weekend. Both Chicago and Los Angeles begin on Fourth of July weekend; however, Chicago ends on Labor Day and Los Angeles continues through September. Informative and witty promotional materials such as brochures, banners, chilling buckets, corkscrews, and CDs are displayed at each event.

The campaign comes full circle with a strong public relations strategy. Leading the way is the www.licensedtochill.org website created to educate the public on Beaujolais wines and European olive oils and to inform them of upcoming “Licensed To Chill” events happening in their area. Visitors can sign up to a weekly newsletter featuring a calendar of “Licensed To Chill” events they can attend in their neighborhood with friends. In addition to getting the word out via the website, press trips to the Beaujolais region and olive groves in Italy are organized for American food, wine, and travel writers and television producers. Since the campaign’s launch in November of 2005, over 200 articles have been written about the campaign, Beaujolais wines, and the Beaujolais region reaching over 13 million readers.

Partnerships with such television shows as “Culinary Travels with Dave Eckert” (PBS national) and “Colameco’s Food Show” (PBS North East), allow the campaign to reach a much broader audience. Both television hosts shot extensive footage while visiting the Beaujolais region on various press trips, enough to produce 3 full episodes in total on Beaujolais. A forth episode will
be shot this July specifically for “Culinary Travels with Dave Eckert” this time showcasing Beaujolais within the daily lives of Americans.

Results from the campaign, thus far, have shown a +17% increase in value and steady volume of Beaujolais sold in New York*, +20.7% increase in value and +24.3% increase in volume of Beaujolais sold in Chicago*, the only 2 markets for which numbers are available. Meanwhile, individual accounts offered positive feedback and high praises for the organization and efficiency of the promotions held in their stores, mainly thanks to the extensive product knowledge of the Beaujoladies.

Overall, “Licensed To Chill” offers a fresh new approach to Beaujolais and wine in general. It reconnects America to French wines and does so in an unpretentious and friendly way. There has been a real movement in Beaujolais to take advantage of America’s growing fascination with wine and the American consumer is beginning to realize that Beaujolais and European olive oils provide a practical choice to accompany any simple gathering.

* Nielsen data for the Beaujolais wine category for July 2nd through November 19th, 2005