

# Where wine meets sustainability — lightweight and recyclable advent calendar packaging for The Online Tasting Company

The Online Tasting Company is the UK's leading wine sample repacking expert, working with top online wine retailers, trade bodies, wine schools, corporate events gifting providers and more. Customers send The Online Tasting Company their wines, and they deal with the difficult process of repacking them into small containers and shipping them directly to end customers. They've delivered more than 800,000 samples directly to consumers in the last three years alone, via courier or post in easy-to-open, letterbox-friendly packaging.

The Online Tasting Company's in-house ecoSIP® packaging is a revolutionary ultra-lightweight wine sample service designed to be affordable, scalable, and comes with a small environmental footprint. This year, they wanted to use their innovative ecoSIP® cartons in a wine sample advent calendar. To do this, they enlisted the help of Smurfit Westrock.

## Sipping sustainable surprises

The team at The Online Tasting Company wanted to take advantage of their existing lightweight ecoSIP® wine sample packaging and with it, offer their customers a creative and planet-friendly advent calendar. The calendars needed to be ready for the busy festive season for customers to enjoy throughout December. This meant we had a tight Christmas deadline to work to, so we wasted no time in designing the perfect packaging for their small but punchy samples.

The Online Tasting Company needed a premium pack that showcased the high value and quality of the wines while ensuring everything stayed safe and secure during transit. We needed to find the perfect balance between product protection and boosting the all-important customer unboxing experience.

## Pouring eco-friendly solutions

Finding an innovative, lightweight, and recyclable solution really allowed us to put our experience to the test, as producing the advent calendar on such a short lead time called for some creative thinking. The result? A luxurious litho-printed pack with marvellous metallic inks and tactile spot UV finishes to elevate every inch of the calendar. It was important for the calendars to be visually appealing and eye-catching while being easy to store, build and pack. Our packaging experts at Smurfit Westrock Barnstaple had to find a middle ground between keeping the advent calendar pack lightweight and ensuring it was strong enough to support the weight of multiple wine samples and protect them during transit.

## Advent calendar packaging as robust as a red

We embraced the opportunity to work with The Online Tasting Company's ecoSIP® cartons and create a packaging solution that also aligned with their eco-friendly ethos. This meant avoiding bulky or complex designs and trialling designs to ensure they are quick and easy to assemble, reducing the risk of packing delays in the supply chain. One of the highlights of the advent calendar packaging lies in the quality of the finish and design. A printed outer ensures it arrives in great condition through the courier network for a striking and shareable unboxing experience. The calendar sits beautifully on a



countertop and becomes a real focal point of any room, allowing the business to showcase its brands in consumers' homes non-stop for an entire month.

## Delicious savings in time for Christmas

This unique protective packaging solution adds value to The Online Tasting Company in several ways. The full calendar - including multiple 100ml samples - is less than a quarter of the weight and one sixth the footprint of a traditional 187ml bottle advent calendar. It's extremely compact, resulting in much lower shipping costs and a huge space saving at home for customers once the box is delivered.

There are also CO<sub>2</sub>-saving benefits for the brand, in both transport and raw materials. By using a fully corrugated packaging solution - the calendar, inserts, partitions, and outers are delivered flat-packed - meaning more efficient transportation and saving on precious warehouse space. We also ensured that the entire wine advent calendar is fully recyclable, hitting the key environmental goals for this responsible wine business and the expectations of its eco-conscious consumers. After all, **94% of consumers** say it's a brand's responsibility to create products that are not harmful to the earth (Deloitte Global).

Alex Taylor, Founding Director of The Online Tasting Company said: "As a newly established company with a unique proposition in wine packaging, your supplier base is hugely important. Smurfit Westrock has been a fantastic support to us in creating designs, sampling various designs and delivering our project as agreed. The support from the Smurfit Westrock Barnstaple team has been of great value to us at The Online Tasting Company."

Simone Mace, General Manager at Smurfit Westrock Barnstaple reflects: "Our design team have done a fantastic job rising to the challenge and producing a practical, durable solution that doesn't compromise on the 'WOW factor' - achieved with litho print. We have enjoyed supporting The Online Tasting Company with their project and look forward to working on future efforts."

If you're in need of stand-out advent calendar packaging for this year's festive season, **get in touch** today!

For more information visit [smurfitkappa.com](https://www.smurfitkappa.com)