



## **THE BRAND CALLED SALE**

**My avenue to break into the wine business was in the retail wine universe. I had never been in retail of any kind in my life before, so I had no idea there was a Brand called Sale. I soon discovered what that meant in the Retail World. Here is my awakening.**

**After being given a promotion in 1979 with only five months of experience in the wine business, albeit in retail wine, the owner of A & A Wine & Spirits was sensing I was being offered other positions by several of the Wholesale Distributors in Washington, DC. These were the same companies who, when they had interviewed me prior to finally landing at my new position, I was told that I didn't have any experience in the wine business so they would not hire me. I was given the promotion to be the American Wine Manager for the store. A position that didn't exist before.**

**As I tasted through some of the wines from California, I wasn't familiar at all with, I opened a bottle of 1975 Raymond Vineyards**

**Cabernet Sauvignon from the Napa Valley. I was impressed with the quality of the wine vs its retail price of \$5.79 a bottle. That is not a typo, we were selling it for \$5.79 a bottle. The weird thing was when I began to promote it to my European wine-loving customers they wouldn't touch it. I couldn't give it away.**

**That is when I discovered there was a Brand called Sale. I had watched the store's wine manager many times mark a bottle of wine up and then place a for-sale tag on it and the wines would jump off the shelf. I decided to try something. I marked Raymond up to \$6.99 a bottle. I then put a Sale tag on it for \$5.99. Essentially .20cents more than the full price had been but with no further discount for case quantity. And much to my surprise the wine flew off the shelf.**

**It was that experience that taught me the rule of retailing whether it is wine or other products. Customers like to believe they are getting a deal no matter what the price and since I have learned that most retail merchants have a brand called Sale. In fact, it is almost certain, with the exception of an immediate need, most consumers only buy when something is on sale. Ask yourself if that is not true.**

**I would also add, if any merchant is selling a wine for less than full retail it is not necessarily because the product is bad or defective, but the sale price often reflects what the product is worth. Keep that in mind when you see the ads for Sale.**

**I guess that is where the phrase "Buyer beware" originated from.**