

# Tapping into The Source: Retail Business Services Pilots Private Label Wine

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**ARTIE**  
SAUVIGNON BLANC  
FRANCE  
2018



**ARTIE**  
CHARDONNAY  
SOUTH AFRICA  
2018



In today's competitive grocery retail climate, grocers have embraced private label items as a key way to differentiate their stores from the competition. Recognizing the vast opportunity and value of private labels, Retail Business Services entered 2019 with sights set on its latest sourcing venture: a three-year Private Label Wine Project led by Jonas De Maere, Wine Import Manager, Retail Business Services and former Wine Buyer for Delhaize Belgium.

The Private Label Wine Project, which launched in February, will make quality domestic and international private label wine selections available to local brand

stores. De Maere, who relocated from Belgium to Scarborough, Maine, leverages his wine tasting experience and private label expertise to serve as a liaison between brand Category Management teams and Ahold Delhaize Europe's Wine Buying Teams.

The initiative started with a single phone call in Spring 2017 when a Wine Category Manager from Hannaford reached out to De Maere's team to better understand Delhaize Belgium's private label sourcing, blending and distribution processes. Seeing an area of sourcing opportunity for the U.S. brands, the group discussed how the brands could incorporate private labels into their businesses.

"Our vision is to add variety to the category with private label alternatives," said De Maere. "We're exploring sourcing tasteful, quality wines that can save for the companies and customers while attracting new shoppers as well."

He works closely with the local brands to understand their current demands, successes and opportunities. Throughout the project, he will visit vineyards around the world, carrying over his experience from Delhaize Belgium to source and curate affordable selections of domestic and international private label wine.

In addition to touring vineyards and tasting wines, De Maere evaluates wineries' barrels, studies their maturation processes and examines their soil and vines. After deciding on a blend, he manages the operational process of landing the wine on store shelves by negotiating transportation, importation and store distribution logistics.

"It's a very involved process that we help facilitate from the vineyard all the way to store shelves," he explained. "This system allows us to control the quality and cost, which enables us to offer consumers interesting wines at a preferable price compared to the more established brands."

As Wine Import Manager, De Maere also analyzes trends in wine which he shared goes beyond just observing sales data.

"We also look at the restaurant industry to stay on top of or ahead of trends," he said. "People are more likely to try something new when a server is there to tell a story or make recommendations, so restaurants can be a little more experimental with what they bring in."

De Maere is working closely with Hannaford, Food Lion and Peapod teams to launch initial tests and products in Spring 2019. Currently, shoppers can find "Artie" on Hannaford's shelves. Stay tuned for more information as the project advances across the great local brands!

