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SMALL BUSINESS

Wine with hints of B'klyn

BY LANA BORTOLOTT
Special to amNewYork

A Brooklyn vintner says she's captured the spirit of the borough in a bottle.

In 2005, Alie Shaper founded Brooklyn Oenology, a winery that blends its grapes out on Long Island but distributes out of Brooklyn. The winemaker is part of a growing culinary scene in Brooklyn that focuses on artisanal products.

Shaper sources the grapes from several wineries, and blends and bottles them herself on Long Island. She runs all other business functions — sales, marketing and distribution — from her Greenpoint office. She keeps it as local as possible, right down to the label art created by Brooklyn artists.

"A large part of what I'm doing is to tie together local product[s], the same way we might eat locally, a movement which is booming in Brooklyn," she said.



Alie Shaper uses local resources, including artists who design the labels, to craft her wine. (MARIE CLAIRE ANDREA)

Shaper, 36, left a career as an engineer in Silicon Valley to pursue the wine trade. In 1999, she started working in the tasting room of a Hudson Valley

winery, then she worked for a wine distributor, and eventually she learned how to make wine as an intern at a crush lab on Long Island.

Her wines retail for \$13 to \$20, and they are sold in about 50 New York City locations, which are listed on her Web site, Brooklyn Oenology.com.

Business has slowed a bit during the recession, Shaper said. She produced about 500 cases last year, which was about the same amount as her first year, but down from about 4,500 cases in her second year. She also has suspended some expansion plans.

"Am I optimistic? Yes. Am I comfortable? No," she said. "It's always challenging to keep all the pieces moving. But the winemaking is the reward, and that's the reason I started this business: to make a well-crafted product and something beautiful that you can have in your life every day."

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Fortune 500 companies suffer through worst year

Exxon Mobil unseated Wal-Mart in the 2009 Fortune 500 list, shrugging off the oil price bubble and weathering what the magazine called the worst year ever for the country's largest publicly traded companies.

Fortune's closely watched list, released yesterday, ranked companies by their revenue in 2008. Exxon took in \$442.85 billion, up almost 19 percent from 2007.

But 2008 was far from rosy for most

of the remaining companies on the list. Overall earnings plunged 85 percent to \$98.9 billion from \$645 billion in 2007, the biggest one-year decline in the 55-year history of the Fortune 500 list. (AP)

Street looks to keep rally alive

An intense week of earnings reports will tell whether Wall Street can extend its rally to a seventh week.

Among the companies due to report are Bank of America, Boeing, McDonald's and Microsoft.

On Thursday and Friday, investors expect to get figures on homes sales. A report is also due on big-ticket manufactured goods. (AP)

CONTEST BOX



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