



May 20, 2016

VIA CERTIFIED MAIL

Stew Leonard's of Norwalk
100 Westport Avenue
Norwalk, CT 06851

Re: Deceptive in-store signs featuring inaccurate wine ratings

Dear Sir or Madam:

I am writing to you on behalf of Truth in Advertising, Inc. ("TINA.org"), a nonprofit consumer advocacy organization based in Connecticut dedicated to protecting consumers nationwide from deceptive advertising. A TINA.org investigation has revealed that a number of Connecticut liquor stores are deceptively displaying signs that promote high wine ratings and other favorable characteristics, while the actual wines being sold in conjunction with the signs are different vintages than the ones that are rated, and therefore either do not have the same rating or do not have a rating at all.

We found at least one example of this type of issue at Stew Leonard's of Norwalk. Specifically, Stew Leonard's of Norwalk features a sign for Chateau La Nerthe Chateauneuf-du-Pape White 2013 that highlights a rating of 91 from Wine Spectator, as well as other favorable characteristics, which is being used to sell a Chateau La Nerthe Chateauneuf-du-Pape White from 2014, a vintage that actually has a 90-point rating from Wine Spectator.



As you must know, the quality of a wine can differ significantly with each vintage and consumers rely on ratings and descriptions from wine critics to help them make informed purchasing decisions. There can be no question that the marketing practice explained above is deceptive and lures consumers into buying a wine that is different from what they believe they are purchasing. For this reason, we are alerting the Connecticut Department of Consumer Protection of the use of this deceptive marketing tactic in liquor stores in the state. We urge you to remove all deceptive signs from your store immediately.

Sincerely,

Laura Smith, Esq.
Legal Director
Truth in Advertising, Inc.