



Stephanie Risvold

talks about creating wonderfully
winning wine lists and menus



With a set of elaborately designed wine and food menus for a major client, MarkeTeam Inc.'s Stephanie Risvold is helping to change the way people think about menu design and production.

What's On the Menu?

Stephanie Risvold of MarkeTeam talks about the challenges of menu design and production

As design and printing jobs go, producing menus might seem like a breeze. Even menus for top restaurants appear to be relatively straightforward production pieces, and—what with price and menu item changes—the short shelf life they typically have means that they don't have to be designed to last forever.

In reality, though, menus can be among the most challenging projects. Just ask Stephanie Risvold, senior

production manager for MarkeTeam Inc., a niche agency that specializes exclusively in food and beverage marketing for a wide range of clients. In her role, Risvold is responsible for producing all of the products that MarkeTeam designs. "Menus can be tough," she says. "The primary thing to know about these projects—or any other for that matter—is that they need to be highly collaborative efforts between the creative team, the production manager and the production facility. And by that I mean any aspect of the process, including die-cutting, embossing, printing, etc. It takes time, and you have to be willing to spend the money to make everything right."

Risvold's agency, MarkeTeam, has its flagship office in Mission Viejo, California, but the firm also operates six satellite offices in strategic urban areas across the country.

Cruising

For MarkeTeam's Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines client, the challenge to rework and improve upon a wine menu for the ship's main dining room and to develop a stunning food menu for a new, high-end restaurant required a lot of coordination and hard work.



“There was an existing wine menu that already used FiberMark SuedeTex[®], and we wanted to stay with that stock because we liked it so much,” Risvold explains. She adds that the new design was even built around the properties of the SuedeTex stock, its rich, velvety feel and unique ability to stand up to a variety of print production techniques, including embossing and gold foil stamping.

The other menu, this one for food-based items, was also created using the same SuedeTex paper. Both were designed with Risvold’s involvement by a MarkeTeam freelancer, Kimberly Wenstrom. “We—Kristy Barry, our creative director, the designer and I—sat down with the client to discuss the venues themselves, the look and feel of the restaurants where the menus would be used. We did some brainstorming with the client and from that meeting we went away and developed several looks that we then sent back to Royal Caribbean. They selected one and we were off and running.”

The project had more than a few challenges, one of which related to the size of the gold foil being employed. “It needed a big die, and we also needed to get the printer and embosser involved at that stage because we needed to know that it actually could be done, and done effectively,” she says. “It became a collaborative effort, to be sure.”



Tough Undertaking

A 33-year design industry veteran, Risvold says that she and the team were familiar with FiberMark products, and in fact had used them through the years in several other designs. She says that the use of SuedeTex proved critical to the success of the menu project. “Quite honestly, the wine list project was a horrendous undertaking,” Risvold notes with a chuckle. “We ended up needing to go a number of rounds with the die-maker himself to get the depth of detail that we wanted. The printer had to send the die out to be created and then print the piece on a press proof to test the die.

“Before we were done, we had to modify all of the above to get the results we wanted,” she says. “I’m not sure that another stock could have withstood everything we needed to do from a processing standpoint.”

Additionally, the project presented some other challenges involving the client’s original color choice of tan cover stock. “Printing the full-color graphics and getting the color we wanted out of it took more than several rounds of press proofs. We ended up having to lay down a sealant so the color wouldn’t absorb in, and then six layers of white to get the base for the color to be printed on top of it. It took a lot of work, but, again, I can’t imagine how difficult—and perhaps even impossible—it might have proven if we hadn’t used SuedeTex.”

Asked if she would use SuedeTex again, Risvold is quick to reply. “Absolutely,” she says. “One of the reasons we love SuedeTex has to do with its ability to maintain and hold its shape, as well as its ability to take an embossing, especially with bi-level dies. That’s why we chose it. The paper stock doesn’t tear easily and it doesn’t absorb moisture that might ruin it. With some stocks, moisture will wick into the edges of the paper and the paper will get fat and fluffy, but SuedeTex doesn’t do that.”

In addition to a thumbs-up from her client, Risvold and the team won additional kudos from FiberMark itself, when the two menus were named winners in FMK’s 17th Annual Specifier Awards competition last year. “We were happy to receive this recognition,” Risvold says. “What goes into a project like this behind the scenes is often a lot more than meets the eye.”