

# Chateau Ste. Michelle Winery

Chateau Ste. Michelle attains greater efficiency and reliability with RFgen Inventory Control Solution

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MICHAEL DEVER | APPLICATIONS MANAGER

Situated on 105 wooded acres in Woodinville, Washington, 15 miles northeast of Seattle, Chateau Ste. Michelle Winery is Washington State’s oldest and most acclaimed winery. One of the most popular tourist attractions in the Puget Sound area, the winery features its signature wines, tours and tastings at their historic chateau and grounds.

## At a glance...

### Industry

Food and Beverage

### Application

Inventory Control

### Environment

Oracle JD Edwards World A7.3

Chateau Ste. Michelle Winery is one of the few premium wineries in the world with two state-of-the-art wineries, one exclusively devoted to white wines in Woodinville and the other, Canoe Ridge Estate Winery in Eastern Washington, exclusively devoted to reds. Chateau Ste. Michelle is best known for its award-winning Riesling, Chardonnay, Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon.

## The Challenge

In 2007, Chateau Ste. Michelle Winery chose RFgen’s mobile data collection software solution to eliminate manual recording and improve the overall efficiency, accuracy and timeliness of their bottling production process. Two years later, the RFgen solution was chosen again to bring the same efficiencies and benefits to the winery’s Pick and Ship processes.

Like many of RFgen’s 2,600 customers around the world, Chateau Ste. Michelle Winery uses the Oracle JD Edwards World enterprise resource planning (ERP) software suite. RFgen software also has integration with other major ERP software suites, such as SAP, Oracle E-Business Suite, Deltek Costpoint and Microsoft Dynamics.

## The Solution

RFgen Software’s ERP consultant Paul Hanson has been the lead consultant on the winery’s projects since 2007. “Chateau Ste. Michelle Winery wanted to use a Pallet ID system to identify and track each pallet throughout their production facility. The process started with placing a barcode on each pallet for easy scanning and

tracking from initial selection of the original ingredients, through the multiple steps of the bottling process on the shop floor, until it finally ships.”

Michael Dever, Chateau Ste. Michelle’s applications manager for financial and production systems, is very pleased with the flexibility of the RFgen solution for their bottling production process. “We’ve been using the RFgen solution for two years, and we’re very happy that it’s doing what we need it to do. It’s very flexible, so we’ve successfully deployed it to four bottling lines, including our mobile bottling lines.” A mobile bottling line is a portable bottling system in a truck the winery can bring in as needed for production.

“The RFgen solution gives us a lot of quality information wherever we need it, like a real-time inventory count or product location” Dever said. “We have the confidence to say how much we need to order and what’s in our warehouse. The huge benefit RFgen has given us,” he emphasized, “is the ability to increase production with the same amount of resources without having to hire more people. That’s the real payoff.”

In 2009, Chateau Ste. Michelle Winery chose RFgen to streamline their outbound orders process.

The project started as a simple application but evolved into a more complex solution as business requirements on the client side changed and expanded along the way. “This solution turned out to be one of the most complex RFgen applications we have developed to date,” Hanson said.

Before the RFgen solution, the winery relied on a paper list of the orders that were scheduled to be shipped out the following day. List in hand, the inventory pickers would go to the warehouse and look for pallets to fill their orders. “Their paper-dependent process was very time consuming and inefficient,” Hanson said.

“We were able to customize the client’s License Plating Suite using our RFgen solution. The complexity of our customization increased when the winery decided to split their picking areas. They had different tiers or rows of pallets. They would store partial pallets in the forward pick zones. We were able to split up that picking process,” Hanson said.

The customized RFgen application looks at the items that comprise an order, builds a Pick List, tells the pickers to go to a certain location in the warehouse, and shows them the lot numbers they should pick. As all transactions are updated in real-time, users are easily directed to the right location for picking using an optimized route. As the pickers are building their order, they put pre-printed pallet ID tags (labels) on each pallet and scan it to link it to the active order. Once the pick job is completed, the pallets are moved to a staging area where another scan of the order confirms the pick.

### The Result

The RFgen mobile data collection solution allowed Chateau Ste. Michelle Winery management to have real-time visibility into the state of their warehouse and production facilities. At every stage of the process their JD Edwards system receives updates so they see the movement from the warehouse to the outbound staging area to shipping.

It also eliminated the vast majority of paperwork and manual processes needed to accomplish these tasks. Employee productivity was also significantly enhanced through RFgen’s ability to intelligently route pickers through the warehouse to reduce wasted time or searching for the right products.

“As the implementation of the RFgen solution progressed, our end-user department found more and more exceptions to our business requirements,” Dever explained. “RFgen’s implementation team was able to make all the changes needed to the RFgen Mobile Framework to meet our requirements.”

On a final note, Dever expressed some of his expectations for the future of RFgen and Chateau Ste. Michelle Winery. “We believe that the system RFgen delivered will allow us to be able to increase the volume of our shipping processes without adding more people; this was the result of adding RFgen to our bottling production processes. As our volume increases, we expect to be able to do more with the same amount of personnel. A major goal of the company is to reduce our reliance on temporary or seasonal help. We implemented the latest program changes this year and so far, so good!”



### About RFgen Software

Incorporated in 1995, California-based RFgen Software provides flexible and reliable mobile supply chain solutions that solve real-world business challenges. As a certified Oracle, SAP, Microsoft, Deltek and Vocollect partner, RFgen actively seeks companies facing challenges managing their internal supply chain operations and solves them using real-world experience, industry best practices, and state-of-the-art technology. RFgen’s Mobile Framework division specializes in development tools for mobile, wireless and voice environments and provides open standards based connectivity to a multitude of systems (database, SOA, legacy, etc.). RFgen’s ERP Integration division focuses on providing certified, open-source transactions and integration expertise for Oracle E-Business Suite, Oracle JD Edwards, SAP, Deltek Costpoint and Microsoft Dynamics solutions.

RFgen’s Mobile Framework is an open systems development platform that speeds the path from idea, to proof-of-concept, to solution deployment. RFgen provides built-in, native functionality for extending real-time and on-demand access to enterprise data to almost any mobile device available today. RFgen’s Mobile Solutions are currently installed in more than 35 countries, in over 2,600 locations, and are supported by a certified group of over 125 solution partners.

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