

Tap Handle Design: Contrast is King

by Ben Weston, Hoptown Handles

In real estate, the three most important factors are location, location, location. In tap handle design, they are contrast, contrast, contrast. When designing your handle, you want to make sure potential customers can easily read/see whatever it is you are putting on the handle. The easiest way to accomplish this is with contrast. Dark print on a light background or light print on a dark background is how you will best achieve this. Look at the examples below and see what works and what doesn't.



A very popular feature among breweries recently has been laser engraved wood. Sounds great, right? In theory, you get an engraved, recessed look along with a highly detailed darker area. The problem is that oftentimes, the laser engraving just isn't dark enough to get good, solid contrast, especially if you're not using the right wood. We've found that Alder is going to provide excellent contrast when laser engraved, while laser engraved oak provides the most rustic, natural look, but the consistency of the color isn't quite as good. Consistency of the darkness will also vary from piece to piece depending on the character of the wood.

If going with a printed handle, make sure that your manufacturer is using the right settings on their printers. We double print our white in both the foreground and backing layers to achieve a more vibrant color and whiter whites when printing on a darker base color like black or dark stained wood. It takes a little more printing time, but the results speak for themselves.

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This rule doesn't only apply to tap handles though. Anytime you're creating new bottle/can artwork, menus, advertisements, or packaging, you should be keeping an eye on this. Always remember: Contrast, Contrast, Contrast.



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