

CRUSH

CANADIAN VINEYARD & WINERY MANAGEMENT MAGAZINE

FALL
Edition 2025

BEYOND THE BARREL
*Converting vineyard
space into a revenue-
generating venue*

*Grape and wine experts
expect a strong harvest*

*You can't market to everyone:
Why demographics still
matter in wine*





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CONTENTS

- 6 Message from the editor
- 7 Healthy vines for a healthy industry: The clean plant blueprint
- 10 Raising glasses, raising profiles:
The growing promise of the Calgary Stampede Cellar Showdown
- 12 Empower your team to assess confined spaces in-house
- 14 Beyond the barrel:
Converting vineyard space into a revenue-generating venue
- 16 Grape and wine experts expect a strong harvest
- 18 You can't market to everyone: Why demographics still matter in wine
- 21 The future of Canada-U.S. wine trade:
Challenges and openings for Canadian producers
- 22 Winemaker's CUT brings no- and low-alcohol wines
to the Okanagan with The Opera Room

INDEX TO ADVERTISERS

Antonio Carraro Canada.....	3
Auric Cooperage.....	17
Ben Berg Farm & Industrial Equipment Ltd.....	9
Calgary Stampede.....	11
Farm Credit Canada.....	IFC
Grapevine Harvest Inc.....	13
Great Little Box Company Inc.....	5
Inland Desert Nursery.....	20
New Line Hose & Fittings.....	23
Orenda Safety Services Ltd.....	12
Town Hall Brands.....	14
VineTech Canada.....	15
Vitis-Import.....	13
WineOpeners Inc.....	6

CRUSH

DEL Communications Inc.
Suite 300, 6 Roslyn Road
Winnipeg, Manitoba
Canada R3L 0G5
www.delcommunications.com

PRESIDENT & CEO
DAVID LANGSTAFF

MANAGING EDITOR
TAMMY SCHUSTER
tammy@delcommunications.com

DIRECTOR OF SALES & MARKETING
DAYNA OULION
dayna@delcommunications.com

Published by



ACCOUNT REPRESENTATIVES

GARY BARRINGTON
MIC PATERSON
ANTHONY ROMEO
GARY SEAMANS

CREATIVE DIRECTOR /
LAYOUT & DESIGN
KATHLEEN CABLE

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Another harvest season

AS CANADA'S VINEYARDS move through another harvest season, this issue of *Crush* magazine takes stock of both challenge and change across the country's wine landscape.

We begin with a deep dive into the latest research from the Canadian Grapevine Certification Network (CGCN-RCCV), where efforts to combat grapevine red blotch disease are helping growers better identify, manage, and ultimately prevent the spread of this costly virus. It serves as a reminder of why vigilance in the vineyard matters.

From there, we head west to the Calgary Stampede, where Alberta's wine presence is kicking up some dust, and to British Columbia, where Orenda Safety Services' focus on safety and sustainability demonstrates how

proactive practices protect both workers and vines. And we raise a glass (or a can) to innovation, including a look at non-alcoholic wines finding their place at The Opera Room in Oliver, B.C.'s District Wine Village.

We also explore the growing appeal of transforming wineries into event spaces, and how understanding Canada's shifting demographics can help producers build lasting connections with both young and established wine consumers

Here's to resilience, renewal, and a harvest that rewards both patience and passion. I hope you enjoy the fall issue of *Crush* magazine.

Tammy

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By Darien Temprile,
CGCN-RCCV
Executive Director

ONCE A GRAPEVINE is infected, there is no cure! The only way to remove viruses from a vineyard is to destroy infected plants and replant them with certified clean vines. Certified vines contribute to a longer vineyard lifespan and increased yields, reduced labour and replanting costs, and higher Brix and winter hardiness.

The Canadian Grapevine Certification Network (CGCN-RCCV) believes that clean vines are integral to the production of quality wine, and necessary for Canada's grape and wine sector's competitiveness and sustainability. Education and communication also contribute towards "Starting Clean and Staying Clean" to ensure long-

These two images clearly show the discoloration differences between healthy, clean vinifera vines versus grapevine red blotch diseased red vinifera variety vines. In the healthy vines you can see full, green leaves. Whereas in the red blotch infected vines you can see large splotches of irregular red and purple colouring with sometimes curling leaves.



term vineyard success. This article answers some frequently asked questions to help growers make informed decisions when purchasing and planting grapevines.

1. What questions should you ask a nursery when buying vines? What answers should you look for?

a) Are these vines certified? If so, by which organization/program?

For domestic vines, ensure they are labelled either "Certified Plus" or "Certified" by CGCN-RCCV, as these are the two highest certification tiers, within the only domestic certification system that exists. CGCN-RCCV "Verified" material is also available until July 31, 2029. Internationally, we recommend sourcing vines from facilities registered with state-run certification systems in the U.S.A. whose protocols are similar to



Close up image of a young Cabernet Franc vine showing early symptoms of grapevine red blotch disease. Leaves are starting to show red blotches form between the veins. Over time, the blotches will expand and coalesce, sometimes covering large parts of the leaf.

CGCN-RCCV's (i.e. California, New York, Washington/Oregon). It is not enough to know that a nursery participates in CGCN-RCCV's programs because many nurseries produce certified and non-certified grapevines. Make it clear that the specific varieties you want to purchase are produced according to CGCN-RCCV protocols.

b) What viruses are these vines certified against?

CGCN-RCCV's two certification programs test for 25+ viruses/ pathogens. This includes economically important grapevine viruses such as Red Blotch, Leafroll-3, Pinot Gris Virus, Fanleaf, and all other quarantine pests under the CFIA's Plant Protection

Act. CGCN-RCCV "Verified" vines are tested for Red Blotch, Leafroll-1 and -3, and Tomato Ringspot. We always recommend sourcing clean grapevines from within Canada whenever possible. If your desired varieties are not available domestically, confirm that your imported vines are, at minimum, certified against the economically important viruses and CFIA quarantine pests listed above.

2. Why can't vines be fully guaranteed clean?

Currently, no certification programs anywhere can guarantee that the vines are (or will stay) 100 per cent clean. Some viruses and pathogens can be dormant and undetected in grapevines without showing

symptoms or negative effects on the vine or fruit. Additionally, new viruses or virus strains may evolve in natural conditions, out of the control of human intervention.

3. What is the importance of the concept of "Starting Clean and Staying Clean"?

"Starting Clean" means purchasing certified, virus-tested vines. We recommend placing orders 12-18 months in advance to secure vine availability.

"Staying Clean" means implementing precautionary processes in the vineyard to keep vines clean and mitigate virus spread by managing vector populations (e.g. mealybugs, soft-scale insects, treehoppers). We recommend a few key processes:

- Field inspections: Visually inspect vines for virus/disease symptoms at least monthly during the growing season. Tag suspicious vines for consistent follow-up.
- Equipment cleaning: Thoroughly clean equipment by removing soil from machines with water and sanitizing handheld items (especially if working in a non-certified block and then moving to a certified block). Preferably, consider working on clean blocks first and non-certified blocks last.
- Vector control: Regular treatment schedules, or other pest management strategies,

must comply with provincial recommendations, and treatments must be applied to control potential virus vectors. Follow integrated pest management practices for your province: British Columbia, Ontario (1. sprays, 2. information resources), Quebec, Nova Scotia.

- Virus testing: If vines are showing signs of infection, TEST THEM and remove all positives. The earlier an infection is detected, the better your chances of reducing virus spread throughout the vineyard.
- Rogueing and replanting: Flasco et al. (2025) recently published a study advocating for zonal rogueing as a viable disease management strategy, demonstrating that the removal of diseased and surrounding vines contributed to reducing the rate of virus spread. If the vineyard infection level is under 20-30 per cent, rogue and replant with CERTIFIED CLEAN GRAPEVINES. If infection is over 30 per cent, we recommend full block replacement with CERTIFIED CLEAN GRAPEVINES. Remember: infected plants cannot be cured!!

Currently, two facilities produce CGCN-RCCV "Certified Plus" vines (<https://www.cgcn-rccv.ca/site/grapevine-certification-long-term>) and three produce CGCN-RCCV "Verified" vines (<https://www.cgcn-rccv.ca/site/grapevine-certification-interim>).

Now more than ever, we all want to support Canadian products and businesses. Purchasing domestic certified vines from a Canadian nursery will strengthen both your

vineyard and the Canadian grape and wine industry. Encourage your favourite nursery to join CGCN-RCCV programming or contact (<https://www.cgcn-rccv.ca/site/contact>) us to learn how you can produce clean vines directly from your own vineyard!

Citation

Flasco, M. & Heck, Daniel & Cieniewicz, Elizabeth & Cooper, Monica & Pethybridge, Sarah & Fuchs, Marc. (2025). A decade of grapevine red blotch disease epidemiology reveals zonal rogueing as novel disease management. *npj Viruses*. 3. 10.1038/s44298-025-00111-2. ▲

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RAISING GLASSES, RAISING PROFILES: *The growing promise of the Calgary Stampede Cellar Showdown*

WINE COMPETITIONS ARE a proven way for wineries and distributors to earn recognition, test their craft against peers, and reach new audiences. Among the newest of these opportunities is the Calgary Stampede Cellar Showdown international wine competition, hosted annually at the BMO Centre at Stampede Park in Calgary. Now entering its third year, the Stampede Cellar Showdown has established itself as a professionally run, credible and uniquely positioned competition. With entries opening in late November 2025 and judging scheduled for February 28–March 2, 2026, it's a timely moment to consider what participating could mean for your business.

A competition set according to international standards

The Stampede Cellar Showdown is guided by international wine tasting standards and judged under a double-blind process. Wines are evaluated without any producer information, ensuring results are based purely on merit. The judging is overseen by renowned Master of Wine, Elsa Macdonald, and the panel includes additional Masters of Wine, a Master Sommelier, wine educators, and experienced local experts. Eugene Mlynczyk, MW (Ontario), Rhys Pender, MW (British Columbia) and Elyse Lambert, MS (Quebec) all sat on the 2025 Super Panel. This rigorous approach ensures that recognition earned here is meaningful and credible.

Alberta's unique market

What sets the Stampede Cellar Showdown apart is its Alberta connection. The competition is open to all products from Canadian and International wine producers and distributors that are registered within the Province of Alberta. This ensures that consumers who discover new favourites at the Stampede can find them on shelves locally.

"Every year, the diversity of the competition entries is really interesting, and we have entries from all over the world," says Matthew Protti, volunteer Chair of the Wine Competition Committee, whose mandate is to create inspiring experiences that promote the agrifood and

wine industries and support the Stampede as a leader in showcasing these industries. "All of the products you can purchase in Alberta, the province with the most variety of international wines available for purchase in Canada. We want to highlight the best-of-the-best wines accessible to consumers across various price points."

Benefits for entrants

The Stampede Cellar Showdown provides exposure that extends well beyond judging days. Winning wines are featured at the 2026 Calgary Stampede (July 3–12), where a national and international audience experiences them firsthand. They are also showcased at Stampede Cellar Uncorked, a wine and food tasting event hosted in the spring in the BMO Centre—Western Canada's largest convention centre—where top restaurants create dishes with local ingredients to serve alongside medal-winning wines.

These events not only create opportunities for regional promotion and brand visibility, they also help wine distributors promote their award-winning wines when they hit the shelves through official Stampede-branded digital assets, including medal artwork that can be used on bottle labels and promotional materials.

Looking ahead

The competition continues to demonstrate why it is becoming recognized as Western Canada's premier wine competition, with a growing reputation for quality and credibility. With a focus on quality wines across diverse price points, the Stampede Cellar Showdown is accessible to a wide range of entrants and offers both credibility and visibility in one of the country's most dynamic markets.

As entries open this November, wineries and distributors are invited to join a competition that is building momentum, connecting wines to consumers, and celebrating the agricultural excellence behind every bottle. Learn more about the Stampede Cellar Showdown international wine competition at calgarystampede.com/wine. ▲



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Entries open Fall of 2025. For more information, visit calgariystampede.com/wine

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Crush magazine is Canada's vineyard and winery management magazine.

The publication, which is released every spring and fall, features winery profiles, industry news, supplier stories, and more.

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Beyond the barrel: Converting vineyard space into a revenue- generating venue

scale, research on wine tourism indicates that hospitality and event activities can contribute roughly 15–20 per cent of total winery revenue, making them a significant driver of both cash flow and brand exposure.

Before investing in infrastructure, it's important to define your goals. Whether you are looking to maximize short-term rental income or to build long-term customer acquisition through brand exposure, weddings and large-scale events can yield higher immediate returns but come with more complex logistics. Smaller gatherings, such as corporate tastings, winemaker dinners, or ticketed harvest celebrations, tend to be easier to manage, fit within existing compliance frameworks, and encourage repeat sales.

Knowing your market helps shape your investment decisions. In regions with strong tourism traffic, on-site events can be a major driver of visitation and tasting room conversions. For rural or production-oriented vineyards, a modest event program may serve better as a marketing extension than a primary revenue line.

Regulatory compliance is the first hurdle. Agricultural zoning often limits event frequency or guest counts, and local governments may require conditional-use permits or noise-management plans. Additional liquor service licensing may be necessary if events are not part of regular tastings. Consulting with municipal planners early prevents costly retrofits later.

Infrastructure is the next critical factor. Start by evaluating things like parking capacity, restroom facilities, power, and water supply. Temporary structures, like tents and portable sanitation, allow you to test the market before committing to construction. Once event demand is established, permanent upgrades such as patios, commercial kitchens, or climate-controlled event barns can significantly

AS PRODUCTION COSTS rise and competition in direct-to-consumer sales intensifies, many wineries are discovering that hospitality-driven diversification has become part of a healthy strategy. Converting part of your property into an event venue can deliver a measurable boost in both revenue and brand visibility.

While figures vary by region and

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raise both operational efficiency and property value. According to industry benchmarks, modest capital improvements in hospitality spaces can yield full payback within three to five years when coupled with a consistent event calendar and strategic pricing.

Operational integration is essential. Define clear boundaries between event zones and production areas to avoid crop damage and equipment disruption. Designated event pathways, service roads, and staging zones maintain safety and preserve vineyard integrity. Partnering with experienced event coordinators or outsourcing logistics can reduce staff strain during peak production periods.

Beyond direct rental income, event programs also drive brand awareness. Each wedding or corporate function introduces your label to dozens of new potential customers, many of whom may return for tastings or join wine clubs. Collaborating with regional tourism boards, local caterers, and media partners can amplify exposure without significant advertising spend.

Transforming your winery into a destination can increase revenues, strengthen customer loyalty, and raise your regional profile. Success depends on thoughtful planning and balancing compliance, infrastructure, and brand positioning. By treating events as a strategic extension of your business model, you can turn every gathering into a memorable experience and a measurable return. ▲



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**Cool Climate
Oenology &
Viticulture Institute**

Grape and wine experts expect a strong harvest

By Brock University

WITH HARVEST UNDERWAY

in Niagara, experts from Brock University's Cool Climate Oenology and Viticulture Institute (CCOVI) say the region is headed for a good crop despite the summer's extreme heat and lack of rain.

"It looks like it is going to be an example of quality over quantity," says Jim Willwerth, CCOVI Researcher and Associate Professor. A damp spring combined with current moderate daytime highs

and cooler evenings are helping to mitigate worries caused by the hot and dry summer conditions, says Willwerth, whose expertise includes soil, water and plant interactions.

"I don't think it will be a short crop year, just some reduced yields when comparing to other years, especially for those growers without irrigation," he says, adding that a smaller yield due to smaller berries on the vine traditionally means more concentrated and desirable flavours

in the grapes. "We will see how the fall weather goes but right now the quality is looking excellent," he says.

Last year, Ontario's three major producing regions — Niagara, Prince Edward County and the Lake Erie North Shore — produced 65,000 tonnes of grapes, according to the Grape Growers of Ontario (GGO).

GGO Chair Matthias Oppenlaender shares Willwerth's optimistic outlook on this year's harvest while also

Cool Climate Oenology and Viticulture Institute (CCOVI) Research Assistant Alex Gunn looks over Cabernet sauvignon grapes from CCOVI's clone and rootstock research vines at Schenck Farms and Greenhouses in St. Catharines. The Institute is predicting this year's Niagara grape harvest will be smaller than in recent years but will be of good quality.

acknowledging the likelihood of a lower yield.

"The heat and drought in the summer were a challenge," he says. "But even with a lower crop, the quality is excellent. We hope the cool nights and sunny days continue to carry us through to the end of harvest."

Temperatures reached extreme highs over the summer, with several extended heat waves consistently measuring over 35 C. Worries of a short crop were compounded by limited summer rainfall, with many areas of Niagara getting a third of their normal precipitation, Willwerth says.

"Most rain, if it did arrive, came in brief thunderstorms that did not allow the soils to absorb much water," he says.

While wet weather in the spring helped grapevines avoid summer water stress, Willwerth says conditions in June and July impacted "fruit set" and helped create the lower yield estimate.

"Fruit set is the time when flowers develop into berries, and the excessive heat appeared to impact that process leading to fewer berries and smaller clusters," he says.

Willwerth is hopeful the season will see continued moderate temperatures and precipitation. Too much heat now, he says, will have a poor impact on acidity and flavours in the grapes, and drier conditions can help reduce diseases that can be caused by moisture and humidity.

"We want to retain acidity to give the grapes that cool climate freshness that we are known for," he says. "If temperatures get too high now, acids will start to break down faster."

He says growers and winemakers are looking for a balance. "Hopefully we will have a gradual ripening period where we have good flavour, good sugar levels and optimal acidity," he says.

CCOVI Senior Scientist in Oenology Jennifer Kelly runs the institute's Pre-Harvest Monitoring program that serves as a free resource for industry

to monitor ripeness of five varieties across the region from multiple vineyard sites, soil types and crop levels. From her perspective, the outlook is positive for local grape growers.

"The weather we are having now is really helping with a favourably slow progression of ripening," she says, adding that the ripening rate could mean harvest 2025 will be extended by a couple weeks into early November.

"We are finding that sugar accumulation and acid degradation is happening a bit slower than it did last year," she says. "More time on the vine is always a good thing."

Oppenlaender agrees and says he expects this year's conditions will result in a vintage that local growers and connoisseurs will happily remember.

"It will make for outstanding 100 per cent Ontario grown VQA wine," he says. "I am looking forward to tasting them." ▲

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You can't market to everyone: Why demographics still matter in wine

By Susan DeMatei

AT FIRST GLANCE, it may seem logical to take a broad approach to wine marketing—after all, shouldn't the goal be to sell wine to anyone who's willing to buy it?

Not exactly.

In practice, marketing to “everyone” is a fast track to appealing to no one. You water down your message, misfire your tactics, and wind up wasting both budget and energy trying to reach people who were never going to buy from you in the first place. Smart marketing is selective, not scattershot. And that's where demographics come in.

At their core, demographics are just the quantifiable details about your customers—things like age, gender, income, education, and marital status. But in the hands of a capable marketer, demographics become strategic tools. They help decode how different consumers make decisions, what cultural cues

they respond to, and how best to approach them with offers they'll actually care about.

Wine, with all its history, nuance, and ritual, may be universally loved—but not uniformly understood. That's why understanding the demographics of your audience is one of the most important investments a winery can make. Not in the abstract, but in the applied: how different generations buy, what they value, and how to speak their language.

Age isn't just a number—it's a strategy

Among all demographic variables, age remains one of the most predictive indicators of consumer behaviour in the wine space. Your 67-year-old customer and your 27-year-old customer may both enjoy Chardonnay—but the stories, channels, and experiences that led them to that bottle couldn't be more different.

So how do you use this knowledge?

You start by recognizing that each generation brings a unique set of preferences, priorities, and expectations to the table. These differences are shaped not just by age, but by shared cultural context—what technology they grew up with, how they were marketed to as teens, and how they define things like quality, authenticity, and value.

Here's a breakdown of how different generations engage with wine—and what your winery should do about it.

The silent generation (Born 1928–1945): The loyal traditionalists

While their presence in the market is shrinking, their loyalty is unwavering. The Silent Generation prefers reliability over novelty and is far more likely to value a long-standing relationship with a winery than to chase the latest release.

They tend to gravitate toward

established varietals, classic packaging, and consistent pricing. Most importantly, they still respond to print. Think newsletters, phone calls, and handwritten notes—not push notifications.

Action Step: Reinforce value and familiarity. Printed materials, bundled discounts, and a personal touch go a long way.

**Baby boomers (Born 1946–1964):
The experience-Driven collectors**

Boomers are the architects of modern wine culture in the U.S. They invented the wine tasting as vacation activity. They made critic scores a thing. They turned mailing lists into badge-worthy status symbols. For much of the past three decades, they were the ones buying the library vintages and signing up for vertical tastings with religious fervor.

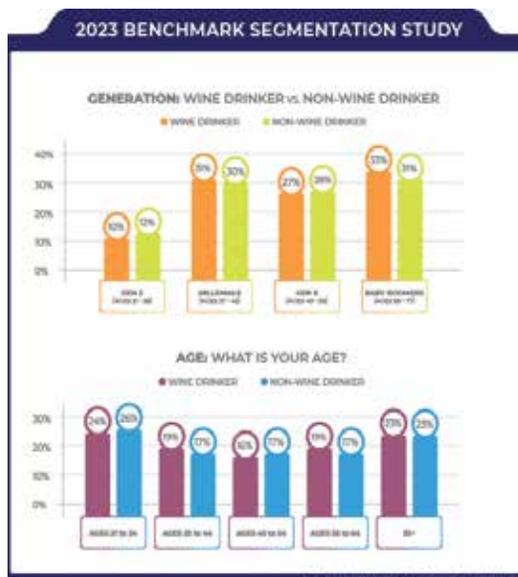
But time changes habits. As they approach retirement, Boomers are buying less and moderating more. They still want quality and ritual—but they also want convenience and value.

Action Step: Focus on smaller format options, curated selections, and loyalty programs that emphasize connection over exclusivity. They still appreciate prestige—but they now appreciate sensible pricing just as much.

**Generation X (Born 1965–1980):
The forgotten powerhouses**

Gen X is frequently left out of marketing conversations. This is a mistake.

Despite their smaller size, Gen Xers are in their peak earning years, and



Among all demographic variables, age remains one of the most predictive indicators of consumer behaviour in the wine space.

they value quality and reliability in their purchases. They're skeptical by nature—raised in an era of economic uncertainty and cultural disillusionment—and they're not easily swayed by flash or trend.

They also exist at the intersection of analog and digital. They read emails and engage with apps. They're on social media, but they also like printed tasting notes. They're pragmatic, fiercely independent, and allergic to anything that feels like a sales gimmick.

Action Step: Speak directly and respect their intelligence. Offer clear value, consistent product quality, and customer service that rewards loyalty without fluff. Combine digital convenience with occasional analog moments.

**Millennials (Born 1981–1996):
The values-driven explorers**

Millennials are the largest consumer cohort in North American history, and they've been quietly reshaping wine culture for years. Where Boomers sought status, Millennials seek alignment. They care less

about Robert Parker scores and more about soil health. They want transparency, flexibility, and values that match their own.

They are also deeply influenced by visual storytelling. Experiences matter—but only if they're worth posting. They prefer inclusive, approachable brands that make wine feel less like a secret society and more like a good party.

Action Step: Show your work. Be transparent about sourcing and sustainability. Ditch the formality and engage authentically on digital platforms. Offer flexible wine club options and behind-the-scenes storytelling. And yes, your label design matters—don't let it look like a Word doc from 2003.

**Generation Z (Born 1997–2012):
The unfiltered futurists**

Gen Z isn't just digital-first—they're digital-only. If your website isn't optimized for mobile, if your online store takes more than five seconds to load, or if you're still asking people to download PDFs to join your club... you've already lost them.

This generation values fun, flexibility, and visual relevance. They will try your wine if it appears in a trending video. They will buy it if the branding makes them feel something. But they won't stay loyal unless you earn it—every time.

And they have no patience for old rules. They like slushies, canned wines, pet-nats, sweet reds, and anything that gets people together. They're not here for tradition. They're here for the moment.

Action Step: Prioritize mobile, visual storytelling, and interaction. Think sampler drops over verticals. Think memes over mailing lists. Your wine club should feel like a community, not a contract.

**A note on the underage (for now):
Generation alpha**

Gen Alpha is still pre-legal-drinking-age, but they're already influencing your customer base—through their Millennial parents. They're the reason your tasting room has

crayons and juice boxes now. And they'll be of legal age by 2034.

Smart wineries are thinking ahead: creating family-friendly experiences, building tech infrastructure, and embracing sustainability initiatives now—so when Gen Alpha gets here, you're already fluent in their expectations.

In Summary: Choose Your Audience Before You Choose Your Campaign

Marketing to everyone is marketing to no one. Demographics, and particularly generational cohorts, give you a powerful filter for your strategy. They tell you who your audience is, where they're most comfortable, what they care about, and how to speak to them in a way that resonates.

So the next time someone says "our wine is for everyone," feel free to politely disagree—and then ask them which generation actually signs the credit card slip.

P.S. This article is based on decades of research, but we'll never pretend it's the final word. People are complex. Trends shift. If you've seen different behaviour from your own customers or cracked the code on reaching Gen Z through interpretive dance and Instagram stickers, we'd love to hear it. Knowledge is meant to be shared—preferably over a glass of something interesting.

Susan DeMatei is the founder of WineGlass Marketing located in Napa, California, and can be reached at 707-927-3334 or wineglassmarketing.com. ▲

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THE FUTURE OF CANADA-U.S. WINE TRADE: *Challenges and openings for Canadian producers*

FOR CANADA'S WINE industry, the United States has always been both a competitor and an opportunity. As trade tensions and consumer preferences evolve, Canadian winemakers now face a more complex, and potentially advantageous, future in cross-border trade.

The U.S. remains Canada's largest single export market for wine outside domestic consumption. According to Statistics Canada, roughly 90 per cent of Canadian wine exports go south of the border, led by producers in British Columbia's Okanagan Valley and Ontario's Niagara region. Yet that relationship has been tested by fluctuating tariffs, shifting consumer loyalties, and provincial policies that still limit market fluidity.

The 2025 trade disruptions, triggered by U.S. tariffs and retaliatory provincial purchasing restrictions, exposed how fragile the cross-border wine relationship has become. U.S. shipments to Canada dropped nearly 90 per cent in April 2025 as shelves were cleared of American products, prompting both industries to reconsider just how dependent they are on each other.

For Canadian winemakers, that rethinking opened doors. The short-term absence of U.S. imports gave domestic producers rare shelf visibility in their own provincial liquor systems. Many wineries saw higher local demand, stronger restaurant placement, and increased attention from private retailers. If provincial governments maintain some of those procurement shifts, or move toward more open interprovincial trade, Canadian producers could consolidate their presence at home while selectively expanding abroad.

The export picture is equally nuanced. American consumers are increasingly curious about cool-climate wines, especially aromatic whites, sparkling wines, and lighter reds that fit shifting food trends. The Okanagan and Niagara regions have already established credibility in that niche, and as logistics and marketing improve, small producers could find a loyal U.S. audience. The key is visibility: stronger branding, direct-to-consumer channels where legal, and collaboration with regional tourism agencies.

Climate trends also play in Canada's favour. As rising temperatures threaten California's long-term grape viability, Canada's northern regions are moving into their climatic prime. If managed sustainably, that shift could strengthen Canada's export potential just as U.S. volumes stabilize or decline.

Policy alignment under the Canada–United States–Mexico Agreement (CUSMA) will still matter. Both countries benefit from predictable, transparent alcohol trade rules, but Canada's provincial controls remain the wild card. Streamlined interprovincial trade, fairer markups, and investment in export promotion could make Canadian wineries far more resilient and competitive when cross-border tensions flare again.

The lesson from recent volatility is clear: relying on stability south of the border is risky but so is ignoring it. For Canadian winemakers, the future of U.S. trade is less about dependence and more about strategy and leveraging proximity, authenticity, and climate advantage to carve out a lasting place in North American wine culture. ▲

Winemaker's CUT brings no- and low-alcohol wines to the Okanagan with The Opera Room



IN THE HEART of Oliver's District Wine Village, a new kind of tasting experience has arrived. Winemaker's CUT has opened The Opera Room, the first tasting room in British Columbia dedicated exclusively to no- and low-alcohol wines and ciders.

For owner and winemaker Michal Mosny, the project is both personal and pioneering. Growing up in Slovakia, he crafted traditional non-alcoholic wine alternatives using botanical recipes he's drawn on again to create the Opera Room portfolio. These drinks are made with real juice and a proprietary herb extract, without preservatives, offering a fresh take on mindful consumption.

"Wine culture is evolving, and we want to ensure that everyone — whether they drink or not — can enjoy the experience, the flavours, and the community that makes this region special," says Mosny. "We're excited to bring something entirely new to District Wine Village, while staying true to our vision at Winemaker's CUT."

The lineup is as thoughtful as it is



diverse. Three 0% ABV Piquettes form the backbone of the non-alcoholic collection: Piquette Blanc from Muscat grapes, Piquette Rosé from Merlot grapes, and Piquette Apple from local Gala apples. Each is infused with herbs and sparkling water, offering a lively, botanical-driven alternative to traditional wine.

For those looking for lower-alcohol options, the Opera Room is also debuting a 4.5% ABV Spritzer crafted from estate-made wine and elderflower syrup, a 6.9% ABV Plum Cider made from local apples and plums, and a 7.0% ABV Cranberry Cider blended with Ambrosia apples and cranberries.

Rounding out the collection are the

Opera Room's dealcoholized wines, Incognito Blanc and Incognito Rosé. Produced from 100% B.C.-grown grapes and estate-made wine, they undergo gentle de-alcoholization to just 0.6% ABV — preserving the flavour and structure of the original wines.

The project reflects a larger shift within wine culture, one that balances tradition with changing consumer habits. "The Opera Room is part of our commitment at the District Wine Village to make our local, artisanal food and drink community even more accessible," says Matt Kenyon, the Village's founder. "This year, we're also welcoming the addition of a bakery and coffee roaster, showcasing the

“The Opera Room is part of our commitment at the District Wine Village to make our local, artisanal food and drink community even more accessible.”



diversity of offerings available in the Okanagan.”

For Mosny and his wife Martina, the Opera Room is the latest chapter in a journey that began more than a decade ago. The couple ran a small winery in Slovakia before moving to

the Okanagan in 2011. Since then, Mosny has built Winemaker’s CUT into one of the Valley’s acclaimed producers, known for wines that are food-friendly and lower in alcohol. With The Opera Room, he brings both innovation and heritage

together, offering an inclusive way to taste the Okanagan’s terroir.

The Opera Room celebrated its grand opening in April 2025 and its wines and ciders are also available through winemakerscut.ca and through select retailers. ▲



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