



BC Wine Institute

COVID-19 Key Messages

May 7, 2020

The following key messaging works to ensure clear, factual, relevant and timely information is being shared on behalf of the BC Wine Institute (BCWI), member wineries and industry stakeholders to promote the safety and health of our community and to encourage the support of buying local. Together, we can keep our industry growing strong. **Please share these key messages in your winery communications.**

Plans for BC wineries following announcement of BC's Restart Plan:

1. During the May 6th conference, BC Premier Horgan announced British Columbians will move forward with safely restarting the provincial economy beginning in mid-May.
2. Under BC's Restart Plan, government will work closely with public health officials, businesses and labour organizations to lift restrictions in phases, gradually allowing for more social and economic activity, while closely monitoring health information to minimize the risk to the public.
3. We are encouraged by Dr. Bonnie Henry, Provincial Health Officer asking for counsel on how best to cautiously remove existing protocols for a post-COVID environment and the longer-term recovery phase.
4. While the BCWI had initial input into the BC Restaurant and Food Services Foundation's (BCRFA) plan for the reopening of restaurants, we are now looking at expanding this plan specifically for the BC wine industry.
5. As result, the BCWI is underway with an industry stakeholder engagement plan for development of post-COVID-19 winery production and hospitality protocols (e.g. winemaking, tasting room, sales, etc.) for the industry and will be communicating with the ministry of agriculture throughout the process. We will be implementing these as BC's restart plan unveils phase by phase.

Working together:

1. The BC wine industry supports the federal and provincial governments' continued efforts in minimizing risk and spread of COVID-19. We continue to encourage all members to practice physical distancing to keep themselves and others safe.
2. The BC wine industry is working closely with the Ministries of Agriculture and Attorney General, provincial and federal agencies, Wine Growers Canada, Destination BC, industry stakeholders and partners to assess the current and potential impact of the virus on our wine, food and tourism industry.
3. BCWI is working on a recovery plan for the industry. This will require feedback from industry on the short and long-term effects. Following [survey](#) feedback BCWI will work with government on a plan to move the industry forward during the crisis and to ensure a swift recovery.

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4. As these circumstances can bring negative media attention and unreliable information through social media channels, it is important to stay informed and use clear, accurate and up-to-date information from [official resources](#) only.

Prioritizing the safety and health of our families, co-workers and communities:

5. The health and well-being of our visitors and industry is our number one priority. The BC Wine Institute has developed Industry-wide [COVID-19 Tasting Room Protocols](#) that meet and exceed guidelines set out by the Interior Health Authority. We encourage all wineries to use these protocols and communicate early to your patrons and wine club members on what your winery is doing to ensure social distancing and what extra precautions you are taking to keep employees, guests and customers safe and healthy.
6. Responsible alcohol sales are essential during COVID-19. BCWI continues to work with provinces' Business Technical Panel (BTAP), BC LDB, private store operators, hospitality licensees and Wine Growers Canada to encourage government to keep liquor stores open during this challenging period of social distancing and strengthen alternative sales distribution channels for our members. Keeping in mind the safety of employee's and their families, along with our local communities, consumers, and business partners are a top priority.

Support local by buying local:

7. While some winery tasting rooms are closed for sampling or restricted to a minimum number of visitors, many wineries remain open for direct sales and are offering special online shipping and promotions on wine orders. Let British Columbians know what your winery is doing to help them access local BC wine.
8. We wish to express our sincerest gratitude for the ongoing support of your local wine industry. Together, we can keep our industry growing strong. Visit your local wineries online to see how you can support your local community by choosing to buy local.
9. The COVID-19 crisis underscores the **importance of free interprovincial trade**, which would allow Canadians to legally receive direct wine shipments in support of local farmers and small businesses during this time of global uncertainty. Canadians should be able to purchase the wine of their choice safely while supporting the national economy through direct-to-consumer shipments of wine. The BCWI continues to work with WGC to engage provincial officials where barriers remain.
10. With 282 wineries and 923 grapegrowers, the BC wine industry is an important contributor to the local regional economies, jobs and quality of life and like any agriculture enterprise whereby cultivation, processing, and distribution would be considered an essential service, BC wineries should be recognized as the same in order to preserve production and inventory .



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11. The BC wine industry is taking action to protect the more than 12,000 jobs BC wineries support and that are essential to maintaining operations during a potential lockdown.

Please direct media inquiries to the BC Wine Institute.

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