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ABLE BC

FOR A RESPONSIBLE LIQUOR INDUSTRY

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» ABLE BC INDUSTRY UPDATE

by Jeff Guignard

It has now been five months since the global COVID-19 pandemic began wreaking havoc on Canada's economy and disrupting our way of life. I certainly do not need to tell any of you that BC's hospitality industry was hit first, hit hardest, and will be among the last to recover fully from the devastating economic impacts of combatting this deadly disease.

Although we won permission for our industry to re-open in mid-May, operating amid the necessary public health protocols has meant massive changes for your business and severe restrictions on your ability to generate revenue and profit. The good news is that, for about a third of you, you've successfully adapted and are seeing customers return in sufficient numbers to get out of the red. With every week that goes by, more and more operators are limping closer and closer to the break-even threshold. If nothing else, watching you fight for your businesses and the jobs you create has been an inspiring testament of the tenacity, perseverance, and creativity of our industry's approximately 10,000 small businesses.

Despite these gains, we need to remain honest about two difficult truths: 1) the majority of BC's LPs are remaining afloat only because they're accessing government programs such as the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy, Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance, and Canada Emergency Business Account, and 2) our society remains in the grip of the single most disruptive economic crisis since the Great Depression.

For context, here are some sobering statistics about the current state of BC's hospitality sector: already, about 10% of BC's liquor primary and restaurant establishments are closed for good. Nearly two-thirds of LPs and FPs are currently operating at a loss. And without continued government support on rent, wages, and working capital, up to 50% of hospitality licensees say they don't think they'll be able to pay bills over the next couple of months.

This crisis is far from over. We will not know the true economic cost of this pandemic for many months.

Fortunately, BC's private liquor retail stores have in general experienced significantly less financial disruption than our hospitality

partners. Like all businesses, liquor retailers have had to adapt, change procedures, and invest thousands of dollars in public health protections such as plexiglass and personal protective equipment for staff. Despite the obvious challenges of retailing amid a state of public emergency, I'm relieved to report that aggregate and average LRS sales continue to be up or steady from last year.

Amid this ongoing crisis, ABLE BC has focused relentlessly on advocating for your interests behind the scenes with all levels of government. In partnership with the Business Technical Advisory Panel, we've worked hard with our government partners to implement urgent policy changes designed to help pull your business back from the brink with things like wholesale hospitality pricing, which will save an average LP about 20% on their liquor purchases. In mid-July, we secured an extension to the temporary permission for LPs and FPs to sell alcohol with take-out and delivery meals. We also helped secure expedited patio permissions all over the province to help operators increase their licensed areas. And liquor retailers are now permitted to open as early as 7 am to service their more vulnerable or elderly customers.

Of course, we have a lot more work to do if our industry is to weather this storm—the worst in several generations. No matter what happens next, please know we will always be in your corner, fighting on your behalf. In the meantime, we'll keep pushing for critical liquor policy reforms as well as emergency financial measures to support your businesses and protect your investments. Things like:

- Securing permission for private liquor retailers to sell products directly to hospitality customers and holders of Special Event Permits;
- Working capital grants of up to \$25,000, especially for those businesses still not able to reopen or who are operating at a loss; and
- Extension of government support programs, including scaling the wage subsidy program to help more businesses return to profitability.

As always, if you have any questions or would like to discuss these or other issues, please drop me a line at jeff@ablebc.ca.

Wholesale Sales – January to March 2020

	Litres	% increase/decrease over previous quarter	% increase/decrease over previous year
Beer - Domestic BC Commercial	30,419,149	- 8.9%	-3.2%
Beer - BC Micro Brew	6,855,297	- 2.8%	+3.8%
Beer - BC Regional	10,497,875	- 6.86%	+5.66%
Beer - Import	7,645,566	- 17.76%	-4.09%
Cider - Domestic & Import	3,787,930	+0.14%	+2.96%
Coolers	9,975,208	+13.63%	+39.99%
Gin	414,311	- 9.78%	+25.75%
Rum	803,158	-32.96%	+14.46%
Tequila	230,934	- 9.8%	+12.82%
Vodka	2,205,756	-10.99%	+16.53%
Whisky	1,713,800	-23.26%	+9.3%
Wine - BC	9,224,558	- 16.95%	+13.66%
Wine - Canadian	225,452	-25.28%	+107.9%
Wine - USA	1,635,494	-25.19%	+4.5%
Wine Total	17,587,533	-18.66%	+11.39%

Hospitality Sales – January to March 2020

	Litres	% increase/decrease over previous quarter	% increasedecrease over previous year
Beer - Domestic BC Commercial	4,592,315	-21.77%	22.98%
Beer - BC Micro Brew	2,524,919	-10.28%	-10.8%
Beer - BC Regional	2,242,771	-18.45%	-16.88%
Beer - Import	1,543,321	-25.74%	-25.32%
Cider - Domestic & Import	439,211	-17.61%	-20.59%
Coolers	238,401	-8.59%	+11.41%
Gin	65,340	-23.54%	-11.19%
Rum	66,507	-27.05%	-20.28%
Tequila	72,515	-20.09%	-9.65%
Vodka	211,226	-20.1%	-15.51%
Whisky	115,431	-25.27%	-18.67%
Wine - BC	1,043,422	-30.69%	-15.4%
Wine - Canadian	13,574	-30.77%	+6.71%
Wine - USA	151,797	-22.34%	-12.84%
Wine Total	1,831,278	-28.96%	-15.01%

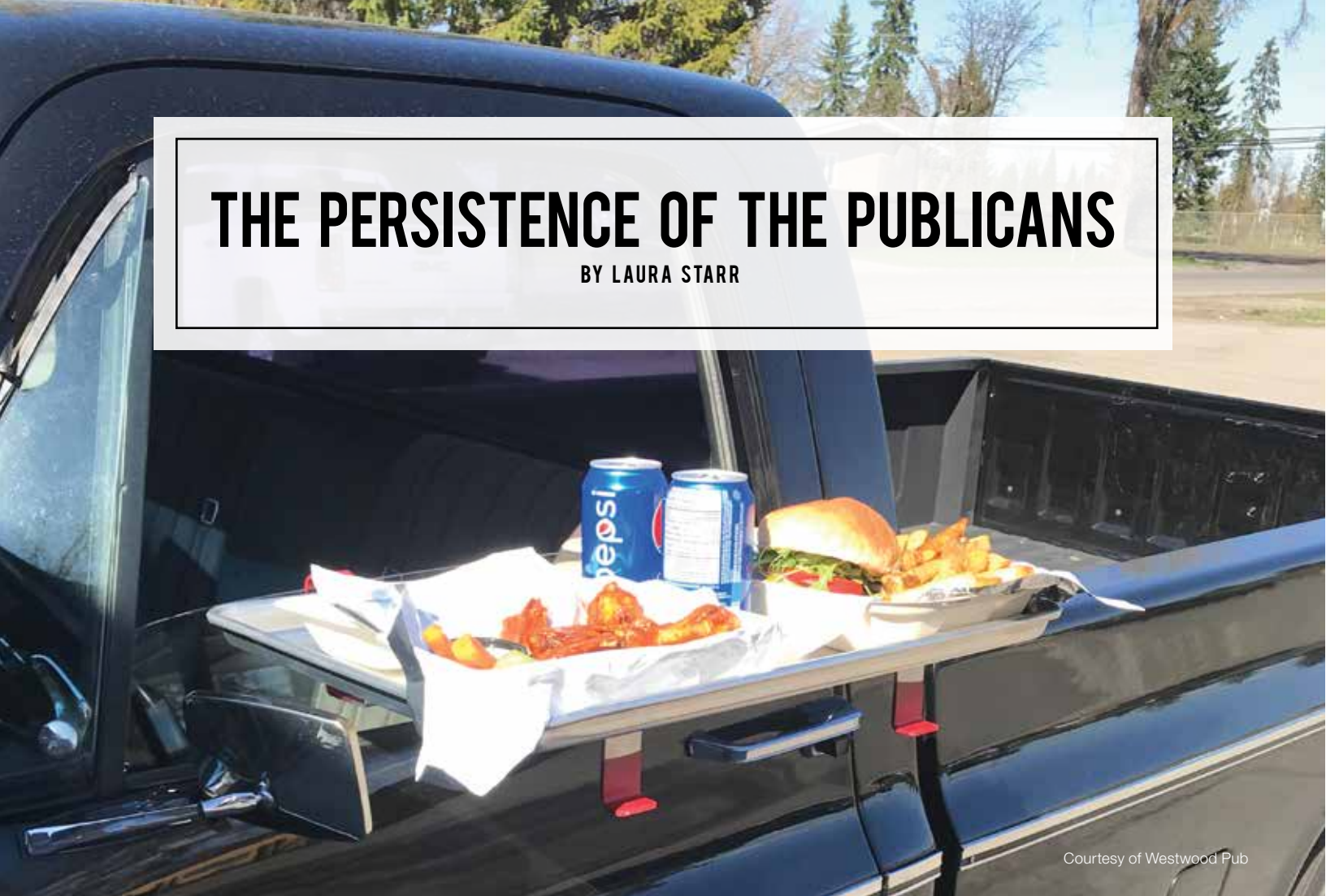
Not surprisingly, sales from January to March 2020 were stronger in wholesale sales than the previous year whereas hospitality sales decreased in many areas as COVID-19 hit us mid-March and the hospitality sector was shuttered.

Coolers and gin are still big sellers, with coolers up almost 40% over last year in wholesale, so be sure to stock up on RTDs this summer.

Canadian wine also continues to show large increases in both wholesale and hospitality so be sure your signage and point-of-sale displays highlight Canadian products.

THE PERSISTENCE OF THE PUBLICANS

BY LAURA STARR



Courtesy of Westwood Pub

These last five months will unquestionably go down as the most challenging period of time in the history of the hospitality industry. With a pandemic having forced shut the doors of our treasured coves of drink and nourishment, many were left wondering how businesses would survive without seats for their customers, jobs for their employees, and what seemed like zero capacity to do what they do best—be hospitable! And yet, this industry’s resilience was quick to get into gear.

Within days of the shutdown, we saw voices in the community fight for the right to sell liquor from restaurants and pubs direct to customers (thank you **ABLE BC!**). We saw takeout menus getting full makeovers and Wednesday’s becoming the official day to support local businesses and order food to-go. We saw chefs and owners become the custodians of the industry, taking care not only of their own staff and their food suppliers, but also people in their communities struggling to eat or feed their families during this time of economic crisis. Without discounting the suffering and the struggle, it has been nothing short of remarkable to watch this industry step up and scream, “We will survive!”

And here we are, in phase 3 of reopening. It is not perfect, and we are hardly out of murky waters, but we are adapting, every day.

Pubs in particular have shown some inspiring creativity in terms of keeping business alive during these challenging times. Pubs often have very rooted connections to the local communities around them, and it is not surprising to have seen so many of them spring up with innovative ways to transition their businesses and stay connected to their customers. Here are a few spotlights of some BC publicans who have led this tricky dance.

NATHAN COOLE PULLED AN IDEA FROM HIS PAST AND SHIFTED THE PUB INTO A CARHOP

Kicking it Old-School

The **Westwood Public House** in Prince George, BC, hit a nostalgic key when owner and manager, **Nathan Coole**, pulled an idea from his past and shifted the pub into a carhop, recognizing that social distancing rules would fit within this model. This brilliant transition was enthusiastically received by loyal customers, allowing the pub to expand on the idea and add

a playful component of drive-in live trivia on Wednesday nights, which you could tune into on 103.5. Westwood Public House has continued to offer the popular drive-in model, even though they reopened their doors in early May.



Kevin Builder & Adam Dewolfe, Courtesy of the John B. Neighbourhood Pub

Growlers to-go

The Wicklow pub in Vancouver's False Creek didn't hesitate to take advantage of their off-sales licence when business came to a halt in March, especially with cruise ships being cancelled for 2020, reducing the walking traffic of millions of customers for much of the Vancouver area. Growlers to-go became a hot ticket item for The Wicklow, with an emphasis on the alluring frosty refillable jars of Guinness. Given the extreme lineups that came to be expected at all the liquor stores, offering cold beer, wine, and coolers to-go definitely worked in sync with boosting support for their take-out menu.

The Spirit of a Neighbourhood Pub

The John B. Neighbourhood Pub in Coquitlam went above and beyond for staying in touch with its community and keeping itself rooted during this quarantine crisis. This should come as no surprise, given they celebrated their 42nd anniversary, only days after all restaurants, bars, and pubs were ordered to shut their doors in early March.

Barb Hawkins, manager of the John B. Pub, speaks to how they doubled down on their efforts to stay relevant and connected to their customers, saying, "we wanted people to keep remembering us!" They quickly turned to social media to engage with customers, putting out promotions and contests online to keep interest piqued. She says, although they didn't roll out their take-out menu for food right away, they did tweak their liquor options immediately, rolling out playful Caesar, Daquiri, and Margarita Drink Kits to-go, to match their playful presence online. Their Mother's Day "Mommosa Kit," which included chocolate covered strawberries and Truffle Pig chocolates, was also a huge hit. They even continued to support local live music, offering streamed DJ sets from the artists who had lost access to their venue.



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Courtesy of Westwood Pub

the John B. Pub hosted a Mojito bartending segment, teaching how to make the classic, as well as encouraging people to dig into their gardens and play with herbs and botanicals for fun alternative mojito versions.

The event was a success, and raised over \$80,000 in support of Coquitlam, Port Coquitlam, and Port Moody businesses during COVID-19, and it certainly worked to keep the John B. Pub feeling connected and engaged with its community.

Even since opening their doors, the John B. Pub continues to do its

THE JOHN B. PUB HOSTED A MOJITO BARTENDING SEGMENT

part to spread local love. Although you cannot yet dance, they have opened up their room to local acoustic sets, with all the proper safety measures in place. Not only can customers once again enjoy live music, but local musicians are given back their livelihoods.

These spotlights are not exhaustive and do not begin to cover all the pubs and their incredible employees (from chefs to management, to service and beyond) who rolled out so many worthy initiatives that helped keep their doors open and businesses alive. Many of you were quick to ensure your staff and communities had food on their tables, and you didn't stop rolling with all the punches of 2020. This is a heartfelt shout out to all your hard work and perseverance. Please know there are so many people rooting for you and eager to support your businesses. Cheers to you all! **P**

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» LDB UPDATE

by Liquor Distribution Branch

A few short months ago the terms ‘physical distancing’ and ‘self-isolation’ were introduced to our collective vocabulary, when the **World Health Organization** declared the COVID-19 outbreak a pandemic. Grocery stores sold out of sanitizing wipes, bathroom tissue, and canned goods as panic buying took over.

And then liquor quickly became the new focus, with customers flocking to retail stores to stock up just in case supply chains collapsed. Thanks to the smart work of manufacturers, suppliers, distributors, and teams at the **Liquor Distribution Branch (LDB)**, they never did.

The LDB and its lines of business were declared ‘essential services’. This was to ensure that the supply chains would continue operating, and customers could rely on uninterrupted delivery of product. At the same time, **Sairose Fisher**, Acting Executive Director of LDB’s Wholesale Liquor Operations, was working with other LDB leaders and industry stakeholders to adapt workplace practices to keep everyone safe.

Initially, the Delta and Kamloops liquor distribution centres had to quickly adjust operations to process unplanned and unprecedented volumes. Simultaneously, they had to contend with a combination of new distancing protocols and lower staff attendance, stemming from the individual complexities that families faced around child care and quarantining.

“When bars and restaurants were ordered closed, we expected retail to pick up some of the sales lost, but the level of activity and orders certainly surprised us,” says Fisher, “We had

just completed our warehouse management system upgrade in Kamloops, and hardly had time to catch our breath.”

The **Delta Distribution Centre** was forced to suspend bottle pick service, and the **Wholesale Customer Centre** worked to advise retailers and other customers of scheduled delivery changes. Like our customers, our responsibilities were changing dramatically at the same time as we were processing an extraordinary amount of orders. The workforce challenge wasn’t confined to the LDB, as third party warehouses and freight delivery partners also worked to overcome their own staffing shortages and service constraints. In spite of all the challenges faced by customers and industry partners, LDB Wholesale sales in March/April 2020 increased by \$89.5 million over the same period last year, a jump of 17.3% (see chart below).

Attorney General **David Eby**, the Minister responsible for the LDB, recognized the efforts of employees at the distribution centres and stores. These efforts helped minimize the black market and the predatory resale of controlled products that would most likely spring up following the closure of our regulated public system. “Although it may not be obvious at first glance, you are helping in our fight against organized crime, and our efforts to protect children and public health,” wrote Eby, in a note of thanks to the LDB. “You have been asked to come to work when many are being asked to work from home—your efforts and commitment have not gone unnoticed. I am hugely appreciative of everything you do for

the people of our province,” he added.

Bottle pick service has since been restored in part and government has introduced several policy changes to support our industry. This included extending the hours that LRS can operate and allowing food-primary operators to offer packaged liquor with take-out meals.

The LDB’s distribution centres continue to run at full tilt with sales volumes at levels normally seen in peak summer months. All cleaning precautions are still in place to protect employees and prevent the transmission of the COVID-19 virus.

“Break times have been scheduled appropriately to minimize the number of people in the break room or other common areas and checking that the physical distancing signage is well displayed and adhered to,” explains Fisher, adding that equipment is sanitized regularly and tracked to ensure rotation through shifts. “We’ll continue to serve our customers while following these directives until **Dr. Bonnie Henry**, BC’s Provincial Health Officer, directs us otherwise. We are proud of our team’s responsiveness to these changes and their resilience in maintaining a reliable supply chain for all customers who rely on our services. This has been a tough time for all of us, but I think we have all risen to the challenge.”

Through its wholesale and retail lines of business, the LDB raises over \$1 billion each year to support public services. This funding is going to be vital in supporting families and communities impacted by COVID-19.

	MARCH/APRIL 2018		MARCH/APRIL 2019		MARCH/APRIL 2020	
	Net Amount	Volume Litres	Net Amount	Volume Litres	Net Amount	Volume Litres
Beer	\$176,254,897	43,651,746	\$177,639,262	43,524,574	\$185,577,377	44,985,380
Spirits	\$122,178,309	3,800,642	\$125,278,091	3,835,310	\$158,577,525	4,970,185
Wine	\$167,135,156	10,887,014	\$170,891,008	10,872,859	\$198,690,160	13,629,047
Refreshment Beverages	\$32,524,888	7,138,620	\$41,920,895	8,701,246	\$62,367,094	13,025,304
Total	\$498,093,250	65,478,022	\$515,729,257	66,933,989	\$605,212,157	76,609,916

STRATEGIC PRICING

*The Delicate Balance of Enticing
Customers Back to your Pub*

BY JOANNE SASVARI



Even before a global pandemic devastated the hospitality industry, Surrey's **Clayton Pub** was famous for its Wednesday night seafood special. But since reopening, general manager **Jenn Bach** has doubled down on the deal, adding \$1.50 jumbo prawns to the already popular \$1.50 crab legs.

"It's a good way to encourage people to come in on a Wednesday night and choose us rather than someone else," Bach says. "It's easily one of our busiest nights. We easily match the same sales on a Wednesday as we do on a Friday or Saturday."

It's just one of the ways pubs are finding to revise their pricing strategies at a time of unprecedented uncertainty.

Some are promoting signature cocktails, which have higher profit margins than, say, a pint of draught. Others are expanding their happy hours. Some are offering takeout to make up the shortfall from empty seats. And many are offering loss-leading daily specials such as the **Bard and Banker's** two-buck-a-shuck oysters on Tuesdays and Saturdays, the \$10-off bottles of wine

on Thursdays at **Darby's Public House**, or the \$6 classic burgers on Mondays at **Jack Lonsdale's**.

Do you Need to Discount?

But do pubs really need to discount their food and drink? **David Hopkins** doesn't think so.

He's the president of **The Fifteen Group**, a restaurant consultancy based in Toronto and Vancouver, whose business is split between launching new concepts and making existing ones profitable. His clients include **The Cascade Room**, **Joe Fortes**, **Bao Bei**, and the **Queen's Cross Pub**.

Rather than recommending discounts, Hopkins says, "We're encouraging all of our clients to put their prices up, right across the board. We have a number of clients who've put their prices up 15 to 20% and they're busy every night."

Offering weekly specials, happy hours, and loss leaders can be a good idea "if you need the people," he says. But he points

out that a number of current factors make this less important than an owner might think.

**WE'RE ENCOURAGING ALL
OF OUR CLIENTS TO PUT
THEIR PRICES UP, RIGHT
ACROSS THE BOARD.**

Pillars for Success

First, and probably foremost, Hopkins' company has long identified three pillars for restaurant success: quality, service and atmosphere. "Now we're adding a fourth thing: sanitation," he notes. "We're telling clients that the most important thing is people feeling confident in the environment. I would rather pay full price in a restaurant that makes me feel safe and comfortable than have a half-price burger."

The other major factor is that there is much less competition right now compared to four months ago. According to **Restaurants Canada**, about 20% of restaurants that closed because of the pandemic won't re-open at all, and the ones that do have significantly reduced capacity. Overall, Hopkins estimates, restaurants only have about 40% of the seating capacity they did in early March.

"There's a huge undersupply of seats in restaurants for the market. So if you're doing everything right on those four pillars, you should be busy," Hopkins explains. "And if you have 40% of the guest traffic, you can totally offset that with a 17% price increase, which isn't that much."

That's not all. A restaurant's biggest cost is almost always labour, and with the federal wage subsidy, 75% of that cost was covered by CEWS and this program could be extended to December 19, 2020. Besides, with the new wholesale price for liquor in BC, which is coming into effect July 20, 2020 and is set to expire March 2021, a pub can profit off a pint or a highball without raising prices at all.

"If they approach this properly, restaurants can actually make a lot of money between now and Christmas," Hopkins notes. "I don't think it will last forever. But for me it's a bit of a reckoning for the industry as a whole. It can work once again."



That said, other variables are complicating the current situation.

In December 2019, *Canada's Food Price Report* predicted that restaurant prices would jump 2 to 4% in 2020. By the end of March, after the **WHO** declared a global pandemic and consumers pivoted to dining at home, the authors of the report predicted restaurant sales would instead fall by half this year. It's quite a change from 2017 when, according to **Statistics Canada**, Canadians spent nearly a third of their food dollars in restaurants.

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Costing Menu Items

Meanwhile, the cost of food continues to increase (by an anticipated 2 to 4% this year), while supply chains have become unpredictable.

And that contributes to the biggest problem Hopkins sees when he works with independent restaurants: costing menu items improperly. "The number one issue right off the bat is that they don't know the cost of what they're selling," he says. "We'll go into many restaurants and cost menus and the owners will be shocked when they find out what menu items cost."

Costing the menu is also the first step in a restaurant pricing strategy laid out by **Toast**, a US-based restaurant software company that offers an online menu-engineering course (pos.toasttab.com). They recommend using POS-system reports and a food-cost calculator to determine both the cost percentage for each menu item and the cost per pound per ingredient.

They also recommend studying the market to learn what it will bear, but advise against mimicking competitors. Play to your strengths and offer unique items that you can charge a premium for. "Creating value goes beyond price," Toast says. "Value's created when you deliver on things that aren't as quantifiable, including service, atmosphere, and food presentation." And most importantly, find balance in your menu, weighing high-cost items with low-cost ones.




That is exactly what Bach is trying to achieve at The Clayton Pub.

"Obviously, finances are a concern," she says. "We had to raise our prices slightly just to get back into business."

At the same time, she notes that many people are still uncomfortable going out to dine. So Bach raised prices on some items where the margins "weren't huge," but kept them low on others, added a pizza special on

Mondays and is planning to add to the pub's already extensive happy hour program. Offering a bit of a deal doesn't just add value, she says, it makes the experience fun, and maintains a sense of normalcy in abnormal times.

"You also have to not alienate your customer base who are putting themselves at risk in such a weird climate," says Bach. "It's a balance." 

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Over the past few months, the **Liquor and Cannabis Regulation Branch** (LCRB) has heard from businesses in the sectors we regulate about the difficulties facing industry due to the global COVID-19 pandemic. That is why the LCRB has worked quickly to implement measures that follow directives from the Provincial Health Officer (PHO), while supporting businesses and the British Columbians that rely on them.

From an economic perspective, the hospitality industry was one of the earliest and hardest hit industries as a result of the crisis, with restaurants and bars being ordered to close early on to protect public health. To help licensees navigate this difficult time, the LCRB immediately consulted with our Business Technical Advisory Panel partners to understand the most effective ways that we could support the liquor and hospitality sectors. Following that consultation, the LCRB got to work on providing critical temporary measures to support the businesses and British Columbians who were significantly impacted by the public health crisis.

Here are some of the temporary changes we have enacted during the COVID-19 crisis:

- To promote physical distancing as ordered by the PHO, the LCRB proactively cancelled Special Event Permits;
- To provide relief from revenue losses and to support public health directives by encouraging citizens to stay at home, the LCRB temporarily authorized Liquor Primary and Food Primary establishments to sell and deliver packaged liquor for off-site consumption with the purchase of a meal;
- To help retailers meet physical distancing recommendations and protect seniors and vulnerable populations by giving them a dedicated time to shop, Licensee Retail Stores, Wine Stores, Special Wine Stores, and Manufacturer Onsite Store endorsements were permitted to temporarily extend their hours of retail liquor service;
- To support the production of essential health and safety products and provide industry with increased opportunities to generate revenue, the LCRB worked quickly to authorize licensed manufacturers to use their establishments to manufacture and/or package, sell or donate sanitizer and hand sanitizer;
- To ease the financial burden of upcoming renewal fees for those who have been most affected by the PHO's orders, the LCRB also offered the temporary deferral of renewal fees for some liquor licensees;
- Finally, to support BC's licensed establishments in safely reopening for business while respecting the PHO orders and recommendations, Food Primary, Liquor Primary and Manufacturing licensees were permitted to temporarily expand their service area footprints until October 31, 2020 through a no-cost Temporary Expanded Service Area Authorization application. To ensure businesses could get up and running quickly, these temporary authorizations focused on expanding licensee service areas only, allowing the LCRB to expedite approvals while mitigating any public safety risks or local government requirements.

You can find the most up-to-date policies on the LCRB website: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/employment-business/business/liquor-regulation-licensing/liquor-law-policy/liquor-policy-directives>

While the LCRB continues to help licensees through the immediate crisis, we are also focusing on gradual recovery and ways to assist in rebuilding and strengthening the liquor industry. This includes continuing

to improve our business operations and service delivery through our online Liquor Modernization Project, which will incrementally bring different licence classes online. Activities currently completed in OneStop include renewals, reporting catering events, market authorizations, temporary use areas, and all-ages liquor-free events, will be available in the new system as licence types are moved online. Continuing work on this project supports the new environment we all find ourselves in, at a time when a paperless model for government and industry is much needed.

The LCRB is thankful for our strengthened relationships with our industry partners as we've worked together through the many challenges that the liquor and hospitality industries have faced during this unprecedented time. We look forward to continued collaboration as we look towards recovery for businesses in sectors we regulate that have been so greatly impacted by the pandemic.



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HISTORIC DEWDNEY PUB



SIZZLING BLUES AND MOUNTAIN VIEWS KEEP THINGS ROCKING

by Joanne Sasvari

On a Sunday afternoon, the blues are wailing, the dance floor is heaving, and the windows are moving in and out to the music. It's the weekly "service" at the Church of the Blues, better known as the **Historic Dewdney Pub**, a rural roadhouse that really knows how to rock.

"We've been serving the community for over 100 years, sort of. And we have the best music around," says **Doug McNeill**, who has owned the pub for the last 12 years. "On a Sunday, I guarantee we have more people come to us than any other pub on the north side of the Fraser River. More and more people keep hearing about us and are showing up." But it wasn't always this way.

The pub is located in an old Anglican church building that dates back to 1912. Built on the banks of the Dewdney slough, with stunning views of the surrounding mountains, it survived the devastating 1948 flood, then was a private residence before becoming one of BC's first neighbourhood pubs back in 1978.

Over time, though, neglect and mismanagement took their toll. For "20-some" years, McNeill, who was then a shop teacher, lived only a few minutes away, but had only set foot in the bar once. "It was a dump. It smelled bad and was run down," he recalls.

So what made him decide to buy it? "It seemed like a good idea at the time," he says drily. "That it used to be a church was quite intriguing to us. It had a liquor store, which was good, of course. And we could only go up from there."

McNeill and his pals set about renovating the place, returning it to its proud historic roots. "The inside has changed remarkably, from the colour to the woodwork we put in there. "It is old, it looks old and we're proud of that."

The pub features vintage light fixtures, local historic photos, fir wainscoting, stained glass, and artifacts of the area's farming and logging traditions. It also has a vast new patio, with a view of the mountains and the neighbours' horses, who occasionally amble over, hoping to be fed. "One of our strong points, separate from our newly opened outdoor area, is the location. I consider it a bit of a gem when people say, 'You're out in the country,' and I say, 'Yes we are.'"

He claims that the patio is the biggest in the valley, with plenty of room for socially distancing guests to spread out. (The pub is also following other **WorkSafeBC** rules for safety during the pandemic—that popular dance floor, for instance, won't be used for the time being.)



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"I've always thought a pub should have presence. It should be clean. It should be fun," McNeill says. And, he figures, it should have music.

McNeill is a big blues fan, so back in 2008 he started bringing in blues musicians, and his pub became the first place in the valley to have consistent blues music. "Now we're one of the top 35 blues bars in Canada," he says proudly.

Though there is a DJ on Fridays and live classic rock on Saturdays, the big event is the weekly blues jam from 4 to 8 pm on Sundays. The crowd for that skews a little older and a little more female than most pub events; that, plus the fact that the place is family-friendly keeps things civilized even when they're rocking out. Our patrons come from all over the valley and Greater Vancouver for the blues.

And people don't just come for the music. They're also there for the friendly staff, the country atmosphere, and the food.

"We're certainly not white tablecloth fine dining, but the food is good and the portions are generous," says McNeill. "We have a remarkable chef, **Colin Rogers**, who does chef's creations on Fridays that people come to our place especially for."

In addition to the regular pub fare menu, which offers more variety than most, that might mean a seafood jambalaya, chicken cacciatore or veal medallions, and on Sundays, a roast beef dinner that's "probably better than Grandma used to make." And of course, there's a great selection of beer and other drinks to choose from, too.

In short, the Historic Dewdney Pub is a classic country roadhouse reborn, with great food, rocking music, attentive service, and an incredible mountain view.

"People are astounded. 'You're out in the middle of nowhere?' Yes, we are," McNeill answers happily.

Historic Dewdney Pub & Liquor Store is located at 8793 River Road South, Dewdney, BC.

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*Source: Nielsen Total Canada Mixer Market Report, ending June 20, 2020. Mixer Market includes Tonic Water, Ginger Beer, Ginger Ale, Cocktail Mixer, and Club Soda categories.

ADVERTISING FEATURE

How To Unlock a Rapidly Growing Premium Mixer Category as Part of your Liquor Retailing Strategy

STEP 1



Create a Mixer Shelf Set

STEP 2



Place Top-Sellers in Fridge

STEP 3



Display and Co-Promote Spirit + Mixer

STEP 4



Drive Impulse at Cash

STEP 5



Educate Staff and Recommend

Summer is the season for easy, refreshing sippers. But that doesn't mean they can't be sophisticated and flavourful at the same time. In fact, that's just what consumers are craving right now—and it's exactly what Fever-Tree mixers are serving up.

"Consumers want more," says Kris Steed, Country Manager – Canada for Fever-Tree. "Even though people have been at home, they still want to treat themselves. They still want that restaurant experience. When consumers are making drinks, they don't want it to be complicated, but still want it to taste great."

Since it introduced Premium Indian Tonic Water in 2005, Fever-Tree has elevated the category of mixers from sugary, one-note sodas to bright, refreshing products with layer upon layer of spice, citrus, floral, and herbal flavours. There are now seven different tonics in the lineup in Canada, including the rosemary-scented Mediterranean, Floral Elderflower, and the recently released Refreshingly Light Cucumber. The range also includes its award-winning ginger beer; highly acclaimed by gastronomes and critics alike. It's a blend of three gingers from Nigeria, Cochin, and the Ivory Coast; spicy and complex it's brilliant for making a Moscow Mule. Rounding off the portfolio is its series of sophisticated Ginger Ales, and Premium Club Soda, which is a great addition to any spritz!

Fever-Tree's UK-based co-founders, Charles Rolls and Tim Warrilow, source those natural ingredients from top-notch producers all over the planet, starting with the quinine for the tonic water, which comes from a single cinchona ledgeriana (fever-tree) plantation in the Democratic Republic of Congo. They also source bitter oranges from Mexico, lemons from Sicily, elderflower from England, and vanilla from Madagascar.

The high-quality tonics and sodas made from those global ingredients complement several major trends in drinks culture: premiumization of spirits; wellness and authenticity; and the dominance of Highballs and simple mixed drinks as the consumer's cocktail of choice. As Steed says, "Canadian consumers are still spending a lot of money on premium spirits and putting sugary mixers into them doesn't uphold the distiller's intention."

They also offer a unique opportunity for pubs and independent liquor retailers—especially with the ongoing popularity of simple cocktails.

"You walk through most BC or Alberta liquor stores these days and

the mixers are these sugary products on the bottom shelf, amongst the dusty bottles of slow-selling spirits or in an often forgotten fridge at the front. It's an afterthought," Steed explains.

Meanwhile, in the UK and the US, liquor retailers are displaying Fever-Tree mixers right along with the spirits they're designed to elevate. "The top retailers are using Fever-Tree to drive profitable spirits categories. For example, in one of the UK's top retailers, they merchandised and co-promoted Fever-Tree with the top five gin brands while those gin brands were not on sale; Fever-Tree drove a sales lift of 20-30% on those spirit brands compared to the weeks they were not co-promoted together. By co-promoting spirits and Fever-Tree together in retail, you're providing the consumer with a complete drink solution, ease of shop, and driving a very profitable spirit category!

Fever-Tree has made it even easier with its pairing wheels that offer suggestions for which spirit and garnish to combine with each mixer. "We wanted to make it easy for bartenders, servers, and liquor store staff to recommend the best possible Fever-Tree Tonic or Ginger pairing, depending on the consumer's choice of spirit to provide the best possible drink experience."

The tonics are relatively well known, but the ginger ale—which comes in three flavours as well as a ginger beer—is a real game changer, especially considering the popularity of Canadian whisky. For one thing, it's made with real ginger and not as sweet as commercial ginger ales tend to be, and neither are any of the tonics or other products Fever-Tree makes. Their mixers are made with all-natural ingredients with no added colours or preservatives. "Consumers are mindful about what goes into their drinks," Steed says. "This is going along the lines of healthier drinking, healthier consumption, and healthier trends."

Right now, we're craving light, thirst-quenching G&Ts, Highballs, Mules, and Spritzers. Fever-Tree mixers are here to make them easy, without sacrificing a drop of sophisticated, sparkling flavour.

"We only use the best ingredients and spare no expense in doing so," Steed adds. "We're excited to help guide consumers to what a brilliant drink experience can be."

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INVENTORY MANAGEMENT

BY SHAWN SOOLE

Bar inventory can be very tedious for most managers and bartenders, whether it is done weekly or monthly. It takes hours, usually spent long before or after the bar is in operation, counting bottles and points of bottle. Taking proper inventory is especially important for bars, where over pouring, spilt and free drinks are commonplace and sometimes considered accepted culture in many establishments. Any drinks that aren't accounted for throughout the night, week, or month hurt the bottom line. With the "new normal" in the industry beginning to roll out, these bottom-line deficiencies will add up quickly. What may have been swept under the rug pre-COVID will now be a death knell.

Bar Inventory and Costings Overview

Bar inventory is much more than just maintaining enough on-hand inventory to operate and generate sales. Having strong inventory counting and reporting gives you an insight into one of the most profitable and misunderstood areas in many restaurants and bars. Bar inventory reporting helps with strategic planning for budgets, projections, and programming. On the surface it defines how your bar is performing

financially, your purchasing costs, and the overall cost of goods. But as you dig deeper and evaluate the final figures, it can also show you spillage and spoilage. Reporting shows trends, pinpoints the popularity of all drinks, and even shows macro market trends in drinking and spending habits. Fully understanding your inventory is much more than top line revenue, variances in costings, and counting bottles.

The first step to understanding your inventory is to create categories within your bar inventory. Liquor, beer, wine and non-alcoholic/ingredients are the usual categories that most bars use. You can also go into more specific sub-categories such as red wine, white wine, whiskies, etc. These sub-categories can

be very helpful post-inventory in focusing on small variances within the larger categories. Although, this is all very dependent on how deep you want to get on your POS back-end programming since, with all the pieces in the inventory puzzle, you need the specific sales figures for those sub-categories to use against the final inventory figures.

Following are the two formulas to calculate your stock usage in dollars and the cost of goods percentage (COGS%).

**INVENTORY SHOULD BE
TREATED EVEN MORE
IMPORTANTLY THAN CASH.**

1. Stock Usage = (Starting Inventory + Liquor Purchased) – Ending Inventory

Next, take the stock usage figure and divide it by sales in that category.

2. COGS% = Stock Usage / Sales

Most pubs have their own cost of goods budgets set in place and they are very specific to your venue. A beer heavy business may run a slightly higher COGS based on contribution, whereas a cocktail bar will be focussed heavily on liquor and ingredient costs (something that can go unchecked when you start adding in fresh squeezed juices, bitters, and peripheral ingredients for prep). Your budgets are based on your business, breakeven points, and overhead costs. Once you have mastered these two formulas, you can positively pinpoint where you have deficiencies, possible spills, spoilage, and theft, and where you can improve the overall health of your bar and business.

The Psychology of Bar Operations

The long-term, “old school” psychology of bar operations in many venues is a culture of buying drinks for loyal guests, staff drinks post shift, beer over pouring because the taps foam, and wine spoilage all not being accounted for. **Sean Finter** of **Barmetrix** goes deep into the psychology of “justified theft” that comes from lack of transparency from ownership and management. “Bartenders and servers see owners and managers comping tables and buying drinks, setting a tone and culture that allows people who are in their employ to see this as an acceptable practice,” he says. Transparency from ownership is more important than ever in communicating goals and results to staff.

“Bartenders handle two things, cash/credit and inventory,” Finter explains. “We wouldn’t just dump nightly cash into a bucket and count and balance it at the end of the week or month. But for some reason, we treat inventory differently. In most ways, inventory should be treated even more importantly than cash. End-of-night sales and cash is the result of selling inventory, but we treat our base products so blasé”. Fundamentally changing the culture of bar operations should always be a paramount mission for any operator, but even more so in this post-COVID world of reduced capacity, minimal staff, and maximizing every cent in sales.



Quarterly Check-ups

Quarterly check-ups of costings in your inventory management system are the bare minimum for successful long-term achievement of budgetary goals. In BC, pricing for liquor, wine and beer change regularly and can be everything from one dollar to ten. If these price increases aren’t kept in check with regularly re-costing of ingredients, the variances in costings can be very damaging to your bottom line. Taking the time to check on every bottle each quarter will help to continually increase your profitability and efficiencies when it comes to inventory management.

Along with quarterly re-costing comes realigning of budgets, including acceptable variances. As an owner or a manager, what is an acceptable variance on your inventory? One, two, five percent? When creating your quarterly budgets, include purchasing budgets, category COGS, overall COGS, and what you class as an acceptable variance in inventory. Inventory variances can be alleviated by creating systems, whether on

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paper or in the POS, to account for comped drinks, spills, spoilage, and research and development. All these factor into variances at the time of inventory and come directly out of your bottom line. A 1% variance can end up costing thousands of dollars by the end of the year. Inventory variance through proper management should be kept to an absolute minimum, as anything more than zero is lost profit.

Inventory Systems

There is a myriad of inventory systems on the market, both here in BC and across the globe, from high concept Excel spreadsheets to fully automated digital systems. In order to find what will work best for your establishment, you have to ask a number of questions: Is your management team skilled enough to create and build working, deliverable spreadsheets themselves? Do you have the time to do inventory, whether it be weekly or monthly? Does this system give me more value than it costs? And most importantly, can these systems reduce inventory variances and save you money?

If you are running a relatively transient staff, and do not have a bar manager to handle inventory and reporting, hiring an outside bipartisan

A 1% VARIANCE CAN END UP COSTING THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS BY THE END OF THE YEAR.

company to handle your inventory is one of the most efficient ways to shrink variances. You'll receive a report showing you exactly what is red flagged for that period. If you have a hands-on bar manager with Excel skills—who is constantly plugged into your establishment and can deliver the reports you need for your business—then continue with what you're doing. But, if you have any variances in your inventory, re-evaluating the way you count and report is imperative. You would not allow \$100 variances in cash outs, so don't do it with your stock either.

Post-COVID and New Legislative Changes

Dead stock that has been sitting for three months of lockdowns has become inevitable. Moving product has been difficult even with the legislative changes allowing takeout liquor delivery with food orders. If you are still doing delivery services, pricing your wine 10-15% above cost to move it is a smart business pivot. Turning stock (that has most likely been paid for on credit card) to liquid cash flow is most important during this time.

Another legislative change that has helped publicans is the ability of hospitality customers to purchase liquor at wholesale prices. This reduced pricing will be in effect from July 20, 2020 to March 31, 2021.

Inventory management is not difficult, but it is still a hugely overlooked section of bar operations in the industry. Creating a business model where every aspect of the business is viewed as equally important is a culture shift that many will have to adopt over the next six to twelve months to stay open. At the very beginning of my career, I was told by one of my owners something that still resonates with me today: "Watch the pennies, the dollars look after themselves."



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The Return of Lagers

Many people associate lagers with the pale yellow, homogenous beers produced by big, multinational breweries. Sure, Bud Light, Coors and Lucky are lagers, but by no means do they represent the entire lager spectrum. In fact, lagers come in all colours and cover a wide range of flavour profiles, from light and crisp to sweet and malty, smoky, and yes, even hoppy and hazy.

When I ask brewers what they want to drink after a long day at work they usually say “lager” and more and more consumers are starting to agree with them. Brewers argue that lagers are harder to make well; that you can’t hide mistakes as easily as you can in an ale; and that lagers just taste great and quench your thirst without overwhelming your palate or knocking you on your backside.

What makes a lager a lager? It’s all about the yeast. Basically, there are two main types of yeast used in brewing: *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* for ales and *Saccharomyces pastorianus* for lagers. Lager yeast is called “bottom-fermenting” because it falls to the bottom during fermentation while ale yeasts floats on top. Lager yeast also works best at colder temperatures (6°-13°C compared to 15°-23°C for ale).

Lagers take longer to brew—several weeks compared to just two or three weeks for most ales—which is one of the reasons why craft breweries don’t necessarily brew a lot of them. They slow down production schedules too much, and many small breweries have to work at a breakneck pace just to keep up with demand because of their small capacities.

Flavour-wise, lager yeast tends to stay in the background while many ales derive significant flavours directly from the yeast itself. Because of the long fermentation and conditioning period, lagers tend to be crisper, cleaner beers with a dry finish.

When **Sean Hoyne** opened his eponymous brewery in 2011, he says, “It wasn’t even an option for me to not make a Pilsner.” For Hoyne, lagers require subtlety: “If ales are about making them bigger than everyone else’s then lagers are about making them better than everyone else’s.”

In addition to his Pilsner (5.5% ABV), Hoyne also brews Helios Golden Lager (6% ABV) and Vienna Lager (5.3% ABV). Hoyne orders container loads of German malts and specific Czech and German hops to ensure they taste correct.

Helios is my favourite of Hoyne’s lagers. A Dortmunder Export style, it’s slightly stronger than a Pilsner with a complex malt character. According to Hoyne, “It was made to quench the thirst of coal miners” in the Dortmund region of Germany and then became so popular that the brewers developed an export version that was slightly stronger than the local one.

Besides Hoyne Brewing, Delta’s **Four Winds Brewing** might be the most lager-obsessed brewery in BC these days—several lagers appear in their regular line-up of draught and packaged beers, and they recently released a special Pils Pack, which featured four different lagers brewed in collaboration with four other BC breweries. Talk about lager love!

Along with its core Pilsner (4.8% ABV), Four Winds also makes Elementary Lager (4.5% ABV), Huft Gold Pilsner (5.4% ABV), and another favourite of mine: Holz Pils (5.4% ABV). This fantastic beer is fermented in an open wooden foeder and then conditioned for 60 days in wood barrels, yielding soft esters and a crisp yet delicate finish.

Many other BC breweries also make lagers. **Steel & Oak Brewing** in New Westminster showcases some of the darker, maltier styles well, including its Red Pilsner (5% ABV) and Smoked Honey Doppelbock (7.2% ABV), a fall/winter seasonal that can often be found in my fridge when it is out. Look for Märzens, or Oktoberfest-style lagers, from BC breweries in the early fall: they are amber, slightly maltier versions of typical light German lagers. I find that darker lagers have a rich, rounded maltiness and a dry finish that makes them great companions to a wide variety of foods, especially barbecue. They also work well as an ingredient in sauces or marinades.

The darkest lagers are called Dunkel and Schwarzbier (literally “black beer” in German). One great example is the **Moon Under Water’s** Creepy Uncle Dunkel (5.4% ABV). And each winter **Vancouver Island Brewing** releases its Hermannator Eisbock (9.5% ABV), a rare style brewed with a freeze-distillation process, which results in a strong, slightly sweet, and oh-so-smooth black lager.

Watch out, once you get converted to lagers, there’s no going back!

PRODUCT SHOWCASE



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TOUCHLESS TECHNOLOGY

BY AMY WATKINS

Physical touchpoints can be hotspots for potential COVID spread in pubs and bars, but touchless technology can help to minimize staff and customer interaction throughout the ordering and payment process.

Menus

Menus are one of the most obvious touchpoints that can be converted into a touchless interaction. The **BC Restaurant and Foodservice Association** recommends limiting menus and promoting them via social media as daily specials, using digital menu boards and online pre-ordering, and encouraging tap or mobile payments.

While online ordering apps such as **UberEats** help bring menus to customers at home, it's the physical menus that are used inside businesses that can spread germs. Luckily, it's easy and inexpensive to move menus online. Most customers are mobile-savvy and able to follow a link to a section of your website that contains a PDF of the menu (consider splitting it into sections that can be easily navigated).

Quick Response (QR) codes are another easy-to-implement method of taking your menu online. QR codes allow customers to use their smartphones to scan a barcode and be taken to an online menu without touching anything. QR codes can be generated for free at sites such as The QR Code Generator and can link to PDFs on your website or your social media pages.

Digital menus can also be made interactive to include an ordering and payment system. When BC entered Phase 2 of reopening, the team behind **Juke's Fried Chicken** decided to reimagine their Chinatown location as an 80s themed, reduced-contact cocktail bar called **Bar**

Chickadee. They allow guests to reserve, order, and pay on their phone without the risk of touching menus or receipts.

Ordering Customized Cocktails

"The technology has adapted very quickly over the past few months," says Juke's Bar Manager **Sabrina Dhaliwal**. "Six months ago, a reduced contact dining experience would have been laughable, but now there are multiple platforms available." Chickadee's entire beverage program, along with food, can be ordered through their website. Guests can browse each section of the menu online, as well as view each cocktail with an image and description. Guests are then able to pay as they order or build up a tab.

"We have dubbed our ordering system as 'Choose Your Adventure,'" says Dhaliwal. "Guests can fully customize their 'dealer's choice' cocktails. They are able to select their base spirit and style of cocktail simply by clicking a few (or many) options and flavour profile they would like to enjoy. While it is a reduced contact experience, our team is always available to help our guests navigate the platform and help build their cocktail experience. There are other benefits to our online systems, as guests leave their name and number in case they need to be reached for contact tracing."


POS

Taking payments via your website or app is one option, but a touchless POS is another more permanent way to ensure that payment can safely be taken. Tech companies such as **Square** offer touchless

options for tapping credit and debit cards as an alternative to cash. “The COVID-19 pandemic has both slowed down and sped up our world in unique ways,” says **Felipe Chacon**, economist at Square. “In the two months since social-distancing, Canadians have moved away from cash at warp speed, in part due to safety concerns around handling cash, and in part the increase in online orders. But there are regional differences—some cities and business types have become less reliant on cash than others.”

The study by Square found that breweries, wineries, and distilleries have the smallest number of cash transactions. However, BC has a relatively high proportion of cash users: Surrey is the most reliant on cash of any Canadian city, with almost a quarter of all purchases (23.9%) still being made with physical money. Two other BC cities, Vancouver and Victoria, are among the top five most cash-heavy cities in Canada.



very interested to see how other venues will adapt to the new COVID regulations; one thing certain during these times is that creativity has been firing on all cylinders.” 

Cash Handling Systems

If you still want to receive cash, it can be done in a touchless way using bill counters and other systems designed to be a hands-off experience for staff. “Using a quality coin and bill counter substantially reduces the requirement to handle cash,” says **Gary Moffatt**, National Director of Sales & Marketing for **Post POS Cash Management Systems**, a Canadian company. “It saves time, is accurate, and reduces the chance of virus transmission from cash. Our discriminator bill counters count \$30,000.00 in 18 seconds. The counter then makes up the bank deposit slip automatically, and the operator only minimally touches cash.”

Glory Global Solutions Inc also produces a range of touchless cash handling systems that are integrated with a POS. Cash Infiniti products like the Ci-10B for cash and Ci-10C for coin work by customers inserting the cash to pay into the machines, which then automatically dispense change. The CI server software will work with back-end systems to process cash and coin for the initial float to the cashiers and then accept the end of day cash and coin from all of the cashiers/tills for day-end deposit and reconciliation.

While some businesses can't move away from cash, it's likely that more bars and restaurants will adopt a touchless ordering system to streamline the payment process. “I think more venues will start adopting this online ordering model,” says Dhaliwal. “There is certainly going to be a learning curve for everyone, as we have been visiting restaurants and bars the same way for years. I think this will stay even after the pandemic passes because the ease of using the system and the ability to pay directly on your phone saves time for both the venue and guests, and there will be reduced wait time for receiving and paying your bill. I'm

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INSIGHT INTO CUSTOMER CONCERNS & PRIORITIES

BY MARC-OLIVIER BOURGEOIS

While Canada has largely been successful in containing the spread of COVID-19, there is no doubt that the pandemic has changed our personal lives, and the way we do business, in fundamental ways. At **Labatt Breweries of Canada**, we saw an opportunity to mitigate some of the economic impact on our partners.

So as Canada started to re-open, we decided to leverage our national presence by undertaking a survey to identify customer concerns and priorities that will help ease the transition for the on-premise channel back to partial normality. In June, through a webinar, we shared the insights of more than a thousand customers, as well as lessons from “opened” provinces, with our partners.

Safety & Sanitation

Several of the messages are pretty clear. In particular, and not surprisingly, safety and sanitization are customers’ top priority for returning to bars and restaurants. This means educating staff as well as customers on the key procedures and protocols, and communicating them through interior and exterior signage. Bars and restaurants need to be organized to avoid close contact by establishing waiting areas and signs that guide social distancing and customer flow. As well, customers expect restaurant staff to use proper personal protective equipment, and to reduce contact with surfaces and objects by using digital menus and contactless payment. At bars and restaurants, outdoor seating is the preference, ideally with physical extensions adjacent to the premises.

Consumption Habits

Overall, we are seeing less customer traffic compared to the same time last year, and consumption habits have changed somewhat. The average transaction size has increased, and beverage alcohol, specifically beer, is a key driver of the increase. Customers still prefer draught and are moving towards big brands. In addition, ready-to-drink offerings remain popular.

We have also learned that while sales and traffic may decline during key selling periods, increases earlier in the day and on earlier days in the week are expected to be of some benefit.



Takeout & Delivery

Finally, takeout and delivery, which have shown unprecedented growth in the past few months, show no sign of slowing down and will certainly help support revenue streams. BC has helped this trend by allowing beverage alcohol to be included in takeout menus. We advised operators to optimize this trend by providing order options on their websites, and developing other delivery and curbside pickup services for customers.

POST Promise

Overall, it is important that bar and pub operators ensure that all their customers feel welcome, comfortable, and safe. Labatt, in conjunction with a range of national industry organizations, and in collaboration with various levels of government, is offering a jumpstart to the hard-hit retail and hospitality sector and supporting employment through POST Promise (People Outside Safely Together), an initiative designed to help Canadians confidently and safely take the first steps back into public spaces and the workplace.

Participating businesses receive training and education on how to help prevent the spread of COVID-19, and voluntarily commit to following these practices. Businesses that “make the promise” are then able to use and display the POST Promise logo, which will act as a clear indication to employees and customers that they are doing their part to protect Canadians’ health and safety as COVID-19 restrictions ease.

This project and the lessons and insight gained from our survey have enabled Labatt to help its partners undertake a smooth, appropriate, and healthy re-opening of the sector. **P**

Marc-Olivier Bourgeois is Regional Vice President, BC, Labatt Breweries of Canada.



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» BC HOSPITALITY FOUNDATION

Thanks Community for Your Support

2020 has been a severe challenge for BC's hospitality industry, with many closures and losses as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic has had a negative impact on the **BC Hospitality Foundation** (BCHF), like all other charities. The organization has cancelled all of its in-person fundraising for the year. While numerous businesses and individuals have stepped up with donations and special programs, the initiatives won't make up for the loss of revenue from these cancellations. It's not all bad news, however. The BCHF's Executive Director, **Dana Harris**, notes that the charity was founded on the idea that we in the hospitality industry can get through tough times by pulling together. She points to the success of the BCHF's recent virtual event, the #HospitalityHustle, as an example.

The #HospitalityHustle was a province-wide virtual event. Participants registered online and chose a physical exercise goal such as walking 5 km, cycling 10 km, dancing, prancing... really anything. They posted their training videos on social media at #HospitalityHustle. On May 31st, participants across the province got their

hustle on for hospitality by getting moving. The event concluded with an online social distancing dance party hosted by DJ, **The TDM Sound**. Over 350 people registered for the event, showing their solidarity with hospitality industry workers. Participants' engagement in physical exercise and social sharing also helped them stay physically and mentally strong and connected to their community. Businesses supported the event by providing a roster of great prizes that participants could win in random draws. The BCHF thanks all the generous event sponsors and participants. We put on a great event!

The love doesn't stop there. The BCHF also continues to receive support from businesses in the hospitality community that are donating a portion of the proceeds from their sales. Here are some examples:

- **Rust Wine Co.** is donating \$5 per Magnum of Gamay. Order through The Bacchus Group;
- **LuLu Spritz**, 'aperol style' refreshment cooler, donated \$1 per 4-pack sold in July;
- **Okanagan Crush Pad's** Many Hands Rosé, sold at **Everything Wine**, will donate \$1 per bottle;

• **JAK's Beer Wine Spirits** donated \$10 from every bottle of Isle of Harris Gin totalling a donation of over \$2500;

• Other support has come from **Steel & Oak, Neighbourhood Brewery, Summerhill Pyramid Winery, Corcelettes Winery, Township 7 Vineyards, Vista d'Oro, The Drinks List, Trialto Wine Group, Church & State Winery, Quails' Gate Winery, Poplar Grove, Winemaker's Cut, Kelowna Concierge, Tourism Kelowna, Snow Cap Enterprises, BC Event Management**, and more.

Choosing to purchase with donation programs doesn't just help the BCHF, it supports small businesses and the BC economy as a whole. Visit the BCHF's Ongoing Fundraising page (under the "Act Now" heading) to view a list of all the current initiatives and help support our supporters. Alternately, sign up for their newsletters to stay apprised of new fundraising programs.

The BCHF thanks all of our friends in the hospitality community who have supported the charity so far this year. Please stay tuned for information about upcoming virtual events, an online lottery, and more!

» NAMES IN THE NEWS

by Pamela Gray

2020 San Francisco World Spirit Competition

The 2020 San Francisco World Spirits Competition was held at the Hotel Nikko, San Francisco in March. The 2020 Competition was another record-breaking year that featured almost 3,000 entries from all corners of the world.

Congratulations to BC's **Liberty Distillery** for winning a bronze medal for its TRUST Single Grain Whiskey!

Highlights from Best in Show winners include:
Best Unaged White Spirit: Defiance Navy Strength Gin, UK
Best Aged White Spirit: Rhum Savanna Traditionnel Le Must, France
Best Whisky: The GlenDronach Revival 15-year-old Single Malt Scotch, Scotland

Best Brandy: Chateau de Laubade Cask Strength Vintage 2000 Armagnac, France

Best Liqueur: Marie Brizard Anisette, France

For a complete list of winners go to www.sfspiritscomp.com/results/search/

Awards

Now in its 15th year, **BC's Top Employers** is an annual competition organized by the editors of Canada's Top 100 Employers. Congratulations to the **British Columbia Liquor Distribution Branch** (BCLDB) for being awarded yet again as one of BC's best companies to work for. For more background on the competition and to see a list of this year's winners go to www.canadastop100.com/bc

A DAY IN THE LIFE:

Everett Cooper

Chef of Truffle Pigs Bistro and Lodge

by Laura Starr



The life of a chef greatly varies across establishments; size, vision, and style of cuisine can make the day-to-day responsibilities of a chef unique, especially in terms of best practices. One of the factors with the most bearing on the shape of this job, though, is location: a Vancouver-based pub has different needs than one on the Island, and most definitely from any establishment in the Interior of BC, which is where we land for this issue's feature.

Chef **Everett Cooper** has worked at **Truffle Pigs Bistro and Lodge** in Field, BC, for over 20 years. He intimately knows the

ins and outs of managing a kitchen in an extremely remote town deep into BC's Rocky Mountains. The town of Field is home to less than 200 people, located in Yoho National Park about 30 minutes from Lake Louise. It is here that Cooper has thrived, crafting a destination bistro that wins awards and consistently amasses a never-ending register of flattering online reviews.

In terms of a day-in-the-life, Cooper says his job has definitely evolved over time, with the early years requiring much more time spent hands-on in the kitchen. Now, with the growth and success of the bistro, his role as chef leans more into operations and oversight of staff, watching for quality control, and managing the back end of things (ordering, inventory, food costs, etc.), including menu creation and the requisite cooking manuals.

What makes this location so vastly different from other regions around BC is the combination of being remote and extremely seasonal in nature. It is in this detail that Everett is presented with the most challenging aspect of working at Truffle Pigs—hiring and managing staff.

The summers, he attests, are wildly busy, with some days bringing in \$10,000 a day in business—a stark contrast to the winters, which see numbers drop dramatically to around \$2,000 a day. In terms of staff, this creates a big discrepancy in keeping staff for the long term, given that Cooper requires around 16 full-time staff in the summer, and only four or five in the winter.

However, in the past few years, Cooper has seen many more of the staff return year after year, something he credits to giving a lot of time and effort to focusing on staff needs and engagement. First off, he finds most success in hiring staff who have an innate love for being in nature; but moreover, he leans into embracing the adventurous nature of those who come to Truffle Pigs to work, knowing that some will return and others not. And when they return, he commits to learning from what experience they gained while away and offering opportunities to incorporate what they learned into potential new menu items or bistro concepts. This keeps staff interested, and feeling a part of the whole picture.

And it keeps Cooper interested, too. A day in the life as a chef in Field, means never expecting each day, month, or year, to look the same. Keep learning, keep growing, and that will allow you to always stay on your toes, ready for whatever each season offers to you.

And this season, with BC borders closed, there is no better a time, nor more dire a time, to visit and support some of BC's treasured hideaways. Travel BC, eat at local establishments, and experience firsthand what 20 years of chef life in the Interior has created—your taste buds, and our economy, will thank you.



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» ABLE BC MEMBERSHIP REPORT

by Danielle Leroux

We know this year has been incredibly challenging for many of your businesses. **ABLE BC** has been working hard over the past six months to ensure the survival of our industry and support our members throughout this crisis.

Here are some things we've done to help:

- **COVID-19 email updates:** sent daily and now weekly to get you the information you need to know;
- **Tools and resources to support your business:** signage templates, best practice guides, FAQ, and complimentary webinars;
- **Zoom calls and surveys** to check-in on members and understand how COVID-19 is impacting your business;
- **Connecting you with suppliers** that have PPE and related products to keep your guests and staff safe;
- **Securing temporary hospitality pricing** effective July 20;
- Working with the Provincial Health Officer to **amend public orders:** removing 50% capacity limit, removing 1.2 m height requirement for physical barriers, and allowing all liquor primaries to reopen;
- **Finding urgent insurance solutions** for nightclubs and other members removed from the Hospitality Insurance Program;
- Successfully requested provincial government to **extend the Temporary Layoff**

Provision and Allow businesses to **defer Employer's Health Tax and PST payments;**

- **Work with the Attorney General and LCRB** to temporarily:
 - o Authorize hospitality customers to sell their existing liquor stock;
 - o Extend patio and service areas;
 - o Extend licence expiry date for licences expiring between March 31 and June 30;
 - o Allow liquor and food primaries to sell alcohol with takeaway and delivery meals;
 - o Extend liquor store hours;
- Getting liquor and cannabis industries **access to BDC loans;**
- Submitting your **concerns about Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy** to federal government;
- Successfully getting liquor stores defined as an **essential service** in BC;
- Supporting you in applying for provincial and federal **funding programs;**
- Connecting with the federal government and expressing urgent need for **liquidity and rent support** in the liquor industry.

Please refer to the ABLE BC Industry Update on page 4 for more on our advocacy work. Find all past COVID-19 email updates at ABLEBC.ca.

We recently sent out our 2020-21 membership renewals. We understand some renewals may be impacted by COVID-19, but we need your support to continue the work we do on behalf of our industry.

Please renew your membership today. You can do so online, by cheque, or by sending in your credit card information to ABLE BC: 604-688-5560 (phone), 604-688-8560 (fax), or danielle@ablebc.ca. If you have any questions or concerns about your membership, please don't hesitate to contact me.

New Signage

In response to member requests, ABLE BC has a range of COVID-19 signage available in our online store for free download.

Popular signs include:

- Capacity capped at;
- Social distancing reminder;
- Remove mask to check ID;
- No bottle returns.

Visit our online store to download them now. If you have additional signage requests, please send them to danielle@ablebc.ca.

Join ABLE BC

During this crisis, your businesses have been dramatically impacted—the association has been too. Our success is tied to your success. If you're not already a member and want to support the work we are doing to help our industry survive, we would appreciate your membership now more than ever. You can sign-up for a membership online or contact me for more information: danielle@ablebc.ca.

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Wine REPORT

by Alana Dickson

German Regions

Like BC, Germany is located at the very northern tip of the world's winemaking regions. Divided into 13 growing regions, which all have their own history and culture, they are known for the unique growing climate, winding rivers, and steep slopes.

With 2,000 years of winegrowing and winemaking, Germany is rich in history and tradition. They have served as the role model for cool climate winemaking around the world and have influenced generations of winemakers around the world, and notably in our own Okanagan Valley (the Rhine Valley and the Okanagan Valley both sit on the 50th parallel).

German wines made a huge splash in the market in the 1970s and 1980s, when they were known for their blue bottles and off-dry Rieslings. Everyone drank German wines—wineries made mock German wines to get in on the trend. Over the past decade, Germany's wine industry has undergone a revolution and your parents' German wines have gotten a full makeover. A new generation of winemakers is redefining German wines with their experimental approach to winemaking. The result is elegant, fresh, complex wines that express the beloved nuances of the regions.

Modernizing does not mean abandoning tradition, however. Riesling has long been the flagship variety due to its wide range of styles and ability to age. Riesling still reigns, but there are other varieties that are worth paying attention to. You will find fantastic white wines from Weissburgunder (Pinot Blanc), Grauburgunder (Pinot Gris), Müller-Thurgau, and Silvaner. Red wines also play a big role in the industry. Germany is the 3rd largest producer of Pinot Noir in the world. It is known as Spätburgunder and has become a strong contender against Pinot Noir, which is produced in other well-known regions. Dornfelder and Portugeiser are also delicious red wines worth bringing to the dinner table.

Five German Wine Regions to Discover

Baden - The southernmost and third largest region in Germany, Baden is the most important region for Spätburgunder. With plenty of sunshine hours and a variety of soils, Baden produces a diversity of styles and flavours with a distinct regional personality of its own.

Grauburgunder and Weissburgunder are common in this area as well.

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Valley River

They are expressive wines with notes of stone fruit and citrus that are easily enjoyed on their own or paired with food. Wines at the premium range are often fermented and matured in oak.

Mosel - The Mosel Valley is the most famous of Germany's 13 wine regions and the oldest in Germany. It is where Riesling reigns, and Mosel Rieslings are some of the finest white wines in the world. They are intensely fragrant, yet low in alcohol with gripping floral and mineral notes. The wines are the perfect balance of sweetness and acidity that can be aged for many years.

Pfalz - Pfalz is the second largest German wine-growing region and home to many classic grape varieties. Although Riesling has become the undisputed leader in this region, Pinot Blanc and Pinot Gris have also gained popularity. Silvaner, Müller-Thurgau, Gewürztraminer, and international varieties like Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc can also be found here.

Pfalz is now the largest red wine region in Germany. In addition to Spätburgunder, Dornfelder has been capturing the attention of wine trade and media for several years. It is deep-coloured, fragrant, and full-bodied, so it's a great wine to enjoy in the cooler seasons.

Rheingau - The Rheingau has a long tradition of winemaking and is one

of the most distinguished wine regions in the world. Grape growers in this region recognized the value of harvesting fruit at various stages of ripeness, and as a result it became the home of the flagship Spätlese Riesling, a late harvest Riesling discovered in 1775.

Rheinhessen - In recent years, the Rheinhessen has sparked the interest of young, local winegrowers. Their uncomplicated approach and innovation have garnered attention from the international wine community. Rieslings, Silvaner, Pinot Gris, and Pinot Blanc are varieties to explore in this region.

German wines are incredibly versatile making them an integral part of restaurant wine lists around the world. The wide range of styles and varieties make great pairings for many of the beloved dishes we enjoy regularly. Whether you are eating dim sum, Indian curry, or fresh seafood, try something from Germany, you won't be disappointed.

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SPIRIT SPOTLIGHT

ELEGANT APERITIFS FOR AN ELEVATED EVENING

by Nicole MacKay

We have the French to thank for creating the appetite-inducing, imbibe-worthy apéritif. The word stems from the Latin term 'aperire', which means 'to open', and it symbolizes both an opening of a bottle as well as the opening or beginning of an evening. Apéritif, which references a beverage, can sometimes interchange with apéro. Apéro is a gathering that spurs connections and moments over drinks and food with friends, family, or loved ones.

Apéritifs were first welcomed onto the Parisian scene in the late 19th century. The popularity of the drink has ebbed and flowed over the years, reaching various cultures at different times. The pre-dinner beverage was most popular in North America in the early 40s, before the recession hit that followed the end of WWII. The drink, in all its variations, saw another boom in popularity in the mid-1950s, then not again until the late 90s.

Today, apéritifs are seeing a resurgence due to COVID-19 and the resulting stay-at-home cocktail culture. People are rediscovering their inner mixologists and experimenting with flavours and textures. They're finding new ways of enjoying old favourites. And with it, a new passion for apéritif and apéro culture.

The Apéritif Purpose

There is no single beverage or type of alcohol that classifies an apéritif. An apéritif is determined by its purpose. By definition, it's a pre-dinner drink meant to be enjoyed at leisure. It is often accompanied by a small sharable snack, which helps stimulate the palate just enough before the upcoming meal.

A successful apéritif focuses on dry and light liquids. Sweet or heavy spirits or liquors can adversely affect the appetite in anticipation of the upcoming meal. Some apéritifs can be a simple serving of vermouth, champagne, or dry sherry. But to enlighten the taste buds and highlight flavour possibilities, opt for an apéritif cocktail.

The following cocktail options are simple, yet elevated concoctions. They're easy to whip up at home, resulting in an authentic Parisian experience.

The French 75

The French 75 is one of France's earliest apéritif creations. It encompasses four simple elements: gin, champagne, lemon juice, and sugar. It was dubbed the 75 after the French 75-millimetre light field gun used during the First World War. The cocktail is said to have such a kick that it felt like being hit by such a weapon.

To reduce costs, replace the champagne with an alternative sparkling wine from any wine-producing region. It then becomes '75 Cocktail', or 'the 75'.

Gimlet

A gimlet is another easy option with only two ingredients: your customer's favourite gin and lime cordial. Although, elevated versions can include club soda, seltzer, or even beer.

A gimlet is a great option to pair with complex food flavours as the lime helps tame intense spices. It also complements a myriad of international cuisines.

Martini

When inspiration is hard to find, it is comforting to know you can always rely on a martini. Classic versions include 1 part dry vermouth (1/2 oz) and six parts gin (3oz) then a garnish of either a lemon twist or olive.

You can adapt this basic recipe to suit any guest's taste preference. Typical variations include adding a touch of sweet vermouth or replacing the gin with vodka. Not a fan of olives? Try serving it with a couple of pickled onions (called a Gibson martini) or even a twist of grapefruit for a fun citrus kick.

Negroni

We move away from France and move to Italy for the negroni. It is one of the most popular cocktails to ever come out of the country. You cannot make a negroni without Campari. On its own, Campari can be considered an apéritif, but when combined with equal parts gin and sweet red vermouth (aka vermouth rosso) it is iconic!

A classic negroni is always stirred, never shaken, served over ice and garnished with a slice of orange.

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