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Quarterly Publication for the
Alliance of Beverage Licensees

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Designed, Produced & Published by:
EMC Publications
19073 63 Avenue, Surrey BC V3S 8G7
Ph: 604-574-4577 1-800-667-0955
info@emcmktg.com
www.emcmktg.com
Publisher Joyce Hayne
Designer Kyla Getty
ABLE BC Editor Danielle Leroux

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» ABLE BC INDUSTRY UPDATE

by Jeff Guignard

It is election time in BC. Since this issue hits stands shortly before the October 24th election, we don't know yet who will emerge to form BC's next government. Rest assured that, no matter who wins, ABLE BC will be connecting with BC's newly-sworn-in Ministers as soon as possible to advocate on your behalf.

We are traditionally among the first stakeholders to meet with every new Attorney General (as the Minister responsible for BC's liquor industry, including the LDB and LCRB). Our first priority is ensuring government understands the economic impact of BC's industry, the staggering financial crisis this global pandemic has created in your businesses, and the necessary balanced supports that will help your businesses remain solvent and keeping British Columbians employed.

Fighting for You and Your Business

BC's hospitality industry is in serious peril. The latest surveys still suggest that up to 50% of pubs, bars, and restaurants are at risk of permanent closure by the end of the year. While the federal government has provided small business supports such as wage subsidies, rent subsidies, small business grants, and loans, our provincial government partners have supported our hospitality members with temporary permissions aimed at reducing costs and increasing opportunities for profitability.

While each of these is crucial, obviously we have much work to do. Our survival depends on it. In the coming months, you can expect us to continue fighting to extend and expand federal supports while also advocating for further provincial liquor policy reforms that will have a real impact on your business.

For our liquor retail members, we're focusing on extending the moratorium on new LRS licences (currently set to expire in July 2022) for a further 10 years, securing permission for private retailers to sell directly to hospitality customers (i.e. pubs, bars, nightclubs, restaurants, etc.), ending anti-competitive BC Liquor Store business practices such as exclusive access to in-demand product, and a guaranteed commitment to the "one kilometre" rule.

For our hospitality members, our focus remains on securing changes to the current Public Health Order that mandates you cannot sell alcohol on-premise past 10:00 pm.

I know how hard you have all worked to meet or exceed the most stringent Public Health protocols in the history of our province. And I've heard clearly that this decision caused immediate financial harm to thousands of hospitality businesses that were already on the brink. Given that we've seen no proof that late-night liquor service leads to increased transmission of COVID-19, the 10:00 pm cut off continues to feel both arbitrary and unfairly punitive.

Additionally, we are also pushing to secure a permanent hospitality price, analyzing the impact of selling alcohol with take-out/delivery meals, and working with BC's municipalities to extend temporary licenced areas (including winterizing temporary patios).

Throughout the campaign, we continued working with government bureaucrats at the LCRB, LDB, and Provincial Health Officer, Dr. Bonnie Henry. I also continued working as Chair of the Business Technical Advisory Panel (BTAP), the group of liquor industry association executives appointed by BC's Attorney General to provide expert liquor policy advice. BTAP has been instrumental in securing the various temporary policy changes that are supporting your operations every day.

Membership Dues

Look, we hate to ask. I know how severely your finances have been impacted by this crisis; it's put a strain on our finances, too. We recently sent renewal invoices to all current members and would greatly appreciate prompt payment. If you need to make payment arrangements, please don't hesitate to contact me at jeff@ablebc.ca.

If you're not currently a member, please know that we need you—now more than ever. As those of you who subscribe to our free Industry Update e-newsletter know, we're the only association that has your back. And I cannot stress enough how vital it is that our industry be represented by a strong, united voice. Your membership ensures that we can continue to advocate for your interests every single day. We've been here for you throughout this pandemic, and—with your continued support—we'll continue to be here for you in the days ahead.

Drop me a line any time at jeff@ablebc.ca if you have any questions or concerns.

Wholesale Sales – April to June 2020

	Litres	increase/decrease over previous quarter	increase/decrease over previous year
Beer - BC Commercial	39,298,901	+ 28.5%	- 2.6%
Beer - BC Micro Brew	6,875,527	+ 6.8%	- 11.6%
Beer - BC Regional	12,445,824	+ 13.8%	- 8.6%
Beer - Import	9,474,890	+ 23.9%	- 13.7%
Cider - Domestic & Import	5,349,866	+ 40.9%	- 3.9%
Coolers	20,833,659	+ 108.9%	+ 48.1%
Gin	566,408	+ 36.6%	+ 10.5%
Rum	941,875	+ 17.3%	+ 12.6%
Tequila	330,493	+ 43.1%	+ 6.9%
Vodka	2,624,770	+ 19.0%	+ 11.3%
Whiskey	1,891,115	+ 10.3%	+ 8.0%
Wine - BC	11,117,001	+ 20.3%	+ 8.6%
Wine - Canadian	304,238	+ 35.1%	+76.4%
Wine - USA	1,845,215	+12.8%	+6.7%
Wine Total	20,331,634	+15.5%	+5.4%

Hospitality Sales – April to June 2020

	Litres	increase/decrease over previous quarter	increase/decrease over previous year
Beer - BC Commercial	1,601,309	- 64.5%	-74.9%
Beer - BC Micro Brew	833,126	- 63.8%	-72.4%
Beer - BC Regional	967,439	- 61.1%	-72.7%
Beer - Import	490,162	- 67.8%	-78.4%
Cider - Domestic & Import	167,296	- 62.1%	-76.1%
Coolers	201,500	- 15.5%	-45.5%
Gin	17,508	- 73.2%	-80.1%
Rum	27,570	- 70.6%	-70.6%
Tequila	29,310	- 70.3%	-70.3%
Vodka	71,387	- 74.6%	-74.6%
Whiskey	28,636	- 75.2%	-79.1%
Wine - BC	343,531	- 66.9%	-78.1%
Wine - Canadian	13,385	+ 0.6%	-56.1%
Wine - USA	39,839	- 73.8%	-77.3%
Wine Total	582,840	- 68.1%	-77.6%

Coolers continued their strong sales growth in both the wholesale and hospitality markets, with wholesale showing a very strong 48% growth. This was spread through all segments of coolers including malt-based, spirit and wine/fruit, although malt-based cooler sales were down from last year. Canadian red, white and rosé wine sales in liquor stores were very strong compared to the previous quarter and red wine sales were much higher than last year's figures, which may be attributable to BC's cool spring since consumers didn't switch over to white and rosé wines as soon as they might in hot weather.

It's no surprise to see the collapse of the hospitality market during COVID. All categories suffered severe decreases, yet coolers was still the strongest category as patrons may feel more comfortable ordering RTDs than drinks mixed at the bar. Canadian rosé was responsible for the actual increase in sales over last quarter as that category alone jumped a staggering 37,929.41% in one quarter!



KEEPING AN EYE ON THE BOTTOM LINE

BY REBECCA HARDIN

Business owners who succeed have learned that you can't depend on luck or a changing tide of fate to keep your business afloat. It takes work: not just hard work, but smart work! The answers to owners' financial woes are found in their financial statements and spreadsheets and the data doesn't lie.

Unfortunately, Failure Is an Option

Roughly a third of Canadian businesses fail by the end of year five (33.2% in the goods-producing sector and 36.7% in the service-producing sector). By the end of year ten, 52.2% and 57.1% of businesses fail in the goods sector and service sector, respectively. Those statistics are enough to give any business owner more than a few sleepless nights and grey hairs.

According to "Birth and Survival Rates over the Period 2002-2014" (published in 2018 by Government of Canada), retail trade and food services had amongst the lowest survival rates at the end of five and ten years compared to other industries.

A few more sleepless nights... and grey hairs!

Why Retail Liquor & On-Premise Businesses Fail

Businesses fail for a variety of reasons. Poor planning, lack of market demand, bad management, cash flow problems, increased competition,

poor budgeting and forecasting, poor customer service, lack of marketing, and inflexibility in ever-changing economies and markets are but a handful of the most-cited causes for businesses to fail.

In my years as a liquor business advisor in BC I've seen many businesses come and go, and a few that come and stay! What is it that gives these businesses staying power?

Much of their success is owed to the proactive management of expenses, cash flow, cost of goods, inventory, staff management and training, and marketing. In my experience, successful retail liquor and on-premise liquor businesses build in these financial and operational management measures rather than using them reactively, after problems are noticed. From the very

beginning, they keep their eyes on the bottom line and always try to anticipate what the future risks will be.

Planning & Budgeting

Business growth doesn't usually happen of its own accord.

Growth depends on the hard work put into planning and budgeting—the visualization of growth that gives business owners clearly defined goals to move towards. Owners must plan in order to meet their goals, including planning budgets.

ANTICIPATE WHAT THE
FUTURE RISKS WILL BE.

A typical planning cycle looks like this:

1. Review past performance.
2. Identify financial growth opportunities and threats to growth.
3. Review previous period's budget and identify successes, failures and causes of both.
4. Create an annual plan, which explicitly states financial and operational goals.
5. Create a budget based on data and insights from past performance.
6. Monitor performance monthly (compare budget with actuals).
7. Analyze why you hit or missed a budget based on targets.
8. Adjust operations to hit or come close to projections (or adjust budget if it was unrealistic).
9. Go back to step 1.

Depending on your industry, profit margins can be razor thin.

In BC, full service restaurants, bars, pubs, lounges (drinking places) have low margins compared to retail liquor stores:

Retail liquor stores: 26.9%

Full-service restaurants: 1.4%

Drinking places: 3.7%

Stats Canada operating profit margin figures above are calculated by subtracting expenses from revenue and expressing the difference as a percentage of operating revenue.

As you can see, restaurants and bars really have to watch every penny, because profit margins are small. That doesn't mean that liquor stores are instant money makers! Margins are relative to revenue and expenses. Anything a business can do to increase revenue and decrease expenses affects the bottom line.

Wage Expense Management

After cost of goods sold, salaries are the biggest operating expense for Canada's retail businesses.

Adequate staffing is always a challenge. Correct staffing levels are critical to how smoothly your business operates and for customer satisfaction. If you have too few staff on a shift, work may not get done and customers may be frustrated. If you have too many employees on shift, you're paying for labour you don't need.

It's easy to overlook schedule planning, although doing so can dramatically reduce your business's second biggest expense. You need staff when the store is busy, not so much when things are slow. The answers are in past years' revenue figures (daily, weekly, and monthly). Frequently reviewing sales data can help determine adequate staffing at different points throughout the year. An easy way to do it is to plot weekly sales on a graph, so you can easily see sales peaks and valleys. You can then guesstimate the number of employees you'll need in a given day, week, or month.

Cash Flow Management

Positive cash flow is an indicator of a business's health. Good cash flow allows businesses to meet debts, purchase inventory, equipment, and goods and services needed to run the business. There are several ways to increase cash flow:

1. Reduce accounts receivables.
2. Increase inventory turnover. Because you pay for inventory, if it's sitting on shelves unsold, it's robbing your cash flow. As an example, it's sometimes better to discount a product that brings in cash quickly rather than wait for it to sell at full retail price. The longer product remains unsold, the more money it is costing you.



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3. Negotiate longer terms with suppliers.
4. Continually audit inventory for winners and losers.
5. Review bank fees and point-of-sale terminal fees at least annually. It's amazing how much cash outflow results from ignoring hidden fees.
6. Review carrying fees and ensure all credit cards are paid monthly to avoid interest charges. Many licensees purchase inventory on credit. Who doesn't love all those points! BUT the points are worthless if you don't pay off your card monthly. Consider a line of credit (which typically has far lower interest rates than major credit cards) for inventory purchases or to pay down credit.

Cost of Goods & Inventory Audits

Track wholesale product costs closely and ensure retail pricing is up to date in your POS. Manufacturer's cost and wholesale price promotions frequently change. Each time inventory comes in, review invoices and update prices accordingly. Don't leave old pricing in place on products that sell well.

Cautiously participate in the BDLDB Wholesale Price Promotion (WPP) program (formerly called the "Limited Time Offer" program). Although purchasing bulk WPP inventory can significantly help your business maximize profit, doing so can backfire resulting in unsold inventory and depleted cash flow. As always, let previous years' sales guide your inventory purchases.

For more details, read "Maximizing Purchasing on LTO", in The Publican, Winter 2016 edition.

Staff Management and Training

Employees that lack skills or knowledge or who are ambivalent about your business's success, are a hidden "cost" that can affect customer satisfaction and your business's financial performance. Hiring experienced employees is one way to spend less time (and money) ensuring employees have requisite skill and knowledge. Training bonuses are another way to motivate employees to strive to improve your business. You win. They win.

Marketing

For some business owners, identifying marketing benefits is akin to grasping a wisp of smoke. Benefits are often intangible or vague. When times are tough (the current pandemic for example), business owners set their sights on what they consider superfluous spending. Marketing budgets, unfortunately, are often the first to go.

"Don't do it!" says **Laura Ramos**, VP, Principal Analyst and **Keith Johnston**, VP, Group Director of **Forrester Research** in the podcast "The High Cost of Cutting Marketing Budgets Now". Forrester predicts that US marketing spend will fall by about 28% by the end of 2021. Ramos and Johnson argue that cutting marketing is "ultimately detrimental" to brand and customer experience and will cost owners revenue in the long run. Companies with foresight are doubling down on customer-focused marketing efforts. Think ahead and plan.

Running any business is complex and difficult, but don't ever forget to keep an eye on your company numbers, so your bottom line stays healthy and your business is around for years to come.

Rebecca Hardin is Lead Advisor with Thrive Liquor & Cannabis Advisors, www.thriveadvisors.ca 

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» LDB UPDATE

by BC Liquor Distribution Branch

'Game Changer' Takes Shape with Temporary Hospitality Pricing Model

The **BC Liquor Distribution Branch (LDB)** has completed the roll out of a temporary pricing model for hospitality licensees, allowing them to purchase liquor at the LDB wholesale price until March 31, 2021. Hospitality licensees are calling it a 'game changer to survive the hard times.'

The initiative to provide immediate and much needed assistance to the hospitality and tourism sectors was announced on June 16 and took effect on July 20, one of several policy and regulatory changes enacted by government to support sectors hard hit by the pandemic.

"The LDB is committed to working with its industry partners and supporting them whenever possible and this was no exception," says **Sairose Fisher**, Acting Executive Director of LDB's Wholesale Liquor Operations. "However, in order to provide the emergency price relief, we had to make immediate and significant changes to LDB's complex pricing system during a pandemic and the busiest time of the year. The hospitality pricing model was a full team effort at the LDB where every department had to push aside other projects and dedicate round-the-clock resources to make the system-wide change in a tight timeframe."

In an effort to deliver the temporary pricing model and provide immediate support to the hospitality industry while maintaining regular operations, LDB project teams rolled out the system changes in two phases.

The first phase of the system changes was delivered by July 20, activating wholesale

prices on 60,000 SKUs for all hospitality licensees at point of sale. Upon go-live there was an immediate outpouring of industry support and appreciation, defining the pricing change as a significant relief effort to the survival of hospitality businesses across the province.

Jeff Guignard, Executive Director of the **Alliance of Beverage Licensees (ABLE BC)** thanked the government on behalf of the hospitality industry writing, "Your recent historic announcement that hospitality businesses will be able to purchase at wholesale price is overwhelmingly significant for BC's 8500 liquor-serving hospitality businesses. We have already heard from industry that this single change could very well mean the difference between near certain insolvency and a real chance of economic recovery. It is that significant."

"We value our customer relationships and all of us at the LDB wanted to support those deeply impacted by the pandemic," adds Fisher. "It was heartening to receive such positive feedback."

Once the new prices were activated at point of sale, the second phase of the project was launched and focused on giving customers online access to hospitality prices as these are not posted on store shelves. This system-wide change involved upgrading and relaunching the Hospitality Product Catalogue in the hospitality section of the LDB Wholesale website.

At the same time, the LDB worked to register and onboard hospitality customers to the LDB Hospitality Product Catalogue to enable access to the enhanced tools and

resources including:

- A searchable database of more than 60,000 SKUs with detailed product attributes and real-time hospitality pricing information
- A Favourites tool to save frequently purchased products, which can be exported or printed
- Hospitality product price promotions and real-time wholesale price changes
- A downloadable MS Excel hospitality price list that provides past, current, and future pricing
- A calendar noting upcoming price change effective dates
- Two tutorial videos explaining how to use all the enhanced tools and resources available in the hospitality section of the LDB Wholesale website

"Hospitality customers now have on-demand access to detailed product information and pricing details at their fingertips as well as useful tools and resources to help them with their purchasing decisions," explains Fisher. "We've designed the Hospitality Product Catalogue to be an all-in-one online resource centre that can be accessed anytime for those working in bars and restaurants."

More information and registration details for the LDB Hospitality Product Catalogue are available at <https://wholesale.bcldb.com/hospitality>

The LDB and its lines of business were deemed essential services at the outset of the global pandemic. It has adapted workplace practices to keep employees and customers safe all while maintaining operations and uninterrupted supply.



DIGITIZING YOUR STORE

BY AMY WATKINS

Photos Courtesy of: JAK's Beer Wine & Spirits

New challenges can bring new opportunities and with the designation of liquor stores as essential services during COVID, this year has brought the chance of offering online sales and delivery to increase revenue in uncertain times. Combine this with the Government of BC allowing bars and restaurants to deliver liquor with food orders, and now is an ideal time to think about moving into ecommerce and home delivery.

Taking your store online can be as simple as signing up for a third-party app that will integrate with your existing systems to enable online ordering and home delivery. It could also involve a more long-term solution of making your website into an ecommerce store that can provide another revenue stream and repurpose staff for alternative roles.

Using Third-Party Apps

Pre-COVID, the **Fountainhead Pub**

in Vancouver's bustling Davie Village didn't offer any online options and so it closed when COVID hit. "Initially, we just closed our doors," says **Michel Duprat**, Managing Partner at the Fountainhead Pub. "Given the density of the neighbourhood and the available options out there, we remained closed until the government allowed us to reopen."

However, when it came to reopening, the team wanted to give customers an online option if they were nervous about going out to pubs. They chose to use **Shipt**, **Uber Eats**, and **xDine** to provide an online ordering and delivery option.

**MAKING MONEY IS
A CHALLENGE WHEN
DELIVERY SERVICES
CHARGE A 30% FEE.**

Other delivery apps available include **SkipTheDishes** and **DoorDash**, with some having options to tip establishments directly. New Vancouver-based apps such as **Fromto** and **Perk Hero** have also recently launched as a response to the higher mark-ups, offering lower fees than the global apps (closer to 5% than the typical 20-30%).

Using a third-party app or system means that the infrastructure is easily implemented and has been set up to make it easy. However, there is a literal price to pay for that service and for businesses that are struggling with sales, it can be an extra hit on resources.

Making money is a challenge when delivery services charge a 30% fee. "Their original pitch was that their service brings incremental income," says Duprat. "With COVID, it could become a larger part of our income, and 30% really takes away from the bottom line." He advises businesses to research the apps and collectively try to

reduce the mark-up on home deliveries: "Shop around. As a group, we should all start pushing back."

Building an Ecommerce Store

While ordering and delivery apps take care of the logistics of running an online store, there is a way to maximize profits by setting up your own system and repurposing staff to deal with orders and deliveries. Using ready-to-go ecommerce platforms such as Shopify or Square, can make it simple to set up an online store and manage deliveries.

Using Third Party Apps and Internal Systems

Combining third party apps with an internal system can give you the best of both worlds. **Dennis Dong**, Director of Marketing at **JAK's Beer Wine & Spirits**, led the jaks.com project that took the company from not having any internal or third-party delivery options to becoming a fully-fledged ecommerce store.

"Increasing our digital footprint was in the long-term marketing strategy and planning was already underway," says Dong. "However, when COVID hit, along with the uncertainty around business continuity, it fast tracked our initial ecommerce timelines and it quickly changed to immediate execution."

Helped by the relaxing of some liquor laws, such as the extension of operating hours from 9:00 am- 11:00 pm to 7:00 am- 11:00 pm, and access to experienced and knowledgeable new hires who unfortunately were laid off in the hospitality industry, the time was right to create an online store for the BC-based liquor retailer.

"We took a two-pronged approach: third party online sales and enabling our own site for ecommerce at jaks.com," explains Dong. "We were already in discussions with a backend provider to help develop and host our ecommerce site. When COVID hit, our timeline to take jaks.com live went from a cushy six-month schedule down to four weeks. In a nutshell, our biggest challenge was the integration of the ecommerce backend with JAK's POS provider, along with the development of our delivery partner network. All of our partners worked together and burned the midnight oil to make it happen on a tight timeline."

The team opted to release jaks.com in waves. First, it was released only in Vancouver and, once the kinks were worked out there, it was released to the rest of the Lower Mainland, and finally to all JAK's markets.

To test out going digital, the team made use of third-party apps in the beginning. "In order for us to get selling digitally immediately, we partnered with a third-party platform (UberEats) and developed an online presence on their platform, with a limited SKU base," describes Dong. "This allowed us to dip our toes in the online world while our own site was being developed. If given the luxury of time, and if you're going the route of using an external delivery service, vet your prospective providers closely. Check peer references."

Faced with extremely shortened timelines at the beginning due to COVID, POS integration challenges, and the development of the delivery driver network and integration within the online system, the team also had to ensure the health and safety of all people involved in processing the order.

The advantages have outweighed the challenges though, with positive customer feedback helping to increase revenue during a potentially tough time. "It's fast and convenient," says Dong. "It also allows customers at higher risk with COVID to continue shopping with JAK's from the safety and comfort of their homes."

With the future looking uncertain in terms of COVID, digitizing your store can help to bring your brand to people who may not be venturing outside at the moment, while utilizing staff from the hospitality industry who may be looking for alternative income. **P**



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WHAT TO CONSIDER BEFORE LEAVING YOUR BUSINESS

BY JOHN LAWSON

There's a 100% certainty that you're eventually leaving your business. Will it be on your terms?

After spending the last 40 years working with business owners and being one myself, I've seen some of the mistakes and successes that entrepreneurs make when selling their business.

With that in mind, here are five things every entrepreneur should consider while building and before selling their business.

The Lipstick on a Pig Trick

This does not work.

If your business is not up to snuff, any informed buyer will spot it." Prettying up" the business so that a buyer submits a letter of intent and signs your non-disclosure to have a deeper look, will simply end up in disappointment and frustration at the time wasted as the buyer walks away.

If a company is not as good on the inside as it looks on the outside, you MAY get a reduced offer. Usually though, the buyer will walk away because they now wonder what else is not as advertised.

If you are going to all the work of being a successful entrepreneur, go that extra step and build it to create real long-term value.

**IT IS GOOD BUSINESS TO
ALWAYS BE IN POSITION
TO SELL FOR TOP DOLLAR.**

50 Ways to Leave Your Lover

As Paul Simon alludes to, you can "leave your lover" in a lot of different ways. Let's narrow it down to two categories.

1. Planned – This is where you have decided you want to move on from your business. The successor will be family, a third party, or employees.

Often the cleanest, easiest and most profitable thing to do is selling to a third party. Family and employee purchases can lead to discounting to make it work, along with real and perceived fairness issues by siblings who are not involved in the business.

2. Unplanned – Death, disability, unsolicited offers, and sudden changes in business landscape (i.e. COVID-19) are the most common catalysts for an unplanned exit.

A normal reaction to this is saying "well an unsolicited offer would be great!" The truth is, it is only a good situation if you are prepared. If you're not prepared, you likely aren't getting maximum value on an offer. You also may not be "ready" psychologically, financially, or both.

Death or disability aren't scenarios that anyone wants, but good planning can mitigate some of the risks.

Sudden changes in business conditions can have a devastating effect, as we are currently seeing play out in this new COVID world. Business owners and the leadership teams must have processes in place to measure, assess, and respond to changes in their environment.

Build to Sell

Even if you never have any intention of selling your business, it is good business to always be in position to sell for top dollar. It means you will be more profitable, enjoy working more, and probably have more time for yourself outside of the business. It also means your family, employees, and business's future is well taken care of.

Let's start with the basics of building to sell. This only works if you are brutally honest and constructive on assessing the strengths and weaknesses of your business. You may know your business and industry better than anyone else, but can you honestly step back and view it constructively? If not, get help.

Your goal is to make yourself irrelevant. A buyer wants a business that can be purchased and run as an investment. A buyer wants a functioning team in place, so the clientele doesn't notice a change and the business does not skip a beat.

Work ON your business, not IN your business. This is age old advice, but owners get sucked into the minutia all the time.

I often hear: "We can't afford not to work in the business." Well, you can't afford to not work on the business either. Carve out the time and get the right help to lay the plans to your irrelevance. What so many business owners find as they make this transition is they are re-energized by the planning and newfound growth opportunities.

Figure Out Your Goals

The goal of making yourself irrelevant often leads to an incredible business model.

Now turn your thoughts to personal goals. What do you and your family want to do?

These goals then lead to other very important questions: How much money do you need, and how are you going to fund this? How do you do this in the most tax effective manner? How do you pass this on to the next generation? If you have a passion for giving, what is the best way to do that?

Let's tie this back to the unsolicited offer scenario. If you don't know your personal or family goals, then you don't know how much you

need, which means you have no idea if an unsolicited offer is good for you or not.

I'll throw out another kink that many don't realize until it is too late. The selling price and what you get as after-tax dollars can be two very different numbers. You must understand your situation and plan for the most efficient way for you to structure your affairs. It is not what you get, it is what you keep that's important.

Setting this up correctly can mean hundreds of thousands of dollars or more in savings, so take the time to figure this out with your team of professionals.

Find your Dream Team

The very best investment you can make is in building a great advisory team to work with. Most business owners use an accountant and lawyer only when needed. The shift in thinking needs to be forward-looking, not backwards. Move away from dealing with situations as individual transactions and towards planning and viewing from a holistic approach with your advisors as a team.

Work with a wealth management team that will lead with planning first at all levels; financial, estate, tax, risk, philanthropic, investment, and business planning so that they all tie together and are done in consultation with your current legal and accounting professionals. For some, the additional services a family office can provide make sense too. Any other required skill sets can be brought in as required by your core team.

Planning and good advice is crucial to you and your family to make informed decisions. Good planning takes time, so start now.

If you have any questions, email us at: sanafamilyoffice@assante.com or visit our website at www.sanafamilyoffice.com. P

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PLAYING BY THE PANDEMIC RULES

When things are changing all the time, how do you keep staff and guests safe?

BY JOANNE SASVARI

By now we all know the drill. Bigger spaces, fewer faces. Wash your hands. Wear a mask. Be kind, be calm, be safe.

Or do we? Judging by the way some guests behave, especially after a few drinks, the rules around dining out during a pandemic are still a surprise to some people.

As **Margot Baloro**, general manager of F&B at **Forage** and **BeSIDE Forage** at Vancouver's **Listel Hotel** says, "There isn't really a strong public campaign about how to dine in restaurants."

That puts the onus on an establishment's employees not just to enforce the new rules, but to explain them in the first place. Not surprisingly, this has caused conflict and confusion, adding to an already stressful situation.

"It's not good for mental health for anyone," says **Susi Foerg**, the owner of **Rustic Reel Brewing Company** in Kelowna. "It's so incredibly frustrating and aggravating. In these times, I'm so thankful for masks because I just can't smile anymore."

"The inability of people to interact has destroyed what a pub is. It's changed how we socialize," says **Paul Hadfield**, owner of **Spinnaker's Gastro Pub** in Victoria. Still, he feels that this is an opportunity to change things for the better—if bars and restaurants get things right. "It's all going to come down to consumer confidence."

The Ever-changing Rules

Since the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a global pandemic in March, BC's pubs, bars, and restaurants have faced a shifting set of rules and restrictions. Indoor dining was first banned, then brought back in June, but in a different landscape of social distancing, contact tracing, and endless disinfecting. Tables were removed to make space. Traffic flow was reconfigured. More recently, last call was moved up to 10:00 pm to avoid late-night mishaps.

Above all, every establishment has had to create a COVID-19 protocol and follow it, or risk being closed down.

Guests, on the other hand, have only to give a name and contact number, limit their group to six people, then stay in their chair once seated. And yet, Foerg says, "On a daily basis, this entire summer there were people who just weren't willing to follow the rules."

Hadfield was one of 50 representatives of pubs, bars, and restaurants to consult with the restaurant association on the new COVID-19 protocols, including a new poster that helps establishments communicate those rules to their customers.

"What it comes down to is, if people are not in your bubble, you need to stay apart," he notes. "And what we're seeing today is people are just not obeying the rules. The consequence is the whole sector suffers. What we're saying to government is, 'You need to go after the bad guys, and we're here to help you.'"

The First Point of Contact

The biggest point of conflict is often right at the door.

Guests are aware of the COVID rules, says Baloro, but even so, there is confusion, which causes anxiety and sometimes anger. "We just explain to people that this is, of course, to protect the health and safety of all our guests, but also to protect the health and safety of our staff," she says, adding, "We recognize that we have to be as adaptable as possible."

This has been especially hard on the greeter, who often is the first person to tell guests what is expected of them. And that has led to some establishments rethinking how they staff that position.

"Our greeting or host positions, at the restaurant and the winery, at peak times have had to be replaced with senior, experienced staff members to handle the requests and questions from the public," explains **Sarah Lefebvre**, the communications and **Bench Club** manager at **Hester Creek Estate Winery** in Oliver.



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"The majority of the public, during the 2020 tourism season, have been fabulous," she adds. "But there have been a very small minority that have approached the business with negativity and lack of understanding of the Provincial Health Orders set out by the province and BCCDC."

The New Reality

Once guests cross the Rubicon of hand sanitizers and sign-up sheets, they discover a different experience than they're used to, one where dancing, table-hopping, loud music, and ordering at the bar are not allowed. There are good reasons for all this, says Vancouver Coastal Health. For instance, loud music means people have to shout, sending droplets into the air, while moving around gives the virus more opportunity to spread.

That said, the health authority notes that transition is rarely from staff to customer or vice versa; the bigger issue is guests transmitting it to each other. That's why, if someone tests positive in an establishment, it likely won't have to close—as long as it has been following the safety plan. "I wish people could understand that businesses that are following the protocols are just doing their job—and it's working," Foerg says.

There are two subtle but effective tools establishments can use to help implement their safety plan.

The first is clever physical layout. The L-shaped floorplan of Rustic Reel is ideal: Guests enter through the front door then exit through the marketplace around the corner. The challenge is that the space has a number of doors, so socially distancing tables from them is a logistical challenge—one of the reasons Foerg finds it so frustrating when customers move seats. "We need people to obey the rules and keep their chairs where they are or we're going to be back at square one," she says.

The second is flexible staffing. The old Timber location, now home to the casual takeaway BeSIDE Forge, is an ideal space for social distancing, but staff was still needed to control traffic flow. "We don't want people waiting in line, and we don't want people clumping," Barolo notes. "We have a flex team who can move in and out of positions easily. I am wearing a lot of different hats given the day."

Because the responsibilities have changed so fundamentally,

Spinnaker's revised how they approached staffing. They replaced the roles of servers and managers with teams and team leaders, then ensured that everyone would earn a living wage starting at \$20 an hour, receive benefits, and share equally in the tip pool. "Those that are working now recognize that it is a team thing and it's incumbent on everybody to do a good job," Hadfield explains. "We've got a whole new working order. It was an opportunity to wade in and say to everyone, 'This is broken, this doesn't work,' and fix it."

The Long View

Perhaps it's just a matter of time before what now seems outlandish will become habit.

Already, Baloro says, "When it comes to the distancing, the contact information tracing, and the mask wearing, people are getting used to it. The things they're not used to are the no-more-than-six-people-a-table rule and the new liquor hour requirements."

Foerg, too, has seen a shift as the tourists have gone home and the numbers of COVID infections have continued to rise. "When people are out of vacation mode, they are going to behave a bit better," she says. "Going into fall and winter, we'll be in a better place with locals who want to support their establishments."

Still, she'd love to see a survey that determined whether everything possible is being done to inform guests before they enter a bar or restaurant, rather than putting the responsibility on staff.

"There's been a lot of playing mom, playing parent, and I'm pretty much over it," Foerg says. "Everyone gets one warning, and then we say, 'You're going to have to settle up your tab and go.'"

Hadfield, on the other hand, is feeling slightly more optimistic. He thinks the new patios could create dynamic streetscapes, for instance, and hopes for other positive changes.

"I think we all have to look at it as an opportunity. Something has changed and we need to change in response, or we're done," Hadfield says. "It's an opportunity for all of us to reassess how we do what we do, and see how we can make it work—for us and for consumers."

Belgium's Best Local Beers

Beer Name	ABV	Ratebeer Rating
ST. BERNARDUS ABT12	6.46000 (LDB Listing)	100/100
Westmalle		
TRAPPIST WESTMALLE DUBBEL	161860	99/100
TRAPPIST WESTMALLE TRIPEL	161863 (LDB Listing)	99/100
Trappistes Rochefort		
TRAPPIST ROCHEFORT 10	073981	100/100
TRAPPIST ROCHEFORT 8	728071	100/100
TRAPPIST ORVAL	628255	99/100

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by Laura Starr

In 2018, **Mid Island Liquor**, a division of **Mid Island Co-op**, opened their first set of doors in Parksville, a small city 30 minutes north of Nanaimo on Vancouver Island. And these were no small doors. Mid Island Liquor opened a 5000 sq. ft. liquor destination featuring thousands of products (running the gamut of beer, wine, and spirits), educated and knowledgeable staff, and a noticeably endowed walk-in beer fridge. In the few years since, three more locations have opened (Duncan, Nanaimo, and Sayward) with another in the South End of Parksville slated to open in late September 2020.

The mid-Vancouver Island region is not exactly large, so five locations in three years (alongside a global pandemic) is quite the feat! And what is so remarkable about this expansion is the understanding of how much of this business gets funnelled back into the community—instead of profits finding their way off of Vancouver Island.

As a cooperative business model, Mid Island Liquor truly puts the local community at the heart of everything they do. They ensure a percentage of profits are donated to local charities and events. Annually, they return any profits to the co-op members themselves, either as tangible cash or further equity in the business.

Jared Brown, Operations Manager for Mid Island Liquor, enthusiastically speaks to the community mindedness of the co-op business model, adding that their employee roster is entirely island-based—from management to marketing to IT. Brown himself has been an employee with Co-op for 26 years, having moved to Vancouver Island from Alberta in 2018 to open the Parksville store's doors. His tenure with Co-op is representative of his belief in the company model—understandably so. Brown started out bagging at a Co-op in Calgary more than a quarter of a century ago, and now manages operations for five liquor stores, with no sign of his momentum slowing down.

That is the co-op mentality though: take care of your own.

To Brown, the key difference in working under a co-op business model, compared to that of a non-co-op liquor store, is the core fact that you serve your shareholders and represent your community. And so, Brown highly prioritizes customer service and product selection.

Customer service begins with good employees. Brown looks for people who are passionate about retail and sales, and then ensures a minimum standard of training and as much opportunity to educate, develop, and grow within the company. All key staff at Mid Island Liquor



have a WSET 2 education (provided by the company). Brown himself, who has his WSET 3 training, is hoping to soon be certified in teaching some WSET courses, allowing more employees to access formal wine and spirits education. This highlighted focus on staff development leads to a more engaging and meaningful customer experience.

For product selection, the co-op model gives Brown the freedom to really customize each store location to the demographics that it serves. There is no corporate agenda per se, and instead, each store is empowered to uniquely serve their markets. Parksville offers over 800 beers, for example, whereas the Duncan location caters more to a crowd of cider and cooler lovers.

Oddly enough, it has been during these last six months of economic crisis that we have really been able to see the true colours of a

co-operative shine through. There is simply no downplaying the severity of the impact this pandemic has had on businesses of all sorts; however, when you are locally owned and managed and have the community and members at the core of your business model, what you end up seeing is a company that took care of its staff during one of the hardest economic hits in Canadian history. "Yes, there was a learning curve to COVID," says Brown. "We closed initially, but maintained pay for our staff, because it was the right thing to do."

Mid Island Liquor continues to grow, with even more locations in the works for 2021, and additional community service offerings making their way to the table, such as in-house customer product training. We look forward to seeing what's next for this ever growing entity. [P](#)



FIVE COCKTAIL TRENDS YOU NEED TO KNOW

In a year of endless pivots, these are the trends that will continue into fall and winter

BY JOANNE SASVARI

Photo Credit: Shutterstock

Ask a bartender what's trendy right now, let alone what they're anticipating for fall, and there will be a sort of awkward silence.

"Obviously cocktail trends are going to be really hard to predict right now," says **Grant Sceney**, the creative beverage director, **Fairmont Pacific Rim**. "We're in a reactive phase."

"There's a lot of quick pivoting," adds **Sabrina Dhaliwal**, bar manager for **Juke Fried Chicken** and its 1980s-inspired offspring **Chickadee**. "What's happening is people are adapting to how to provide the best experience possible for their guests—and still break even."

Since the global pandemic was declared in March, pubs, bars and restaurants have opened and closed their doors, created pop-up patios, inserted fancy room dividers, added takeout to their menus, and changed those menus to adapt, again and again. Now a new 10 pm last call is changing things once more. And who knows what's next?

"I think it's exciting to see how bars and restaurants are evolving to deal with the pandemic," says **Adam Domet**, bar manager for **Pourhouse** in Gastown. "People still want to eat. People still want to go out."

Here are five trends that will last through to 2021. Probably.

Support Local

"I think there is definitely a view to using more local spirits and vermouths," says Domet. "Supporting everything as close to home as we can is super important. The more support we all give to the small guys [creates] a rising tide."

BC has more craft distilleries than the rest of the country combined, and we are producing some excellent, award-winning products. It's not a hardship to sip, say, **Sheringham's** Seaside Gin or **Sons of Vancouver's** No. 82 Amaretto or **Okanagan Spirits'** Laird of Fintry single malt, assuming you can get your hands on it.

And some of the most exciting products are the local vermouths and amaros, which offer complexity and flavour while supporting local farmers. Now that's tasty.

Choose Complex Flavours

"I'm seeing people being adventurous with their palates," Dhaliwal says. "People are becoming a little tired of their own cocktails and cooking, and willing to try new things. Curiosity has increased and I think that's a positive trend, so bartenders can express their creativity a little more."

SUPPORTING EVERYTHING AS CLOSE TO HOME AS WE CAN IS SUPER IMPORTANT.

We're craving big, bold, complex flavours, especially as we move into fall, and one of the best ways to add those to drinks is through fortified and aromatized wines such as vermouths, amaros, sherries, and port, which also happen to be lower in alcohol than spirits.

"I love the idea of low-proof cocktails showcasing sherries and vermouths," explains Domet. "Vermouth gives you so much more capacity to showcase what's in your drink and it gives the bartender so much opportunity to showcase their theatre."

Low-proof drinks have another advantage, he points out. "Keeping drinks lighter in proof is a good way to pace yourself. They keep people at your bar longer, spending more money."

Keep it Simple

Counterintuitively, although guests are craving bold, complex flavours, they are also looking for simplicity.

"The biggest thing is going to be minimalist menus," Sceney says. "The less hands or steps you need to make the drink reduces the risk. As much as you wash your hands, guests don't want to see them over a drink."

Classics are where it's at, he says. They often have only four or five ingredients, but they often include complex products like vermouth and amaro.

"People want to get back to what they know, so in the Lobby Bar we're doing a Martini hour and a Margarita hour," he says, adding, "I think highballs are going to be the big thing, simple refreshing drinks."



Pick Your Poison

Remember how a few years back cocktailing was all about Fernet Branca? Then mezcal had its moment and the last couple of years, it's been all about rye. This year, the trendy spirit is anyone's guess – or maybe no one's.

"It's bourbon and tequila [that] are on the rise," says Domet.

"As we start getting into cooler months, we'll see more darker spirits," notes Dhaliwal. "I hope it's Cognac. Quality over quantity."

"I think scotch is making a different approach," says Sceney. "Instead of being an old man's drink, it's being used in tropical drinks and also in highballs. It's more of a versatile spirit than people think it is."

In other words, there is no dominant spirit, which means everything is on the table.

Go Beyond the Bar

This past summer, pubs, bars, and restaurants came up with a wide range of creative solutions that kept their guests safe and the taps flowing. Turns out, some of these initiatives were a lot of fun, too. And who isn't craving that right now?

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Take **The Keefer Bar** in Gastown, which turned an empty lot next door into the Keefer Yard, with socially distanced bench seating and a mini-putting green.

"I think the Keefer Yard is killing it right now with their slushy drinks, like the slushie Rosemary Gimlet or Penicillin," says Dhaliwal. "That's super fun and delicious."

The expanded patios in different communities have been a big hit, too. Pubs that can find a way to add some heat lamps and rain protection outside have a definite advantage come the cooler weather.

"We, for example, have the patio out front and we're looking at ways of keeping it open all year round," Sceney says. "People will start thinking about that more."

Of course, the place people feel most comfortable is at home, which is why cocktail kits were such a big hit in spring—and are making a comeback for fall.

"We were the first to create these cocktail-in-a-jar mixes, and there are so many amazing kits in the city right now, we're working on upgrading to make it more interesting," describes Dhaliwal.

And RTDs (ready-to-drink coolers) could have been made for this moment: "If you can't go to your favourite bar, instead of being a home bartender you can pick up a sixpack and you're good to go," Sceney says.

As For What's Out . . .

"Guests being rude to servers. That was never cool, but especially now," says Dhaliwal, who, like so many hospitality workers has been dismayed by the belligerence of guests unhappy with the new safety protocols.

After all, she says, "We just want our guests to be happy." **P**

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What is the BC Ale Trail?

The BC Ale Trail is a marketing campaign showcasing British Columbia as a global destination for tourists and craft beer enthusiasts. We're working closely with Destination BC on a recovery plan to stimulate the province's economy by inspiring travel planning through self-guided itineraries that showcase craft beer all across BC.

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Fresh Hop Beers Offer a Unique Taste of the Harvest

Every September beer lovers await the arrival of a very special style of beer. Fresh hop beers are highly anticipated because they can only be produced once a year during the hop harvest. Add to that the fact that the fresh hop flavours that appear in those beers don't last very long, and it's obvious why this ephemeral style generates so much excitement.

Hops are flower cones that grow on long hop-bines that climb several metres in height. Typically, the cones are dried and processed into pellets so that they can be stored for several months before being used as an ingredient in beer. To make fresh hop beers, however, brewers scramble to get freshly picked hops directly from the farms and into their brew kettles—ideally within 24 hours—before they begin to spoil.

Fresh hop beers showcase bright, grassy flavours and a distinctly fresh quality that is not present in dried hops. These beers are also often called “wet hopped” beers because they are still dripping with the succulent oils that contribute so much aroma, flavour, and bitterness to beer. However, these volatile flavour compounds break down quickly, so fresh hop beers should be refrigerated and consumed immediately. This is not a beer to cellar!

The first fresh hop beer produced commercially in BC was **Driftwood Brewery's** Sartori Harvest IPA, which dates back to 2009. In fact, Driftwood brewed its first batch of Sartori before it ever brewed Fat Tug IPA, which it is now best known for. The name of the beer comes from the **Sartori Hop Ranch** in Chilliwack. While some breweries use different hops in their fresh hop beers every year, Driftwood always uses Centennial hops from Sartori.

“Part of our commitment to the Sartori project is that we are exploring a single hop variety from a single plot of land,” explains Driftwood's co-owner, **Jason Meyer**. “We really want to celebrate the year-to-year changes that might occur.”

While the Sartori Harvest IPA is definitely the most highly sought after fresh hop beer in BC each fall, lots of other breweries are making their own fresh hop beers this year, too. Driftwood's neighbour in Victoria, **Hoyne Brewing**, produces Wolf Vine Wet Hopped Pale Ale each fall. **Sean Hoyne** and his wife **Chantal O'Brien** drove a brewery truck over to Pender Island in early September and loaded it with 700 lbs. of freshly picked Cascade and Sterling hops at the **Hope Bay Hop Farm**, then caught the ferry back to Victoria to fill the brew kettle.

One of the co-owners of **Backcountry Brewing** in Squamish is also an owner of the **Maple Bay Hop Farm** on Vancouver Island. That connection results in the Maple Bay IPA, a fresh hop beer made with Cascade hops from the Cowichan Valley farm.

Over in Kamloops, **Red Collar Brewing** will use Cashmere and Comet hops from **Bredenhof Hop Farms** in Abbotsford in its Hop Comet Hazy Fresh Hopped Pale Ale, and Bright Eye Brewing also has plans for a fresh hop IPA brewed with Comet hops.

In Vancouver, several breweries are releasing fresh hop beers this fall. **33 Acres Brewing** brewed two: a Double IPA with fresh Cashmere and a Hazy IPA with fresh Comet hops. Nearby, **Faculty Brewing** also made two different fresh hop beers: Cascade Fresh

Hopped Sour and Cashmere Fresh Hopped Pale Ale. **R&B Brewing** brewed three fresh hop beers using hops from **Myrtle Meadows Farm** in Pemberton: So Fresh So Green West Coast IPA (brewed with Cascade hops); So Fresh So Stolen—their Stolen Bike Lager dry hopped with fresh Saaz hops; and So Fresh So Hazy—their Hipster Haze Hazy IPA with fresh Comet hops.

Main Street Brewing's take on the fresh hop style is the Screaming Sasquatch Fresh Hop Tart IPA, which was made with fresh Sasquatch hops that were flash frozen with liquid nitrogen and then smashed, releasing more lupulin character. A similar process was used for a special Langley Loop collaboration beer that was brewed at **Farm Country Brewing** in early September. The Hoppy Tonk Fresh Hopped Golden Ale was dry hopped with fresh Tahoma hops that were frozen with liquid nitrogen and then smashed, providing notes of lemon, grapefruit zest, and wild cedar.

This short list just scratches the surface of fresh hop beers produced in BC. And while there have been events that celebrate BC's fresh hop beers in the past, including Fresh To Death in Victoria and the BC Hop Fest in Abbotsford, pandemic event restrictions mean we all have to settle for tasting these ultra-seasonal beers at home. The good news is that there are so many of them to try.



Photo Courtesy of Hoyne Brewing

Liquor Modernization Project

Everyone at the **Liquor and Cannabis Regulation Branch (LCRB)** is concerned for the individuals, families, businesses, and communities that have been, and continue to be, affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

That's why, in response to the crisis and the Provincial Health Officer's March 2020 declaration of a public health emergency, the LCRB worked quickly across government and immediately consulted with our Business Technical Advisory Panel (BTAP) partners to enact several temporary measures to help mitigate the many challenges that the liquor and hospitality industries were facing during this unprecedented time. More information about these temporary measures is available on the LCRB's website: www.gov.bc.ca/liquorregulationandlicensing.

In addition to this emergency work, we have also kept our focus on our commitment to improving business operations and service delivery. In light of the new environment we all find ourselves in, with more businesses moving online or providing online options for their clients, we recognized the importance of continuing our work to improve our client's experience.

One of these improvements included the launch of our new online licensing portal, through our Liquor Modernization Project. The online portal modernizes and streamlines the LCRB's existing application and administrative processes associated with liquor licensing and supports.

The user-friendly system is available 24/7 and is securely accessed by licensees and local governments using Business BCeID and allows licensees and local governments to complete their portion of the liquor licensing process digitally.

This shift from paper to online systems will help improve our service delivery and better meet our clients' business needs by modernizing how licensees and partners access our services. Using the portal, licensees can submit applications, renew licences, and pay application and renewal fees via computer, phone or tablet and local governments

are able to review complete applications, sign for receipt of an application, and download application packages.

The new online system also ensures timely service delivery, enabling same-day processing for renewals and ensuring that new applications are reviewed promptly upon intake. As well, the system provides licensees and partners with automated notifications, in real-time, to let them know they are moving to the next stage of the licensing process, or whether an action is required on their part. Furthermore, the portal will provide enhanced services, giving users greater access to information and services related to their licences or applications.

Although work on the online portal was already underway, the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the need to provide online and multi-channel services to our clients and stakeholders. Moving liquor licensing online will help our clients better manage their business, which we hope will assist in rebuilding and strengthening the liquor and hospitality industries as we progress through this crisis.

The LCRB kicked-off the Liquor Modernization Project by launching online portal features for catering and wine store licensees in April 2020. To-date, licensees currently use the online portal for catering licences and wine store licences, and it's also the application portal for the recently launched Temporary Expanded Service Area Authorizations. We will continue to gradually move more licence types online over the coming months.

As we move forward, we'll be providing licensees and partners with more information, including how to access the portal, as each new licence type moves to the online system. More information on the project's progression can be found on the LCRB's website, as well as a complete list of the licence types that are currently available through the portal. The LCRB will also continue to complete system enhancements and feature improvements until the end of the fiscal year.

We remain committed to continuing to do all we can to support all British Columbians during this unprecedented time and to improving our service delivery for our clients and partners as we all work towards recovery.

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THE DELIVERY DILEMMA

When things are changing all the time, how do you keep staff and guests safe?

BY LAURA STARR

To Dash, or not to Dash? The choice to use a food delivery service app, such as **DoorDash**, **Uber Eats**, or **SkipTheDishes**, is a decision many pubs have already bought into and rolled out as part of the “pivoting” tactic we became so familiar with in the early days of COVID. To call it a choice though, seems a bit of a stretch. Food and beverage establishments already run on extremely tight margins, especially with food costs, so when pubs suddenly had to adapt to food delivery and takeout, a concept that has never really been a part of their business strategy, they were faced with figuring it out on their own (a huge undertaking) or turning to food delivery platforms and accepting the antagonistically high rates that accompany their services. It doesn’t feel so much like a choice when your options are the hammer or the anvil.

One can make an argument that we should be grateful these services exist and acknowledge they have been a tool to help establishments push through these hard times. They do all of the marketing for you, including accessing their massive customer base, plus you need not worry about hiring drivers, managing orders, or dealing with customer service. There

are many pubs and other establishments in this camp, who are just happy the delivery platforms allowed them to maintain engagement with their communities and customer base, as well as assist in keeping some staff working the line. To them, the fees simply are what they are.

To many others, however, the fees are unreasonable. At the **Fountainhead Pub** in Vancouver, delivery may have increased since they signed on to DoorDash and Uber Eats, but that’s only because they didn’t do delivery prior to COVID-19. **Michel Duprat**, Managing Partner at the Fountainhead Pub, comments that the services have not created a significant increase in business, “They are, however, still taking 30%. It is an outrageous fee. If we were takeout and delivery dependant, I’m not sure that we could survive at those rates.”

Maggie May, Assistant GM at **The Pint Public House** in Vancouver, says that DoorDash has helped business but not significantly, and right now with all the added restrictions in place, any lost money on a sale hurts the business.

What both of these pubs are doing though is shifting their focus to takeout. Particularly with the new 10:00 pm liquor curfew, May noted it encourages people to order food direct from the pub to take home, and so that has become a focus. Duprat on the other hand, is strategically working with a platform called **xDine** (a restaurant takeout platform by **Eigen**), which he says is cheaper, and integrates with their POS system. Another initiative that has grown from a seed of delivery fueled frustration is **Fromto**, which aims to offer delivery from local restaurants at cost. Adapt, adapt, adapt, and adapt some more.

It is very much a story of David and Goliath. You might choose to opt into the delivery platform services, but it must be understood that they are not designed to be a floatation device during this economic crisis—they function as highly profitable corporations with shareholders at the helm. This might work for you, or it might not, but it is in the concerted effort of trying all angles that we continue to see new successes, new systems, and new ways of making it through these challenging times.

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» BC HOSPITALITY FOUNDATION

Online Lottery and Thanks

The BC Hospitality Foundation (BCHF) is working hard—and thinking creatively—to adapt to the curve ball thrown by COVID-19. Last year we benefited from funds raised by three online lotteries. This year, however, we'll be running one lottery which will focus on promoting BC-based hospitality and tourism businesses. There are 15 prizes in total including:

- An overnight stay at the **Naramata Inn**, with winery tours and meals
- A 2-night penthouse suite at **The Chateau Victoria** with dinners out
- West Coast Suite at **The Fairmont Waterfront** with dinner at **Hapa Izakaya**
- Retreats in Penticton, Whistler, Fraser Valley, New Westminster, Vancouver, and Sooke
- Pub packs in Victoria and Vancouver
- Best Buy gift cards and a chef's dinner in your own home

All prizes will be redeemable in 2021. The lottery will take place October 13 – November 1, 2020. Check our website www.bchospitalityfoundation.com for details on the lottery.

Thank you

We wish to thank **Gray Monk Estate Winery**, **Sandhill Wines**, and **Red Rooster Winery** for donating over \$18,000 in restaurant gift cards to us. We, in turn, donated over \$5000 worth of these gift cards to the **Vancouver Food and Beverage Community Relief Fund** that shared them across the province with hospitality workers in need of a break. The balance will be used for BCHF fundraising.

» PREPARE YOURSELVES AND YOUR STAFF FOR TAXES OWING

by Len Colman

The hospitality industry is probably the most impacted by COVID-19. In Canada, the federal government introduced the Canadian Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) to assist those who temporarily lost employment due to business closures. This was \$500 a week for up to 28 weeks. Some may not realize that no taxes are taken off at the time and this is fully taxable income. Please consider the following in order to avoid a big tax bill:

Putting Money Aside - Ideally, hospitality workers should have been taking a portion (depending on your anticipated annual income) of each payment and putting it aside for when you file taxes.

Tax Free Saving Account - If you have TFSA contribution room, this is the ideal parking place for your money where you can choose from a variety of investment options. In this case, you should park it in a high interest savings account as you will likely need the funds in six months to pay taxes owing. Have your money make you money while you prepare to pay your taxes.

Registered Retirement Savings Plan - You may also have the option of transferring these funds into a RRSP (depending on your contribution room and income for 2020) by the end of February 2021.

Charitable Donation - And finally, consider making a donation to a charity in order to get a tax receipt. If you have any appreciated securities, you can donate them in-kind.

Catch-up - The reality for most people is that they needed this CERB money to survive and pay expenses. If that is the case, then once you return to work, you should establish a strategy to start to put funds aside for taxes.

Every person's financial situation is unique and you should speak with a qualified Certified Financial Planner (CFP) to determine a personalized strategy.

Len Coleman, CFP, CLU, is Senior Investment Advisor with Manulife Securities Inc.

The opinions expressed are those of the author and may not necessarily reflect those of Manulife Securities Incorporated.

» NAMES IN THE NEWS

by Joyce Hayne

New Members

ABLE BC is pleased to welcome these new members:

British Consulate Vancouver

Integral Hospitality Services and
Integral Surface Protection

Kanaka Creek Liquor Store

Langley Liquor Warehouse

Maple Ridge Liquor Store

Marquis Wine

Mathews Dinsdale Clarke LLP

Parksville Curling Club

St. Johns Street Liquor Store


Taste Advisor

- Greg Berti, Andrew Peller
- Josh Stewart, Arterra Wines Canada
- Vice-Chair Darryl Brooker, Mark Anthony Group
- Christa-Lee McWatters, TIME Winery
- Charlie Baessler, Corcelettes Estate Winery
- Santiago Cilley, Phantom Creek Estates

Continuing their directorships are Chair Erik Fisher (Monte Creek Ranch Winery), Leo Gebert (St. Hubertus & Oak Bay Winery) and Dapinder Gill (Kismet Estate Winery). BC Grape Growers' Association representative David Kozuki and BCWI President & CEO Miles Prodan continue as ex-officio non-voting members.


Appointments

The BC Wine Institute has rebranded to Wine Growers British Columbia. At the recent AGM, nine voting directors representing all BC wineries were newly elected or re-elected:




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WHAT'S COMING?

by Joyce Hayne

Wine

Knock Knock Tempranillo Syrah has an app you can download on the Apple app store or Google Play. The wolf talks to you on your phone and describes the wine. Released September, 750ml \$10.04 whsl +149380

JP Chenet Advent Calendar 2020 is an innovative concept of 24 exciting sparkling wines from France. Released October, 24x200ml, \$115.99 Whsl +58324

Knotty Vines Cabernet Sauvignon is packed with mocha and black cherry flavours. This smooth, rich medium-bodied wine finishes with playful silky tannins. Released September, 750ml \$20.00 whsl +8683

Kopke Vintage Port 2016 has tannins that are cushioned by the ripe plum and prune fruits. 96pts. Wine Enthusiast. Released September, 750ml \$62.98 +146668

Graham's Gift Pack features a collection of Fine White Port, Six Grapes Port, LBV, 10 year old, and 20 year old. Released October, 5x200ml \$43.95 Whsl +20093

Tormaresca Calafuria Rosato's grapes were picked by hand, destemmed, and given a soft and delicate pressing. It's initially soft with a pleasurable crispness followed by delicately savory sensations and much balance with the aromatic persistence. Released October, 750ml \$19.01 Whsl +606897

Flight of the Condor Malbec 2019 shows a good integration of oak contact while the wine remains focused on a fresh fruit profile on the palate, which is complemented by violet aromatics. Released October, 750ml \$13.99 whsl +836550

RTD

Jameson Cold Brew is made with 100% Arabica beans sourced from Brazil and Colombia, for notes of toasted oak and dark chocolate. Released September, 750ml \$27.47 whsl +14220

Spirits

Mr. Jones Vodka is made in Revelstoke, BC in small batches using pristine mountain water. This triple international award-winning premium vodka has a smooth, clean, authentic taste. Released September, 750ml \$28 whsl +187746

Sammy's Beach Bar Rum Red Head Macadamia Nut is owned by Sammy Hagar and Rick Springfield. It's a perfectly infused blend of macadamia nut and cherry, with notes of almond. Released October, 750ml \$47.99 whsl +43891

Halewood Dead Man's Fingers Spiced Rum is a blended rum combined with exotic spices to create a unique and distinctive flavour profile. It has aromas of vanilla, orange, raisins and demerara sugar. Released October, 750ml \$23.99 whsl + 190716

» ABLE BC MEMBERSHIP REPORT

by Danielle Leroux

Our First Virtual Conference

Thank you to everyone who attended and supported our fifth annual BC Liquor Conference on October 19 and 20—held virtually for the first time this year!

Hundreds of liquor industry owner and operators joined us from across BC for two days of educational seminars, keynotes, and networking—all designed to help you adapt to and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Missed the conference? Select seminar recordings will soon be available for you to purchase. Stay tuned for details.

Take Advantage of Savings

Did you know **ABLE BC** members get access to exclusive benefits and discounts? By using our benefits, you can more than cover the cost of your annual membership. Some of our most popular programs include:

- **Western Financial Group** Hospitality Insurance Program - Innovative commercial insurance solutions tailored to the unique needs of the hospitality industry. Coverage options include commercial general liability, directors and officers, and cyber liability.

- **Western Financial Group Employee Benefits:** proprietary employee benefits program providing comprehensive life, health, and dental plans.

- **Foodbuy** - Enjoy added manufacturer revenues and savings over and above all current programs.

- **VI Banking ATM** - Our exclusive ATM agreement is day-to-day, with no fixed term commitment, and high profit. You keep 100% of the surcharge and set the amount.

- **BDL Beer Bottle Return Program** - Sign up your liquor store and receive a full refund on beer bottles and cans plus handling fee.

- **Sting Investigations** - Do your due diligence and avoid a \$7,500 fine. Members receive a discount on alcohol compliance checks.

For more information and to sign up for a program, please contact Danielle: 604-688-5560 or danielle@ablebc.ca

We Are Here To Help

Unfortunately, the COVID-19 crisis is far from over. But no matter what happens next, please know we will always be in your corner—fighting on your behalf, supporting you with tools and

resources, and getting you the information you need to know.

Visit our COVID-19 resources page to see past news updates, download our COVID-19 advocacy report and Liquor Primary Best Practices Handbook, find recent policy changes, and more.

Visit our online store to download free COVID-19 related signage or purchase laminated due diligence signage for your establishment.

Sign up for our email list if you haven't already at ABLEBC.ca, to keep updated on urgent policy changes and advocacy work.

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're doing to help our industry survive, we would appreciate your membership now more than ever.

Sign-up for a membership online or contact Danielle for more information: 604-688-5560 or danielle@ablebc.ca.

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A PUBLICAN:

Gordon Cartwright of Woody's on Brunette

by Laura Starr



The position of proprietor of a pub is a role that comes with many interpretations. To some, it is very hands off, relying on general management for most of the company operations, particularly in the day-to-day. To others, it is very hands on, being much more about vision and leadership, and demanding daily attention and physical presence.

To **Gordy Cartwright**, industry veteran and long-time publican owner of **Woody's on Brunette**, it is most definitely the latter. In fact, you could say his role is not only hands-on, but a sheer project of passion. To each their own of course, but Cartwright is revered by the people he works with and

the community in which he works. With Woody's having surpassed 25 successful years with their doors open, he is clearly doing something very right.

Situated in the tightknit Maillardville community of Coquitlam, Woody's Pub was originally a hotel before being bought and crafted into the pub and liquor store that it is today (with many renovations along the way). To Cartwright, known to most as Gordy, Woody's is a really big part of the community, and this is exactly how Cartwright intended for it to be. Community is at the core of every part of his dialogue about the business, from who gets hired, to how the staff is treated, to how he has drawn in and established a loyal customer base.

"It comes naturally when you enjoy what you do," he says, and this passion for working with people and community is what drives Cartwright to oversee everything in the company. "Always have," he remarks, as he outlines what a typical week looks like for him. The list of responsibilities begins traditionally on a Monday and follows the typical owner expectations of reviewing the daily business, learning from the yesterdays, and preparing for the tomorrows. He is involved with management hiring as well as overseeing menu planning, but as he speaks, there is no air of micro-management. He has full faith in his team, and credits them for making his job easy. Fortifying his team with development and education as well as the respect he dishes out, is likely the reason he has such long-running staff, with many employees having been a part of Woody's for years, some as many as 18. For the ones who leave, Cartwright speaks fondly of the great things they go on to accomplish.

One of the most important parts of his role as pub owner though is physically being there and knowing the people. He clearly loves it, but also recognizes the power of listening, knowing that the people who come in are not interested in hearing his story, but rather having their stories heard. He is then properly attuned to the needs and wants of his customers, and intuitively knows how to craft nights for them, whether that be sport or music based. He listens, and he delivers.

He earns stripes within the community as well, with Woody's Dare to Dream Foundation, an organization which grants wishes for individuals within the tri-cities community.

This type of contribution just runs in his blood, and Cartwright doesn't seem to shy away from any opportunity to get involved. Most recently during the COVID-19 crisis, he hired a plane to fly over Royal Columbia Hospital and Peace Arch Hospital with a banner that read: 'Thank You Healthcare Workers – Woody's Pub', simply to bring an uplifting sense of energy to the 7:00 pm cheer that resonated daily around our province.

His capacity to bring positive energy to situations translated even to the March shutdown of restaurants and pubs earlier this year. "It actually worked well for us," he claims, as Woody's quickly jumped on the opportunity to revamp and remodel the pub kitchen, something that is impossible to do when the establishment is open. "It can only get better now," Cartwright says, with a positive perspective that accurately summarizes him and the type of proprietor that he not only aims to be, but lives up to be.



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Photo Courtesy of: Wines of British Columbia

WineREPORT by Carie Jones

BC's Wine Regions

The BC wine region is like no other. The unique cool-climate terroir provides premium conditions to produce exceptional wine, while visitors from near and far drink in the awe-inspiring beauty at every turn. With nine distinct wine regions, BC is like no other place on earth when it comes to growing grapes. And where the grapes are grown makes all the difference.

In BC, like most of the New World, wineries have the choice of which grapes to grow where and how to make the wine. However, there are legally defined boundaries for geographic regions, known as geographical indications (GIs) and sub-geographical indications (sub-GIs). In BC, there are currently nine GIs, with five sub-GIs and more under development. Defining these regions on wine labels connects wine lovers with the unique geographic area the grapes are grown and

where the wine is made, thereby increasing the exposure to the region for both wine and tourism businesses.

As a wine industry, BC has been exploring terroir in more depth while making top quality wines that express the subtleties of the unique terroir in the different areas of the province. Even though much of the grape growing in BC takes place within the Okanagan Valley and Similkameen Valley regions, there is a diverse group of other terroirs making excellent wine in BC.

Cowichan Valley is one of those regions having been officially recognized this year as the newest sub-GI in BC, and the first sub-GI recognized outside of the Okanagan Valley. Cowichan Valley joins wineries in Naramata Bench, Skaha Bench, Okanagan Falls, and Golden Mile Bench in the Okanagan Valley GI as wineries that meet the

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requirements of the Wines of Marked Quality Regulation—the province’s system of wine standards. These standards help ensure that wines produced across BC meet quality and labelling regulations, and use the correct GIs. They also let consumers know they are purchasing a quality product. Only wines that meet these standards can display the BC VQA certification on their labels.

The Cowichan Valley sub-GI is roughly defined as the area between the Cowichan watershed, the eastern coastline from Mill Bay to Maple Bay, and the western area of Cowichan Lake. The vineyards of the Cowichan Valley boast ideal conditions for popular grape varieties that include Ortega, Bacchus, Gewürztraminer, Pinot Gris, and Pinot Noir.

Identifying specific regions within BC wine country helps bring recognition and notoriety to the region. With smaller sub-regions like the Cowichan Valley, this would ideally allow, over time, for a specific grape variety to build a reputation within that terroir. For example, if Pinot Noir within the Cowichan Valley consistently makes top quality, award-winning wines then the reputation and price of both the grapes and the wines will grow. More people will plant Pinot Noir in the sub-region, and the link between terroir and grape will start to emerge, bringing not only

recognition to the wine, but to the region itself.

The unique nuances of a region’s climate and terroir can have a significant impact on the taste of wine, and the GIs of BC can vary significantly in terms of climate and terroir even within a small area. For example, two different sides of the Okanagan Valley with the same grape variety and the same farming techniques just a kilometer away from one another may ripen up to two or more weeks apart, purely due to the unique influences of terroir. Similarly, soil differences within a vineyard can shape the taste, structure, and character of its wines.

No two vineyards are exactly alike. Grape growers are continually learning with every harvest, uncovering the unique elements that make up their vineyards. As the vines of BC develop some age and growers have more experience and understanding of the varying characteristics of each vineyard, they can better manage vintage variation and continue to produce better wine every year.

While the wine regions of BC are distinct, they share rich, bountiful landscapes, which produce exceptional wine that is a lasting expression of the place where they were grown and crafted. To learn more, visit WineBC.com.

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SPIRIT SPOTLIGHT

FULL FLAVOUR

Why Consumers are Thirsty for Fruit and Spice in Gin, Vodka, and Rum

by Joanne Sasvari

Remember the dark days of sticky-sweet flavoured vodka, when notes of Skittles, PB and J, or birthday cake were a thing? Thankfully, those days are over, but consumers' taste for flavoured spirits is anything but over.

The category has expanded beyond vodka, with flavoured gin and rum rocketing up the sales charts. In fact, the **BC Liquor Distribution Branch's** "Liquor Market Review" reports that wholesale sales of flavoured rum have nearly doubled over the last year, from 15,491 litres in the first quarter (April to June) of 2019 to 29,457 in the same period of 2020. Flavoured gin sales have shot from 27,480 litres to 38,719 in that period; flavoured vodka, from 182,493 litres to 327,397.

Of course, the pandemic has played a significant role here. With bars and restaurants closed or offering limited service for much of that period, consumers have been drinking at home. (Given the recent increase in infections, this is a trend that is likely to return over fall and winter.) For home bartenders, flavoured spirits are easy to mix with soda or tonic, no fancy mixers or cocktail gadgets are required. Besides, there's no one around to judge your preference for, say, Captain Morgan Watermelon Smash.

But there are a couple of other things going on here as well.

Look at the products. Back in the day, Absolut dominated the flavoured vodka market with one-note products like Citron and Kurant, while Malibu offered flavoured rums that were essentially high-proof liqueurs. Now Ketel One has a "Botanical" range of flavours including Cucumber & Mint and Grapefruit & Rose. Tanqueray has introduced Flor de Sevilla (bitter orange) and Rangpur (lime) expressions of gin. Gordon's Premium Pink is subtly flavoured with red berries, while Luxardo has a mouth-wateringly

juicy sour cherry gin. Captain Morgan, which popularized spiced rum, is now all in on fruit flavours, but even higher-end brands like Plantation are dipping into the cornucopia for its pineapple flavoured rum.

In other words, flavoured spirits are connecting with the premiumization trend of the last few years. They are no longer designed for young consumers and those with unsophisticated palates; they are designed for savvy drinkers, too.

Pre-COVID-19, as the impact of the Great Recession of 2008-'09 faded and consumers found they had more discretionary income, premium whisky, vodka, and tequila were considered affordable luxuries. As a result, reports the US-based website **Beverage Dynamics**, sales of higher-end spirits increased by more than 13% between 2018 and 2019, while sales of premium mixers also soared.

Premium flavoured spirits cover both those categories, and they tap into a growing taste for bold flavours in general, both in food and drink.

For instance, although vodka still dominates the global spirits market, sales of brown spirits have been growing year after year. The publication *Beverage Industry* reported in 2019 that US sales of brown spirits had outpaced those of white spirits for the seventh year in a row, while sales of gin and tequila, with their distinctive botanical notes, are also edging upwards.

We can thank cocktail culture for much of that. Bartenders love to introduce consumers to exciting new products. They have popularized misunderstood spirits like mezcal and made once-exotic cocktails like the Negroni or Aperol spritz staples of everyday drinking. As a result, consumers have learned to enjoy drinks that are more exciting than a Screwdriver. But few of them are willing to stock a full bar at home, let alone take the time to muddle fresh mint into a Mojito. Flavoured spirits offer a shortcut to all that.

So do RTDs, the ready-to-drink coolers that have been such a market juggernaut these last few years. Flavoured spirits require just one step more than opening a can of hard seltzer: adding some soda or tonic water to a glass. If that sounds like a highball, well, that's exactly what it is, and the highball just happens to be one of the biggest trend in cocktails right now.

RTDs and highballs also quench the thirst for lower-proof, lower-calorie drinks, which are considered an easy fit with a healthy lifestyle.

Premiumization. Bold flavours. Cocktail culture. Convenience. Lower-proof drinks. Flavoured spirits sit at the intersection of all the major trends influencing consumer habits. No wonder they are just what we're craving right now.



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