

---

## 2025 WINERY APPLICATION GUIDELINES

---

**The Vancouver International Wine Festival is recognized as one of the premier wine events in the world.**

Founded in 1979, VanWineFest has a mandate to inform, educate and entertain consumers and trade professionals in the world of wine; be a premier marketing opportunity for participating wineries, agents, partners, and sponsors; and raise funds for its designated charity, Bard on the Beach Shakespeare Festival.

**The 2024 festival had approximately 19,000 admissions and participants, including 5,800 in trade events.**

147 wineries from 12 countries participated in 42 events—tastings, seminars, wine minglers, lunches and dinners —at the Vancouver Convention Centre and other venues across the city during the festival’s seven days. The typical festivalgoer is a young (average age 38), affluent, educated, wine-and-food-savvy professional. More than 70% have a college or university degree and 65% have a household income greater than \$100,000. **The typical festivalgoer spends an average of \$3,000 annually on wine at home, plus an additional \$1,800 on wine while dining out.**

Agents and their wineries are encouraged to support special events, including the **Bacchanalia Gala Dinner + Auction**, and the **2025 themes: USA (theme country) and Chardonnay (global spotlight)**. Canada's premier wine show once again aims to attract some of the top wineries from around the world. **The 46<sup>th</sup> Vancouver International Wine Festival runs February 22-March 2, 2025.**

Please note: as per provincial government regulations, all pourers – including principals residing in Canada (if applicable) – exhibitors, staff, and volunteers must have valid Serving It Right (SIR) certification or other provincial equivalent. Principals residing outside of Canada, who are representing international wineries, are exempt from this requirement, but must be accompanied by someone who has certification. Certification numbers will be collected on pouring schedules.

---

### 1. SUBMITTING APPLICATIONS

Winery applications for the Vancouver International Wine Festival must be submitted by a registered and active BC wine agent on behalf of suppliers they represent in the BC market.

Winery applications are submitted by completing the online Winery Application Form in full for each winery. The final deadline for submissions is **May 31, 2024**.

**Only complete applications will be forwarded to the Winery Selection Committee for consideration.**

Once selected, agencies become actively involved in the festival process and must adhere to the festival’s administrative requirements and deadlines. A series of Agents Meetings are held annually to ensure that the best advantage is taken of this marketing opportunity. The critical path from application through wine ordering to onsite set-up and execution has a steep learning curve. This document forms the basis of VanWineFest policies and procedures, so please read it thoroughly before starting an application.

### 2. FESTIVAL PRODUCTS – WHOLESALE PRICING

International wines for the 2025 festival will not come in through the diplomatic privilege system. All festival sample products, including domestic, will be charged to the agent by the BCLDB at the wholesale price. Agents/wineries must remove any leftover products at the close of the Saturday night Tasting Room session. Agents/wineries may use the excess products for promotional activities, but these activities do not include in-store tastings at BC Liquor Stores. In addition, agents/suppliers cannot sell the excess liquor. Excess liquor may

be donated to future charitable events. **All agents and domestic wineries must be set up as a customer with the Wholesale Customer Centre (WCC) LDB by early January 2025 in order for product(s) to be delivered to festival events. All outstanding payment with the LDB must be resolved and paid for prior to stock being drawn for the festival. Any outstanding invoices or failure to be set up as a wholesale customer may result in stock being undeliverable to the festival events.**

### 3. BASIS FOR SELECTION

The Winery Selection Committee (made up of wine professionals, media, and aficionados, including the BCLIQUOR category manager for the theme country) evaluates only complete winery applications. The winery description paragraph, the product information, and the reason for participation assist the Winery Selection Committee in their decision making. This information will also be used for product information forms, the festival website, festival print materials and digital tools, and winery signs for accepted applications.

#### Wineries will be selected based on:

- a. Quality and mix of wines to be poured in the Tasting Room and special events, including premium, specialty, new to the market, and the 2025 themes, USA (theme country) and Chardonnay (global spotlight). **Please note that due to ongoing shipping delays, all festival wines must be cleared by customs, costed, and available to draw to the DDC no later than Wednesday, January 22, 2025. Once selected, you must place a hold on the wine. All wines will be drawn in full case configurations only, beginning in early January 2025. Products that are not available to draw by Wednesday, January 22, 2025, will not be poured at the festival or sold in the on-site store. Once selected, you must place a hold on the wine and provide the LDB the PO number to draw stock from.**
- b. Attendance of a winemaker, owner/family member or other senior winery representative.
- c. Bacchanalia Gala Dinner + Auction participation: dinner wine and/or auction item donation.
- d. Participation in special events; see Sponsored Event Proposal Guidelines and Special Event Wine Submission Guidelines for more details.
- e. Country and region of origin (based on consumer demand and current/future trends in the marketplace).
- f. Introduction of a new winery to the festival.
- g. The ability of their agent to meet administrative requirements and deadlines in past years.

\*Please note: Theme country/region wines will be featured exclusively in the Theme section. Please do not propose wines from other countries or regions for wineries in the Theme section or include Theme country/region wines in your proposals for the rest of the world wineries.

The Winery Selection Committee selects wineries based on the submitted information. Once selected for the festival, any changes to accepted applications (wines, vintages, principals) **must** be submitted to the Winery Selection Committee for approval. Please email the change to [visnja@vanwinefest.ca](mailto:visnja@vanwinefest.ca). If the change is approved, the application will be updated in the online system for inclusion in festival materials.

### 4. WINE CONTRIBUTION (International Festival Tastings / Trade Tastings)

Each participating winery is required, with a winery principal in attendance, to participate in the **Principals Welcome Lunch** on Thursday, February 27, 11:45 am – 1:15 pm, and all **six Tasting Room sessions**:

- Thursday, February 27, 1:30-5:00 pm (Trade: 1:30-2:30 pm Buyers Only)
- Thursday, February 27, 7:00-10:00 pm (Consumer)
- Friday, February 28, 1:30-5:00 pm (Trade: 1:30-2:30 pm Buyers Only)
- Friday, February 28, 7:00-10:00 pm (Consumer)
- Saturday, March 1, 2:30-5:00 pm (Consumer)
- Saturday, March 1, 7:00-10:00 pm (Consumer)

For the Tasting Room, wineries are required to contribute/provide 1 x 9L case of each SKU:

- a. Two premium wines – retail suggested minimum \$25.00 including all taxes, (approximately equivalent to \$18.00 wholesale or above); unique/specialty/exciting/new to the market/back vintages; and
- b. Two other quality wines.

Fifth Wine (optional, but encouraged):

- c. One premium wine that is not in the BC market on a regular basis, such as a special vintage, small production or other esoteric wine that will excite attendees. This wine will also be sold in the on-site BC Liquor Store.

**\*Agents are encouraged to order one additional case of each sparkling wine or another wine that they think may have high demand.**

The total number of cases ordered for the Tasting Room may not be fewer than 4 x 9L cases (48 x 750 ml) or equivalent.

All products must be available at each of the six Tasting Room sessions and for sale at the on-site store. **Should a product run out at the winery table, the Winery Selection Committee has the authority to close the winery table.**

**All Tasting Room wines must remain in the Tasting Room until the close of the Saturday night session: NO EXCEPTIONS. Please make sure all staff and attending principals are aware of this.**

## 5. WINERY PRINCIPAL

The festival requires that each winery designates a single senior winery principal to provide information and insight to festival patrons about their winery. This principal must be present at the winery table during all six Tasting Room sessions (Thursday, February 27 through Saturday, March 1) and the Principals Welcome Lunch (Thursday, February 27). This principal will be listed in the Tasting Room program and festival app. The principal – or an alternate senior winery principal – must also be present at all special events where their wine is being poured. A senior winery principal is one of the following:

- a. Winemaker
- b. Owner / Proprietor / Family Member
- c. CEO / Managing Director
- d. Senior Winery Executive
- e. International Export Director, or
- f. Other suitable representative employed by the winery, subject to approval by the Winery Selection Committee

Note: Agency and/or corporate employees are not acceptable substitutes.

The designated principal receives a complimentary ticket to the Principals Welcome Lunch (\$100 value), an excellent opportunity to network with colleagues and members of the trade before the Tasting Room opens.

Once a winery has been selected to participate, any changes to the designated winery principal **must** be submitted for approval to the Winery Selection Committee. Please email the change to [visnja@vanwinefest.ca](mailto:visnja@vanwinefest.ca). If the change is approved, the application will be updated in the online system for inclusion in the Tasting Room program and app. **Prior to proposing a principal, please consider anticipated travel, harvest, and production schedules.**

An absent winery principal at any Tasting Room session or special event, except in emergency situations where festival management has approved the absence, will affect a winery's future participation in the festival. **In the absence of the principal, the Winery Selection Committee reserves the right to close the winery table.**

## 6. SPECIAL EVENTS

The festival week is comprised of various types of events (seminars, vintage tastings, minglers, lunches, and dinners) targeting two distinct audiences:

**TRADE** (Wednesday, February 26 to Friday, February 28, 2025)

A key part of our programming is dedicated to members of the food, beverage and hospitality industry. We provide opportunities through our events for professional education, to sample a vast array of wines, and to purchase products otherwise not available. This is your chance to connect with restaurateurs, BC Liquor Distribution Branch and retail personnel, industry professionals, and wine and food media.

## **CONSUMER (Monday, February 24 – Sunday, March 2, 2025)**

Our dynamic consumer program is host to many exceptional tastings, seminars, and wine and food experiences, in addition to the International Festival Tastings. The average consumer of wine in British Columbia is very passionate and has an excellent knowledge base.

Participating in special events enhances a winery's profile in the festival and showcases wines that may not be available in the Tasting Room. The Winery Selection Committee considers a supplier's willingness to participate in special events during the selection process.

Additional product donation is required for pouring during special events. However, special event wines are not necessarily sold at the on-site BC Liquor Store in the Tasting Room. Please see the Special Event Wine Submissions and Sponsored Event Proposal Guidelines for details on particular events and event categories.

**Participating agents, wineries, wine organizations, and sponsors may not stage competing public and/or private events during the week of the festival**, as this would undermine the integrity and success of the festival and all of its participants. Consequently, this will jeopardize their current and future participation in the festival.

## **7. HOSPITALITY SUITES**

Agents and wineries participating in the festival must not conduct hospitality tastings on Thursday, February 27 and Friday, February 28, during the hours of 1:30-5:00 pm, to ensure there is absolutely no conflict with the Trade Tastings (which run from 1:30-5:00 pm). It is in the best interest of all participating agents and principals to have buyers and media in the Tasting Room during the afternoon trade sessions. Agents and wineries that operate hospitality suites/tastings during the trade sessions will have their winery tables closed in the Tasting Room and will jeopardize their future participation in the festival.

## **8. ON-SITE BC LIQUOR STORE**

The British Columbia Liquor Distribution Branch operates a BCLIQUOR store that is exclusive to the six Tasting Room sessions. Each product being poured in the Tasting Room must be available for sale in the store and for special order following the festival. BCL will review the wine selections and it is the agent's responsibility to ensure that a minimum of 12 bottles of each Tasting Room wine is available for BCL to order in for the retail store. **All festival wines must be cleared by customs, costed, and available to draw to the DDC no later than Wednesday, January 22, 2025. Once selected, you must place a hold on the wine. Wines will start to be drawn in early January 2025. Products that are not available to draw Wednesday, January 22, 2025, will not be poured at the festival or sold in the on-site store. Once selected, you must place a hold on the wine and provide the LDB the PO number to draw stock from.**

Agents must register all festival wines – **including special event wines** – that have been selected for the festival via the BCLDB online vendor website. Agents are encouraged to order additional quantities of wines so that any demand generated by exposure at the festival can be immediately satisfied by drawing from the agent's warehouse.

### **9 (a). PURCHASE ORDERS (POs) – DOMESTIC**

All domestic wine orders will be processed through the BC Liquor Distribution Branch Wholesale Supply Chain and POs will be issued beginning **mid-November, 2024**. POs are issued based on the information provided in the online system. Accuracy is essential for quick processing, so please ensure that the information included in your application is complete, correct and print ready.

### **9 (b). PURCHASE ORDERS (POs) – INTERNATIONAL**

Festival specific POs will not be issued by the LDB. Once selected, you must place a hold on the wine and provide the LDB the PO number to draw stock from.

**All requested purchase orders must be fulfilled.**

## 10. OUTSTANDING INVOICES

Agents with any outstanding invoices from previous festivals will not be considered for the 2025 festival. If outstanding invoices become known after selection, the agent or winery will have 21 days to pay the invoice or the applicable winery will be withdrawn.

## 11. NOTIFICATION:

Agents will be notified if their supplier's application to the 2025 festival has been successful on Thursday, July 25, 2024.

## 12. NON-REFUNDABLE WINERY TABLE FEE

- a. **\$700 + 5% GST** without an auction donation; or
- b. **\$400 + 5% GST** with a Gala auction donation that has a minimum retail value of \$500; or
- c. **\$0** with Gala dinner wine and an auction donation (see below for dinner wine quantities and benefits).

Winery table fee payments are due in full within 21 days of notice of acceptance to the festival. Please make cheques payable to:

Vancouver International Wine Festival Society  
202-162 West 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue  
Vancouver, BC V5Y 0H6

## 13. BACCHANALIA GALA DINNER + AUCTION CONTRIBUTION

The Bacchanalia Gala Dinner + Auction is the festival's major fundraiser for its designated charity, Bard on the Beach Shakespeare Festival, and we encourage your participation and appreciate your support. More than 330 of Vancouver's business and community leaders attend this black-tie event. A popular event with wine collectors and sommeliers, this five-course meal is paired with 10 wines, including reception wines. Throughout the reception and meal, patrons have the opportunity to bid on rare, valuable, and unique wines.

**Wineries with selected Gala dinner wines will have \$400 of their winery table fees returned. If an auction item, with a retail minimum of \$500, has also been contributed, the full \$700 will be returned.** All wineries participating in the auction will receive additional marketing profile through our Gala marketing materials and recognition during the event. Auction items of significant value (greater than \$2,500) may be included in the Live Auction (space permitting) and will result in added profile for the donating winery.

If choosing to contribute to the auction, the auction item details and description must be submitted with the online application form. After acceptance to the festival, any changes to the auction item must be emailed to [visnja@vanwinefest.ca](mailto:visnja@vanwinefest.ca), **prior to December 13, 2024**. If changes result in decreasing the value below the minimum catalogue value, the winery will be invoiced the difference.

Winery participation through a Gala dinner wine entails the donation of:

- 4 x 9L cases of sparkling wine for the reception; or
- 4 x 9L cases of dinner wine; or
- 4 x 9L cases of port or dessert wine; plus
- two sample bottles for the Executive Chef to be supplied to Visnja Vukelich by Friday, October 11, 2024 (one bottle of the reception wine).

Suppliers donating wine to the Gala Dinner receive additional benefits above and beyond general participation benefits:

- two complimentary tickets to the Gala for a winery representative and guest (valued at \$1,190);
- principal publicly introduced at Gala (if present);
- winery representative and guest invited to VIP reception with sponsors and corporate guests;
- short video about the dinner wines played during the Gala dinner;
- PowerPoint display highlighting dinner wines at the Gala;
- link to the winery homepage on the Gala page of the festival website;

- one-page profile in the Gala dinner menu/auction catalogue;
- one-page colour ad in dinner menu/auction catalogue;
- Gala star icon on Tasting Room winery sign;
- product sales display for Gala dinner wines in the on-site BC Liquor Store; and
- wineries providing Gala dinner wines will be ensured a spot in the 2025 festival and in the next festival applied to (within two years), provided that their completed applications meet the criteria set out in the Winery Application Guidelines for that year.

#### **14. BARD ON THE BEACH SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL**

Bard on the Beach is one of Canada's largest not-for-profit, professional Shakespeare festivals, presented on the waterfront at Señ ákw/Vanier Park. The festival offers Shakespeare plays, related dramas, and popular special events in two performance tents every June through September. Over 2 million patrons have experienced Bard since its inception, growing to annual attendance close to 100,000. This year's festival dates are June 11 to September 21, 2024, and scheduled plays include *Twelfth Night*, *Hamlet*, *The Comedy of Errors*, and *Measure for Measure*. Bard also offers a range of education programs for learners from eight to 80. Full details and education program information are at [bardonthebeach.org](http://bardonthebeach.org).