



February 4, 2025

**Subject: Vancouver International Wine Festival – California Wines Update**

Dear California Vintners,

We are advising that the Vancouver International Wine Festival is proceeding as planned. As Canada's premier wine event, now in its 46th year, the festival remains one of the most respected and well-attended wine trade shows in the world and California wines has been and will continue to be an integral part of this event.

Despite current tensions in U.S.-Canada relations surrounding trade and tariffs, we are hopeful that your presence at the festival will highlight the enduring partnership between our wine communities. We want to reassure you that these developments will not impact the availability of US wines at the onsite BCLIQUOR store or for any of our events, seminars, mingler and dinners.

While broader trade discussions between the U.S. and Canada continue, the festival remains focused on wine, hospitality, and the strong cultural and economic ties that connect our regions.

California, Oregon, and Washington wineries will be well represented, with 50 producers participating in person to engage with the BC wine community and showcase their wines.

The VIWF will be positioning this year's theme as "West Coast Wines" rather than "US Wines" to mitigate any potential negative backlash.

We have been working with the festival organizers and their communications firm to manage the message and communications to trade and consumers. We are focusing on California's long-standing relationship with the festival and how its history reflects the strong ties between the California and BC wine industries, reinforcing the value of cross-border trade and cultural exchange.

With California as the largest featured region under the “TASTE WEST COAST” theme, British Columbia’s wine professionals and consumers continue to show great interest in the diversity and quality of California wines.

The BC market has long been a key region for California, supported by a passionate community of sommeliers, wine buyers, and consumers who remain engaged and appreciative of high-quality wines from California. We have shared values—a love of the land, a passion for sustainability, and a dedication to craftsmanship.

We have provided you with some suggested talking points below to help you focus when speaking with attendees.

We look forward to seeing you in late February. Please feel free to reach out with any questions.

Best regards,  
California Wines Canadian Team

## **Suggested Talking Points for VIWF:**

1. The cooperative spirit of the West Coast wine industry was especially evident following BC's Okanagan Valley loss of almost all fruit from vintage 2024 due to a climate event. Local BC producers subsequently developed strong connections with wineries/growers in Washington/Oregon and California to import grapes. Our wine regions played a key role in helping BC producers continue crafting high-quality wines. This underscores the longstanding partnership between our wine regions and the mutual benefits of working together. This was also a win-win situation given current over-supply in many U.S. regions. It's been controversial, but underlying sentiment is wineries helping wineries and for many Okanagan producers, a lifeline to stay in business and keep people employed.
2. California Wines' has been a longstanding supporter of VIWF and has been a cornerstone of the Vancouver International Wine Festival since its inception. In fact, the very first festival in 1979 featured the legendary Robert Mondavi, putting California wines at the forefront of this iconic event.
3. We're proud to celebrate over four decades of collaboration and partnership, which have fostered a strong cultural and economic bond between California vintners and the people of British Columbia.
4. California wines have always focused on building relationships and partnerships with Canada, particularly British Columbia, where our wines are a staple on store shelves, restaurants and dining tables throughout the province.
5. The threat of tariffs is beyond our control, but what remains constant is California's unwavering commitment to the Canadian market and our shared history with the VIWF.
6. California wines are not just products on shelves; they represent families, communities, jobs, tourism, and investment in both California and Canada.
7. We've built deep ties with consumers, media, buyers, sommeliers, restaurateurs, and retailers in British Columbia, and our wines are part of the fabric of the province's vibrant wine culture.
8. The festival is a home-grown, not-for-profit annual event that generates a significant positive impact on the BC local economy. During the festival, the participating wineries and their principals have travelled here from around the world, along with the thousands of visiting event attendees, and the dozens of agent importers, exhibitors and industry partners spend considerably on local restaurants, hotels, and businesses during their stay. The festival is a big support to the community.
9. In times of uncertainty, it's vital to remember our shared values: a love of great wine, sustainability, and a commitment to the future of the wine industry on both sides of the border.
10. Wine is special and unique, it is an agricultural product, it is crafted by primarily family owned and operated businesses. Wine unites and brings us together, lets focus on our love and passion for wine and put politics aside.