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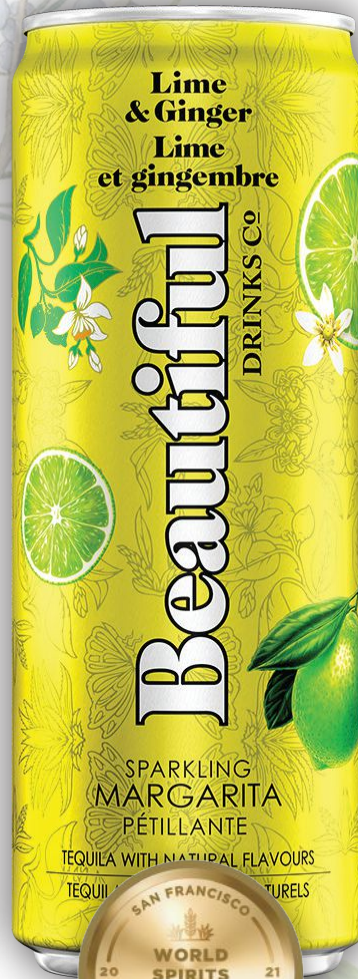
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# ABLE BC

FOR A RESPONSIBLE LIQUOR INDUSTRY

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## » ABLE BC INDUSTRY UPDATE

by Jeff Guignard

Every day, I hear from licensees wondering, “When will these pandemic restrictions end so we can finally get back to business as usual?” It’s a question I ponder often as well, particularly as the Omicron-variant peaks and we approach the two-year anniversary of the first COVID-19 restrictions and shutdowns.

The hard truth, of course, is that no one can predict when restrictions will end. Nor can anyone predict how long it will take to restore consumer confidence and help get BC’s small liquor and hospitality businesses back on their feet. Fortunately, we do know that in jurisdictions where businesses have been permitted to fully reopen, customers have come back. That means there is likely a high degree of pent-up demand for hospitality services, and customers willing to resume drinking out and dining out as soon as restrictions lift. That’s potentially good news for our pub and bar members who have their sights set on a profitable summer.

In addition to the handcuffs various public health restrictions have put on your businesses, our industry has also been hit with persistent disruptions to our supply chains and a battery of cost increases on everything from food to building material. Prices for good rose 4.7% in 2021, while the Consumer Price Index rose at its fastest rate since 1991.

Making matters worse, government chose the worst time in our business cycle to increase your payroll costs by introducing five days of paid sick leave beginning on January 1, 2022. By the end of January, many of you had already written to express frustration and disbelief that government mandated paid sick leave at the exact moment that up to a third of our industry’s workforce was off sick due to the alarming transmissibility of the Omicron variant. As one member who wrote to me said, “It’s like trying to run uphill in a snowstorm, tornado, hurricane, and landslide simultaneously.”

While government has been clear sick leave isn’t going anywhere, rest assured that **ABLE BC**—along with a broad coalition of industry business associations—have communicated these frustrations bluntly and suggested logical policy reforms that would support you. We also repeatedly remind our government partners that BC’s hospitality industry—pubs, bars, nightclubs, restaurants, hotel liquor licensees, etc.—were hit first and hardest by the pandemic and that, even once restrictions are removed,

it will still take a long time to overcome the staggering financial losses of the past two years.

That’s why our focus in 2022 will be on securing the programs, policy changes, and government supports that encourage economic recovery. In the months ahead, the team at ABLE BC will remain focused relentlessly on getting you get back on your feet and allowing you to operate without restrictions.

### Vancouver Magazine's Power 50 List

On a personal front, in January I was shocked and humbled to be recognized on *Vancouver Magazine's* 2022 Power 50 List of accomplished and influential leaders.

While it’s my name on the list, I know this is a shared recognition for the hard work, dedication, and passion of the team at ABLE BC and other association leaders who have been fighting for BC’s liquor and hospitality industries throughout this pandemic. Together, we secured:

- Wholesale pricing for BC’s pubs, bars, and restaurants, reducing liquor purchase costs by an average of 20%
- Over \$200 million of direct financial support for BC’s liquor and hospitality industries
- Extending the moratorium on new LRS licenses a further 10 years (to 2032)
- The ability for LPs and FPs to sell alcohol with take-out and delivery meals
- For the first time ever, LRSs may sell to Special Event Permit licensees
- Temporary extensions of service areas and patios all over BC
- Industry re-opening and extensive changes to various public health orders

While I know we still have a long way to go, I’m immensely proud of what we’ve accomplished together and filled with gratitude for this acknowledgement of our shared successes. We have a lot of work left to do, and I’ve never felt more inspired to advocate for our industry.

My sincere thanks to the fine folks at *Vancouver Magazine* for this unexpected recognition. I can’t tell you how much I appreciate it.

As always, you can reach me directly at [jeff@ablebc.ca](mailto:jeff@ablebc.ca).

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# HIRING FOREIGN WORKERS

BY GO2HR

Are you facing challenges finding experienced and dedicated employees? Are your traditional hiring tactics not producing the results you want? It may be time to think outside the box and consider tapping into a diverse labour pool such as immigrants or foreign workers. While hiring foreign workers can be more challenging than hiring local staff, it may be worth the effort in this tight labour market. Here are some tips and options to consider before embarking on the process of hiring a foreign worker:

### Plan Ahead

If you are thinking of hiring a foreign worker, plan ahead by creating a recruitment plan and determining your recruitment goal. Start thinking at least a few seasons ahead, especially because of slower processing due to the ongoing pandemic. A recruitment plan should be based on your business goals. From there, establish specific recruitment goals. One of your main goals will be to attract the right number of candidates who also have the appropriate skills your business needs. You might be surprised to find that a foreign worker may also be able to enhance the skill set of your current workforce.

### Explore Available Program Options

There are many program options available, and depending on the program, the processing times can vary. Take the time to explore all the options available to you. Here are a few of them:

#### International Students Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada (IRCC)

provides most international students with eligibility to work in Canada. In most instances, students who are enrolled full-time at a Designated Learning Institution (DLI) in Canada are eligible to work off-campus, up

to 20 hours per week, while attending classes. Once students have graduated, they are eligible to apply for a Post Graduate Work Permit (PGWP) which allows them to work in Canada from eight months up to three years, depending on their program's length. IRCC will issue a work permit directly to a new graduate without the requirement of first having a job offer, so the student comes to you with a valid, open work permit. Connect with a local post secondary institution to see if they

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offer an International Student program. You may be able to promote your available position(s) directly through the school. Here is a list of schools with Tourism Hospitality programs: <https://go2hr.ca/recruitment/post-your-jobs-at-colleges-across-canada>



### International Experience Canada (IEC)

Consider promoting your seasonal jobs to international youth who already have a work permit. The Working Holiday is the most well-known IEC program which allows a foreign worker the flexibility to travel and work anywhere in Canada. The worker is issued an open work permit which allows them to work for any employer. International, mobile, young people are eager to explore and work in various regions of BC. Canada has bilateral reciprocal agreements with over 30 countries allowing foreign youths aged 18 to 30 (35 for some countries) to travel and work in Canada. The work permits are typically valid for 12 to 24 months.

### Mobilitéé Francophone

The Mobilitéé Francophone program is a category of the International Mobility Program that allows Canadian employers to hire French-speaking foreign workers to work in any province or territory other than Quebec. The program is open to any nationality with no age limit, as long as French is the candidate's habitual language of daily use. This option can only be used for skilled positions, so it would be ideal for hiring a professional Chef or managerial role such as Restaurant or Bar Manager. IRCC has options available to make it easier for employers to hire these candidates. Many countries have public employment services that specialize in international recruitment and can assist in finding candidates. For more information, visit the IRCC website <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/work-canada/hire-permanent-foreign/french-speaking-bilingual-workers-outside-quebec.html>

### Additional Points to Consider

For applicants already holding a work permit, once they accept an offer one of the first steps is to ask for a copy of their work permit (note the expiry date and fine print as some work permits can be employer specific), and Social Insurance Number (SIN) for payroll purposes. A SIN beginning with '9' indicates that the employee is a foreign national. Employers must be diligent when hiring foreign workers to ensure they are eligible to work for the business, in that location, and in that role. There are penalties for both employers and employees who work or employ a foreign national without legal authorization to do so in Canada.

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Entry requirements have varied over the last two years. As of January 15, 2022, all workers, visitors and students entering Canada are required to be fully vaccinated with a vaccine accepted in Canada at least 14-days before their entry. At the time of writing, travellers are also required to take a PCR COVID test before entry and provide results that are no more than 72 hours old at the time of entry to Canada (land border) or when boarding their flight to Canada, and must also submit a quarantine plan before entering Canada.

Remember, if you are hiring a newcomer to Canada, they may need a place to live and may need time and assistance to get settled in the country. Be prepared to help, especially with finding housing if options in your area are limited. And at the very least, ensure they have a place to stay when they first arrive in the country.

While foreign workers can be a great addition to your workforce, do your research before setting out to hire them. You may want to seek help from an immigration consultant or lawyer. **go2HR** can also provide further information and resources. Please contact: [hr@go2hr.ca](mailto:hr@go2hr.ca) or 604-633-9787.

As travel restrictions and requirements change frequently, visit the **Government of Canada** website to check the entry requirements to Canada: <https://travel.gc.ca/travel-covid/travel-restrictions/visitors-workers-students> **P**

*Cindy Conti is the HR Consultant–Vancouver, Coast & Mountains with go2HR. go2HR is the Human Resources and Health and Safety Association for BC’s tourism and hospitality industry. This article also had input from Katie Van Nostrand, Partner with Mathews, Dinsdale & Clark LLP.*

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# DISRUPTED SUPPLY CHAINS:

*Will Things Get Better in 2022?*

BY DANIELLE LEROUX

Courtesy of the Liquor Distribution Branch.

From logistics disruption to labour shortages and severe inventory challenges, our supply chains have been hit hard by the global COVID-19 pandemic and, more recently, devastating floods and mudslides across BC. Everyone, from distributors to the end consumers, has been impacted.

Vendors are facing challenges in production delays, sourcing raw materials like glass and packaging, and experiencing logistical issues such as shipping delays and transportation interruptions when bringing products into the province. Prices are increasing, product selection is decreasing, and agents are scrambling to find consistent supply.

“Everything is taking longer, and everything is costing more,” says **Tim Wispinski**, President of **The Drinks List**. “Things are still moving and people are doing their best, but these are two constants that every stakeholder is finding.”

The logistics system is simply not built to have products stay in one place, yet that is the reality we’re facing.

## Is COVID the Source of These Disruptions or the Fuel to the Fire?

**Dennis Christmas**, President of **ContainerWorld**, says the latter: “This started before COVID, but the pandemic has made supply chain challenges

worse internationally. Before the pandemic, we were seeing the signs [of strain] on the supply chain and the pressure on carriers. The prices were becoming higher... then COVID came along and just pushed it up.”

Both Wispinski and **Ted Latimer**, Executive Director of the **Import Vintners and Spirits Association**, agree the pandemic has exacerbated existing problems.

This includes putting strain on antiquated industry processes. For instance, Latimer says the 60-day lead time for pricing changes with the Liquor Distribution Branch (LDB) has led to pricing challenges—with shipping surcharges being added partway through an order and an agent being forced to guess what their shipping rate will be, but unable to quickly change their listing price.

The lengthy process of getting a Non-Stocked Wholesale Product approved by the LDB and delivered to customers, compounded with shipping, pricing, and inventory challenges, means fewer agents are ordering high-end or unique products.

“These things we have always been working with the LDB to change,” says Latimer. “But with shipping, COVID, and the weather, everything has been exacerbated. Any business, if you had a crack in how you run your business, it broke open into a big flood.”

## How Have Stakeholders Been Managing These Challenges?

Our industry is nothing if not resilient, and stakeholders have done their best to manage and minimize supply chain disruptions.

But this has not come without struggle: “This year has been more of a constant battle to keep inventory in and on the shelves,” says Latimer.

“We react, but do not overreact,” emphasizes Wispinski. “We are prepared to react when it is clear what the situation is.” The Drinks List has tried to avoid

price changes when possible and kept more stock on hand, keeping six to eight months of inventory instead of the typical four months. Latimer adds he has seen agents turning inventory once per year, instead of every three months, trying to satisfy the needs of the LDB and private retailers, while managing inventory.

Agents have also had to be more proactive with retailers, especially during busy times like Christmas and St. Patrick’s Day, while cautioning against panic buying.

On the logistics side, “ContainerWorld is always looking for methods to have continuous improvement and reduce costs,” explains Christmas. “We are in the customer service business, and we have to make it work.” Throughout the pandemic, this has included hiring extra people—

a challenge in itself given widespread labour shortages.

Similarly, the “LDB is committed to working closely with vendors through collaboration on forecasting, product availability, lead times, and adjusting ordering patterns to reduce stock outs in the market,” says **Kate Bilney**, Acting Manager, Communications & Stakeholder Relations, Corporate Strategic Services.

They also keep “customers apprised of stock-out challenges, when necessary, are purchasing stock earlier ahead of peak seasons to ensure there is ample product supply available [...] and are also encouraging customers to place their orders earlier ahead of peak period.”

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## How Can Retailers and Operators Respond to These Challenges?

When dealing with agents, Wispinski suggests being patient, advise if you are missing product, and keep the lines of communication open. “The fastest way to get your order is to place it early and often,” he adds. “We all have customer service people that can help look into orders. We know deliveries are coming, but we may not always know the ETA.”

Latimer emphasizes the importance of regular communication and relationships, picking product and agents you like to work with and who understand your dilemma. “Make sure the agent is looking out for you,” he says. “Work with an agent who will allow you to know what is in stock, but also if there are going to be any dramatic price changes.”

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## What Can Liquor Businesses Expect in 2022?

Unfortunately, supply chain challenges are unlikely to let up in the near future. “This is not going to go away anytime soon. There is still a shortage of carriers, truckers, and warehouse space,” says Christmas. “Not just in BC, but across the country.” Though he suspects there will be a ‘softening’ of some freight rates by the end of the year.


The LDB similarly anticipates that the current global supply chain conditions will continue into 2022 and result in product unavailability or late arrivals.

Wispirski says businesses can expect price increases from domestic and import suppliers. This is in part due to the higher cost of packaging and shipping—the cost of a bottle has doubled, and a manufacturer cannot swallow that.

Latimer believes we are going to see dramatic price increases in the next two to three months. For example, “the average case of wine from Europe went from \$8 to \$16, with shipping costs increasing from \$60 to \$70 per case. This means agents are paying \$80 to \$100 for a case of wine that used to be \$60. A \$15.99 versus \$19.99 wholesale price puts you in an entirely different stratosphere.”

Product selection has and will also be impacted. “A lot of agents are not going to bother bringing in product they only sell 50 cases of,” says Latimer. “This hurts private liquor retailers—where they can make more because they are bringing in unique products—and consumers.”

On the manufacturing side, smaller producers are struggling to get containers (with bottle and aluminum shortages) and compete with big players that own their distribution, wineries, and agencies, and can cut costs.

With the pandemic raging on and extreme weather becoming a seemingly regular occurrence, the thought of dealing with another year of supply chain challenges is overwhelming. But as Wispirski reminds us: “You react, but you do not overreact. Even if sales are slow, you keep the pipeline full.” 




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# CRAFT CIDER REVOLUTION

## ARTISAN CIDER RISES UP ACROSS THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST

by Ross Crockford

The roots of apple cidermaking run deep in the Pacific Northwest, and today its trees are producing some serious fruit.

“This industry has exploded,” says **Emily Ritchie**, executive director of the **Northwest Cider Association** ([nwcider.com](http://nwcider.com)), based in Portland. When the association began in 2010, there were only seven craft cideries in BC and the northwest US. Today there are nearly 200, most of which opened in the past five years.

Big brands like Strongbow—the world’s #1 cider, owned by Heineken—and Angry Orchard—#1 in the US—introduced cider to people, Ritchie says, and that inspired some to try making it themselves. “But it’s also folks wanting to make something that has a lot of tradition here, and kind of got lost from the North American landscape.”

The first record of cidermaking dates back to 55 BC, when **Julius Caesar** saw the Celts fermenting crab apples in Britain—the world’s biggest cidermaking country, even today. The Brits brought cider-apple trees to America, and the **Hudson’s Bay Company** brought them west, planting orchards at Fort Vancouver (today’s Vancouver, Washington) in 1827, and then at Fort Langley and Fort Victoria, to provide settlers with a ready source of refreshment.

Orchards soon flourished across the Pacific Northwest. But as cities grew, beer consumption surpassed cider. Prairie-grown barley was easier to ship and store than apples, and breweries could produce their suds in town year-round. The sharp and bitter apples that work best for cider got replaced by the sweet varieties favoured by grocery stores. For much of the 20th century, farm-crafted cider remained a novelty product kept alive by stalwarts like Kelowna’s **Wards Cider**, which started in 1922.

Now cider is making a comeback. Thanks to courses developed by master cidemaker **Peter Mitchell** and taught through Washington State University, a new crop of cidemakers—trained in the sciences of orcharding and fermentation—graduate every year. In Washington and Oregon, sales of cider are now 8% of that of beer, while they’re only 3% in the rest of the US, according to Ritchie. The popularity of the drink is evident at establishments like **Seattle’s Capitol Cider** restaurant and the **Schilling Cider House** in Portland, the world’s largest cider bar, which opened in 2017 with 50 craft ciders on tap.

BC’s cider culture may not be as developed yet, but we already have several cideries making great product. Victoria’s certified-organic **Sea Cider** won “Best in Show” at last November’s Portland International



Isaac Potash, Courtesy of Upside Cider

Cider Cup for its copper-hued Bittersweet. **BC Tree Fruits Co.**’s Broken Ladder Apples & Hops shared “Cider of the Year” at the 2019 National Wine Awards, alongside **Twisted Hills**’ Tangled Rosé from the Similkameen Valley.

Such award-winners aren’t easy to find, though. Artisan cideries may sell directly at the farm gate to visitors, and to pubs and private liquor stores. But the BC Liquor Distribution Branch treats cider as a “refreshment beverage”, subjecting it to the same high tariffs as hard seltzer and wine coolers. Consequently, farm-based cideries can’t afford to sell their labour-intensive wares through government liquor stores. That means BC Liquor Stores generally only carry factory-produced ciders, which are made from apple-juice concentrate with added flavours and colourings.

“There’s definitely a lot of confusion out there for the consumer,” says **Jason Child**, general manager of Vancouver Island’s **Merridale Cidery**, a craft cidery dating back to the 1980s. So to clear things up, Merridale and 30 other artisan cideries have banded together to form the BC Farm Crafted Cider Association. Members make their cider from at least 95% fresh juice, on the same farm where they grow the apples, and all their



Courtesy of Howling Moon Craft Cider

farms are listed at [bcciderway.ca](http://bcciderway.ca), a guide to “cider trail” tours for different regions of the province. “It’s nice to get real ciders in front of people, so they can taste the difference,” Child says.

Festivals help too, and every May the Northwest Cider Association organizes events for BC Cider Week ([bcciderweek.org](http://bcciderweek.org)). Mainly, though, it’s up to cider lovers to spread the good word to friends and press their favourite pubs and liquor stores to carry local, farm-crafted product. The range of such ciders certainly is expanding: larger producers like Merridale are chasing the craft beer market by packaging their ciders in tallboy cans, while boutique farms like Sea Cider are targeting wine drinkers by emphasizing the terroir of their ciders and packaging them in 750ml glass bottles.

And many are making cider like you’ve never tasted before. **Nomad Cider** makes a series with single varieties of apples, from light Dabinett (pair

with Thai food) to strong-tanned Yarrington Mill (for red meat). Vernon’s **The BX Press** makes Ginny, a cider flavoured with juniper berries and other gin botanicals, and **Summerland Heritage Cider Co.** makes The Flume, a cider so dry and elegantly effervescent you’d swear it’s champagne. They’re complex, adult drinks; nothing like the sweet, fizzy cider you’d find at a bush party. They cost more, but like most things in life, they’re worth it. **P**

*Patrick Ellis is a Saké Samurai, a rare title bestowed by the Brewers of Japan, recognizing his expertise and dedication to spreading the word of saké. He is fluent in Japanese and has been sharing his passion for saké for over 25 years. Patrick represents Canada as Judge at the Concours Mondiaux Saké Selection Competition in Japan. [www.bluenotesake.com](http://www.bluenotesake.com)*

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# Taking Stock

## These Three Trends Should Drive Your Purchasing Decisions This Spring

Sure, it's easy to order the same tried-and-true products year in and year out, and yes, your regulars know to come to you for their favourites. But it's also a good idea to step back occasionally and take stock of what's on your shelves. Is it current? Is it new? Does it offer your customers what they are craving right now?

Refreshing your stock can attract a whole different market, but more than that it can quench your regular clientele's thirst for the drinks they are enjoying elsewhere.

Since the pandemic threw our lives into upheaval in early 2020, we have dramatically changed the way we drink. For instance, more of us are making cocktails at home. Customers expect to enjoy a decent Negroni or Old Fashioned when they go to the neighbourhood pub, and to be able to pick up the ingredients to make it at their local LRS.

Here are three trends driving the way we drink now, and the products you should be carrying.

### Retro Sippers

Maybe we're not quite ready for the Harvey Wallbanger revival, but don't be surprised if you end up squeezing those awkwardly tall bottles of Galliano back onto your shelves. Cocktails of all sorts are back in a big way, but what's really hot this spring—both ironically and not—is the return of 1980s and 1990s retro cocktails.

We're talking Cosmopolitans and Espresso Martinis, Jungle Birds and Piña Coladas, Amaretto Sours and Long Island Iced Teas. Even the cool, rich, minty-green Grasshopper is having a moment among the cool kids. (Can shooters be far behind?)

Long considered a bit tacky and waaaay uncool, these drinks are getting a whole new lease on life because they are fun. Who doesn't want something fun after the past two years? They are unpretentious,

easy to drink, and when they're made properly with quality ingredients are simply delicious.

Stock up on: flavoured vodkas (especially espresso and citron), rum, liqueurs (amaretto, Cointreau, Galliano, crème de menthe, Kahlua, Irish cream) and, for mixers, fresh fruit juices.

### Wellness Drinks

Many people are choosing to drink less these days—or not at all—for many reasons, but especially for their health. These customers should be able to sip something more delicious than boring old cranberry soda. Luckily, more and more producers are making sure they can.

There are a growing number of zero-proof spirits that can be used just like full-strength gin, whisky, or rum in cocktails and highballs. Where not long ago Seedlip had that market to itself, now there are several options, including some produced right in BC.

Ready-to-drink hard seltzers have also been a bonus to the low-proof crowd, and they are being joined by more exciting drinks like canned spritzes and highballs.

Even those who are still embracing alcohol are choosing lighter-ABV products like lagers, prosecco, and Riesling, which also happen to be perfect for spring.

Stock up on: zero-proof spirits, low-ABV RTDs, soda water and mixers for spritzes and highballs, lower-ABV wine and beer.

### Local Heroes

There are plenty of good reasons to support local producers. For one thing, when your shipment of imported hooch is caught up in a strike in Montreal or stranded on a slow boat from China, it's handy to know you can source from the winery or distillery just up the road.

But more than that, we've all come to realize how important it is to #BuyBC, especially after the floods, fires, and other disasters of the last two years. Those growers and makers are also our friends and neighbours. Supporting them not only contributes to the economy, it's also the right thing to do.

Besides, their products are so darn good, why wouldn't you serve them? BC's wineries, distilleries, and breweries regularly sweep national awards and make a fine showing on the world stage, too. Yes, their prices can be high compared to mass-produced global brands, but adding a few local options to your selection is a win for everyone.

Stock up on: beer, wine, spirits, liqueurs, and bitters made in BC from ingredients grown in BC. It's even better if they are produced in your own community. **P**

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# » ABLE BC MEMBERSHIP REPORT

by Ann Brydle

Hello **ABLE BC** members and *The Quarterly Pour* readers! I am beyond excited to introduce myself as ABLE BC's new Manager of Membership and Communication. While I am brand new to the role, I have extensive experience in the liquor industry and am eager to bring my expertise to our members.

Prior to joining the ABLE team, I worked in liquor retail for ten years—starting as a cashier in a Victoria liquor store. I had no idea this part-time gig I picked up on a whim would soon become a career that has brought me great joy.

Not long after starting as a cashier, I became completely enamoured with the wines I was selling. It became my mission to try as many bottles as possible, while reading every wine book I could get my hands on. As a life-long learner, I jumped into wine courses and started chipping away at various wine accreditations, from Certified Sommelier to the WSET Diploma.

While I was exploring the world of wine, I began working my way up in the retail industry. After only a few years, I was managing private liquor stores—first for **Liquor Express**, then for **Cascadia Liquor**. Starting in 2019, I moved into a new role creating training and education programs for Cascadia employees, with a focus on both broadening product knowledge and developing guest service skills.

In addition to working in liquor retail, I teach Italian Wine Scholar courses with **Cru Consultancy** for the **Wine Scholar Guild**. I take great pride in guiding wine professionals through the often confusing (but oh so rewarding) landscape of Italian wine. Cin cin!

While wine may be my main passion, I try and round out my life with other interests. I love discovering new places, whether hiking trails or hidden beaches around Vancouver Island, or searching out the best vegetarian meals and tap rooms in Victoria. In my downtime, you'll likely find me snuggling my cat, riding horses, or sharing a drink with friends over a rousing game of bocce ball.

Because of my time in liquor retail, I have a deep knowledge of the specific challenges facing retailers both before and during the pandemic. I've seen firsthand how much damage the pandemic has done to pubs,


bars, and nightclubs; the confusion that rapidly changing orders has caused; and the stress that comes from juggling labour shortages, increasing costs of business, and quickly pivoting business models to accommodate online events, ecommerce, or delivery.

I have great respect for our liquor industry. The resilience and sense of community that business owners have shown each other over the past two years is admirable and inspiring. I look forward to playing a larger role in our community and providing help wherever possible. There is still a long road to recovery in front of us, but if there's one thing I've learned from working in this industry it's that nothing can keep us down!

I am honoured to be a part of an association that works so hard to advocate for its members, offering support, guidance, and expert advice along the way. With the help of our members and industry partners, ABLE BC will continue to fight for our industry.

I am looking forward to meeting with members across the province in the near future. I want to get to know you, your businesses, and how best I can help you navigate these difficult times. I hope to meet with many of you in person in my first year and will always make myself available for virtual or phone meetings when in person isn't possible. I am here to offer support and guidance while working to protect your business interests, so please don't hesitate to reach out whenever needed.

## Join ABLE BC Today!

ABLE BC works tirelessly to advocate for the needs of BC's private liquor industry. We are dedicated to helping pubs, bars, private liquor stores, and hotel liquor licensees navigate the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic through advocacy, expert advice, and member benefits. While we remain committed to fighting for our industry, we need your help now more than ever. Join us today to help support the private liquor industry. You can become a member by signing up online at [ABLEBC.ca](https://ABLEBC.ca). 

## THE QUARTERLY POUR

SUMMER 2022

Reserve April 8 | Published May 20

- » Hosting Special Events
- » Conflict Resolution
- » Digital Marketing Ideas
- » Obtaining Financing

## Wholesale Liquor Sales July – September 2021

	Litres	increase/decrease over previous quarter	increase/decrease over previous year
Beer – BC Commercial	35,286,264	-4.3%	-9.4%
Beer – BC Micro Brew	8,478,232	7.1%	10.1%
Beer – BC Regional	13,463,298	-1.5%	-5.1%
Beer – Import	6,080,319	-3.5%	-42.0%
Cider – Domestic & Import	5,164,722	-0.3%	-9.9%
Coolers	22,439,095	-5.1%	-3.3%
Gin	579,351	5.0%	4.4%
Rum	923,330	4.1%	-1.8%
Tequila	464,329	15.1%	28.6%
Vodka	2,543,397	3.9%	-1.7%
Whiskey	1,808,320	0.4%	4.0%
Wine – BC	11,064,514	8.1%	-5.9%
Wine – Canadian	231,560	-21.3%	-15.3%
Wine – USA	1,665,776	-4.6%	-2.5%
Wine Total	19,890,156	3.9%	-5.2%

## Hospitality Liquor Sales July – September 2021

	Litres	increase/decrease over previous quarter	increase/decrease over previous year
Beer – BC Commercial	4,487,156	52.8%	21.9%
Beer – BC Micro Brew	2,517,912	47.4%	38.5%
Beer – BC Regional	2,966,594	46.9%	27.2%
Beer – Import	862,065	64.4%	-26.0%
Cider – Domestic & Import	547,315	48.7%	26.3%
Coolers	591,353	46.5%	54.2%
Gin	85,612	86.3%	71.4%
Rum	100,059	83.2%	59.5%
Tequila	150,078	90.4%	95.3%
Vodka	269,220	75.0%	50.9%
Whiskey	119,019	89.9%	67.5%
Wine – BC	1,228,390	56.7%	36.7%
Wine – Canadian	31,211	44.1%	57.3%
Wine – USA	148,083	51.3%	53.9%
Wine Total	2,165,372	57.2%	43.2%

Tequila has continued to show strong growth in both wholesale and hospitality sales, so stock up on a good selection of tequilas to satisfy this demand.

The Buy Local trend shows in both the growth in BC Micro Brews as well as BC Wine.

# A DAY IN THE LIFE OF AN AGENT:

## Justine Fantillo

### BC Trade Development Manager for PMA Canada

by Jacquie Maynard



As BC Trade Development Manager for **PMA Canada**, **Justine Fantillo** is the touchpoint for the BC wine and spirits market—everything that happens in the region flows through her. Whether it's liaising with PMA brand managers, guiding promotions, or digging into some juicy marketing data, Fantillo makes it happen for the 80-plus brands and approximately 35 suppliers that PMA Canada represents.

"I like to say I'm the liaison between dreams and what can actually be done," she laughs.

#### Follow Your Passion

Fantillo has always loved hospitality and marketing, but

it wasn't until after taking a break from her career and travelling in Thailand that she ended up in the beverage industry. "It wasn't my original vision, but when I thought about it, all the pieces fell into place," she says. Now she has eight years in the beverage industry under her belt.

Her previous role at PMA was as a key account manager, but after a few years, it didn't feel quite right.

"I've always been a behind-the-scenes type of person. I love building things for people—building that killer presentation, finding the data and

similarities for what I needed to make the pitch. I always had in the back of my mind that I'm passionate about this, and it came down to being upfront with my managers. I told them 'This is my passion, this is what I enjoy doing, what position exists that can make that happen?' Six months later, the perfect position came up."

Sometimes it takes the right conversation with the right people to make your dreams a reality. "I wasn't unhappy in my previous role, but I saw my little sparks of passion and followed them."

#### Lots of Meetings

Just because it's her dream role doesn't mean there wasn't an adjustment. "Coming from sales, where you're always up and moving around and meeting with people in person, and then going to a desk job was quite a shock," she laughs.


She came into her new role about six months ago, so the pandemic was already underway, but even before that her role required many Zoom meetings liaising with brand managers across the country. For her, the biggest change was managing the region as a whole.

"I've always had to deal with suppliers, but before it was in a more sales-oriented way," she explains. "This role is more transitional, instead of focusing on my accounts. Now I worry about the entire sales team's capacities and help the brand managers succeed across all channels. It's a juggling act."

Along with her sales coordinator, Fantillo's main goal is to make plans that are executable and compliant.

"It's part managing expectations with the brand team—helping guide their fiscal plan, pricing, even POS—but we're also the regional experts when it comes to what you can and can't do in a regulatory sense. We help brand managers from different provinces understand the landscape of BC."

Growing into this leadership role has also inspired Fantillo to help other women go after their passions and reach their goals. "Beyond my career, I feel a heightened responsibility to use my position to encourage and support other women to apply for leadership positions, and further my abilities to be a good mentor," she says.

Now that she's settled into her role, Fantillo is excited for the upcoming year. "Heading into 2022, I can start affecting the changes that, I think, got me the job in the first place. It's an ever-growing and adapting company, and there's always something that can be improved and so much to learn," she notes. "That's what excites me." 

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# THE HEID OUT

## RESTAURANT AND BREWHOUSE

by Jacquie Maynard

**Heidi Romich** and her family have been a part of the Cranbrook restaurant scene in some form or another since 1999 when she opened **Heidi's Restaurant**. What started as a 12-table European international fine dining restaurant has blossomed into **The Heid Out Restaurant and Brewhouse** and **Fisher Peak Brewing Company**, a local haunt and pillar of the community.

### A Long, Storied Journey

Romich has been everywhere—Austria, Borneo, Argentina—learning and teaching about tourism, hospitality, and culinary arts. When she settled back in her hometown, she brought her experience and knowledge with her, opening Heidi's Restaurant.

In 2005, Romich and her then-husband decided to expand. The new space had four separate dining rooms and was decorated in a cozy, European style with a carved wooden bar and accents.

Unfortunately, during the height of the renovation Romich's husband was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and passed away shortly after, leaving her with not only a broken heart but also a newly-renovated restaurant with double the occupancy to run.

Trying to pick up the slack, Romich moved from the front-of-house to the kitchen—resulting in back surgery in 2009. Fed up, sore, and not

fully healed from surgery, she attempted to sell the business. "At the time there were lots of restaurants for sale and no one wanted to buy them," Romich laughs. "Fortunately!"

### Award-Winning Restaurant and Brewery

In 2013, Romich and her team decided to give the business a facelift. After stripping everything back they ended up with 9,200 square feet over two floors, with exposed beams, two fireplaces, and three garage doors to let in some light. The new space could hold 160 in the main dining room and 40 in a private banquet room. The Heid Out Restaurant and Brewhouse and Fisher Peak Brewing Company officially opened that year. After a challenging opening partnership, Romich's partner bought into the business, jumping into the brewing side with both feet. They were able to collaborate with a well-known brewmaster who showed them the ropes, and now Fisher Peak Brewing Company has won Gold in Canada, Gold in BC, and Silver in Canada for its Hellroaring Scottish Ale.

"Everything is handcrafted and we use the best local ingredients. The kitchen is the same," says Romich. "Everything is made from scratch and we have a separate Celiac kitchen, so we can accommodate most dietary restrictions." Romich's catering company has even catered fully Celiac weddings and been featured on the Food Network.



Courtesy of the Heid Out Restaurant and Brewhouse

The Heid Out's Executive Chef, along with the Executive Sous Chef and other kitchen staff, come up with delicious, unique recipes that incorporate interesting local ingredients and their house beer. "We laugh a lot, and have a lot of fun together," she says. "When we get together it's like, 'How are we going to entertain ourselves today?'"

### Creating A Community

Speaking of staff, Romich is proud that so many of hers choose to stick around. She says they've all become a family and gotten through the trials and tribulations of the last 22 years together. Even seasonal hires come back year after year. She says leaving people with a positive experience in the industry is her biggest compliment and reward. She even catered the wedding of a young man who had been a dishwasher for her at 14 years old. According to his parents, he was adamant about Romich catering the wedding because he'd had such a good experience working for her.

"Having been in hospitality and tourism a long time, it drives me crazy to hear horror stories," she says. "It makes it hard for the industry. It's a dynamic, exciting job with lots of transferrable skills, but managers who don't care about their staff are pushing people away."

It's not only her staff that become family—the love spreads into the community as well. The Heid Out and associated brewery are strong community supporters, donating time, money, and food to those in need. After teaching culinary arts at the local college for the last 17 years and welcoming apprentices with open arms, along with everything the business contributes to Cranbrook, the community decided to give back to Romich and awarded her Citizen of the Year in 2019. "It was such an incredible honour," she says.

For the past 22 years, Romich has been a fixture of downtown Cranbrook, and everything she and her team do—from letting the town name the new business, to immortalizing "The Elephant Incident" in their Elephant Run IPA—is to benefit the community that has done so much for them. **P**



# CERTIFICATION: YOUR TICKET TO PARADISE

by Tim Ellison

It's a common refrain, "I can't get staff." Or you hear, "If I can get employees, they are no good. Or if they are good, they don't stay." And every now and then they say, "There is a labour shortage, but I can't get a job." The answer?

Certification. Investment. A quantifiable demonstration of your commitment to invest in your staff. Something that enhances their lives as well as their ability to do their job. Whether you offer to pay for it after a predetermined period of continued employment, subsidize employees by helping with tuition, provide flexible scheduling to accommodate courses, or bring in an instructor to certify your whole crew, it is sure to make some potential employment candidates seriously consider joining your team. As a job seeker, getting certification is a clear demonstration to

industry that you are serious about your career and are willing to invest in yourself as part of your professional development.

Staff feel more confident, are better able to suggest sell and upsell, contribute directly to an enhanced guest experience, and they get to reap the rewards—both emotionally and financially. Happier employees are more productive, stay longer, and have less absenteeism. They contribute to a positive work environment and a rising tide floats all boats. As they share newfound knowledge with coworkers, everyone wins.

Professional development and education resulting in certification is not just for the front of the house either. There are many professional certifications for the rest of the crew, too. Recognized certificates, diplomas, and degrees

are available for everything from chefs to accountants, facilities managers, and human resource staff.

Some industry-recognized certifications are self-study, can be completed quickly and easily online, and might be a requirement for certain occupations (i.e., Serving It Right for alcohol servers). Others may be complex, multi-year studies like the **Wine & Spirit Education Trust's** Diploma in Wine or a Bachelor of Hospitality as offered at **Vancouver Community College**. Look for credible institutions that have a good track record either locally or even better, internationally. As potential employers abroad don't necessarily know the quality and reputation of your previous employers, internationally recognized

certification really boosts a resumé (so you can work abroad, travel to cool places, and get paid for it). If you are under 35 years of age, check out the various 'Young Professional' work visas available in a variety of intriguing and exotic countries.

### Cooks & Chefs

For cooks and chefs, the entry level certification is Foodsafe Levels 1 and 2. After those courses, aspiring culinarians can hone their skills through a variety of programs intended for the 'serious amateur' quite often on offer at professional cooking schools during evenings and weekends. After that, it's enrollment in a Culinary Arts or Baking and Pastry program with a view to achieving an Interprovincial Red Seal Certification. Not only does this certification give depth to one's knowledge, it also leads to more prestigious certifications involving financial and people management skills like the Canadian Culinary Institute's Chef de Cuisine Certification and ultimately Certified Master Chef. These certifications give recognition to the myriad of hats professional chefs wear on any given day. There's more to running a kitchen than simply cooking.

### Bartenders & Servers

For front-of-house staff, there are several certifications that may be helpful. The Wine & Spirit Education Trust (WSET) offers certifications centered around beverage alcohol. The certificates in wine knowledge that run from the introductory Level 1 to the Level 4 Diploma are viewed as the international gold standard. There are other wine certifications available including offerings from the **International Sommelier Guild** (ISG) and the **Court of Master Sommeliers** (CMS). The WSET also offers a very thorough three-level course of studies for specialization for both saké and spirits. The **Statera Academy** based out of Vancouver is one of the few program providers offering courses for all three disciplines.

For servers of beer, there is certification offered virtually via the Cicerone Certification Program. Certification is offered at a variety of levels including the entry level Certified Beer Server to Certified, Advanced, and Master Cicerone. These courses cover everything from types and styles of beer, structured beer tasting technique and identification, right up to assembly and maintenance of beer lines and tap systems. This is a unique offering that really gives you a competitive edge in the growing craft beer market.

### Management

There are many other certifications geared toward industry professionals wishing to take on managerial roles. There are many courses available in leadership, event management, accounting, or sales and marketing, ranging from short certificate programs to lengthier offerings resulting in Diplomas or Degrees. These programs are a great option for those wishing to make a career out of the hospitality industry. A simple Internet search will offer up a lot of choices to consider.

There are countless options and the return on investment of money and time will have a dramatic effect on guest satisfaction, employee engagement, loyalty, and most likely profitability. Ultimately, investing in your staff or yourself by helping to achieve these professional certifications demonstrates a commitment to lifelong learning, and a desire to improve the knowledge, skills, and abilities of your team. It is also a competitive advantage when trying to attract new hires or get a job yourself. **P**

*Tim Ellison is a Certified Sommelier & Chef de Cuisine who has dedicated nearly half a century to the hospitality industry. Currently, he is the Interim General Manager/COO of the prestigious Vancouver Club.*

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# » NAMES IN THE NEWS by Deb Froehlick

## Congratulations

We are delighted that **ABLE BC's** hard-working Executive Director, **Jeff Guignard**, has been named on *Vancouver Magazine's* 2022 Power 50 List as one of the "change-makers and power players shaping our world



in 2022." Guignard is number 35 on the list and says, "I am utterly humbled and honoured to be included on this list of accomplished and influential leaders. While it's my name in the magazine, I know this is a shared recognition for the hard work, dedication, and passion of the team at ABLE BC and other association leaders who have been fighting for BC's liquor and hospitality industries throughout this pandemic. I'm immensely proud of what we've accomplished together and am filled with gratitude for this acknowledgement of our shared successes."

## Appointments

**Ann Brydle** has joined ABLE BC as the new Manager of Membership and Communication. Ann has an extensive background in liquor retail, having worked for **Cascadia Liquor** for several years, so her skills and experience will be a tremendous asset to ABLE BC and the association's members.



**Alana Dickson** has been appointed the new Executive Director of the **BC Hospitality Foundation (BCHF)**, taking over from **Dana Harris** as of January 31, 2022. Jeff Guignard, Board Chair of the BCHF says, "I am immensely proud of everything Dana has accomplished over the past four years. Her endless passion, relentless dedication, and positive leadership style have benefited the Foundation immeasurably, especially amid the extraordinary challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. On behalf of the Board of Directors, we cannot thank her enough for everything she has contributed to the BCHF."



## New Members

ABLE BC is pleased to welcome the following new member:

### Historic Dewdney Pub

## Awards

### 2021 Melbourne International Spirits Competition

This 8th annual competition is part of the International Beverage Competition Series, the only International Beverage Competition judged solely by trade buyers who assess the product by category as well as retail price. There were over 200 quality submissions from around the world, which were judged remotely.

#### Gold Medal Winners:

**Whisky** - Amahagan World Malt Edition No.5 Sherry Wood finish, Garrison Brothers Cowboy, Garrison Brothers Small Batch, The Shin 15 Year Old Malt Whisky Mizunara Oak Finish, Uncle Nearest 1856 Premium Aged Whiskey

**Vodka** - Baxter – Australian Crafted Vodka, Grainshaker Australian Vodka – Wheat

**Gin** - Coventry Estate Australian Botanical Gin, Devils Thumb Distillery Signature

**Dry Gin** - Kangaroo Island Spirits Whisky Barrel Gin, Prohibition Liquor Co. Shiraz Barrel

**Aged Gin** - Slingsby Old Tom Gin, The Craft & Co Navy Strength Gin

**Rum** - Coles Armada Dark Rum, FNQ Spirits Croc Piss, RHS Royal Hawaii Spirits Honey Rum

**Agave/Tequila** - Ciento Tequila Private Collection – Anejo, Ciento Tequila Private Collection – Blanco, Coles VIVIR Tequila Reposado

**Brandy** - Distiller's Selection Single Cask Brandy Ochre – Fine Brandy

**Liqueurs and Others** - Geo Coffee Liqueur, Lyre's Absinthe, Lyre's Amaretti, Lyre's Aperitif Rosso, Lyre's Italian Orange, The Craft & Co Anise Silver, Bronze, and Individual Winners are listed at

<https://melbourneinternationalspiritscompetition.com/2021-winners/>

### Canadian Whisky Awards

Nine independent whisky experts have named Crown Royal Noble Collection Winter Wheat, Canada's best whisky and Canadian Whisky of the Year at the 12th annual Canadian Whisky Awards.

From among well over 150 Canadian whiskies tasted, Crown Royal also took top honours for Best Blended Whisky and Sippin' Whisky of the Year.

Other major winners include **Pendleton** Director's Reserve 20-Year-Old which was named Connoisseur Whisky of the Year in the multi-market category.

**J. P. Wiser's** Red Letter 15-Year-Old is the Connoisseur Whisky of the Year – Canada Exclusive, and Best Line Extension.

**Canadian Club** 100% Rye was named Best Whisky Value in multiple markets.

Innovation of the Year went to the truly original and delicious **Forty Creek** Master's Cut. Vancouver's **Odd Society Spirits** won Best New Whisky with its Maple Whisky.

Smoke Point 3 from **Shelter Point Distillery** was awarded as Single Malt of the Year.

**Diageo Global Supply** - Gimli is the 2022 Distillery of the Year, while **Okanagan Spirits** in Vernon, BC earned notice as Artisanal Distillery of the Year.

See all award winners at <https://canadianwhisky.org/blog/canadian-whisky-awards-2022>. 



# » LCRB REPORT

by Jillian Rousselle, A/Assistant Deputy Minister, LCRB

In this ever-evolving pandemic, the **Liquor and Cannabis Regulation Branch (LCRB)** remains active in providing targeted support to the liquor and non-medical cannabis industries, while also monitoring public health and safety in relation to the Provincial Health Officer (PHO) orders and liquor laws.

2021 was a busy year on the compliance and enforcement side of our operations. On September 13, 2021, a new PHO order was issued that mandated proof of vaccination (POV) requirements for citizens who are attending certain businesses or events. Since then, our compliance and enforcement team has been kept very busy monitoring and educating liquor licensees about compliance with the POV requirements ordered by the PHO. Following the new order coming into force, the Branch received a significant number of complaints from both the public and stakeholders about non-compliant operators, and quickly developed a multi-agency enforcement approach amid high levels of industry and public expectations.

In addition, the compliance and enforcement team quickly deployed inspectors from other areas of the province to Northern BC to address non-compliance issues with the regional health order put in to address concerns related to low vaccination rates and high transmissions of the virus.

LCRB records for 2021 show that our compliance and enforcement officers issued 28 violation tickets under the PHO orders. Of the 28 violations, 14 were related to non-compliance with the vaccine requirement for entry into licensed establishments, with the rest related to non-compliance with social distancing and transmission mitigation measures at licensed establishments and events.

As the circumstances with health orders and the pandemic continue to evolve, LCRB staff continue to prioritize voluntary compliance through educational meetings and inspections and will take enforcement actions for violations as necessary.

While the vast majority of licensees continue to be in compliance, you may be interested to know the top five contraventions of liquor laws by licensees in 2021 were related to responsible service and record-keeping:

1. Failing to comply with requirements for liquor quantities and price lists (over 400)
2. Failing to have liquor register available at time of the inspection (over 300)

3. Failing to comply with record keeping requirements (over 200)
4. Allowing a person to sell or serve liquor without Serving It Right, the prescribed training program or re-certification (over 140)
5. Allowing a person to supervise the sale or service of liquor without Selling It Right, the prescribed training or re-certification (over 50)

On the licensing side of operations, the intake of Temporary Expanded Service Area (TESA) applications closed at the end of October 2021 with more than 2,250 applications approved. Processing permanent structural change applications (i.e., new outdoor patios) remains a priority to enable licensees to make their TESAs permanent, if they wish to do so. While there is no deadline to apply for a permanent structural change, some applications require a public input/consultation process and may take up to 10 months to be approved, so we encourage licensees to be proactive and **apply early** for a permanent structural change to help prevent disruptions in business after the June 1, 2022 expiry of the TESA program.

In October 2021, we also announced that Liquor Primary (LP) and Food Primary (FP) licensees are now permitted to package and sell single servings of unmixer drinks (i.e., wine, cider, draft beer) for takeout with the order of a meal. This expanded on the permanent authorization for LP and FP licensees to sell packaged liquor and cocktails for off-site consumption with a meal.

While this opens another revenue stream for industry, it's important to remember that government is not intending to allow bars and restaurants to operate like liquor stores. Liquor must be kept under the control of the licensee and staff, and not accessible for self-service by patrons. Though a meal is not strictly defined, licensees are asked to use their common-sense and judgement to meet the meal requirement of this authorization. Generally, it is understood that a small appetizer or dessert alone does not constitute a meal.

Over the last year we have seen an increase in the number of liquor licensees in BC with over 10,350 active liquor licensees now, compared to 10,165 in January 2021. The LCRB also issued more than 90 non-medical Cannabis Retail Store (CRS) licences in 2021, for a total of 390 CRS licences and an additional 53 approved in principle at the beginning of December 2021.

We know that 2021 was another challenging year for many of you, and we look forward to continuing to work with licensees, stakeholders, local governments, and Indigenous Nations to foster resilient liquor and non-medical cannabis markets in BC. **P**

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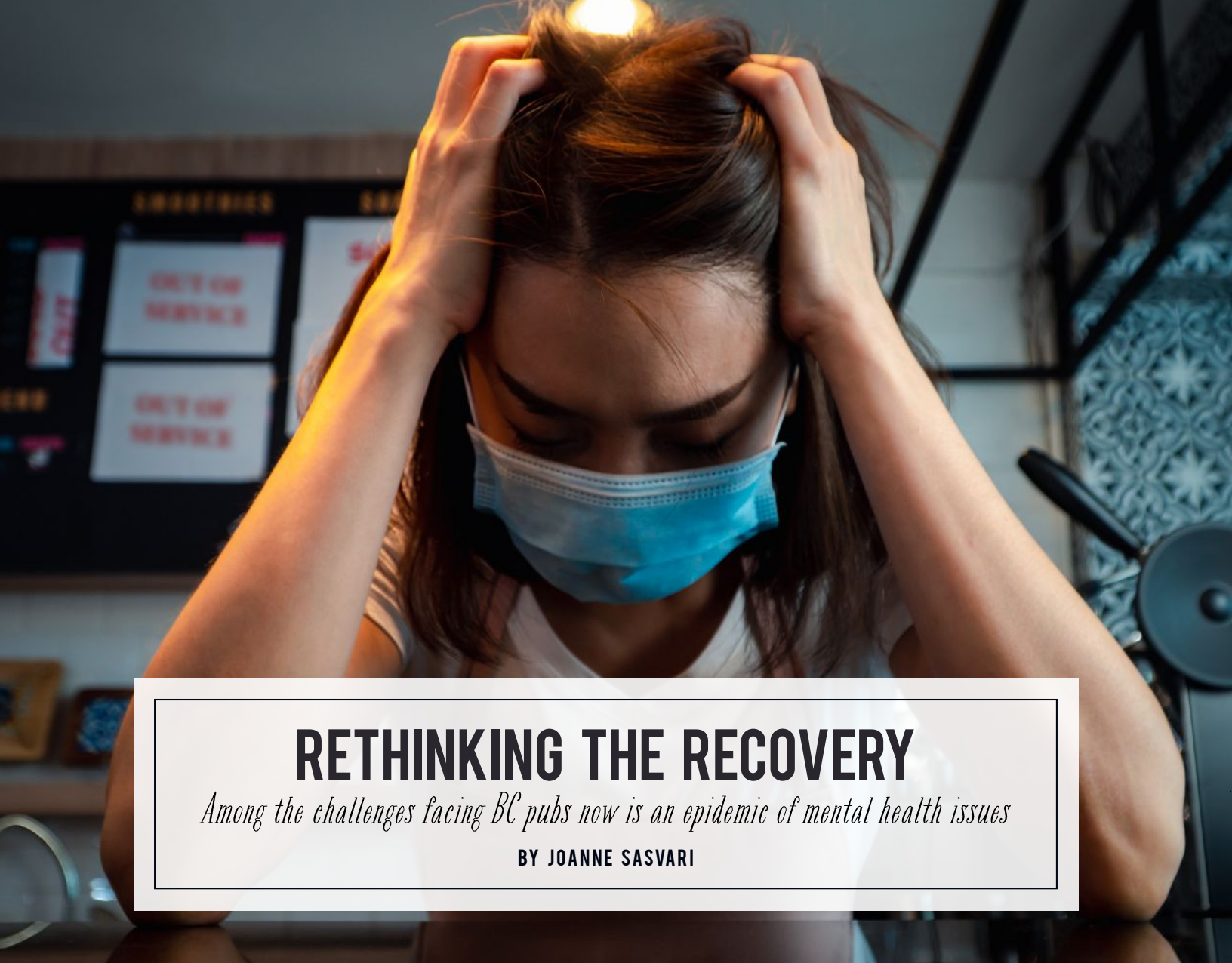
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# RETHINKING THE RECOVERY

*Among the challenges facing BC pubs now is an epidemic of mental health issues*

BY JOANNE SASVARI

After two years of a global pandemic, pubs across BC should be well on the way to recovery. Wait, says COVID-19, hold my beer.

“For two years we’ve been looking for room to breathe and I don’t think we’re going to get it,” says **Richard Matthews**, the general manager of **Ullr Bar** in Invermere.

The situation is even getting to the normally optimistic **Paul Hadfield**, owner of **Spinnakers** in Victoria. “I’m getting to the point where I’ve had enough of this stuff,” he says. “The wear and tear on the population is starting to show. How long does one want to do this?”

January and February are traditionally slow times in the industry, but this year has been especially bleak, thanks to the Omicron variant that sidelined Christmas and New Year’s Eve. But that’s not all that’s affecting the recovery.

## Not a Level Playing Field

One of the many unfair things about the pandemic is that it affects different businesses in different ways.

“My understanding from conversations with the **BCRFA** [BC Restaurant and Foodservices Association] is the downtown venues are just getting trashed,” says Hadfield. “It has to do with the changing

nature of offices and working from home. Suburban locals are doing OK. People are sticking to their neighbourhoods.”

Pubs in downtown Vancouver, for instance, are dealing with the loss not just of office workers, but of conventions, festivals, and cruise ships. Meanwhile, across Burrard Inlet, North Vancouver’s **Queen’s Cross Pub** is seeing a steady stream of locals.

“Being in the neighbourhood is good because people like to go for a walk and have a pint or a cocktail and walk home,” notes General Manager and Operating Partner **Robyn Gray**. Still, he notes, “Everybody is kind of timid to come out, especially the older demographic, and we’re in an older demographic neighbourhood. Beyond COVID and Omicron, there’s been huge supply chain disruption. And now we’re hearing there are going to be booze shortages, too.”

Over in Invermere, travel restrictions have taken a toll. “We’re a summer-primary place,” Matthews explains. “Summertime is king. The rest of the year we’re supported by locals and a little bit by the ski hill, Panorama.” Ullr Bar was also affected by provincial health orders that have kept nightclubs closed almost constantly since March 2020. “We’re fortunate that we have a food service licence attached to our nightclub, so we changed that to a restaurant on the fly. If we couldn’t, we would be bankrupt,” he says.

Even at Spinnakers business is down about 35% since early 2020. "People are afraid to go out. The anxiety level is very, very high and that's complicated by a lack of access to tests," Hadfield says. "We're fortunate. We're diversified and we have a lot of goodwill. I don't understand how small operators in leased premises can make it work."

### 'Another Huge Stressor'

The biggest issue for everyone is staffing—thousands of people have left the hospitality industry for more stable, less stressful employment. That's why Matthews will do whatever it takes to keep the people he has. "During the pandemic, we worked really hard to make sure our employees were getting their bills paid, to build camaraderie, and show people we care," he says. "We're a family. We're dead in the water without them."

Ullr Bar's owners are also talking to realtors and developers to find affordable housing solutions. "All of a sudden we're getting into the real estate game because if we don't, we won't have any employees," Matthews states. "It's another huge stressor for us."

**WE WORKED REALLY HARD TO  
MAKE SURE OUR EMPLOYEES  
WERE GETTING THEIR BILLS PAID.**

Yet another huge stressor is staff falling sick, which affects everyone else they work with. "Omicron takes out whole flocks of staff," says Gray, who ended up working in the kitchen when his cooks got sick. "First the kitchen went down, then the bar went down, then the cold beer and wine store went down."

Now the industry is facing a growing epidemic of depression, anxiety, and other mental health issues. "They're worried. They don't know what's going on," Matthews says. "They need to pay the bills. They can't go out and have fun. They have to enforce the rules. And they're worried they'll get sick."

"It's been really hard raising morale," Gray adds. "I just stay positive, really keep the energy up and really listen to the people, especially when they are talking about COVID. They come first; the business comes second. Happy staff means happy guests means more revenue."

### 'Absolutely a Roadblock'

When the pandemic began, the provincial and federal governments rolled out subsidies, grants and loans, and fast-tracked legislative changes such as temporary patio licences.

"The programs, particularly from the feds, have been enormously helpful," Hadfield says. "But the difficulty right now is that we don't have any clarification on what's out there, and they don't seem to understand the magnitude of the problem. I quite simply don't think they understand the challenges that we are collectively facing."

Some establishments have been unable to take advantage of the government programs and others are reluctant to do so. "If we can do it without, we should always do that first and foremost," Matthews says, noting that the money runs out eventually and besides, some of the grants are so small they are "just a drop in the bucket" of what's needed.

At the same time, regulatory hurdles are getting in the way of making Ullr's temporary Asgarden patio a permanent one. The process is so




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Courtesy of Ullr Bar

costly and complicated, he'll either have to close the patio or spend a lot of money he doesn't have. "The regulatory board of licensing is putting us through the wringer," Matthews says.

Hadfield feels his pain. He was one of the 50 or so industry representatives who helped define the province's rules for re-opening in 2020. But he feels that the province is "absolutely a roadblock right now," and needs to do more to encourage innovation and investment. "What we've seen in the last two years is not that. It's been one of much more constraint," he says.

For instance, Spinnakers' newest retail products are trapped in the LDB's achingly slow listing process. At the same time, Hadfield notes, there has been no postponement of statutory payments—even while the province's new sick leave policy will cost his pub an estimated 450 additional days of labour. "I don't think that gets factored into everything. Who's actually paying for this? We are. Small business is."

### A Need for Community

If all this sounds like it isn't much of a recovery at all, well, it isn't. But there is a light at the end of the tunnel. Spring is just around the corner and, as Hadfield says, "We'll be into longer days and people will start going out for dinner again and playing softball in the park. It all averages out in the end. We need to get back into March and things will start to get better."

Most importantly, there will always be a need for pubs. "The public house is a special thing because it's all about community," says Gray.

"Our community has been awesome," Matthews adds. "They've supported us and backed us. We've had snowstorms with people sitting outside under heaters to make sure we don't go under. We're not going to give up. We're a Viking bar for a reason." P

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# UNDERSTANDING & PREVENTING BURNOUT

by go2HR

Many of us wear our busy schedules and tight deadlines like badges of honour, particularly those employed in BC's tourism and hospitality industry. As service-oriented professionals, we rise to the occasion repeatedly, taking pride in our ability to show resilience and respond to the seemingly ever-changing and increasing workloads that are a result of the incredible challenges that employers and businesses have had to face over these past few years (the COVID-19 pandemic, wildfires, floods, labour shortages, and supply chain issues to name just a few). But while we focus on getting through each day, an undertow of feeling overwhelmed, inadequate, or unappreciated sometimes builds momentum. This undertow, if not addressed, can sweep us off our feet.

## What is Burnout?

Burnout isn't just about being busy or having a heavy workload. Our perception of our work, our workplace, and ourselves all play a big role. Some contributors to burnout include feeling unsupported at work—that demands are unreasonable, expectations are unclear, or that nothing will ever change for the better.

Although "burnout" is not classified as a medical condition, it is a term for an occupational phenomenon that is familiar to many. There are numerous signs of burnout, including exhaustion, apathy and diminished motivation, decreased employee morale and increased turnover (one person's experience of burnout can affect the entire team), errors and accidents, physical issues, and "presenteeism"—where an employee still comes to work and may even be at work for longer hours, but their tasks are not getting done or aren't completed to typical standard. In service-oriented businesses such as pubs, bars, restaurants, and liquor stores, the delivery of poor customer service by employees who are typically customer focused (demonstrated

through customer complaints, a lack of repeat business, and so on), might be one of the biggest indicators of a struggling employee.

## How Can Burnout Be Prevented?

For employers and managers, it is important to take the pulse of your team and employees regularly. This can be done through informal check-ins, formal meetings, or by using tools such as the Guarding Minds at Work survey ([guardingmindsatwork.ca](http://guardingmindsatwork.ca)) on an annual basis. Recognize that some performance problems could actually be related to burnout or other mental health issues, so approach conversations from a place of respect and care. When trying to help someone get back on track, timely feedback and intervention are key. Don't wait for yearly performance evaluations to bring up your concerns. Seek to address them as they are happening. Doing so will enable you to provide support and resources in real time, increasing the chances of preventing burnout.

As an employee, you might be the first to notice that a colleague is not their usual self. You don't have to be a human resource professional to ask how someone is doing. You can open the door to talk about your colleague's experiences and then encourage them to get support from the appropriate person at work, your employee family assistance program, or free community resources such as [bouncebackbc.ca](http://bouncebackbc.ca) or other provincial mental health resources available. Check out [workmentalhealthbc.ca](http://workmentalhealthbc.ca) for more information.

Lastly, as you read this, you might be noticing some of the symptoms of burnout in yourself. It is important not to ignore how you're feeling, especially if you've felt this way for a while. Take a moment to reflect on the reason you were drawn to your work or your employer, as well as the other aspects of your life that motivate you. If this is difficult, set an intention now to access a service that can help you, even if you just need someone neutral to talk to. In addition to the resources already mentioned, HealthLink BC (8-1-1) and the 310-Mental Health Line (310-6789) may also provide support. **P**

*As the human resources and health and safety association for the BC tourism industry, go2HR is proud to work in partnership with the Canadian Mental Health Association of BC (CMHA BC) to provide mental health resources, support and resources for BC's tourism and hospitality industry employers and workers. Visit BC's Hub for Workplace Mental Health to learn more.*

## Neighbourhood Pub and Liquor Store Sales



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## » LDB UPDATE

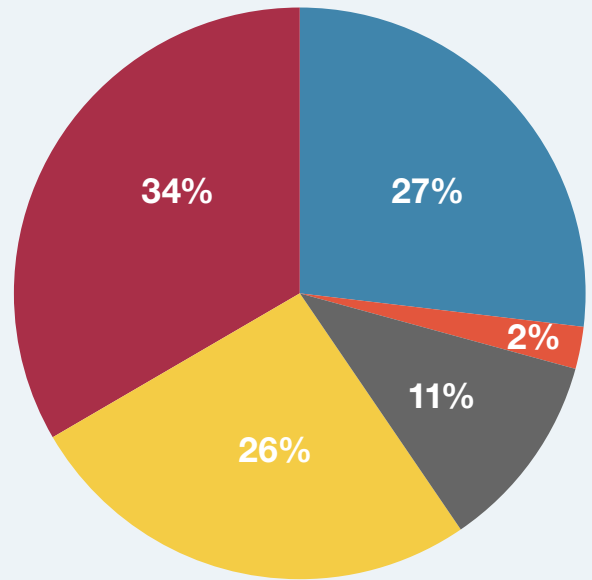
by BC Liquor Distribution Branch

# Beer Industry Trends

In the last LDB Update we highlighted trends that we've been seeing in the wine industry, particularly as we headed into the cooler months. For this edition of *The Quarterly Pour*, with warmer weather just around the corner, we wanted to highlight trends that we're seeing within the beer industry.

As spring approaches and the weather begins to change, so too do the consumption choices of British Columbians. As the weather gets warmer, many consumers are likely to switch their glass of Cabernet for an ice-cold beer. Throughout the spring and summer months, demand for beer products increases by roughly 30%.

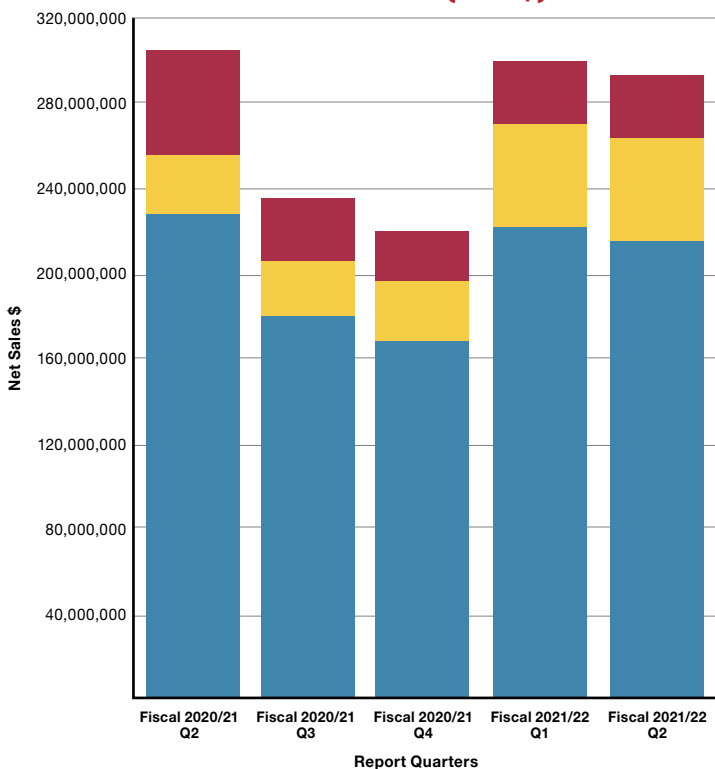
## FY 2021 \$ Market Share By Category



FY 2021 is inclusive of April 2020 to March 2021.



## Beer Sales (Net \$)



Beer makes up 27% of the market share, second only to wine, but only 1% more than spirits. Despite the popularity of this category, overall beer sales have been declining in recent years. Most impacted by this decline have been manufacturers of larger beer brands, as customer buying patterns suggest consumers are favouring products from smaller manufacturers.

British Columbians love beer and, what's more, they love BC beer. BC-based products continue to sell at much higher rates than any other beer products and make up more than three quarters of the province's beer sales. In the past two fiscal quarters, popularity of domestic beer products deriving from outside of BC has taken the lead in sales over import beer products. Looking at import beer, consumers significantly favour products from Mexico over beer from any other country, perhaps because Mexican beers are well known for their light and refreshing notes.

### Item Subcategory



From stouts to sours, lagers to pilsners, and various types of ales, there is no shortage of choice in the market. Yet BC's beer drinkers clearly prefer lagers. This is unsurprising as lagers are one of the most popular beer products all over the world. Consumers often opt for variety packs when shopping for beer, which provide those with a broad palate the opportunity to select a beer based on their preference at the time. For those seeking to

try something new, variety packs also provide the opportunity to sample the various types of beer on offer. Sales data also show that customers prefer to purchase beer in a larger format, and often favour beer products in a 16 oz tall can over the typical 12 oz can.

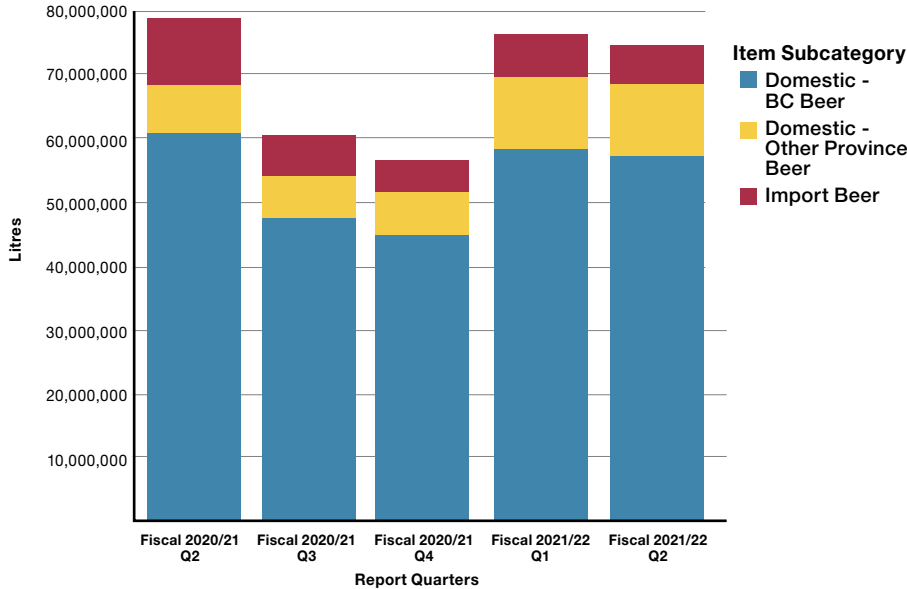
These trends are captured in the LDB Liquor Market Review, which reports provincial sales through the LDB Liquor Wholesale channel for beer, refreshment beverages, spirits, and

wine. Sales are provided in both net dollar value and litres. Net dollar value is based on the price paid by the customer and excludes any applicable taxes. For each reporting period, the Liquor Market Review provides summarized sales data for the current quarter and the previous four quarters.

Manufacturers across the world were impacted by an aluminum can shortage in 2021. Fortunately, we did not see an impact of this shortage on the supply of beer products, as many Canadian beer manufacturers took steps to ensure an ample supply of cans to accommodate their product volume.

LDB Wholesale remains committed to keeping customers informed of temporary and seasonal impacts to the industry as well as market trends, as we continue to strive to provide excellent customer service. The past 12 months have been particularly challenging for LDB Wholesale and for our customers. Together, we faced environmental challenges with wildfires and extreme flooding in many parts of the province in addition to the continuing impacts of the global COVID-19 pandemic. All our customers have been impacted in one way or another by these events and we are grateful for their patience, understanding, and resilience in the face of these challenges. 

## Beer Sales (Litres)



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# EFFECTIVE CATEGORY MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

*Leveraging data and insights critical toward the procurement of a winning product assortment*

BY SEAN TARRY

Evolving consumer tastes is one of the few constants that purveyors of beer, wine, and spirits can count on when running their businesses. Another is shifting trends that can influence a consumer’s purchasing decision. While these are part of what makes running a private liquor store or pub exciting, they also represent significant challenges for category managers—whose job is to curate a selection of product that satisfy customers while keeping them coming back for more. Doing this effectively requires a deep understanding of the various forces impacting the marketplace.

“When assessing the direction in which the consumer and different categories are heading, there are always multiple forces at play that need to be considered,” says **Marc-Olivier Bourgeois**, regional vice president, British Columbia, **Labatt Breweries of Canada**. “At the moment, there

are a few key macro trends that are really influencing the consumer and putting pressure on the sellers of beer, wine, and spirits. One of the most prominent trends impacting multiple categories is the continued acceleration of health and wellness. As part of this, consumers are looking for great

**CONSUMERS ARE LOOKING FOR GREAT TASTING BEVERAGES THAT CONTAIN MORE NATURAL AND TRANSPARENT INGREDIENTS.**

tasting beverages that contain more natural and transparent ingredients, like those found in many organic products, for instance. In addition, as a result of the pandemic, there is now a lack of occasion, leading most Canadians to spend a lot of time in the comfort of

their homes. This is sparking a desire in the consumer to treat themselves, presenting opportunities to meet their indulgences with new and interesting flavours. And it’s also prompting a rise in spirits and cocktails as Canadians want to bring the bar home, providing themselves and their guests with as much variety as possible.”





## Evolving Consumer Preferences

According to Bourgeois, macro trends are relatively consistent from province to province across the country. It is only when comparing different cities and regions that consumption of particular brands and products varies.

**Caroline Bourke**, regional sales strategy manager, Western Canada, **Arterra Wines Canada**, sees many of the same trends impacting wine consumption. She also noted that regional data shows a clear trend of consumers choosing to shop closer to home.

“Over the last couple of years, we’ve seen an accelerated shift toward buy-local,” says Bourke. “Travel restrictions that have been in place during this period have spawned a new consumer base who is discovering the BC VQA wine market for the first time. And this trend is reflected across the country, compelling shoppers to visit and revisit wineries in-store and explore more of the offerings that are closer to home.”

## The Power of Data

Like the growing penchant to discover unique organic and craft products, the buy-local movement is driven primarily by younger and more digital-savvy consumers. This shift is leading to what Bourke describes as a “new era” of category management where retailers, operators, and suppliers must evolve to meet the growing needs of an increasingly digitized, omnichannel world.

According to Bourgeois, the key to an effective category management strategy in this changing environment is listening to consumers.

“Listening to the customer is the most important thing that any seller within the beverage category could do for their business,” he explains. “However, this is often much easier said than done. You can’t possibly speak to every customer that enters your establishment. And, you’d often end up hearing the voice of the people talking the loudest, anyway. Fortunately, we have the tools and technology today that allow us to work with data to help us understand consumer behaviour and the trends that are driving sales. It allows retailers to see the products that are selling in their stores. But, most importantly, they also have access to data related to the products that are selling within their communities. Without this, and without understanding the performance of products that you don’t carry, your sales start to become a bit of a self-fulfilling prophecy.”



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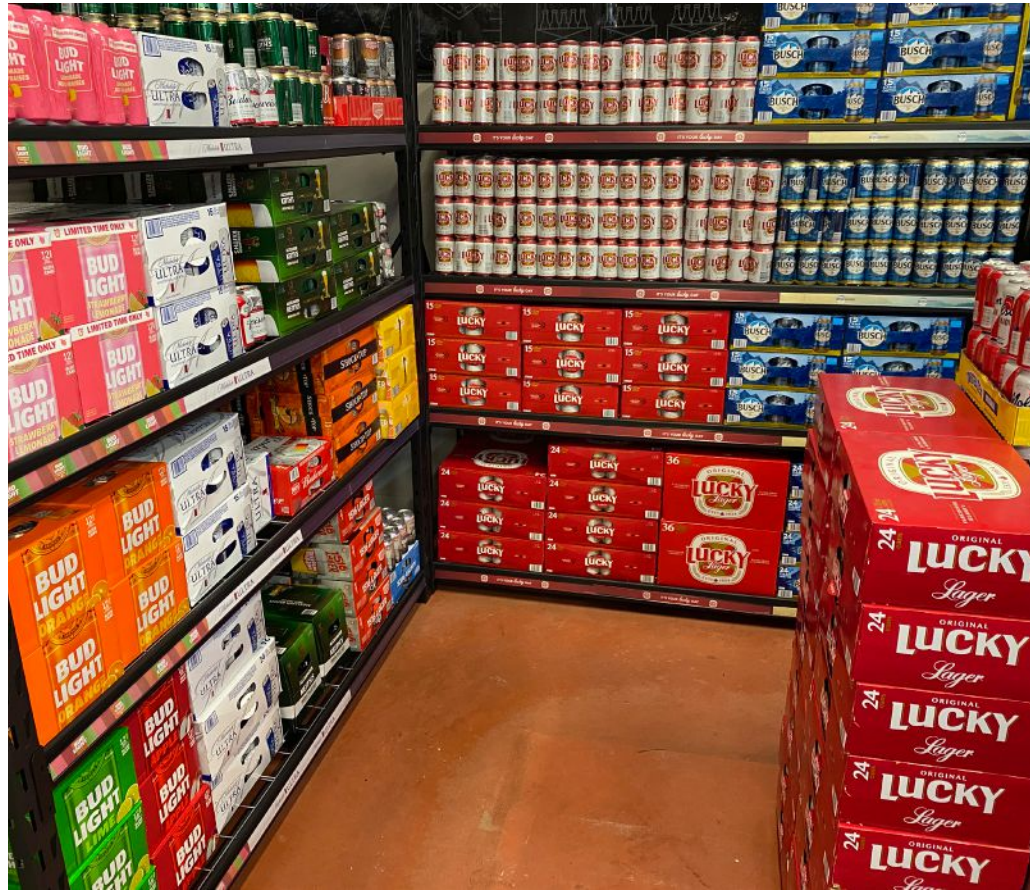
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## Insights-Driven Assortment Optimization

To gain access to data generated outside of their own stores, Bourgeois suggests that retailers work with their supplier partners who will, in most cases, share their data. For example, Labatt frequently shares data with their retail partners via user-friendly monthly reports. It allows retailers to easily identify shifts in sales within various categories and subcategories, which can suggest ways to shift assortment or the shelf-space allocated to a particular product. These subtle insights can arm retailers with an enormous amount of knowledge that will benefit their bottom line.

“Data is everything today,” Bourgeois explains. “Any data-driven decisions are more rational than anything else. And, with access to the right data, retailers are guided and directed concerning the products that the consumer is actually looking for and purchasing, making them aware of exactly which products they should be carrying. It also provides them with the ability to more easily identify the low-hanging fruit or underperforming SKUs within categories. After all, category management is all about optimizing your assortment to meet the needs of your consumer. Data allows retailers to achieve this, getting out ahead of trends and satisfying the many tastes of their consumers.” **P**



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# TIPPING FOR BETTER TEAMWORK?

by Kevin Woolliams



The hospitality industry in North America has a long history of tipping with full acceptance of the practice starting almost 100 years ago; historical records show tipping started in Europe in the eighteenth century. The acceptance of tipping does not make the ritual conflict-free—from guest's complaints (especially those from outside North America) to back office challenges with credit cards to your front-of-house staff whispering about what is 'fair'—there is rarely a respite from hearing about tipping.

Laws on tipping are ever evolving too. BC's **Employment Standards Act (ESA)** changed to have expanded definitions and rules regarding tipping (closely mimicking Ontario's changes). The succinct—quite bureaucratic—summary of the ESA about tipping comes from the ESA website.

Employers can require that tips are redistributed in a tip pool. Employers may not share in tips unless they do similar work to the employees who receive the tips. Employers cannot withhold tips or force employees to

give up tips unless it's required by law (e.g. they have a court order to garnish wages).

Knowing what leaders can do is not an effective guide to the best practices of how to do it. There are ample opportunities to reduce the employee challenges that often surround tipping, tip outs, and sharing of tips.

First, we always recommend determining what outcome you are hoping to accomplish. Adjusting the approach to tipping can be done for many reasons: employee retention, employee morale, perceived fairness and equity issues, or promoting teamwork.

Teamwork in the hospitality industry—especially restaurants and bars—is not particularly hard to describe. The sharing of common goals across the front and back-of-house can be very positive for both the business and employees. Think back to great customer experiences you have had in hospitality; it is extremely likely that that experience was a team effort

including those in the kitchen, the bar, and the service staff. It is not a stretch to imagine that a well designed tip pool can be a significant part of helping employees share a common guest experience goal.

Done well, using tip pools/sharing to promote teamwork can also assist with several positive employee relation issues like retention and morale. While legislation in BC allows employers to require a tip pool, the word “require” can clash with the concept of positive employee relations.

There are several approaches that allow employers to avoid the negatives of “require”. Building consensus around a new or revised tip pool with employee input is a very employee-friendly path to finding the best tip pool for your business. Using employee participation gains buy-in to the plan that a top-down approach does not garner. Be prepared to set aside some of your predictions, and enjoy the surprise of some of the great information and suggestions your employees will share with you.

## EMPLOYEE PARTICIPATION GAINS BUY-IN TO THE PLAN THAT A TOP-DOWN APPROACH DOES NOT.

Regardless of how you engage your employees in the conversation, there are several core questions to consider. Some of the common ones are:

- Who should be in your tip pool? Front-of-house, back-of-house, sales and promotion employees, support staff? Who should be in each of the groups? Do not make it about actual people, it is about the position.
- If you’re excluding certain employee groups, why? Is it about a certain personality in a group (the wrong reason to exclude a group of employees) or about the actual position? Having people explain why they support inclusion or exclusion of different positions helps build understanding when the final plan is developed.
- What should be the size (in percentage terms of tips) of the pool? Why?
- What should the division of tips be amongst the different employee groups? Why?
- Do you know (from friends in the industry or previous work experience) what has worked and not worked for tip pools?

Note the number of times “why” appears in the list above. Asking “Why?” is an incredibly powerful tool to use when coaching employees and will help you truly understand the best tip pool for your business and your employees.

How you ask employees can be approached multiple ways. Depending on the size of the group, having a series of short one-on-one meetings with all impacted employees may be the most efficient and effective way to get the information you need.

A simple one page questionnaire (or a web-based version of a questionnaire) can help with gathering information from a larger group. In addition to choice questions like “what percentage,” make sure that the form gets employees to answer open ended “why” questions.

Another method could be to have team meetings—either one or two large groups or several small groups, possibly split by position or front-of-



house/back-of-house. The key in those meetings is to allow for as many voices to be heard as possible. Be prepared with questions for both vocal employees and those less likely to speak out in a group setting. Have a little checklist nearby when conducting the meeting to make sure that you capture ideas and feedback from each employee group, and all the questions you need to have answered have several contributors.

Once you have consensus (or what appears to be consensus) it is time to make sure you have a few supporting materials. A short written summary document of the tip pool plan is important. In addition to the expected data points—percentages, timing, etc.—try to include elements like the shared service goal(s) you have and some of the “why” captured from your employees. Additionally, make sure you have the administrative supports ready so that the payments from the tip pool are done well, on time, and as promised in your summary document.

Finally, make sure that you continue to listen to your employees, watch for industry trends in tipping, and adjust when necessary. The practice has lasted centuries and is apt to continue to change and evolve; your business will be best served if you and your employees stay with the latest trends (and avoid conflicts with the legislation). **P**

## » BC HOSPITALITY FOUNDATION

### Hospitality Charity Scholarships

**The BC Hospitality Foundation (BCHF)** is pleased to announce that its scholarship program will be the biggest ever in 2022. If you, or someone you know, is eligible for a scholarship, please apply! We love to help community members who will become the future leaders of our industry. Here's a peek at some of the opportunities:

- At least 17 Culinary Scholarships – in partnership with the **Chefs' Table Society of BC**
  - 8 BC WISE Scholarships – for individuals enrolled in a wine business program such as winemaking, viticulture, or wine business executive
  - Wine Professional Scholarships (formerly Sommelier Scholarships) – sponsored by local wineries and agencies, for individuals in the hospitality industry who want to further their wine knowledge
- In addition, there will be new scholarships dedicated exclusively to giving a hand up to members of underrepresented groups, such

as First Nations, women, and members of the LGBTQ+ community. Applications for many of the scholarships open in February, so check [www.bchospitalityfoundation.com](http://www.bchospitalityfoundation.com) soon for deadlines and submission requirements.

### Golf Tournaments

The BCHF has also started planning our three annual summertime golf tournaments, in Kelowna, Vancouver, and Victoria. We're excited to host these fundraisers again after a two-year hiatus, and we're looking for people to get involved in the events including:

- players
- committee members
- sponsors
- auction prize donors

We want the tournaments' "comeback" to be a resounding success, so please contact at us at [info@bchospitalityfoundation.com](mailto:info@bchospitalityfoundation.com) if you can contribute, and plan to purchase tickets for a fantastic day on the greens!

Check out our website or sign up for our newsletter for more information. **P**



## PRODUCT SHOWCASE



**REBEL VODKA**  
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Canada

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# WHAT'S COMING?

by Deb Froehlick

## RTD

**Jaw Drop Blue Blast** is a cool blue cocktail that's sure to take you back to those hot summer days of freezing-cold blue ice pops. Dominated by nostalgic blue raspberry flavour, this vodka cocktail is just sweet enough, without being overpowering. Release March 2022, 6x355ml \$8.90 +400449

**Jaw Drop Red Rush** is a rousing red refreshment with the perfect combination of fruit flavours reminiscent of rocket pops. This jaw-dropping cocktail has flavours of blue raspberry, cherry, and lime with well-balanced acidity and sweetness. Release March 2022, 6x355ml \$8.90 +400463

**Jaw Drop Blast Pack** is a variety pack featuring two of their top flavours—Sucking Lemons & Flashing Peaches—and two of their new innovations—Blue Blast & Red Rush. Release March 2022, 12x355ml \$17.02 +400496

**Lime & Ginger Sparkling Margarita** mingles tequila with flavours of fresh ginger, lending a depth of warm spiciness paired perfectly with flavours of lush lime. Release March 2022, 4x355ml \$10.49 +45730

## Wine

**Masottina Collezione 96 Brut Prosecco DOC Treviso** is 100% Glera, 11 % ABV, hand harvested, and produced using the gravity method. Golden delicious apples, pink grapefruit, and limes are clearly distinguished on the nose. Delicate hints of pears and plums together with wisteria flowers. Release February 2022, 750ml \$14.66 introductory price +465581

**Masottina Collezione 96 Brut Prosecco Rose DOC** is 90% Glera, 10% Pinot Noir, and 11% ABV. The Glera grapes are white vinified while the Pinot Noir grapes undergo brief pre-fermentation maceration. On the nose there are fragrances of wild strawberries, raspberries, redcurrants, and cherries, enhanced by white peaches, apricots, and a floral touch. Release February 2022, 750ml \$15.30 introductory price +465578

**Louis Roederer – Collection 242** is writing a new chapter in the story of Brut Premier. This multi-vintage wine reveals the power of blending, expressed year after year, resulting in a Champagne that is bright and contemporary. Great focus and length on the palate, with a fresh, vibrant nose displaying aromas of orange, lime peel, almond, honey, and brioche with ripe quince and sweet pear undertones. Release January 2022, 750ml \$63.62 +483159

## Beer

**Tangerine Tea Hazy IPA** is a new brew from Stanley Park Brewing. It's an Earl Grey-inspired Hazy IPA infused with bright tangerine and tart bergamot flavour. Bold citrus and Earl Grey aromas take center stage. Release February 2022, 4x473ml \$10.39 +486897

## Spirits

**Brecon Rose Petal & Strawberry Gin** marries rose petal and strawberries with tart fresh raspberries and juniper. Hints of liquorice and angelica root swirl, blending spicy cinnamon and coriander aromas with refreshing notes of citrus fruits. Best served with ice and chilled tonic water. Garnish with a slice of pink grapefruit and fresh mint leaves. Release February 2022, 700ml \$44.98 +382221

## Other

**Sparkling Lime and Yuzu** is made with Tahiti lime from Mexico's fertile groves in addition to pressed oil extract from the wonderfully floral Japanese yuzu to create a low-calorie soda that's perfect for mixing with premium vodka or tequila for a mouth-wateringly zesty summer spritz. Release April 2022, 4x200ml Price varies by retailer +812136031328 **P**

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