Fall 2026

Welcome to Virginia Wine Month!

Calling all Virginia Winemakers & Cidermakers!
Mark your calendar to enter your wines and ciders in the 2027 Governor's Cup® Competition!

For over 4 decades, this competition has recognized the highest quality wines Virginia has to offer. Entries will be accepted from **October 26th until November 20, 2026**.

The Mission of the Governor's Cup® Competition is to promote diversity and commercial availability of Virginia wines from all regions. Entries are required to be 100% Virginia wines and ciders, (meaning fruit, wine, concentrates and fortifiers must be 100% Virginia grown and 100% of mead's base agricultural product, honey, must be from Virginia), vintage 2018 or younger.

Please Note: A maximum of six entries allowed per winery.
New this year: The top 140 gold medal winning wines advance to the final round of judging.

The additional panel of judges exclusively for ciders will continue in 2027. Judges more familiar with cider will judge those entries. The Best in Show Cider Award will be revealed and will receive additional recognition and promotion. All Virginia Farm Winery licensees are encouraged to enter the competition!

Click **HERE** for more information and to review the rules and guidelines for 2027.

VWA Honors Senator Russet Perry as 2026 Legislator of the Year

The Virginia Wineries Association was pleased to formally recognize Senator Russet Perry as its 2026 Legislator of the Year during a special gathering at Slater Run Vineyards on July 13. Senator Perry was honored for her advocacy on behalf of Virginia's wine industry, including legislation advancing online reporting, filing, and tax payment through Virginia ABC, a change that will benefit wineries across the Commonwealth. VWA thanks Senator Perry for her partnership with Virginia's wine community and congratulates her on this well-deserved recognition!

Stay informed and ahead of changing regulations by joining our upcoming Regulation & Rules Round Up sessions with Mary Beth Williams of Williams Compliance. These educational sessions are designed to help Virginia wineries navigate compliance requirements, prepare for upcoming changes, and protect their businesses.

Upcoming Sessions:

🍷 **ABC Inspections & Staff Training - October 23 @ 1:00pm via Zoom**
Find out what to expect during an ABC inspection, review ABC requirements and expectations, and learn how to better train your staff to help protect your license from inadvertent compliance issues.
Register Here

🍷 **How to Complete Your TTB Reports - November 18 @ PVCC**
(This is an in-person session in Charlottesville!)

The Regulation & Rules Round Up series and Resource Guide were developed by the Virginia Wineries Association and funded through a grant from the Virginia Wine Board. Stay informed and confident when navigating the ever-changing regulatory landscape with VWA's Regulation & Rules Round Ups.

This series addresses regulatory issues specific to Virginia's wine industry, along with broader business and compliance topics affecting wineries.

We look forward to having you join us for these informative sessions. Whether you're new to the industry or a seasoned winery owner, these programs offer valuable guidance to help keep your business compliant and successful!

Past Regulation & Rules Round Up webinar recordings are available to view **HERE**.

2026 Stewards of Virginia Wine

Virginia Wine is poured, shared and celebrated well beyond the tasting room. **The Stewards of Virginia Wine Awards** recognize restaurants, wine shops and other businesses that make Virginia Wine part of what they do.

This year, 26 businesses were recognized for their commitment to supporting local wine. Explore the list and find a new place to enjoy Virginia Wine this October.

This full-day, hands-on workshop will guide you through completing your TTB reports using your own operational data. Williams Compliance will hold one-on-one appointments after lunch. Please register if interested and specific times will be assigned in order of registration.
Register Here

🍷 **Resource Guide Walk-Through - December 16 @ 1:00pm via Zoom**
Did you know your VWA membership includes access to the Virginia Winery Resource Guide created by Mary Beth Williams? Join us for a guided tour of this valuable resource and learn how to make the most of the tools available to you.
Register Here

🍷 **COLAs & Formulation - January 27 @ 1:00pm via Zoom**
Prepare for bottling season by learning when a formula submission is required and what label details commonly delay TTB approval. A little preparation now can help ensure a smooth approval process.
Register Here

🍷 **Food Service at Farm Wineries - February 25 @ 1:00pm via Zoom**
Food service regulations can vary significantly across Virginia. This session will cover what food service is permitted without triggering Department of Health oversight and how local zoning laws may affect your winery's operations.
Register Here

VIRGINIA WINE COALITION

Industry Speaker Series — Now Available as a Podcast!

The Virginia Wine Coalition knows that harvest season is busy. That's why all six previous installments of the Industry Speaker Series are now available as a podcast on Spotify! Catch up on valuable industry insights while you're on the tractor, working in the cellar, or driving between vineyard blocks.

Click **HERE** for the Spotify Channel.

Episodes cover topics including wine sales strategy, U.S. market trends, regional credibility, website content, winery financials, and more. They're free to stream or download, so you can even save a few before heading out for the day.

Have an idea for a future Industry Speaker Series? We'd love to hear it! Send any topics, questions, or speakers you'd like featured in an upcoming installment.

Virginia Wine Board Grant Opportunity

The FY27-28 Virginia Wine Board grant cycle is now open! The Virginia Wine Board is seeking pre-proposals to fund research, education, and marketing projects that implement the **Wine Vision** strategy to ensure a vibrant and sustainable industry for Virginia farm wineries and cideries. View the **pre-proposal announcement here** and submit pre-proposal applications for research, education, or marketing project ideas via **this Google Form** by **November 10** at 5pm Eastern.

- For a list of **projects funded since 2019, click here.**

The awarded grant period of performance runs from June 1 through May 31. Contact Jennifer Reichert, VWB Grant and Budget Manager (contractor),

VWA Marketing Series

The VWA Marketing Committee serves as a resource to support and empower Virginia wineries in their marketing efforts by providing trainings, sharing best practices, and facilitating access to helpful tools and insights. Acting as a liaison between our member wineries and the Virginia Wine Board Marketing Office, we work to ensure alignment between winery needs and statewide marketing strategies. Our goal is to strengthen the visibility, voice, and success of the Virginia wine industry through collaboration and communication. With this mission in mind, we introduced a virtual marketing series with specific focuses on different areas of marketing to help with strengthening your message and brand.

Please check out the list of upcoming dates and session topics below and be sure to register!

October 21, 2026- *E-Commerce Sales Strategies: Converting Online Visitors into Buyers*
Register Here!

November 18, 2026 - *Website Do's & Don'ts: ADA, Technology & Content That Converts*
Register Here!

Missed a session? View the recordings from past sessions **HERE!**

For our customers, drinking wine is a multisensory experience. Aroma, taste, texture, temperature, and even the context in which a wine is served all contribute to how it is perceived. A better understanding of how our sensory systems work can help

at **VWBGrants@stonywater.com** with questions about this grant program.

To learn more about this summer's feature on Virginia wine's historic visit to France, read Virginia Governor's Cup judge Paul Ting's C-VILLE Weekly article recapping the Old World, New Roots tasting at Le Cordon Bleu Paris. The article is available **HERE**!

Preferred Partner Member Highlight:

CONSOCIATE
Marketing. Media. Management.

At **Consociate Media**, we speak wine. Just like each uncorked bottle tells the story of its vineyard, we bring the distinct terroir of Virginia's wineries to life in everything we create. Our passion is helping wineries uncover their unique narratives and elevate them through comprehensive branding and marketing strategies that not only resonate with your audience but also leave a lasting impact. Our services are as diverse as Virginia's wine regions, offering everything from logo design, website development, and packaging design to videography, social media management, and influencer marketing. We bring extensive experience in the nuances of winery branding and the regulations that come with it. We ensure your products and messaging don't just look great, they make sense for your business and meet industry standards. We take pride in creating individual campaigns that fit into the broader narrative of Virginia winemaking. True to our name, "Consociate," we collaborate with you to bring your vision to life—crafting strategies, captivating visuals, and impactful branding that amplifies your story and drives results. At Consociate Media, it's more than wine or an eye-catching label—it's about communicating your winery's authentic voice and creating a lasting impact. To

us think more deeply about both the wines we make and how we communicate about them. This November, the International Society of Neurogastronomy will bring sensory scientists, neuroscientists, culinary professionals, and other practitioners together at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville for its 2026 Symposium.

For Virginia wine producers, this is a great opportunity to hear what leading sensory scientists are studying and talking about, right here in Virginia, and to consider how that science connects with the way we make, evaluate, describe, and sell wine.

The symposium takes place **Saturday, November 7, at the University of Virginia** in Charlottesville. A separately ticketed dinner workshop, ***A Celebration of Virginia Flavors***, will also feature a multi-course dinner paired with Virginia wines.

Learn more about the program and register **HERE**!

Member Milestones:

Virginia wine writer and longtime industry advocate Frank Morgan is featured in the latest special edition of Wine & Country Life with his article, "Jefferson Vineyards: Thomas Jefferson's Vision Realized for Virginia Winegrowing." Published as part of the magazine's celebration of America's 250th anniversary, Frank's piece explores the history and legacy of Jefferson Vineyards and its connection to Thomas Jefferson's early vision for winegrowing in Virginia. The special edition celebrates the history, people, food, and distinctive sense of place that continue to shape Virginia's wine industry today. Congratulations to Frank and Jefferson Vineyards on another wonderful feature highlighting Virginia wine and sharing its story with a wider audience!

view our work and see how work has made a difference for several Virginia Wineries, visit consociatemedia.com.

Offer to VWA Members: VWA members receive 10% off all services at the current market rate

Contact: Michael Kimball
(757) 846-7977
Michael@consociatemedia.com

VWA Upcoming Events:

October 21, 2026: *VWA Virtual Marketing Series (E-Commerce Sales Strategies) via Zoom*

October 23, 2026: *VWA Regulation & Rules Round Up (ABC Inspections & Staff Training) via Zoom*

October 26-November 20, 2026: *Governor's Cup® Competition Submission Window*

October 29, 2026: *VWA Board Meeting via Zoom*

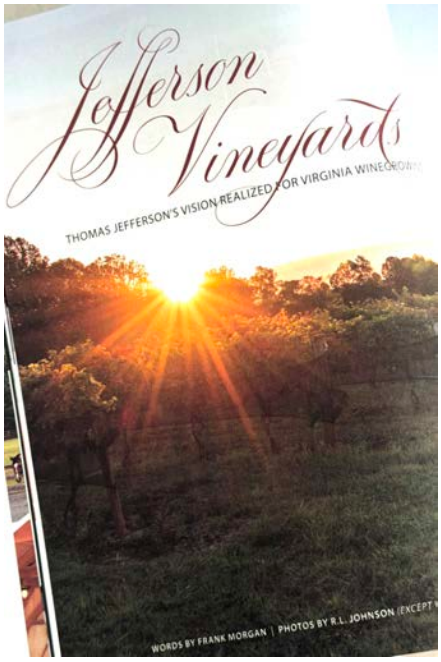
November 18, 2026: *VWA Regulation & Rules Round Up (TTB Reports) in person at PVCC*

November 18, 2026: *VWA Virtual Marketing Series (Website Do's & Don'ts) via Zoom*

December 16, 2026: *VWA Regulation & Rules Round Up (Resource Guide Walk Through) via Zoom*

January 27, 2027: *VWA Regulation & Rules Round Up (COLAs & Formulation) via Zoom*

March 11, 2027: *Governor's Cup® Gala, Main Street Station, Richmond*



Silicon Valley Bank 2026 Direct-to-Consumer Wine Report:

Explore the latest trends shaping direct-to-consumer wine sales with Silicon Valley Bank's 2026 report. The report offers insights into consumer behavior, sales performance, industry challenges, and opportunities for wineries navigating today's evolving DTC market.

Click **HERE** to read the full report!

Who's My Legislator?

The Who's My Legislator? service is an online tool where the public at-large can determine which legislators represent them. Just enter your home address or use map based navigation to see your Virginia House and Senate representatives, as well as those in the U.S. House and Senate.

Please click **HERE** to locate your representatives.

Join a Committee!

VWA Job Bank - Post your Open Positions!

SEND US YOUR NEWS! We're always interested in hearing updates from our members: New staff, new programs, recent news, community service projects, awards, etc. Photos are encouraged!

Virginia Wineries Association | 250 West Main Street | Charlottesville, VA 22902 US

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