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How Wineries Are Keeping The Juices Flowing During The Pandemic

Lana Bortolot Contributor

[Lifestyle](#)



The "D2 Heart" label is designed specifically for DeLille Cellars' philanthropic support of various ... [+]

DELILLE CELLARS

Forced to shutter their tasting rooms, U.S. wineries, which rely heavily on direct-to-consumer sales, are having to think fast on their feet. Survey results released last week by the [National Association of American Wineries](#) painted a grim picture of the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the wine industry. Ten percent of the U.S. wineries responded, with the average respondent estimating a 63% decrease in sales during March. Anticipating business for April was also dark: on average, wineries expected a 75% decrease decline (with the median estimating an 80% loss). If able to resume operations on April 30, the average business recovery time was estimated to be three months. That could be a big “if.”

While waiting it out, wineries are finding ways to cope, discounting product and shipping rates and tying in charitable-giving incentives. And even

in uncertain times, wine-industry leaders large and small are stepping up relief efforts—from cash and in-kind donations to employee and peer support. Here’s a roundup of who’s doing what to keep the juices flowing.

REGIONAL SOS

In Napa Valley, home to some of the country’s most prestigious wineries, **Beckstoffer Vineyards** announced a direct donation of \$100,000 to individuals in need in Napa, Lake and Mendocino counties most affected financially by the crisis. Beckstoffer will write checks of \$300 each for individuals in each of the three counties, which will be distributed through their local Chambers of Commerce.

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Fine and rare wine retailer **Benchmark Wine Group** is reinvesting in the supply chain by purchasing excess inventory from local wineries to help support the loss of sales in their tasting rooms and to distributors due to restaurant closures. The retailer is offering discounts to restaurants that are still operating for takeout and pickup, and finding positions for displaced sommeliers.

Cuvaison Estate Wines will donate \$5 from every May wine club shipment to the Restaurant Workers’ Community Foundation (RCWF). Winemaker Josh Phelps committed to donating 10% of its sales from **Grounded Wine Co.** to Redwood Empire Food Bank.

Angel Arevalo and Robert Dubben of Compline Wine Bar in Napa are sommeliers-turned-food preppers in ... [+]

COMPLINE WINE BAR



With the help of local business and private sponsorship, and an [online meal purchase plan](#) for health-care workers, staff at **Compline Wine Bar, Restaurant and Merchant** has been preparing and delivering 250 complimentary meals each day for healthcare workers at Napa's Queen of the Valley hospital and OLE Health clinics in Napa County. Local vintners that have supported the meal delivery program include Arnot-Roberts, Aaron Pott, Clos du Val, Dalla Valle, Frog's Leap, Hourglass, Hudson Ranch, Jarvis Winery, Lagier Meredith, Matthiasson, Mira Winery, Naked Wines, and Sinegal.

E.&J. Gallo Winery, the world's largest winery, has switched one of its spirits production lines to make hand sanitizer for its employees and has donated several boxes full to the Stanislaus County Office of Emergency Services. Their Barefoot Wine brand donated \$300,000 to [Children of Restaurant Employees](#) (CORE) and the premium wine division donated \$100,000 to [GuildSomm](#) to support the sommelier community. While its tasting rooms are closed, they are offering curbside pickup and free shipping for all orders of three or more bottles.

St. Helena's **Heitz Cellar** will pay the full salaries of 40 employees during the mandated closure, and is also donating 500 pounds (\$10,000) of Angus beef from their biodynamic farm to families in need via relief groups Abode Service Napa, The Table Napa and The Salvation Army. They are also donating \$1,000 to the United Sommeliers Foundation, an undetermined amount to the James Beard Foundation for its food and beverage relief efforts, and will donate 10% of sales from their limited library wines to the Restaurant Workers Community Foundation. Rather than furlough its hospitality team during mandatory tasting-room closures, **Chateau Montelena** cross-trained those employees to work in production and operations to ensure job continuity.

Honig Vineyard & Winery reduced shipping fees for online and phone orders by 50%, donating the other half to regional food banks.

Napa Valley Distillery has produced and distributed 1,000 mini bottles of hand sanitizer.

From March 23 through April 3, **The PlumpJack Group**, founded by California Gov. Gavin Newsom, (PlumpJack Winery, CADE, Odette, and 13th Vineyard), will giving 10 percent of all online sales back to its employees displaced by COVID-19 restrictions.

The **Prisoner Wine Company**, along with other Constellation Brands partners, has committed more than \$2.5 million to COVID-19 relief efforts, including \$1 million to the National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation, \$500,000 to the U.S. Bartenders' Guild, and \$250,000 to support first responders. It also established a COVID-19 relief fund and will match employee contributions 2:1.

Round Pond Estate is donating produce from their gardens, which was previously used in their tasting room menus, to local food banks.

In Sonoma Valley, **Bricoleur Vineyards** is donating 10% of all wine purchases to the Redwood Empire Food Bank. **Inman Family Wines** is donating 5% of their proceeds to Meals on Wheels. **Macrostie Winery & Vineyards** will donate \$10 to No Kid Hungry for every online order. **Ram's Gate Winery** is donating 5% of net proceeds from their spring release to Meals in Wheels San Francisco. **Winery Sixteen 600** will donate 10% from every order to the [Redwood Empire Food Bank](#) and the [Undocufund](#) to help people most effected by the ongoing pandemic and shutdowns.

The Donum Estate is charging a \$10 flat-rate shipping for orders of any size (code FRIEND10), and will donate \$10 to the World Health Organization's COVID-19 Response Fund for each online order.

For every 10 meals ordered through its dinner club, **Kivelstadt Cellars** will deliver one free meal to a service industry worker affected by the crisis at no cost, and is rolling out a donation meal program this week.

On April 2, **Three Sticks Wines** will partner with Healdsburg's **SingleThread Farm** restaurant and Sonoma Family Meals to donate 200 meals to the Graton Day Center, an advocacy organization for day laborers and other workers and their families. Another day of sponsored meals is forthcoming (TBD).

In Washington State, **Alexandria Nicole Cellars** is offering health-care professionals and first responders 50% off all wine during a two-week time period. Through April 16, **Betz Family Winery** has donated \$5 from every bottle of wine sold to The Seattle Foundation's COVID-19 Response Fund.

Chateau Ste. Michelle's **Canoe Ridge Estate** winery is partnering with Glass Vodka in Seattle to help produce hand sanitizer with materials they use at the winemaking facility. **DeLille Cellars** is donating 50% of sales from the 2016 D2 Heart Label to the Seattle Foundation's COVID-19 Response Fund and Lifewire. The "Heart" label is designed specifically for DeLille's support of various nonprofits.



Rick Rainey of Forge Cellars in New York's Finger Lakes wine region, is donating a percentage of ... [+]

CHANDRA RUSSELL

In New York's Finger Lakes wine region, **Forge Cellars** says "for the foreseeable future" it will donate 5% of sales of its signature dry Riesling "Classique" to the Restaurant Workers' Community Foundation. The **Long Island Wine Country** association is coordinating a fundraising drive amongst its member wineries (12 so far have committed to the recommended \$500 cash donations) to benefit three local hospitals with immediate needs during the pandemic. Some wineries are choosing to donate a percent of their sales.

MidAtlantic: With tasting rooms closed, **King Family Vineyards** in Crozet is providing door-to-door free delivery to Crozet and the Charlottesville area on orders of three or more bottles. **Chateau O'Brien Winery & Vineyard** in Fauquier County is offering the same free personal delivery of

three bottle, waiving the usual minimum of six. You still have to pick up curbside, but the laughs are free in Hagerstown, Md., where [Stone House Urban Winery](#) uses a 75-pound brindle boxer named Soda Pup to personally delivers two bottles at a time from the cellar door to curbside.

SHIPPING + SIPPING

Member wineries of **Texas Fine Wine** are offering delivery and shipping options, mostly within state, but two extended free shipping to the 30+ states for which they ship: Bending Branch Winery, on orders of three bottles or more; and Pedernales Cellars on all online orders over \$100.

Numerous prestige Napa wineries are offering free or reduced shipping, including **Long Meadow Ranch** and **Stony Hill** wineries (use the code SENDWINE at checkout for Long Meadow; code NEEDWINE for Stony Hill purchases); and **Far Niente** and **Nickel & Nickel**. Sonoma's **Macrostie Winery & Vineyards** offers a 1¢ shipping on 12+ bottles, \$10 ground shipping on 3-11 bottles (plus that \$10 donation to No Kid Hungry for every online order).

In Paso Robles, **Bella Luna Estate Winery** offers free shipping for orders of 4 bottles or more; **Brochelle Vineyards** offers \$1 shipping on orders of three or more bottles, and a 20% discount on a case of the Estate Zinfandel 2017; **Red Soles Winery** offers \$1 shipping for online orders and a 30% discount on certain three-bottle packs; **Vina Robles Vineyards & Winery** offers \$1 for shipping on orders of six or more bottles when you (code STAYSAFE at checkout).

Keep up to date at #KeepWineAlive, [Vinography's](#) ongoing list of U.S. wineries offering shipping (and other) deals.

OTHER HELPERS

Barton Family Wines and **Krobar Distillery** in Paso Robles are producing and donating up to 1,300 gallons of hand sanitizer to local first responders and public health agencies.

Cellar.nyc is a new website that helps restaurants sell their wine inventory for short-term capital.

Georgian wine importer, **Corus Wine Imports**, based in Stamford, Conn., donated 90 cases of wine, which can be distilled to high-proof alcohol, to [SoNo 1420 American Craft Distillers](#), their neighboring business in Norwalk, to help with SoNo's hand sanitizer production.

In Atlanta, **VinoTeca** and **Uva Imports** are donating a portion of sales to support F+B workers, and have created **a six-pack of wine for \$120**, the purchase of which will feed five displaced workers.

Fred and Nancy Cline, owners of **Jacuzzi Family Vineyards** in Sonoma Valley, donated 95 masks to the Sonoma Valley Hospital.

Craig and Kathryn Hall of **WALT** and **HALL Wines** will pay staff for 40 hours of their volunteer work for local organizations needing support in Napa and Sonoma valleys.

The **San Francisco Wine School** is offering discounts of up to 50% for certain online programs and workshops through May 31, 2020 for industry professionals impacted by COVID-19.

As noted above, Vinography is keeping an updated [running list of wineries offering deals](#) on bottles and shipping in major wine-producing states

(California, Oregon, Washington, Texas, Virginia), and Lenn Thompson hosts the same for New York/east coast and midwest on [The Cork Report](#).

[Wine Enthusiast](#) magazine is working on partnering with a COVID-19 fund to provide essential financial assistance to “small, independent restaurants and bars that have an imminent need for support in operating expenses.” A spokesperson said they “hope to have a plan in place next week.”

RESOURCE HUBS

[Food and Wine magazine](#) lists resources for both hospitality operators and displaced industry workers.

[PUNCH](#), an online beverage magazine, has compiled a list of industry and relief resources.

Southern Glazer’s Wine + Spirits today launched a [resource hub](#) for its trade customers with a curated list of sources related to financial relief, health and wellness, and federal and state-specific guidance for employers and employees in the hospitality industry.

The newly formed **United Sommeliers Foundation**, a 501(c)(3) provides immediate financial assistance to sommeliers who are experiencing a pause or termination.

[Wine + Spirits magazine](#) released a free quarantine e-zine issue with a page dedicated to how people can help.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/lanabortolot/2020/03/31/how-wineries-are-keeping-the-juices-flowing-during-the-pandemic/#500d40287759>