

Starting a winery in Georgia¹

From seeds to profit...

This winery company is seated in an area of Georgia with a rich history in wines. The success of the region's vineyards was cut short due to the passing of prohibition but is nowadays revived by the company who is borrowing the rich cultural history of this region and bringing it back to life with their wines and vineyard. This business's debut was tricky though; how to survive without a flow of revenue in the establishing years until the first rounds of wine will be fully matured?

Branding the history.

In order to compete with already established (and bigger) wineries and the “unavoidable” difficulties such as technical knowledge, industry regulations, and consumers' preferences, the company has to emphasize what will set it apart from the others. A name, a brand linked with the ancestral know-how of the region where the company is located; that is the unique proposition the owners will build their reputation on. There is a growing demand for “local” and “sustainable”, and moreover, there is a growing interest from consumers to get high-quality crafted foods and beverages.



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¹ Based on J. Kelly, B. Edmond, Z. Tackett, T. Sanders, and K. Lestrangle's project developed for the AAEC3100 Food and Fiber Marketing Course, Fall Semester 2016.



Education and relationship.

The company's listed grape varieties include a spectrum adapted to its soil; Blanc du Bois, Villard Blanc, Lenoir (also known as Black Spanish), and Norton. The vineyard is established and eventually will generate a variety of white and red wines, but it is not generating any revenue yet.

To get people to come, get to know the owners, get interested in wine and start to build a relationship with their community and potential buyers, the owners have been offering educational workshops and are heavily involved in local sustainable agriculture groups. They have demonstrated a technical knowledge about these varieties that can easily grow in this area of Georgia.

Combining passions.

Wine is one, alpaca fiber is another. The company owns some alpacas which already provide fine fleeces that are sold to the community and the company offers workshops in the fiber arts and crafts as well. Why not combine those two activities to reach a larger pool of visitors? The diversification of its clientele can be the key to success for a small business located in a less touristic area in Georgia.

Coming next?

When the company completes its tasting room, then the Vineyard can become a destination for wine connoisseurs, tourists, event planners, and wedding parties. The tasting room will also shelve other local "Georgia Grown" products, especially ones that pair with wine, like local cheeses.

When the company completes its fiber studio, then it will attract fine-fiber craft amateurs who could really enjoy a nice "break" at the tasting room.

Lessons learned

This winery company is counting on history and know-how to set its business apart and succeed.

The wine industry is a tough business to get in--given a set of barriers such as winning over wine connoisseurs and building a strong reputation. The company has tried to position itself both in terms of location and product mix to succeed in the winery business.

The owners teach their customers about their passions: wine making and alpaca fiber.

By sharing their knowledge and organizing workshops, the owners build a relationship with their potential future clients within their community and beyond.



Sources

- The winery's website.
- Interview between the AAEC students and the owners.

