TODAY’S HIGHLIGHTS

• MI: Rep. Wakeman plan legalizes self-serve beer and wine
• AK: Bars and breweries propose bill rewriting state’s alcohol laws
• France: Trump wine taxes threaten 100,000 jobs in France
• Alcohol too easy for minors to buy online
• The California Wine Industry Sets Ambitious Export Goal Among Surplus Talks
• NHTSA announces release of $562 million in highway safety grants

NABCA NEWS

27TH ANNUAL LEGAL SYMPOSIUM
Registration is open for NABCA’s 27th Annual Legal Symposium. Please go to https://www.nabca.org/meeting/2020-legal-symposium to register!
If you have questions, please contact meetings@nabca.org.

83RD ANNUAL CONFERENCE
Registration for NABCA’s Annual Conference at our new location is open.
To register, please visit our website at www.nabca.org/meeting

JOB OPPORTUNITY
Manager of Store Operations
PLCB, Pennsylvania

“The PA Liquor Control Board is currently accepting applications. Applications are being accepted through February 25, 2020.


Chief Executive Officer
Mecklenburg County Alcoholic Beverage Control Board
Charlotte, NC

Mecklenburg County ABC Board is looking to fill the position of Chief Executive Officer. Please click here to review the details of this position.

TTB NEWS

If you are a member of the alcohol beverage community who is responsible for preparing TTB applications, tax returns, and/or operational reports, please take this short survey (hosted by SurveyMonkey®) and share your thoughts on some service improvements TTB is considering:

Survey: (https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/88S585C)
The survey should take no more than 15 minutes to complete, and your responses will be anonymous.

TTB Alcohol Trade Practice Video Series
TTB provides on-demand alcohol educational information


NABCA WEBINAR
NEW! Women. Alcohol. Health. - From Blackouts to Breast Cancer, webinar is now available on our website. Visit www.nabca.org/Resources/Webinars
**CONTROL STATE NEWS**

**MI: Rep. Wakeman plan legalizes self-serve beer and wine**

Michigan House Republicans  
February 24, 2020

State Rep. Rodney Wakeman, of Saginaw Township, recently unveiled a plan that would legalize self-serve beer and wine in Michigan.

Under Wakeman’s measure, bar and restaurant owners would be allowed to install self-serve beverage dispensers in their establishments. Wakeman said consumers would be able to pour their own beer or wine in certain quantities in a safe and controlled environment.

“We need to be mindful of the growth of the craft beer industry in Michigan and respond to the demands of the marketplace,” Wakeman said. “Our state should join the vast majority of other states that allow for this type of safe technology to provide increased flexibility for business owners and variety for consumers.”

House Bill 5544 will be formally read in Tuesday and is expected to move to the House Commerce and Tourism Committee for consideration.

**LICENSE STATE NEWS**

**AK: Bars and breweries propose bill rewriting state’s alcohol laws**

Long-brewing conflict may be coming to an end.

Juneau Empire  
February 24, 2020

An agreement was reached over drinks between a bar association and a brewing association in Alaska that could rewrite alcohol laws and change how people enjoy their beverages across the state.

The agreement produced a bill that would bring changes for brewery, winery and distillery tasting rooms, including clarification on which events could be held on their premises, KTUU-TV reported.

The Alaska Cabaret, Hotel, Restaurant and Retailers Association, the biggest trade association representing bars, and the Brewers Guild of Alaska, an association representing breweries, came to the agreement this week after yearslong conflict over the difference in licenses prices between bar and brewery owners.

The bill would increase the time tasting rooms could stay open from 8 p.m. to 10 p.m., maintain daily drink limits in tasting rooms, allow venues to hold four live music concerts each year and set rules in place so fundraisers, brewery tours and art shows would be in statute and could not be changed by regulation.

“It reflects eight years of hard work,” Brewers Guild of Alaska President Lee Ellis said.

Alaska CHARR “proudly offers its full support,” President Sarah Oates said.

The bill was voted out of the Senate Finance Committee and will next head to the Senate for a full vote.

“We sat down, had a beer, came to common ground, made some compromises, and we’re all happy with what the bill looks like now,” said Evan Wood, the co-owner of Devil’s Club Brewing in Juneau.

Legislation would also increase limits on new breweries opening in the state unless given an exemption by the Alcohol and Marijuana Control Board.

“What’s always caused the wedge has been that friction between new breweries and existing license holders,” said bill sponsor and state Sen. Peter Micciche, R-Soldotna.

Bar owners often pay hundreds of thousands of dollars for a license and many have resented breweries serving alcohol after paying much less for their licenses, Micciche said. Brewery owners have argued that the cost of buying manufacturing equipment is also expensive.

The bill could have a huge impact on bar owners, said Republican state Rep. Louise Stutes in opposition to the bill. But if CHARR, the Brewers Guild and the public safety community are onboard, she said she won’t oppose it.
Included on the Presidential Preferential Primary Ballot for the March 3 election is a proposition that will enable residents in, and visitors to, Payne County the ability to order alcoholic beverages in restaurants and bars 365 days a year.

The state of Oklahoma has been among the most restrictive alcohol laws in the nation. On Nov. 8, 2016, Oklahomans overwhelmingly approved State Question 792, which set into motion the modernization of state liquor laws that went into effect beginning Oct. 1, 2018. The result of the statewide changes created some unanticipated challenges for restaurants and bars on a county-by-county basis.

Prior to Oct. 1, 2018, Payne County based restaurants and bars could not sell high-point beer and alcohol on Memorial Day (or, Declaration Day), 4th of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. However, they could sell 3.2 beer on those holidays. Now that there is no longer 3.2 beer in Oklahoma, Payne County based restaurants and bars cannot sell any alcoholic beverages on those five holidays, yet individuals can purchase alcohol in liquor or grocery stores.

Data from the Oklahoma ABLE Commission website indicates of the 77 Oklahoma counties, only 17 continue to have no sales on Sunday and only 19 continue to have no sales on specified holidays. Payne County is among the most restrictive by naming five holidays when several of the other counties name only one or two holidays.

Payne County restaurants and bars are currently at a disadvantage because their business is restricted five days out of the year. Payne County residents and visitors are also prohibited from their choice to order an alcoholic beverage with their lunch or dinner, which can certainly be challenging to explain to residents and visitors alike.

The progressive communities located within Payne County should enable their local dining and entertainment establishments the ability to conduct business in the same manner 365 days of the year. It is beneficial to economic expenditures and growth to provide residents reasons to keep local dollars within our Payne County communities, and give visitors incentive to spend more money while in our community.

In 2012, Visit Stillwater and local restaurant representatives and developers lead the initiative to modernize Payne County laws to enable restaurants and bars the ability to sell liquor and wine on Sundays – in addition to low point beer available at that time.

Now, local restaurants, bars, and Visit Stillwater urge voters to support the further modernization of Payne County liquor laws by voting “Yes” early from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Thursday or Friday, from 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday or at your polling location from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. March 3.

**INTERNATIONAL NEWS**

**France: Trump wine taxes threaten 100,000 jobs in France**

*At least 100,000 jobs in France could be at risk as the 25% import taxes imposed on French wine by US President Donald Trump continue to affect the industry, wine industry experts have said.*

The Connexion
February 25, 2020

French exports to the United States have fallen around 30% since the higher import taxes were imposed last October, in retaliation for what the US claimed was a “preferential agreement” between the EU and European aircraft company Airbus.

French wine industry experts said that the taxes risked negative consequences for the entire sector, as well as France as a whole.

Jean-Marie Barillère, president of national wine industry committee le Comité National des Interprofessions des Vins à Appellations et Indications Géographiques (CNIV), said: “The entire French countryside economy will be in trouble if winemaking suffers. We risk at least 100,000 direct and indirect jobs.”

Around 500,000 people are estimated to be employed, directly or indirectly, in the wine industry in France.

Mr Barillère was speaking at the Salon de l’Agriculture taking place in Paris this week.

During his visit to the Salon on Saturday February 22, President Emmanuel Macron said he would ask the European Union to set up a compensation fund
of €300 million - as requested by winemakers. He said the aim would be to have the fund in place “by Spring”.

But other industry heads have criticised the move, saying it is too little, too late. Jérôme Despey, president of wine and cider council le Conseil Spécialisé Vins et Cidres de France AgriMer, said he wanted to see an “immediate and appropriate response” from Mr Macron.

Mr Barillère said: “Distributors will buy their wine elsewhere; we are losing parts of the market that will be very difficult to get back.”

Bernard Farges, Bordeaux winemaker and president of the national group the CNAOC (Confédération Nationale des Producteurs de Vins et Eaux-de-Vie de Vin à Appellations d’Origine Contrôlées), which represents AOP wines, said that both the State and Airbus were at fault.

He said: “There are victims - the winemakers - and behind them, an entire economy; distribution, restaurants. There are two guilty players: the French State and Airbus.”

He called for any subsidies to Airbus to be “stopped”, and said that it was the French “countryside and wine industry that is being punished” for the State’s behaviour.

PUBLIC HEALTH NEWS

Alcohol too easy for minors to buy online

Medical Xpress
by University of New South Wales
February 24, 2020

In an Australian first, public health researchers examined the sales, marketing and delivery practices of the 65 most popular online alcohol retailers in Australia, and the easy access to liquor— for anybody willing to buy it—shocked them.

Drug and Alcohol Review published the research, conducted in mid-2019, this month.

The researchers found 69 percent of websites would leave alcohol unattended at an address without having verified the purchaser’s age; 12 percent offered delivery within two hours; 13.8 percent allowed customers to purchase alcohol through a "buy now, pay later" scheme; about 20 percent offered a 750mL bottle of wine for under $5; 81.5 percent offered discounts for buying more, and there was no requirement for delivery drivers to hold Responsible Service of Alcohol (RSA) certification.

Australian online alcohol sales were worth an estimated $569.4 million in 2019, representing 4.6 percent of total alcohol sales, in a rapidly growing market where online sales averaged 14 percent annual growth in the previous five years.

Soberingly, Australian Bureau of Statistics figures show there were 4,186 alcohol-related deaths in Australia in 2017, the latest data available.

Study co-author and UNSW Master of Public Health graduate Stephanie Colbert said that regulation had fallen behind the rapid growth in online alcohol sales in Australia.

"This is creating new problems around minors accessing alcohol, the sale of alcohol to intoxicated persons and easy access to cheap alcohol—from $2.88 for a 750mL bottle of wine, which is cheaper than a cup of coffee," Ms Colbert said.

"The liquor industry recognises they can get away with more online: a recent industry report about online alcohol sales stated, "Unlike many liquor related industries, the Online Beer, Wine and Liquor Sales industry operates under a low level of regulation and policy."

"I told a friend who brews beer for a living that delivery drivers don't need an RSA to deliver alcohol to retail customers—he was shocked, and he works in the alcohol industry."

Tougher standards required

Co-author Professor Robyn Richmond, of the UNSW School of Public Health and Community Medicine, said the community expected that online alcohol delivery services were subject to the same stringent standards as other modes of alcohol supply.

"Many people would be shocked to find out that this is simply not the case and that's why, based on our findings, we call for online standards to be just as tough as when you walk into a pub or a bottle shop," Prof Richmond said.

"The regulations are very, very lax online. The fact that online alcohol is accessible to minors,
intoxicated persons can just get a top-up and it's so easy to access cheap alcohol, at any time from any location, are all major concerns.

"Even their sales talk mentions customers going 'thirsty' if they don't leave clear delivery instructions for the driver."

Prof Richmond said it was all too easy for under-18s to use PayPal to buy alcohol online with few or no checks on their age: the study found 72.3 percent of websites accepted PayPal.

"There's a misconception that a teenager needs to steal their parent's credit card to make the purchase, but they can just use PayPal," she said.

"Even if you type in the birth year of a minor before making a purchase on these websites, you can just go back and enter an adult's birth year. There's no way for them to actually check."

**No money, no problem**

Ms Colbert said she was surprised that nine of the 65 websites she examined, 13.8 percent, enabled customers to buy alcohol through "buy now, pay later" schemes such as Afterpay or Zip Pay.

"These services are not regulated under the National Credit Code, so the usual consumer protections and responsible lending obligations do not apply," she said.

"These services make it so easy to buy alcohol by reducing the upfront cost to a fraction of the total and combined with convenient home delivery of an addictive substance, this is alarming.

"We suggest that to reduce harmful drinking and financial stress among vulnerable customers, such as people with an alcohol dependency, 'buy now, pay later' services must be banned as a payment option for buying alcohol online."

Ms Colbert said that cheap or free delivery also enhanced the appeal of buying alcohol online for people with limited upfront funds.

"Costs are similar to physical bottle shops and delivery doesn't add much," she said.

"More than half of the retailers in our sample offered free or discounted delivery if customers purchased over a specified threshold."

**Minors can access unattended alcohol**

Ms Colbert said she was also surprised with how most retailers, 75.4 percent, advertised a willingness to leave alcohol unattended at an address.

"There are well-established links between the increased availability of alcohol and young people's increased consumption of it," she said.

"It was also a concern to find that 69 percent of retailers advertised a willingness to leave alcohol unattended at an address without having ever verified the purchaser's age, which could give minors access to alcohol.

"The point of delivery is the only chance for face-to-face age verification in an online sale; therefore, age verification at delivery should be mandatory for all online alcohol orders to meet the same minimum RSA standards as physical liquor stores and prevent sales to minors."

Ms Colbert said Retail Drinks Australia's self-regulatory code, introduced to address problems with online alcohol sales and home delivery, did little to allay her concerns about risks including minors having access to unattended alcohol.

"Retail Drinks Australia (RDA) claims they randomly audit signatories' practices to gauge compliance, but how often they do this is unspecified—likely, it's rare," she said.

"Even if the RDA finds that a signatory company breached the code, the RDA just says they will contact the company and ask them to comply."

"The code stipulates signatories may be removed temporarily or permanently from the register only after repeated failure to comply. So, there are no real consequences."

Ms Colbert supports the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education's position on the code.

The foundation states: "The code is a wholly inadequate response to the risks with online sales and home delivery of alcohol. The alcohol industry has a vested interest in selling alcohol to make a profit.

"The alcohol industry engages in the same tactics as the tobacco industry to prevent or delay government regulation and undermine good public policy."
"Self-regulation is an industry strategy to put in place minimal controls and prevent government regulation. It is not a legitimate route to harm minimisation."

**Aggressive sales tactics**

The study also found that an overwhelming majority of the online alcohol retailers, 89.2 percent, offered visitors the chance to join their email list to receive discounts and promotions.

Ms Colbert registered her contact details with various websites for the purposes of the study and was surprised at how aggressive the retailers' promotion and discounting strategies were to entice shoppers and retain their custom.

She said her limited experience with the websites was unlikely to reflect the full scale of promotion and discounting an average user would experience, but nonetheless such resource intensive sales tactics were a major concern.

"The websites often required my email address and phone number in order to review the online checkout and consider payment and delivery options," Ms Colbert said.

"Once they had my details, I received innumerable targeted promotions and discounts via email and persistent, repeated phone calls—since I completed the study in June, I've received about a dozen calls from several companies—the most recent was a couple of days ago.

"For example, one retailer offered to help me complete my purchase and another called around Christmas time promising great Christmas deals.

"Even when I told them I was busy at work they promised to call me back after work. It's very aggressive marketing. I've never bought anything from them!"

Ms Colbert said further research was needed to better understand how aggressive online marketing tactics influenced the purchase and consumption of alcohol.

"The fact these kinds of aggressive tactics are occurring is particularly concerning for vulnerable people in our community, such as those with an alcohol dependence," she said.

**INDUSTRY NEWS**

How South African Wineland Workers Used Global Networks to Fight for Their Rights

Workers not only create pressure to reform laws and regulation. They can influence the strategies for enforcing labor standards too.

Inequality

by Thomas Hastings
February 24, 2020

Echoes of apartheid-style exploitation of workers have resurfaced in recent years in South Africa. Debates around these malpractices were given fresh impetus four years ago with the release of a documentary, Bitter Grapes. Produced by Danish journalist Tom Heinemann, it featured workers from South Africa’s winelands.

Bitter Grapes cast light on wide-ranging exploitation. Hardships included health and safety violations, underpayment of wages, and illegal efforts by producers to restrict trade union access on farms. These conditions sit uneasily with South Africa’s progressive constitution. They also run counter to numerous International Labor Organization conventions relating to organized labor rights that the country has signed.

In a recent research paper I outlined the case for greater optimism around working conditions on wine farms due in part to the activism which helped create the documentary.

Worker’s networked activism

Key to the production of Bitter Grapes was the role of Ethical Wine Trade Campaign. This was a collaboration of worker organizations and solidarity movements across South Africa, Sweden, Chile and Argentina. All are important wine regions.

The campaign makes use of local knowledge about conditions in winelands in the Global South. This can be used to apply pressure to improve conditions in wine supply chains. An example is the role played by the campaign in connecting actors in Scandinavia and South Africa which informed and made possible the Bitter Grapes documentary. Subsequently the film has proved key in creating regulatory reforms.
The Commercial Stevedoring and Allied Workers Union played a vital role in the campaign.

The impact of Bitter Grapes reflects a strategy to connect activists in different places connected to common sectors. The links between South Africa and Scandinavia are not incidental. Nordic countries consume around 10 percent of all South African wine exports. This is mainly via the country’s state monopoly retailers – Systembolaget in Sweden and Vinmonopolet. They have the sole licence for selling alcohol on the high streets of Norway and Sweden. Both governments have faced pressure to better regulate supply chains which are directly funded by tax payers.

In my paper I examined how labor can use networks to create public pressure on governments and firms to better regulate supply chains. This has the potential to improve working standards and opportunities. In particular, I look at changes in the regulation of work conditions that have resulted.

**Improvements**

Several changes to wine farm regulation have emerged since Bitter Grapes on the back of moral and political appeals to European consumers.

The first set of changes is around formal state-led labor inspections. After Bitter Grapes the South African labor inspectorate investigated (and verified) several claims made in the documentary. Subsequently, the inspectorate has shown greater interest in the rural sector and has committed to more dialogue with trade unions in gathering intelligence about worker exploitation.

 Secondly, there have been major changes in the private regulation of wine producers. A key private labor standards monitor in South Africa, the Wine and Agricultural Ethical Trade Association, has adjusted the way it operates. It has responded to concerns by committing to auditing farms more frequently. And it’s agreed to use a more transparent grading system. This change will mean that poorly performing farms are now confronted with a genuine trading threat. Farms getting a low score in an audit are now – in theory – unlikely to be able to sell products to major retailers in Europe.

For their part, Vinmonopolet and Systembolaget have sought to improve standards in wine production through additional strategies. Vinmonopolet commissioned a series of independent audits and developed a new eight-point assessment for producers to adhere to. Findings confirmed a range of “critical” risks in several wine farms.

Systembolaget, meanwhile, has adopted a new and novel approach to reporting standards violations spurred by the Swedish trade union Unionen. This has included a Memorandum of Understanding with the International Food Workers’ Federation. The memorandum is intended to support unions on the ground and offers a reporting mechanism for unions operating on the ground in South Africa, ultimately feeding information back to Systembolaget in Sweden.

**Lessons learnt**

The creation of progressive labor laws is important in securing improved standards of work. But laws in themselves remain limited in their effectiveness in industries where workers are hidden and isolated, and where inspectorates struggle to attend to the work realities on the ground.

That’s why regulation is so important.

The case study I have done shows that workers are capable of influencing both private and public forms of regulation in their interests. This involves the creation of consumer boycotts, as well as supply lines of pressure from within corporate networks which producers will struggle to ignore.

Workers not only create pressure to reform laws and regulation: they can influence the strategies for policing labor standards too, for example by getting the labor inspectorate to be more active.

In this instance workers have helped re-orientate regulatory agencies away from merely nudging companies to improve conditions towards a stronger regulatory model with a threat of sanction.

Others could learn from the collaborative networks that were formed.

Despite this positive story it is important to stress that the job of improving labor standards in South African wine is far from finished. Issues such as evictions of workers and the over-reliance of casual labor (often via labor brokers) are not
typically addressed by either labor inspectorates or private codes of conduct.

The need for transnational worker activism in monitoring labor standards is sure to remain relevant.

**The California Wine Industry Sets Ambitious Export Goal Among Surplus Talks**

**Wine Enthusiast**  
**By Virginie Boone**  
**February 24, 2020**

Hundreds of wine industry professionals gathered at the Culinary Institute of America at Copia in Napa, California, on Tuesday, February 18, for the inaugural Export 2020: California Wine Global Export Conference, a day to think about California wine in the global marketplace.

California wine exports have increased 60% by value in the last decade, accounting for around $1.5 billion in winery revenue. However, Honore Comfort, the vice president of international marketing for the Wine Institute, also outlined an ambitious long-term goal for that figure to exceed $2 billion by 2030.

California represents 95% of all exports from the U.S., with Canada the number one export market for California wine, according to Robert P. Koch, Wine Institute president and CEO.

That 2030 goal can be reached by both bringing more California wineries into export and more California wine to international markets. This is an attractive prospect considering the news of the state’s grape surplus this year, and vintners’ fears of domestic price decreases as a result.

Currently, Canada is the largest export market for California wines. In Ontario, home to 40% of the country’s population, California wines represent 15% of the market according to the Liquor Control Board of Ontario (LCBO), with California Cabernet Sauvignon alone accounting for $187 million per year. In Ontario, California wine is second only to Italy’s 18% market share.

LCBO president and CEO Dr. George Soleas spoke to the major trends he sees among consumers. He noted that while customers are buying less, purchasing habits are favoring higher-end wines, with a rise in sales of ultrapremium and iconic products. Refreshing, lighter wines like rosé and sparkling wine are gaining interest, as are health-conscious alternatives like low-alcohol or low-calorie bottlings. He also stressed the increased importance of sustainability and storytelling.

Wine writer and author Jancis Robinson, MW, commented on California wine’s position around the world in a Q&A session with wine writer Elaine Chukan Brown. Robinson recalled how she first came to California in 1969 and has returned annually since then.

“The early 1980s were a magical time for California wine in the U.K.,” she said. Basking in the afterglow of the 1976 Paris Tasting, Robinson observed, California winemakers would travel the world to introduce them to their bottles.

However, the author noted she was not a fan of what happened to California wines in the 1990s, an era she described as dominated by longer hang times and “richer, riper, stronger wines that didn’t chime well with the U.K. consumer.” Nor did the decade’s rising prices.

“At the moment, it’s a mass of inexpensive California wine on the bottom shelf in the U.K.,” Robinson added. “I suspect people who buy it don’t know or care where it comes from. Price is the driver."

Decades ago, emerging regions wanted to make copies of the great wines of France, she said, and “we had agreed on ranking.”

Now, she observes that the market is much more free form.

The wine industry is in “the greatest state of flux today than ever in my 44 years,” according to Robinson. “What younger people want is breadth, they don’t want to go to the top, they want a change from the handful of international grape varieties and they’re not chasing alcohol, oak or color.”

She observed a move to lighter, fresher wines worldwide, and an explosion in interest of lesser-known grape varieties, particularly from indigenous and ancient vines. She estimates there are currently 1,500 varieties used in winemaking right now, with California containing a treasure trove of old vines yet to be utilized.
The potential for California, in Robinson’s view, is in mid-range wines from both established and emerging brands, and not bottom-shelf generics (“a commodity that’s liquid and alcoholic”) nor overly expensive offerings.

“The middle is exciting,” said Robinson. “Lots of discoveries, whether it’s old vines [or] different ways of making wine. There’s a need to re-dynamize the perception of California wine, [and] great value in older brands that have real quality.”

She also highlighted the California winemaking community as one that values cooperation and community investment, topics valued by a younger generation of wine drinkers, and touted the state as having the most quality-conscious growers and producers.

“The top California producers have taken more trouble to get every detail right than anywhere else,” said Robinson. “If one place in the world can look at sustainability holistically, it’s California.

Women in Wine Expo Aims to Bring Global Wine World Together
A Q&A with Organizer Senay Ozdemir

Wine Business
by Erin Kirschenmann
February 24, 2020

Fostering success among women in the global wine industry through education and mentorship is the goal of Senay Ozdemir, the founder of the Women in Wine Expo. A journalist and owner of a PR agency based in Amsterdam, Ozdemir hopes to create awareness about gender equality and celebrate advancements in winemaking, grapegrowing and sales.

Ozdemir’s wine journey began in Austin, Texas, when it took an 8-hour drive to find Turkish wines for her friends to enjoy with a Mediterranean meal. It spurred her to expand the reach of the rich history of Turkish wines across the globe as an importer. Throughout her career, she spent time with a number of female winemakers, marketers, distributors and entrepreneurs, and discovered that it was time to bring two story-telling passions together. With her new marketing agency, she has committed herself to telling the tales of the less-frequented wine region and the women who thrive within the industry. From this, the Women in Wine Expo was born, and she held her first edition in 2019 in Rotterdam and Brussels.

This year, the second annual Women in Wine Expo will be held May 7-8, 2020 at the Lopota Lake Resort, in Napareuli, the heart of Georgia’s wine region. Following on the success of the inaugural event, this year the conference moved out of Europe and into the birthplace of winemaking—a region Ozdemir feels every wine professional should experience for herself.

“A large international wine organization like this has never been held on this side of the world, how poor that may sound, as it’s the cradle of wine,” she said. “We believe that every wine professional should experience where winemaking started.”

Karen MacNeil, author of the Wine Bible is lending her expertise as this year’s keynote speaker, lending her expert. The prolific wine writer is currently expanding the section on ancient wines in one of the industry’s most well-regarded reference books. Sessions will explore sustainability in winegrowing, entrepreneurship, marketing and diversity as well as masterclasses on Georgian wines and tours of local facilities.

“We have speakers with fascinating stories. As a journalist, you just develop a nose for a good story and you recognize talent. I’d like to give them a stage,” she said. “Last but not least we will come with an analysis on the state of gender in the EU wine industry, as there are no statistics. But we are also going to celebrate women’s hard work as growers, producers, entrepreneurs, have fun, watch some movies and learn about Georgian wines with the beautiful Caucasus mountains on the background.”

Attendees will include women from across the globe, including Europe, the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada and Africa among others, and will create a space for women around the world to meet, network and collaborate. “Wine is a very global product so you should treat it globally,” Ozdemir said.

For 2020, Erica Taylor and Vicky Corbeels joined the organization as board members, lending their knowledge and expertise to grow and expand the conference.
NHTSA recently announced the release of $562 million in grants for highway safety programs to offices of highway safety in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, U.S. territories, and the U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Indian Affairs.

“These highway safety grants will help save lives by addressing impaired driving, promoting seat belt use, improving pedestrian and bicyclist safety, and funding other important traffic safety efforts,” U.S. Transportation Secretary Elaine L. Chao said.

The agency announced $297 million in state and community highway safety program (Section 402) funds that will be used to enhance highway safety for Americans through activities such as:

- High-visibility enforcement campaigns (e.g., Click It or Ticket, related to seat belt use, and Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over, related to impaired driving);
- Enforcement of state laws on seat belt use, impaired driving and distracted driving;
- Public information and educational campaigns regarding special safe-driving emphasis weeks (e.g., St. Patrick’s Day – driving sober, and Labor Day – driving safely near schools as the new school year begins); and
- Programs supporting proper use of child safety seats, including inspection stations where caregivers can confirm that their child safety seat is installed properly.
- Additional grants awarded to state, territorial and BIA Offices of Highway Safety under the National Priority Incentive Programs (Section 405) will be used to make U.S. highways safer, including:
- $41.5 million for state traffic safety information systems, to help states build databases related to crashes;
- $37.1 million for occupant protection, for seat belt education and enforcement;
- $17 million for distracted driving prevention;
- $14.3 million for pedestrian and bicyclist safety programs;
- $4.3 million for motorcyclist safety; and
- $2.1 million for impaired driving ignition interlock and 24/7 sobriety programs, to enact testing or monitoring of DUI for alcohol use.

“We know that most of the 36,560 roadway fatalities in 2018 related to behavioral issues such as speeding, alcohol and drug-impaired driving, distraction, motorcycle safety and seat belt usage. The grants we’re announcing today will help our partners in state and local law enforcement and other transportation officials enforce their highway laws and educate the public so that our roads will be safer for everyone,” said NHTSA Acting Administrator James Owens.

The top 10 states receiving NHTSA grants were California ($50.1 million); Texas ($39.2 million); New York ($29 million); Florida ($26.1 million); Illinois ($21.1 million); Pennsylvania ($19.8 million); Ohio ($17.8 million); Michigan ($16.4 million); Georgia ($15.4 million); and New Jersey ($14.6 million).

A breakdown of the grants by program and state can be found here.

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