

Working with the Media – Opportunity Calls

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the Alchemist VITIS

The world of media has changed dramatically in recent years, and if you want to get your story out, it pays to understand a little bit about how it works and how you can work with it.

First, you have to realize that there is not a publication in the world that is not as desperate for content as it desperately understaffed. If you make life easy for an editor by providing timely, accurate information, it will pay off. There is a reason that certain people get coverage and others don't, and it's not always because we like them better.

Secondly, there is an important difference between editorial and advertising; that said, there is a blurring of the lines. It's worth knowing the difference and how to use it to your advantage.

So, what kinds of media opportunities are there?



the Alchemist

PERFECT PEARS

The essence of
autumnal cocktails

VICTORIA SPIRIT

What's new and sipworthy
in the provincial capital

BITTER TRUTH

A guide to B.C.'s
best cocktail bitters

SIP LOCAL

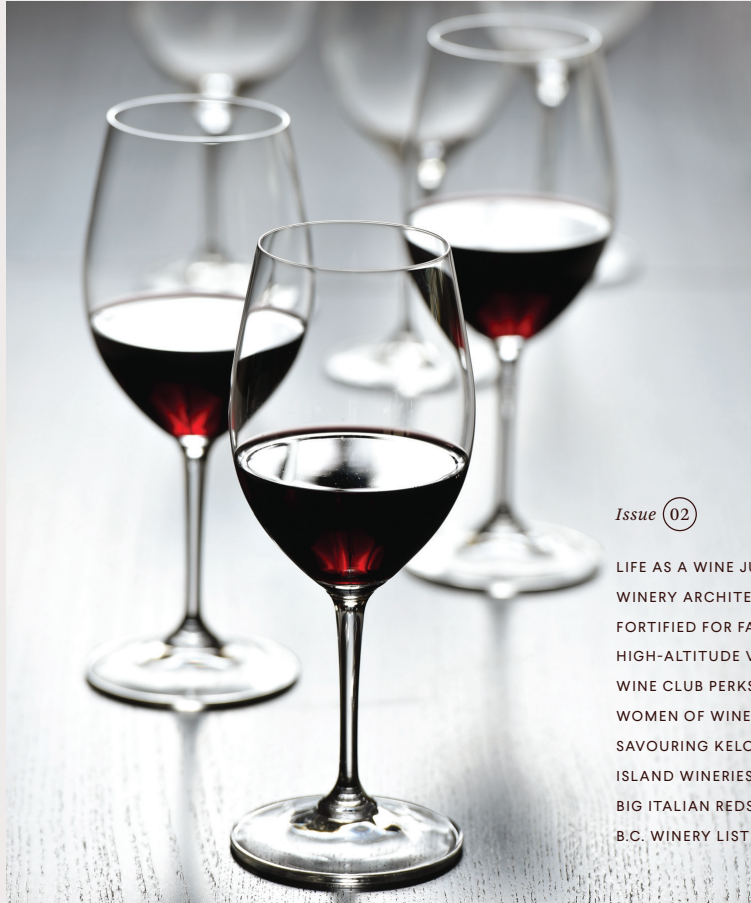
Distillery listings
and tasting panel

the Alchemist VITIS

VITIS

FREE
FALL/WINTER 2018

B.C. WINE CULTURE



Issue 02

LIFE AS A WINE JUDGE
WINERY ARCHITECTURE
FORTIFIED FOR FALL
HIGH-ALTITUDE VINEYARDS
WINE CLUB PERKS
WOMEN OF WINE
SAVOURING KELOWNA
ISLAND WINERIES
BIG ITALIAN REDS
B.C. WINERY LISTINGS

Editorial – News

News is just stuff that happens, good or bad. A brand can share its news but has no say over what runs. The brand does not pay for this content. Two often-overlooked opportunities:

- **Short hits:** Look at the front of any magazine or on the edges of a newspaper page and you'll typically see a bunch of short, newsy stories that can include a product launch, an upcoming event, an award, tasting note or recipe. In Vitis, we call this section Sips & Nibbles; in The Alchemist we call it Bar Bites. These nuggets are always the best-read stories in any publication. And every publication is hungry for them, especially on deadline. Got something cool going on? Send it to a media outlet and you never know what you might get in return.

- **Expertise:** If there is a big national or international story unfolding and you are both knowledgeable and passionate about the subject, position yourself as an expert and make yourself available for comment. Establish your bona fides by regularly posting on social media.

Editorial – Features

These are longer stories that may focus on a trend, an individual, a place or some sort of theme. They might have a newsy element, or they might not. They could be roundups, “listicles” or narratives. It’s unlikely (but not impossible) that you will be able to successfully pitch a writer on a feature, unless there’s a newsy element to it. A writer is more likely to come to you for a comment, interview or background information.

A feature will usually involve multiple sources and lots of photography. This is prestige content. The brand does not pay for this content and has no say over what runs.

BAR BITES



NEWS AND NOTES FROM BEHIND THE BAR AND
AROUND THE WORLD OF COCKTAILS AND SPIRITS

SWEET LAUNCH FOR BITTERS LINE



Central City photo

It's not even available for sale yet, but already **Christos Kalaitzis'** new bitters line is reaping the kind of recognition a crafty bartender could only dream of.

Bitters by Christos, created by the spirits brand ambassador and mixologist for **Central City Brewers & Distillers**, just took home not one, not two, but *three* double gold awards at the prestigious San Diego Spirits Festival, the premiere West Coast celebration of spirits and cocktails. (Central City's Lohin McKinnon Peated Whisky also won double gold.)

"It was the most awarded cocktail ingredient for 2018," Kalaitzis says. "Also it's the only Canadian bitter with

three double gold medals in international spirits competition so far."

His aromatic, rosemary and mole bitters all won double gold; he's also producing cherry, orange and coffee flavours. He promises that they are "100 per cent handcrafted, hand bottled, made with real spices and herbs, non GMO, no artificial flavours or colouring. And," he adds, "they're perfect for cocktails and culinary purposes."

Bitters by Christos will be available in early November; they will retail for a suggested price of \$15 at Central City's retail store in Surrey as well as select liquor stores. centralcitybrewing.com

The 11th annual San Diego Spirits Festival will be held August 24 to 25, 2019. For more info, visit sandiegospiritsfestival.com.



Central City photo

SPIRITED SIPS AT THE HOTEL VANCOUVER

Glance up at the sloping green roof of the Fairmont Hotel Vancouver, and you might just catch a flash of scarlet at one of the windows. Wave hello to the Lady in Red, a gracious spirit said to haunt the halls of this grand dame of a hotel.

The Lady is believed to be the crimson-clad shade of one Jennie Pearl Cox who, along with her husband and daughter, was a regular at the hotel's luxe shindigs back in the day. Then, on a sultry summer day in 1944, she was killed in a tragic car accident right outside the hotel. Since then there have been numerous sightings of her, mainly at The Roof or on the 14th floor.

If it is indeed Cox, she is one of a whole sub-set of "Red Lady" spirits who typically haunt historic hotels, theatres and other public places. Unlike the White Lady, who is usually a bride or innocent maiden, a Red Lady is likely to be a friendlier, more sophisticated sort of spirit, a scandalous socialite, perhaps, or a jilted lover.

Of course, there are those of us who prefer to sip, rather than encounter, spirits, so the hotel's bartenders have prepared the perfect cocktail for the spookiest time of the year.



THE LADY IN RED

*Recipe courtesy of the
Fairmont Hotel Vancouver.*

1 oz Hendricks Gin
0.75 oz St. Germain elderflower liqueur
1.5 oz cranberry juice
0.25 oz lemon juice
Sparkling wine

Combine the gin, St. Germain, cranberry juice and lemon juice in a cocktail shaker with ice. Shake vigorously. Strain into a cocktail glass and top with sparkling wine. If you like, garnish with a skewer of cranberries or cherries. Serves 1.

SPOOKTACULAR SIPS

Looking for Halloween cocktail ideas that aren't cheesy and gross? Consider classics like the Zombie, Blood & Sand, Dark & Stormy, Bloody Mary or a Kill Devil punch. Or look to ingredients such as blood orange, cranberry or tomato juice, as well as black sambuca and, of course, Crystal Head vodka.

Sips & Nibbles

≡ *Vitis Staff*



Liquidity Wines is one of the wineries in B.C.'s newest sub-GI, Okanagan Falls. Liquidity Wines photo

B.C. BURSTING WITH NEW WINE REGIONS

It's time to draw a new map for British Columbia's wine country.

This summer, the B.C. Ministry of Agriculture approved four new wine regions—properly known as geographic indications—as well as B.C.'s second sub-GI.

The ministry formally recognized the Thompson Valley, Shuswap, Lillooet and the Kootenays as new geographic indications under the Wines of Marked Quality Regulation.

It also named Okanagan Falls as the province's second sub-appellation, following Oliver's Golden Mile Bench in 2015.

OK Falls winds north along the east bench of Skaha Lake, across the water to Kaleden and south over the rolling hills above Vaseux Lake. It includes such prestigious wineries as Painted Rock, Liquidity Wines, Blue Mountain, Meyer Family and Syncromesh and comprises some 150 hectares of vineyards producing more than 1,100 tonnes of grapes annually.

These are the first major changes to B.C.'s wine regions

since 1990, when Vintner's Quality Assurance rules delineated the Fraser Valley, Okanagan Valley, Similkameen Valley, Vancouver Island and Gulf Islands.

Why does this matter? Well, for one thing, it provides more land for winemakers, which means more wine for us to drink. But it also makes B.C. a more serious player in the world of wine, with greater competition, better focus and a more astute understanding of what makes each region's wines distinctive.

Along with these approvals, Wines of Marked Quality Regulation now prohibits the use of unregulated geographical locations on B.C. Wine Authority members' wine labels.

Other changes will be coming soon, all designed to enforce quality of the end product. And we can expect to see more sub-GIs as well. Already, the Naramata Bench has put a proposal before the B.C. Wine Authority, which may be decided this fall.

This is good news for winemakers; even better news for wine consumers.

CALENDAR

Thirsty? Add these wine-soaked events to your calendar.

OKANAGAN FALL WINE FESTIVAL

Sept. 27 to Oct. 7

The biggest party in the valley features more than 100 events at wineries and restaurants, as well as signature events including the WestJet Wine Tasting, the BC Lieutenant Governor's Wine Awards and Cropped, which boasts more than 250 local wines, food and live music. thewinefestivals.com



EAT! VANCOUVER FOOD + COOKING FESTIVAL

Nov. 5 to 10

The 16th annual foodie fest features a series of collaboration dinners between local and celebrated North American chefs, as well as signature events such as the EAT! Harvest Party, which will feature the wines of Washington and Oregon states. Don't miss this unique opportunity to sample seldom-seen vintages from our neighbours to the south. eat-vancouver.com

CORNUCOPIA

Nov. 8 to 18

Head to the hills for 10 days of wine, spirits, beer, food and fresh mountain air at Whistler's annual celebration of food and drink. Indulge in winemaker's dinners, the Crush and Poured grand tastings, exceptional food and drink seminars, and so much more. whistlercornucopia.com

DINEOUT VANCOUVER FESTIVAL

Jan. 18 to Feb. 3, 2019

Start the New Year right with a full 17 days of delicious dining. Aside from dozens (and dozens) of restaurants offering bargain prix-fixe menus, the fest features BC VQA wine pairings and brunches, as well as food tours, cocktail masterclasses and global guest-chef collaborations. dineoutvancouver.com

VANCOUVER INTERNATIONAL WINE FESTIVAL

Feb. 23 to March 3, 2019

Clear your calendar for North America's greatest wine fest. California is the theme region for the 41st annual shindig, which features an anticipated 50 events at 25 venues, as well as the not-to-be-missed international tastings, where more than 700 wines will be poured. vanwinefest.ca





Wine by design

MARTIN'S LANE MARKS THE NEXT EVOLUTION
IN B.C. WINERY ARCHITECTURE

≡ Joanne Sasvari

The spiral staircase at Martin's Lane Winery follows the Fibonacci sequence to mimic vine growth. Nic Lehoucq photo for Martin's Lane Winery

There is no tasting room sign. No parking area for tour buses. And, apparently, no entrance. But just as we're almost ready to give up, a towering slab of blackened steel swings slowly, silently open.

And with that, we've entered Martin's Lane Winery.

Designed by Seattle-based architect Tom Kundig of Olson Kundig, this is quite possibly the most beautiful winery in British Columbia. Certainly, it's the most technologically advanced, and the only one that's home to a giant Douglas Coupland-designed bronze sculpture of Vincent van Gogh's head.

"It's the most ambitious Pinot Noir winery in the world," says Martin's Lane wine-maker Shane Munn. "He [owner Anthony von Mandl] has given me everything I need to make great wine."

B.C., it turns out, makes not just beautiful wine, but beautiful wineries.

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He's alongside Frank Gehry as the greatest
contemporary architect in North America.



The arch at the entrance to Mission Hill Family Estate in West Kelowna frames the winery's signature bell tower. Mission Hill Family Estate photo

A VISION ON A HILL

Back when B.C.'s wine industry emerged in the 1980s and '90s, tasting room designs leaned toward the rustic, to alpine chalets and Tuscan farmhouses and the occasional Quonset hut with a plywood counter. Then, in 1996, inspired by Robert Mondavi's Napa Valley winery, Anthony von Mandl hired the then relatively little-known Kundig to design Mission Hill Family Estate in West Kelowna, and nothing would be the same again.

Kundig elegantly combined contemporary simplicity with traditional elements such as the 85-foot-high bell tower and Parthenon-like outdoor restaurant, all clad in board-formed concrete that gleams in the Okanagan sun. Mission Hill is still considered a landmark of winery design. In August, it was the only Canadian winery named to *Architectural Digest* magazine's roundup of the world's 19 most beautiful wineries, along with such dramatic structures as the fantastical Frank Gehry-designed Marqués de Riscal in Spain.

It also set a new standard for other B.C. wineries. Gradually, the simple huts and quaint farmhouses gave way to sleek contemporary designs, to the LEED-certified minimalism of Tantalus, the dark drama of 50th Parallel Estate and the West Coast modernism of Black Hills or Fort Berens.

Meanwhile, Kundig has become one of the most famous architects in the world. "He's alongside Frank Gehry as the greatest contemporary architect in North America," Munn says.

In an expression of elegant symmetry, two decades later von Mandl invited him back to the Okanagan to take on Martin's Lane.



TOP: Martin's Lane Winery is designed as a sloping rectangle that pays homage to its place in the natural environment. Nic Lehoux photo

BOTTOM: Tom Kundig is the architect of both Mission Hill Family Estate and Martin's Lane Winery. Martin's Lane Winery photo

OF ITS PLACE

"A lot of Tom's work, under Anthony's direction, is that this winery has a sense of place," says Munn as we step through that big steel door. "This room here sums up Tom's architecture. His work is very tactile and very textured."

The building, which took two and a half years to complete, was designed to represent the environment of rocky, sun-baked hills surrounding it. It slopes dramatically down the hill above Cedar Creek, conceived as a fractured rectangle in glass, corrugated Corten steel and concrete.

Inside the entranceway, the walls are covered in the same board-formed concrete as Mission Hill. Ahead of us, a spiral staircase leads to a welcoming hospitality area, all warm woods and comfortable furnishings, designed by Antonio Puig of the Barcelona interior design firm GCA Arquitectos Asociados. "Antonio designed the hospitality area like it was the winemaker's home," Munn says.

Puig also created the sculptural steel entry door, which weighs more than 1,200 pounds, but can be opened gently with just two fingers. Its blackened steel pays poignant homage to the burnt trees that remain from the devastating 2003 forest fire that singed the edge of the property.

Nothing has been left to chance, from the white glass-topped tasting table that, at just the right angle, is revealed to be wine red, to the hand-blown glass light shades in the private dining room that are meant to resemble Riesling grapes.

"We're trying to make this a pretty cool experience," Munn says. Mission accomplished.

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Everything in here, whether it's refrigeration
or lighting, it's connected by phone.
It's a very technology-driven winery that allows me
to do nothing to the wines.”

WHERE FORM MEETS FUNCTION

Of course, a winery can't just be a cool experience. It also has to be a functional one.

It's nice to have a beautiful tasting room, but a winery also needs a crush pad where the grapes are unloaded during harvest, room for fermentation tanks, storage area for barrels and space for a bottling line. At most wineries, these areas are utilitarian at best.

Not at Martin's Lane.

Everything here is designed around the single-vineyard Riesling and Pinot Noir that are the only wines Martin's Lane produces. "I choose to have a minimalist approach to winemaking," Munn says. "Pinot, you talk to any winemaker that focuses on Pinot, it's a very sensitive variety that doesn't like being manipulated."

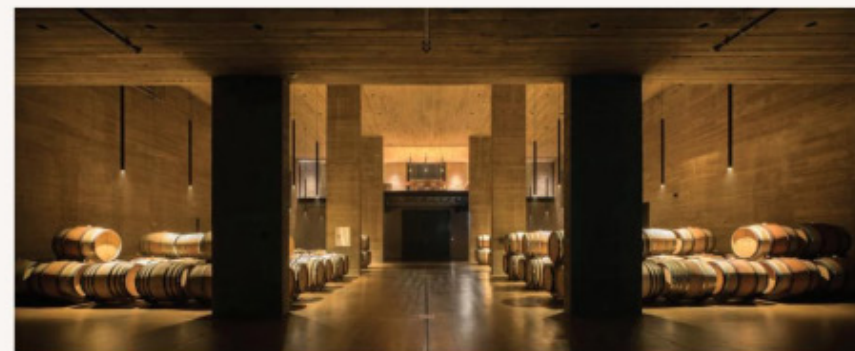
The juice flows naturally down each level so the wine is "gently made by gravity." And technology is put to good use. "Everything in here, whether it's refrigeration or lighting, it's connected by phone," Munn explains. "It's a very technology-driven winery that allows me to do nothing to the wines."

Even the barrel room is work of art, each barrel lined up with a laser and spot-lit with a light fixture that has its own IP address. "Tom designed the barrel cellar so the barrels would be part of the architecture," Munn says.

There's no question that Martin's Lane will be raising the bar for winery design in the Okanagan just as Mission Hill did before it.

But don't expect to just drop by and have that big steel door swing open for you. Tastings are by appointment only and are always a bespoke experience. "We want the experience to be quite personal," Munn says. "If we get three or four visitors in a day, that's a big day for us."

And that, too, is by design. ●



Even the technology-driven barrel room at Martin's Lane Winery is designed as a work of art. Nic Lehoux photo

Paid Media

Advertising

This is a straightforward sales opportunity. Most of the time the brand buys the space in a publication then provides the words and images, although the publication will often do the layout. The brand has near-total control of this content.

Pay to play

Pay to play straddles the line between editorial independence and advertising. The brand pays for the content and the publication produces it. There basically three kinds of pay to play:

- 1. Influencers:** Bloggers and Instagrammers typically expect to be hosted and paid for their content by the people they're writing about; in return, the brand gets a specified number of posts on their social media platforms. Some are ethical and impactful; others, not so much.
- 2. Advertorial:** This is advertising, promotional copy written about a brand in an editorial format; it is paid for and controlled by the brand. It should be labelled "advertising feature."
- 3. Custom, sponsored or native content:** These are stories negotiated between a publication and a brand, paid for by the brand, but reported and written like straight editorial. They are a good way to create some buzz about an overlooked brand or to change the story if your brand has had a negative review. Ethical publications always label these. Increasingly, this is a major source of revenue for legacy media, and a good opportunity for all concerned.

Back to the future

GLAMOUR IS BACK ON THE MENU AT
NOTCH8 RESTAURANT & BAR

Glamour is in the Hotel Vancouver's bones. From its early years as the jewel of Canadian Pacific's hotel empire, to its current position as one of the Fairmont's luxury destinations, the iconic Vancouver hotel understands what it is that makes customers feel special.

And that commitment to customer service has recently been boosted once again, with the arrival of Philippe Grandbois as General Manager of the hotel's swish Notch8 Restaurant & Bar.

"Our whole approach here is the 'new age of glamour,'" Grandbois says, explaining how he's been digging through the hotel's archives, poring over the carefully preserved menus and cocktail lists of yesteryear.

"Much dust has been disturbed," he laughs.

His mission is to live up to the restaurant's name: Notch8 refers to the eighth notch of throttle power in an original steam locomotive, the point at which the train was running at its most efficient.

"That's what we are aiming to do here," Grandbois notes. "We are taking our bar and food program up to Notch8."

To do that, Grandbois is focusing on the period between the 1890s and 1930s.

The new bar menu invokes that era with Crab Louie salad, and a modern play on the restaurant's original prime rib—all using the best quality ingredients available now.

Quality is the watchword behind the bar, too. Notch8's Old Fashioned uses 12-year-old Glenlivet and bespoke Hotel Vancouver Old Fashioned bitters. Those looking for a Manhattan may customize their drink from a choice of 55 whiskies and four vermouths, and have the cocktail finished sweet or dry to taste.

"We're making the best possible versions of those classics," Grandbois insists.

"It's about top quality spirits, house made syrups and shrubs. And every single cocktail listed, from the Saratoga to the Grasshopper—will have been on one of those original Hotel Vancouver menus."

Notch8, 900 West Georgia St., 604-662-1900

Facebook FairmontHotelVancouver Instagram @FairmontVan



Getting the Story Out

So, you've got a story to tell. How do you get your information in front of the media?

- **Do it yourself.** Post things on social media and hope a publication picks up on them.
- **Do none of it yourself.** Hire a publicist and let them do the work.
- **Do some of it yourself.** Hire a publicist to build your website, image bank and fact sheets and/or to organize a media event, but tackle the rest (for example, social media) yourself. Also, work on building relationships with wine, spirits, lifestyle, travel and food media. Invite them for a tasting. Give them something write about. Understand their deadlines.

- **Above all, don't miss an opportunity!** The single biggest mistake you can make is not responding to a request for information in a timely manner. Reply to your emails, send photos as requested, pick up the phone if necessary. Check your spam filter. Make sure you get alerts when people try to contact you through social media. Have an information package available, with high- and low-resolution images. Have a fact sheet with basic background and bio info. Make sure everyone's name is spelled right. Put essential info on the front page of your website. And please, for the love of Bacchus, don't use flash on your website.