



Virginia Wine Board Marketing Office

FY 2027 Marketing Plan

Objectives

1. Drive traffic to Virginia wineries with the intent to increase wine sales.
2. Start an ambitious effort to increase Virginia Wine sales through distribution.
3. Build brand awareness for Virginia wines nationally and regionally.

Similar to last year, sales of wine continue a gradual downward trend, both in Virginia and nationally. Virginia wineries need to aggressively adapt to the marketplace and address changing consumer behaviors. This is in an environment of uncertainty, potential increased costs and other market challenges. The Virginia Wine Board Marketing Office's objectives seek to address these challenges with both new marketing initiatives that ultimately aim to increase Virginia Wine sales and continued programs that have provided measurable results in previous years.

Marketing Initiatives

Trade relations- In FY2027, trade efforts will focus on driving placements, strengthening relationships with key accounts, and increasing visibility for Virginia Wine in priority markets. Investment will be centered on proven, high-impact programs, including regional trade tastings, by-the-glass incentives, and restaurant partnerships that directly support placements and sales through distribution. We will approach industry partnerships, events, and sponsorships with a focus on direct trade engagement, including participation in key industry conferences that provide access to both established and emerging trade audiences. Success will be measured by increased placements, expanded participation across programs, and growth in sales through distribution.

Advertising - Advertising continues to be a powerful way to reach targeted wine buying consumers while increasing brand awareness. Advertising will primarily focus on regional audiences with some national placements. Nearly all investment will be towards digital advertising.

Website & App – Visitation to virginiawine.org and the Virginia Wine app will continue to be a priority. A new AI- driven chat bot will be launched along with refreshed site design. Tasting passes will continue to be developed through the Bandwango platform in FY2027.

Media Relations- Over the years, our PR agency has expanded our outreach to major wine media influencers. We will continue to evaluate and invest in garnering media attention to bring more awareness to Virginia Wine.

International Marketing- While our focus continues to be on building wine sales within the Commonwealth of Virginia and Washington DC, our international work continues to bring national and international exposure for Virginia wines. A small amount is budgeted within the international category this year to support strategic international efforts, especially those receiving funding from the international department at VDACS.

Virginia Winery Guide – The Winery Guide will need to be updated and reprinted in 2027. The budget is allocated to print, redesign and update winery listings in FY2027. Publishing an updated Winery Guide is essential to ensure accurate and up-to-date information and is currently being done every other year.

Governor's Cup Competition Marketing – The Governor's Cup® Competition, the Gala Celebration and corresponding case mailing program continues to be a cornerstone for media, trade and consumers to taste and learn about Virginia wines. Additionally, the Gold Medal Wine Trail serves as a valuable tool to generate consumer interest and provide data on visitors to winning wineries. We will review closely, ways to increase interest and sales of Virginia wines through this quality promotion in addition to finding ways to contain costs and generate additional income to lighten the Virginia Wine Board's financial commitment.

Content Creation & Social Media- Continue to build presence and following of @vawine online. Content on social media is amplified with email marketing, blog content and supported with digital advertising. All content aims to draw visitors to Virginia wineries and the establishments that support them.

Wine Library – Continue availability of wine samples as media interest remains steady. This is a simple and effective way to engage interested media about Virginia wines. Though with budget reductions some of our larger outreach will be paused such as our partnership with SFA.

Wine Ambassador Program – This area will be available for small, focused projects. Creates the opportunity to engage with trade partners to support and share about Virginia Wine at various educational and promotional events.

Virginia Wine Month – Increase impactful press and trade support for this longstanding promotion, expanding last year’s renewed efforts in consumer engagement and trade activations.

Industry events - Sponsorships like SommCon, TexSom, will be evaluated in FY 2026 to increase trade awareness and interest of VA Wine.