



A Plan to Operate Wine Festivals during COVID-19

Wine festivals and events have long been an important part of creating brand awareness for NJ Wineries. Bringing together wineries from local/regional areas to an outdoor location where patrons can go to enjoy and learn about all that NJ Wineries have to offer has been a continuing success story. The festivals and events have also served, for many wineries, as a financial stream of support for these small businesses. For more than 25 years the members of the Garden State Wine Growers Association have participated in various wine-related events that provide a comfortable, safe and enjoyable environment in which to celebrate this vital agricultural industry.

As the organization representing New Jersey-based wineries, vineyards and allied businesses, the GSWGA not only serves as a centralized information repository, resource and clearing house for industry members, but offers a unified voice advocating for issues important to the entire range of New Jersey winery and vineyard operations.

We feel that in this time of pandemic, wine festivals remain a vital component of our industry and provide the means for introducing NJ wines to consumers throughout the region and can safely be conducted under the existing social-distancing guidelines set by Governor Murphy and the NJ Department of Health. Our wineries have already proven they can operate under these guidelines as they have been providing a safe and unique experience for patrons outdoors since June 15.

Similar to our recommended guidelines for reopening indoor and outdoor serving that we previously submitted to the state, The GSWGA has developed the following plan for wineries in New Jersey to participate in outdoor, off-premise, wine-related festivals and events while safety guidelines are still in place for the Covid-19 pandemic. This will be a flexible plan that will be adapted to meet changing conditions.

These protocols have been developed based on those currently in place for related activities taking place in large outdoor environments. Similar in style and layout to Farmers Markets (which are open and active at this time), many wine festivals take place in park-like settings that offer ample space for social distancing and adherence to health protocols. As well, the protocols outlined by the GSWGA have been modeled from those being followed by beaches, boardwalks, outdoor entertainment facilities and the like.

General Festival Health & Safety Protocols

-Festival Ticket Link and Festival Ticket will include festival health policy that requires all attendees to have been healthy for at least 14 days prior to attending the event. By purchasing a ticket festival attendee agrees to abide by all health guidelines of the festival.

-Festival Ticket Link and Festival Ticket will include waiver of liability since currently there is not adequate testing, contact tracing, effective treatment of a COVID 19 vaccine.

-All festival attendees will be required to wear face masks covering the nose and mouth at all times at the festival. The only times festival attendees will not have to wear a face mask is when they are eating or drinking or at a winery sampling station.

-All health guidelines, safety steps, and waiver of liability being carried out for the festival will be clearly stated on the festival web site and promoted through all social media channels.

Festival Ticketing Protocols

-Tickets will only be available online through the festival web site. There will be no cash sales.

-Festival tickets will be sold for a specific date and will only be valid for that date. No “good for either day of the event” tickets will be sold.

-In order to adhere to the large gathering restrictions there will only be *500 tickets** available per designated festival area at each venue. Once *500 tickets** have been sold for a designated festival area on a specific date it will be labeled SOLD OUT and no more tickets for that area or date will be sold. (**Number of tickets sold will reflect the current large gathering restriction at the time of the festival*).

-At time of admission into the festival, attendees will receive a one-time use wristband identifying that they are of legal age.

-No group ticket sales will be permitted for any festival.

Festival & Winery Staff Protocols

-Festival & Winery Staff will undergo daily wellness screens following city, county, state and EEOC guidance on primary symptom checks for COVID-19.

-Any Festival or Winery Staff who displays any symptoms/signs of COVID 19 will not be permitted to work the festival.

-Festival & Winery Staff will be required to sanitize their hands on a regular basis.

-Festival & Winery Staff will wear non-latex gloves and will be encouraged to change gloves frequently.

-Festival & Winery Staff will be encouraged, wherever possible, to observe 6 ft distancing between staff members.

-Festival & Winery Staff are required to observe current CDC guidelines

Festival Admission Protocols

-Admission Tent will include plexi-glass divides between patrons and Festival Staff

-Festival Staff will clean, sanitize and/or disinfect the admission areas on a regular basis.

-Admission Tent will include 6ft social distancing markers to insure attendees are maintaining appropriate distance when checking into the festival.

-Area in front of Admission Tent will have 6ft social distancing markers for queue lines leading up to Admission Tent

-Festival Staff will monitor the queues to ensure that social distancing is promoted.

-At the Admission Tent each festival attendee will receive a one-time use/disposable wristband and a single use wine menu.

Festival Communication & Signage Protocols

- Festival signage will be posted throughout the venue reminding attendees:
 - of the signs/symptoms of COVID 19 and that anyone displaying these signs/symptoms will be denied admission to the festival
 - to adhere to the 6ft social distancing guidelines
 - about the mandatory wearing of face masks except when seated or at winery tasting stations
 - to practice good hand hygiene after visiting any winery tasting station
 - that groups no larger than 8 people are permitted to congregate together at any time/anywhere at the festival.
- Signage will be placed at each temporary restroom informing attendees that they are required to use hand sanitizer before entering and leaving the unit. Hand sanitizer dispensers will be located inside & outside each temporary restroom.

Festival Wine Sampling Protocols

- Wineries will continue to set up in individual tents without sidewalls
- Wineries will set up their display and tasting stations in a uniformed configuration that has been designed to meet CDC guidelines of social distancing.
- Winery set ups will include plexi-glass divides between winery staff and festival attendees.
- Wineries will have 2 – 3 separate, social distanced tasting stations at their tent. Each tasting station will sample all of the products available from that winery so to ensure that festival attendees do not move from station to station within each winery tent.
- Wineries will have bottles of hand sanitizer at each tasting station. Festival attendees will be required to use hand sanitizer following tastings at that station.
- Groups of no more than 8 people will be able to approach a tasting station at any one time.
- Queue markers will be set up in front of each winery tent to insure festival attendees social distance will waiting to be called forward to a tasting station.
- Festival attendees will only be permitted to remove their face covering when they are at a tasting station. Wineries will remind festival attendees that they must put their face masks back on before leaving the tasting station.
- Festival attendees will receive a sampling glass.
- Wineries will be permitted to sell closed bottles of wine to festival attendees for on-site consumption or take home via a contactless payment system whenever possible.
- On site consumption only permitted in the festival area adhering to social distancing guidelines and with no more than 8 people to a group.

Festival Vendor Health & Safety Protocols

- Participating food trucks will be required to follow all current CDC Guidelines as they pertain to mobile food operations. Queue lines for food trucks will have 6ft social distancing markers and social distancing in the queue lines will be enforced.
- Craft vendors will be required to wear face masks and sanitize/disinfect high touch areas of their set ups on a continuing bases. Craft vendors will be required to follow social distancing guidelines in and around their set ups.

Contact Information

All questions relating to these festival protocols should be directed to GSWGA's executive director and/or the chair of GSWGA legal committee.

Contact:

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