

To the Mendocino County Board of Supervisors,

As a small business owner facing possible months of closure, I am understandably concerned – both about the state of my business, and the vibrancy of our local business communities into the future. I would like the Board to consider reopening nonessential businesses, with the proper protocols in place first.

Wine business groups, both local and state-wide, have been discussing best practices for facilitating tastings while keeping employees and visitors safe. Many of our Mendocino County tasting rooms are still local businesses, and rely upon the ability to host visitors to make ends meet. Here are the options that have been discussed locally, and seem reasonable to implement:

- Taking reservations for tastings, thus ensuring a safe number of visitors for each space
 - o There are multiple reservation systems already serving the wine business
 - o This would allow for time to clean and disinfect the area before the next group
- Decreasing capacity so proper social distancing can occur (removing tables, or removing tasting bars and replacing with distanced tables)
- Tasting outside while the weather permits
- Using compostable glasses, or giving away the tasting glasses as keepsakes to the customer
- Removing communal dump buckets
- Allowing customers to pay their tabs remotely with cell phone apps like Rooam
- Installing hand sanitizer stations near tasting spaces
- If the tasting room currently serves food (a small number), consider serving only pre-packaged foods opened by the customer
- Reducing tasting hours/days

The Wine Institute is currently exploring the development of a best practices guide for tasting rooms; my understanding is that it should be released in the next few weeks.

It is certain that tourism will be down for many months to come, and businesses in the hospitality sector will still close, especially if lodging establishments do not open in the near future. And with summer heat comes the inability to ship wine to many states, reducing our ability to sell our wines outside the local area. However, not all our visitors come from afar; there are many locals who enjoy eating and drinking in their communities, especially as the weather becomes warm. Being able to plan for a reopening date, and implementing protocols to ensure that we can reopen safely, will allow our businesses a glimmer of hope amidst all this uncertainty, and the possibility of some revenue to come before the shoulder and winter seasons arrive again.

Sincerely,
Kristy Charles
Co-Owner, Foursight Wines