

WINE BUSINESS

Grassroots Social Movements Hope to Convince People to Drink Wine

by Shana Clarke | Aug 7, 2024

At the end of June, wine communicator Karen MacNeil, Gino Colangelo, president of Colangelo and Partners, and Kimberly Charles, founder and president of Charles Communications Associates, announced the launch of Come Over, October, a campaign to promote and encourage people to gather together over a glass of wine during October. “Come Over October is like a runaway train,” says MacNeil of the response thus far. “The support is overwhelming”

But it’s not the only movement afoot; numerous grassroots campaigns, many rooted in social media, aim to promote wine and its virtues.

Since the inaugural press release and press conference, more than 70 businesses have pledged to support Come Over October, according to MacNeil. Multi-unit retailers like Gary’s Wine and Marketplace and Buy-Rite Liquor intend to run in-store promotions. WineAmerica, representing over 4,000 wineries, vowed to support the campaign. “So those 70 businesses are very broad-reaching,” she says. “Pretty much up and down the supply chain, people understand that something needs to be done,” says Colangelo.

Along with domestic wineries and marketing bodies, international consortiums such as the Comité Champagne, Wines of Sicilia DOC, and Wines of South Africa are getting on board. At the end of July, Lyft came on as the official rideshare partner and will promote Come Over October on its social media channels. “Great consumer brands [like Lyft] and companies with consumer reach will make this successful,” says Colangelo.

In response to concerns raised about participation if people are not consuming alcohol, Both Colangelo and MacNeil stress that inclusivity is a key component of the campaign; they want everyone to embrace the core concept of gathering with friends and socializing, regardless of what’s in the glass.

“Come Over October is a gentle reminder that wine has, and will always, play a vital role in enhancing the best things in life: good times with friends and family, a shared meal, and quality conversations,” says campaign patron Cynthia Lohr of J. Lohr Vineyards & Wines.

IT'S TIME TO
Celebrate, Activate, Participate

Why do we all love working in wine? Because wine bonds us in friendship, hospitality, and generosity. **This October, you can help our wine community.** It's easy. Just encourage friends and family to "Come Over" and share some wine. Get informed at www.comeveroctober.com.

Want to join us, and support the industry we all care about? Visit www.ComeTogetherForWine.com or email info@cometogetherforwine.com.

Brought to you by COME TOGETHER — A Community for Wine Inc. a mission-driven company dedicated to promoting the social, cultural and historical attributes of wine.

Cheers,
Karen MacNeil, Gino Colangelo, and Kimberly Noelle Charles

come together
A COMMUNITY FOR WINE
@cometogetherforwine

Come Over October website

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To date, Come Over October has raised \$100,000, of which \$50,000 is donated media. The Come Over October team plans to add more assets to the website, such as social media graphics, point-of-sale materials, and table tents. The plan is to provide collateral that makes promoting the campaign as turnkey as possible for participants.

A series of upcoming press conferences – tomorrow in Napa; September 23 in New York City; and September 25 in Washington, D.C. – will update the press and trade on ways to execute the campaign.

“Come Over October is a gentle reminder that wine has, and will always, play a vital role in enhancing the best things in life: good times with friends and family, a shared meal, and quality conversations,” says campaign patron Cynthia Lohr of J. Lohr Vineyards & Wines. “We plan to leverage the #ComeOverOctober assets across our marketing and sales channels to inspire gatherings in October and beyond and to celebrate wine's welcome at any table and for any occasion.”

Along with Come Over October, several other awareness campaigns recently launched, or are in the works, such as Napa Valley Vintners' “Why Wine?” which went live July 2.

“The question is very simple: Why Wine?” says Teresa Wall, senior director of communications for Napa Valley Vintners. “You can take the question wherever you want. There's so much passion in what we do. The campaign is all about that.”

The @napavintners Instagram page features video interviews with winemakers and asks participants to make their own, utilizing the #WhyWine and @napavintners tags. Wall stresses #WhyWine isn't Napa-specific and aims for widespread participation. At the moment, the trade is the most engaged, but she hopes consumers will also catch on. As of August 5, the #WhyWine hashtag has been used over 1,000 times. Come fall, Napa Valley Vintners will participate in Come Over October as well.

The Wine Market Council posts a series on Instagram called “Wine Is...” that points out different facets of wine and all the different occasions where it plays a role, such as “Wine Is...College Friends” or “Dining Alfresco.”

Looking to the near future, California's Wine Institute will unveil a new marketing campaign targeting “zillennials” – younger Millennials and those Gen Zs of US legal drinking age.

“Wine Institute is pouring significant resources into understanding how to better reach these customers, including qualitative research focused on how younger consumers engage with each other and with digital technology,” says Honore Comfort, vice president of international marketing. “Some of the insights gathered from this age group focus on the importance of being together – connecting in a genuine way to have fun and make memories.” The data will shape the campaign and Comfort expects to have more information to share in the coming months.

Will multiple messages and campaigns confuse consumers? MacNeil thinks they will do the opposite.

“This huge groundswell for wine is important – but it's not coincidental. There are forces afoot that would have us not drink this beautiful, agricultural product, and that's worrisome,” she says. “What's heartening is that no one has a lock on this idea, and no one should. By having these very emotionally and philosophically aligned campaigns, [the industry] will reach many consumers.”