

CHEERS TO PRIVATELY-OWNED WINE SHOPS SAY MAJORITY OF ONTARIANS

***76% agree with privately-owned wine shops that are government licensed;
Majority oppose expanding sale of alcohol to corner and grocery stores***

(St. Catharines)---A majority (54%) of Ontarians support the creation of privately-owned wine shops to serve as a complement to the LCBO stores and outlets according to a new poll. Support rises to more than three-quarters of Ontarians (76%) when told the new wine shops would follow the same strict licensing rules in place already for bars and restaurants, as proposed by the Wine Council of Ontario at www.mywineshop.ca

The same poll also finds that a majority of Ontarians (52%) oppose the sale of alcohol to corner and grocery stores with more than one third of Ontarians (35%) strongly opposed to the idea.

"These findings confirm that Ontarians support privately-owned wine shops as the Goldilocks solution – we're not too hot, we're not cold, like a great glass of wine we're just right," said Hillary Dawson, President of the Wine Council of Ontario. "Consumers want expanded choice and increased convenience but they don't want to risk the uncontrolled sale of beer and wine to minors in corner stores. That's why mywineshop.ca emerges as the preferred option."

Among the poll's findings:

- 76% of Ontarians agree with the idea of privately-owned wine shops provided they're licensed by government and follow the same rules as bars and restaurants when it comes to sale of alcohol.
- 65% of Ontarians agree that it's time for Ontario to follow the lead of other provinces who allow privately-owned wine shops that offer consumers additional wines not provided by their liquor board.
- 63% of Ontarians agree that privately-owned wine shops that would operate as a complement to the LCBO would provide greater selection and convenience.
- 61% of Ontarians like that privately-owned wine shops would see investment risk and finance shouldered by the private sector.
- 52% of Ontarians oppose expanding the sale of beer, wine and spirits to grocery and corner stores only.

Such wine shops would respond to consumer demand for increased convenience and expanded choice based on the successful models already in operation in provinces such as British Columbia, Manitoba and Nova Scotia.

"Ontario lags other jurisdictions in Canada and around the world in allowing the mywineshop.ca model," continued Dawson. "In British Columbia, for example, we saw these stores boost consumer choice, economic return and helped expand sales of high quality local VQA wines. Working alongside the LCBO, we can create exactly the same results here in Ontario."

The poll was conducted by Innovative Research Group by telephone among 605 randomly selected Ontario residents aged 18 years or older between December 13th and 29th 2012. The results are considered accurate to within $\pm 4.0\%$ 19 times out of 20.

For further information or to request an interview, please contact:

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The Wine Council of Ontario (WCO) is the champion of Ontario's high quality, authentically local Vintner's Quality Alliance (VQA) wines and of promoting wine country as a destination. As a non-profit trade association, WCO represents 80-plus wineries from across the designated viticulture areas of the province: Niagara Peninsula, Prince Edward County, Lake Erie North Shore and Pelee Island. Our members are grape growers, manufacturers and leaders in tourism in their communities. We are the future of Ontario's wine industry, which is a source of new investment, jobs and award-winning wines. The Wine Council of Ontario's role is to promote Ontario VQA wines and vintners, support the production of excellent local wines valued at home and abroad, and build on the substantial economic benefits that the VQA wine industry brings to the province. Authentically local VQA wine is made without imported grapes. The Wine Council of Ontario promotes the unique qualities of Ontario's locally grown wines through its consumer facing brand Wine Country Ontario.