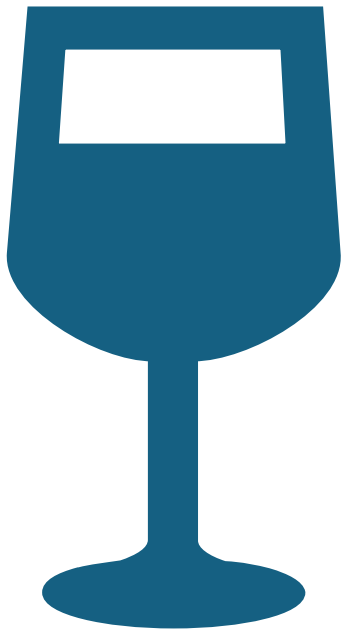


Keys to a successful small winery start up.

Jenne Baldwin-Eaton
coloradowinemaker@me.com
GaragisteCon 2025



Background

- **1994-2016 Plum Creek Cellars Winery in Palisade, Colorado**
- **2017-2022 Establish the first Viticulture & Enology program in Colorado**
- **2023-present**
 - **Winemaking consultant**
 - **Educator for the American Wine Society ~ Western Slope Chapter**
 - **Administrator of the Warren Winiarski-Gerald Ivancie Institute of Viticulture and Enology @ CMU**
 - **Board member for the Colorado Association of Viticulturist and Enologist**
 - **Wine judge both amateur and commercial**
 - **Wine host on AmaWaterways in Europe**

Susan Sokol Blosser ~

- “ Small business is where the action is, and more and more individuals are testing their luck as entrepreneurs. They take the plunge and willingly pour their energy, enthusiasm and savings into something they own. If they are lucky and navigate well, they survive and even thrive. But the business world is harsh, and many do not make it.”





I HAVE A
DREAM





Passion

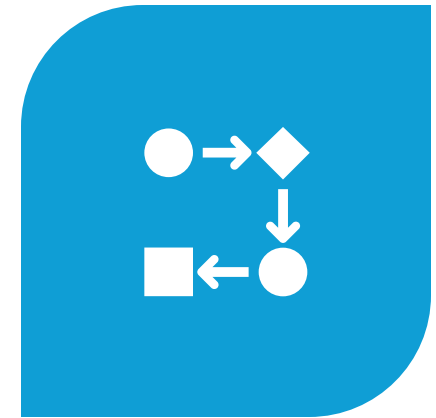
Today's Goal



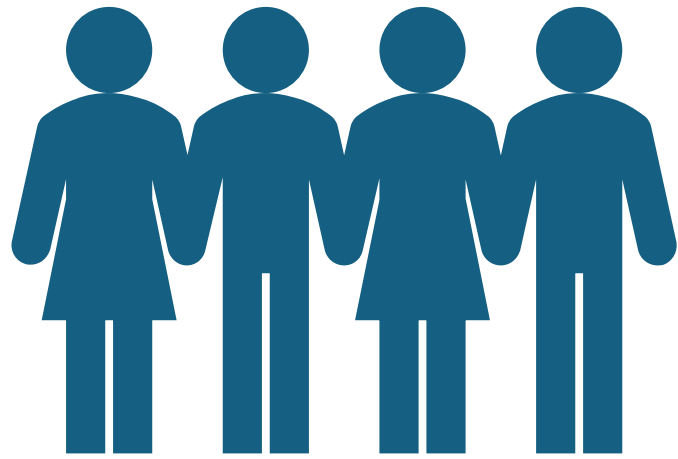
INFORMATION



THINK



PROCESS



Get Involved

- Community
- Associations/Organizations
- Wine Competitions
- Education
- Visit wineries

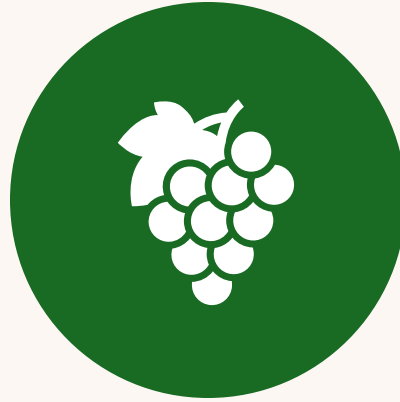
Biggest Difference:

- Small-scale
 - Creative
 - Source
 - What you enjoy to drink
- Commercial
 - Selling
 - Consistency
 - What the consumer enjoys to drink

Going Pro



WINEMAKING



GRAPE GROWING



BUSINESS



Winemaking

CONSISTENCY IS KEY.

Small-scale vs. Commercial Winemaking

Stresses increase

Stabilities

Fault-free

Cleaning & Sanitizing

GRAPES

- **Consistent source**
- **Purchase grapes**
- **Plant vineyard**



Business



Compliance



Marketing



Website



Social media



Paperwork/bookkeeping



Selling/tasting room



Wine club



Distribution/wholesale



Jack of all Trades

- Winemaker/Scientist/Creative
- Plumber
- Electrician
- Refrigeration
- Mechanic/Engineer
- Taster/food & wine pairing
- Public speaking
- Business owner
- Ambassador/Marketer/social media



COST OF VENTURE



Cash Flow – OUT

Grape
purchase

Vineyard
expenses

Fermentation
supplies

Lab analysis

Packaging

Labor

Taxes

Cash Flow – IN

Tasting Room
Traffic
Seasonal

Wine Club
2-4
allotments/yr.

Wine Festivals
May-
September

Farmers
Markets
June-October



PICK YOUR BRAND & STICK WITH IT!

Licenses

- Limited winery license
- Sales room license
- Sales tax license
- Shipping permit
- License fee to play music
- Special event license
- Manufacturer's license



Regulatory

TTB

State

Health Department

FSMA

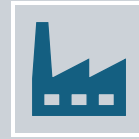
EPA



RECORD KEEPING



Increase quality and SOP's



Regulatory purposes/ 702 report



Sales records

Building your Winery



CONVERSION OR NEW
BUILD?



LOCATION

Winery Design

Flow from grapes arriving to bottling:

- Crush pad
- Fermentation tanks
- Storage tanks
- Barrel aging
- Bottling line
- Lab

Bottled wine storage

Equipment space

Miscellaneous storage

Tools

Winery Specifics

Electrical – 3 phase/air compressor

Drains

Water source/filtration/heater

Septic/sewer

Building temperature/humidity

Carbon dioxide venting

Refrigeration/temperature control

Nitrogen/carbon dioxide cylinders secured

Forklift/pallet Jack

Tasting Room

Based on your
brand, what is
your vision?

Parking

Well marked
signage

Inviting

Flow of
customers,
increase
purchases

Restrooms

VIP or special
event space

Impeccable
customer service

Current material

LED





30 years experience

- **Community importance**
- **Everyone has an opinion**
- **There is a lot that is out of your control, focus on what you can**
- **You are never done learning**
- **Strive to make it better with each vintage**
- **You will always be wanting more space**
- **Passion for what you are doing**
- **Build strong relationships**
- **If you can help do it, you never know when you will need it**

Industry Advice

- Design your space for its use. Plan out tank space, make sure you have ample drains.
- Rely on a TEAM, you can't know how to do everything.
- The importance of planning out 2-3 years, harvest/fermentation/aging/bottling.
- Wine business is a wonderful hard working and very gratifying lifestyle/business!
- Start small & build over time. Best to keep overhead down when you start out.

Advice cont'd

- Are you positive you want to do this, plan on working long days, 7 days a week for at least 5 years.
- Think about bringing on investors or looking into the many different types of loans or grants that are out there.
- Be cautious mixing family and friends within your business plan. If you do, make sure the roles are very clearly defined and written out.
- Tell your story and build the brand identity. Show the journey, share behind-the-scenes, build momentum. A solid fanbase equals a solid sales base.
- At any stage of the business, be kind and professional, it goes a long way.
- Find ways to intern or volunteer with a winery with which you resonate, ask questions and work as hard as you would if working for yourself.

Thank you



**CAVE Small-scale winemaking workshop
in Grand Junction, CO. June 28-29, 2025.**

www.winecolorado.org



Questions can be sent to my email:

coloradowinemaker@me.com