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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**WSWA LAUNCHES WSWA ACCESS:  
A HUB FOR CRAFT, START-UP AND SMALL PRODUCTION WINE AND SPIRITS**

*Wholesalers and industry partners will work to develop expert guidance, resources and best practices that help brands navigate industry challenges and identify opportunities*

*Those interested in joining WSWA Access Advisory Council as a Brand Representative should submit application by January 13, 2021*

**WASHINGTON, D.C., 12/09/2020** – In an effort to further enhance a smartly regulated and successful U.S. alcohol marketplace, Wine & Spirits Wholesalers of America (WSWA) today announced the launch of [WSWA Access: A Hub for Craft, Start-Up and Small Production Wine and Spirits](#) an initiative that will feature expert guidance, resources and best practices to help brands navigate industry challenges and identify opportunities to get to market.

“Today’s wine and spirits marketplace is innovative in large part because of the craft and startup brand influence as a community, and wholesalers are always on the lookout for the next brand to develop and connect with consumers,” said Danny Wirtz of Breakthru Beverage Group and current WSWA Chairman. “Today’s consumer demands selection, value and convenience, and we look forward to working with our wholesaler advisors and WSWA Access Advisory Council members to create something timely and productive.”

The WSWA Access [microsite](#) serves as a hub that offers a variety of free resources developed with the help of the WSWA Access Advisory Council. The site features short video tips from successful wholesaler/craft, start-up and small production wine and spirits brand owner partnerships; a repository of resources related to regulation and compliance, which brands can use to jumpstart research and avoid regulatory pitfalls; and all past and future WSWA virtual programming of relevant material and much more.

The initiative’s first virtual program [WSWA Access: Distribution and Scalability for Craft, Startups and Small Production Wine and Spirits Brands](#) is today at 1:00 PM EST. The webinar will engage LibDib Founder and CEO Cheryl Durzy and Southern Glazer’s Wine & Spirits Executive Vice President of Supplier Management and Business Development Ray Lombard along with Head Distiller and Co-Founder of John Emerald Distilling Jimmy Sharp and President, Wholesale of Ole Smoky Michael Bender to discuss scaling

up and achieving measurable growth through three-tier compliant distribution. The program is open to all members of the media and the public.

“WSWA Access is a resource for craft, startup, and small production wine and spirits brands created to share the route-to-market expertise of America’s wine and spirits wholesales. We are glad to have the input of WSWA Access Advisory Council members to continually enhance the tools and resources designed to support this vibrant and thriving sector of our industry,” said WSWA President and CEO Michelle Korsmo. Wholesalers have long understood the significant and valued role craft, start-up, and small production wines and spirits hold in the modern-day alcohol marketplace. A diverse, selection rich marketplace is what consumers want, and wholesalers will deliver.”

The initiative is also assembling a 17-seat Advisory Council structure comprised of eight craft, start-up or small production wine and spirits brand representatives, seven WSWA wholesaler member advisors to provide counsel and perspective and seats for other industry partners. The council will be tasked with developing relevant content, reviewing strategy and identifying opportunities for industry inclusion and growth. Identified members of the 2021 WSWA Access Advisory Council include:

- Rick Lopus, Great Lakes Wine & Spirits
- Cheryl Durzy, LibDib
- Ray Lombard, Southern Glazer’s Wine & Spirits
- Michael Klauer, Colorado Beverage Team
- Sara Harmelin, Allied Beverage Group
- Ken Rosenberg, Republic National Distributing Company
- Drew Levinson, Breakthru Beverage Group

Craft, start-up or small production wine and spirits brand representatives who wish to be a part of the WSWA Access Advisory Council should email [access@wswa.org](mailto:access@wswa.org) by January 13, 2020.

The WSWA Access Advisory Council will be working to develop a playbook designed for craft, start-up and small production wine and spirits brands to use in meetings with wholesalers when attempting to earn a distribution deal. The Playbook will answer the call for a best practices industry template.

The WSWA Access Hub will also feature case studies in a craft, start-up and small production wine and spirits brand “Hall of Fame” that identifies brands that went from “craft, start-up or small production wine or spirit” to a million-case brand by way of the Annual WSWA Convention & Exposition, Brand Battle or a successful member wholesaler partnership. The initiative is launching with three labels – [Tito’s Handmade Vodka](#), [21 Seeds Tequila](#) and [Buzzballz](#).

#### **About Wine & Spirits Wholesalers of America**

WSWA is the national trade association representing the distribution tier of the wine and spirits industry, dedicated to advancing the interests and independence of distributors and brokers of wine and spirits. Founded in 1943, WSWA has more than 380 member companies in 50 states and the District of Columbia, and its members distribute more than 80 percent of all wine and spirits sold at wholesale in the United States.

To learn more, please visit [www.wswa.org](http://www.wswa.org) or connect with us on [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#).

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