

YOU'RE INVITED

You're invited to participate in the 2026 Maryland Winery Challenge, part of the Rate the States series of competitions celebrating outstanding wines and winemaking across America. Maryland wineries and vintners are encouraged to submit their finest selections for evaluation by a panel of experienced judges. This event offers a unique opportunity to showcase your wines, earn valuable recognition, and gain statewide and national exposure. We look forward to raising a glass with you and honoring the very best Maryland has to offer.

This registration packet includes the forms and instructions you will need to register and submit your entries.

Your initial registration and payment **must** be made online at **MDWineryChallenge.com**. You will use THIS document to submit your physical entries to the competition.

If you have any questions, please send an e-mail to **info@libationawards.com**.

Registration and Entry Samples Received by: Monday, November 2nd, 2026

Judging: November 3rd – 5th, 2026

ELIGIBILITY AND CONDITIONS

1. Any commercial wine produced by a professional winery located in Maryland.
2. There is no limit to the number of wines entered. However, no wine may be entered into more than one class category.
3. Wines previously entered in other competitions are welcome.
4. The Competition reserves the right to photograph any entry and reproduce it in catalogs, posters, publications, on our website, and in publicity issued by the Competition.

JUDGING CRITERIA

The Competition uses a modified 100-point Davis system. Entries will be adjudicated across 5 categories: Appearance, Aroma & Bouquet, Taste & Texture, Aftertaste, and Overall Impression. Each category is worth up to 20 points.

Medals are awarded as follows:

Gold: 90-100

Silver: 80-89

Bronze: 70-79

TASTING COMPETITION

Our **quality-based scoring system** allows for medals to be awarded through independent evaluation, rather than through comparison against other submissions. It is possible, and likely, that multiple gold, silver, or bronze awards will be awarded in each category. Entrants also have three additional ways to win. See the panel below.

AWARDS AND RESULTS

Winners will be notified by e-mail during the week following the Competition.

FOUR WAYS TO WIN

There are FOUR WAYS for wineries to WIN for every submission:

Gold, Silver, & Bronze: Our panel of judges will score each submission using a double blind, modified Davis scale. This point-based scoring system allows for multiple Gold, Silver, and Bronze awards per category. By using this method of scoring and medaling, producers are not competing against each other, but rather being evaluated on an individual basis.

Best in Class Double Gold: The top Gold medal recipient in each category will be recognized as "Best in Class" and upgraded to Double Gold.

Winery of the Year: Submitting four or more entries will automatically enter you into the running for Winery of the Year. The average score of each eligible winery's submissions will determine winery of the year.

Best of Show Bottle Art & Label Design Gold: You spend a lot of time designing your labels- opt to have them adjudicated so they get the credit they deserve!

WE ARE HERE TO HELP

Throughout every step of the Competition, we want to help you succeed. We'll answer any question you may have during the application process. Once you win a medal, we offer a wealth of tools and resources to help you turn your success into marketing gold.

BENEFITS TO ENTERING

- **Medals and Bottle Stickers Increase Sales.** Gold medal, best in class and winery of the year will receive medals/plaques. Graphics for the self-production of bottle stickers will be provided. *Bottle stickers are proven to improve sales.*
- **As Many Medals as Points Dictate.** Our judging model results in as many medals being awarded as point totals dictate.
- **Industry Leading PR and Marketing for Your Brand.** All award winners receive exposure through our six-tiered PR and marketing plan- including separate state, regional, and national press releases in wine media, as well as separate online branding and marketing.
- High-quality, high-resolution medal imagery is available for licensed use in online, print and POS materials for winners.

Developed exclusively for medal winners, a **complimentary marketing toolkit** will provide ideas, tips and strategies for promoting your award to increase visibility and maximize sales.

WE PROVIDE A SIX-TIER PROMOTIONAL PLAN

PROPRIETARY BRANDING

Use our trademarked and well-recognized logos in your brand building efforts.

AWARD MEDALS

Gold medal, best in class, and winery of the year will receive medals/plaques. Silver and bronze winners will receive digital medals and certificates.

PRESS RELEASE TO INDUSTRY LEADERS

Winners will be included in Libation's digital publication to THOUSANDS of industry leaders and insiders.

LOCAL, REGIONAL, AND NATIONAL MEDIA

Winners will be included in press releases to state, regional, and national level media. You may also use the press release for your own marketing purposes.

SOCIAL MEDIA/WEB EXPOSURE

We will promote event results on our web and social media outlets including Facebook, Instagram and Twitter- with over 200,000 individual reaches.

MEDIA KIT

Winners will receive an extensive media kit to use for self-promotion, including sample press releases, social media images, digital graphics and more.



HOW TO REGISTER

1. Register your organization and pay the fee of \$85 per entry at **MDWineryChallenge.com**.
2. Complete the enclosed Wine Information Control sheet using the provided wine category codes and send along with wine samples.
3. Send Two (2) 750ml samples or equivalent of each entry.

SHIPPING CHECKLIST FOR ENTRIES

1. Use FedEx or UPS (NOT USPS), declared as “samples for a commercial recipient.”
2. Label shipments clearly as “competition/judging samples — not for resale.”
3. Include competition entry details inside the shipment
4. **If you need support with your shipping process, email us at info@libationawards.com and we are happy to assist.**

SHIP TO:

Libation Media
8665 Sudley Road #195
Manassas, VA 20110

Entries must be shipped via commercial carrier (UPS, FedEx, DHL, etc.) and may NOT be shipped through USPS.

INCLUDE

A copy of your completed wine information control sheet and copy of your online registration.

WRITE

On the boxes: “SAMPLE MATERIALS. FOR EVALUATION PURPOSES. NOT FOR RESALE.”

For shipments of more than one box, mark each box: “BOX 1 OF 4,” “BOX 2 OF 4,” etc.

KEEP

A copy of your online registration and payment and wine information form for your records.

CONTACT US

E-MAIL: info@libationawards.com

UNUSED PORTIONS At the conclusion of the competition become the property of the **Libation Awards**.

MEDALS AND AWARDS Gold medal winners will receive physical medals. Silver and Bronze winners will receive digital medals. **Please allow up to 8 weeks after judging to receive physical medals and other awards.**

DO NOT SEND ENTRY FEES WITH YOUR WINE SAMPLE. FEES AND ORGANIZATION REGISTRATION MUST BE DONE ONLINE AT MDWineryChallenge.com

About Libation

Libation is one of the nation’s fastest-growing wine, beer, spirits, and lifestyle brands, reaching more than 200,000 targeted engagements across the beverage and lifestyle community.

Backed by more than 30 years of specialty event coordination, media, and marketing experience, our team produces competitions designed not only to recognize excellence, but to help winners turn that recognition into real brand value.

Our Philosophy

Libation is on a mission to modernize the wine, beer, and spirits competition landscape through exciting, innovative state, regional, and national events. Our competitions are built to be fair, accessible, and meaningful, with more opportunities for outstanding entries to be recognized.

WINE CATEGORY CLASS CODES

SPARKLING WINES

1006 - Blanc de Blancs
1000 - Sparkling White — Dry (less than 2.5% RS)
1008 - Pétillant Naturel (Pét-Nat)
1002 - Sparkling Rosé — Dry (less than 2.5% RS)
1007 - Blanc de Noirs
1001 - Sparkling White — Sweet (2.5% RS or greater)
1003 - Sparkling Rosé — Sweet (2.5% RS or greater)
1010 - Sparkling American-Species or Hybrid Wine
1011 - Sparkling Fruit Wine
1004 - Sparkling Red
1012 - Other Flavored or Specialty Sparkling Wine

STILL WHITE WINES

2010 - Pinot Gris or Pinot Grigio
2015 - Albariño
2002 - Sauvignon Blanc or Fumé Blanc
2017 - Vermentino
2016 - Grüner Veltliner
2003 - Riesling — Dry (less than 1.0% RS)
2011 - Pinot Blanc
2022 - Other Italian White Varietal
2023 - Iberian or Portuguese White Varietal
2009 - Chenin Blanc
2001 - Chardonnay — Unoaked
2013 - Sémillon
2026 - Bordeaux-Style White Blend
2025 - Other White Varietal
2027 - Other White Blend
2007 - Gewürztraminer
2014 - Muscat or Moscato — Up to and including 5.0% RS
2004 - Riesling — Medium-Dry or Medium-Sweet (1.0% to 4.0% RS)
2028 - Other Off-Dry or Sweet Still White Wine
2012 - Viognier
2018 - Other Rhône White Varietal
2021 - Rhône-Style White Blend
2000 - Chardonnay — Oaked
2006 - Riesling — Sweet (greater than 4.0% RS)
2029 - Other Still White Wine

ROSÉ WINES

3000 - Vinifera Rosé — Dry (less than 1.0% RS)
3003 - American-Species or Hybrid Rosé
3001 - Vinifera Rosé — Off-Dry or Sweet (1.0% RS or greater)
3005 - Other Rosé Wine

ORANGE, AMBER AND SKIN-CONTACT WINES

3500 - Vinifera Skin-Contact White — Varietal
3501 - Vinifera Skin-Contact White — Blend
3503 - Other Orange, Amber or Skin-Contact Wine, including Hybrid

STILL RED WINES

4001 - Gamay
4000 - Pinot Noir
4004 - Barbera
4013 - Grenache
4002 - Sangiovese
4017 - Other Rhône Red Varietal, including Carignan or Cinsault
4022 - Cabernet Franc
4021 - Merlot
4026 - Other Bordeaux Red Varietal, including Carménère
4008 - Tempranillo
4003 - Nebbiolo
4020 - Malbec
4019 - Zinfandel or Primitivo
4007 - Italian-Style Red Blend
4011 - Iberian or Portuguese Red Blend
4018 - Rhône-Style Red Blend
4012 - Syrah or Shiraz
4014 - Mourvèdre or Monastrell
4023 - Cabernet Sauvignon
4027 - Bordeaux-Style Red Blend
4010 - Other Iberian or Portuguese Red Varietal, including Touriga Nacional
4006 - Other Italian Red Varietal, including Aglianico
4024 - Petit Verdot
4016 - Petite Sirah or Durif
4028 - Tannat
4029 - Other Red Varietal
4030 - Other Red Blend
4032 - Other Still Red Wine
4031 - Off-Dry or Sweet Still Red Wine

LATE-HARVEST AND DESSERT WINES

5000 - Late-Harvest White Wine
5004 - Sweet Muscat or Moscato — Greater than 5.0% RS
5005 - Botrytized Wine
5006 - Ice Wine
5008 - Sweet American-Species or Hybrid Wine
5002 - Late-Harvest Red Wine
5007 - Dried-Grape or Passito-Style Wine
5009 - Other Nonfortified Dessert Wine

AMERICAN-SPECIES AND HYBRID WINES

6013 - Seyval Blanc
6010 - Vidal Blanc
6014 - Chardonnell
6015 - La Crescent, Brianna or Itasca
6011 - Vignoles
6012 - Traminette
6016 - Other White Hybrid Varietal
6017 - White Hybrid Blend
6003 - Other American-Species White Varietal, including Niagara, Catawba or Delaware
6001 - Muscadine or Scuppernong

6030 - White Hybrid-Vinifera Blend
6002 - Concord
6020 - Chambourcin
6021 - Marquette
6023 - Noiret or Corot Noir
6022 - Frontenac
6025 - Other Red Hybrid Varietal, including Baco Noir or Maréchal Foch
6026 - Red Hybrid Blend
6032 - American-Species-Vinifera Blend
6031 - Red Hybrid-Vinifera Blend
6005 - Other American-Species Varietal
6006 - American-Species Blend
6000 - Norton or Cynthiana
6033 - Other American-Species or Hybrid Wine

FRUIT AND AGRICULTURAL WINES

7000 - Apple Wine — Excluding Cider
7001 - Pear Wine — Excluding Perry
7005 - Citrus or Tropical-Fruit Wine
7003 - Cherry or Other Stone-Fruit Wine
7006 - Other Single-Fruit Wine
7002 - Berry Wine
7007 - Multi-Fruit Blend
7008 - Spiced or Flavored Fruit Wine
7009 - Other Agricultural Wine
7010 - Other Fruit Wine

MEAD

7406 - Sparkling Mead
7400 - Traditional Mead
7403 - Cyser
7404 - Pyment
7401 - Melomel or Fruit Mead
7402 - Metheglin or Spiced Mead
7405 - Braggot
7407 - Other Specialty Mead

VERMOUTH AND AROMATIZED WINES

7700 - Dry Vermouth
7702 - Bianco or Blanc Vermouth
7703 - Other Vermouth
7701 - Sweet or Red Vermouth
7704 - Other Aromatized or Aperitif Wine

FORTIFIED WINES

8006 - Other Fortified White Wine
8001 - Port-Style White Wine
8002 - Sherry-Style Dry Wine
8005 - Marsala-Style Wine
8004 - Madeira-Style Wine
8003 - Sherry-Style Sweet Wine
8000 - Port-Style Red Wine
8007 - Other Fortified Red Wine
8008 - Fortified Fruit Wine
8009 - Other Fortified Wine

FLAVORED WINES, SANGRIA AND WINE SPECIALTIES

8506 - Wine Cooler or Wine Spritzer
8500 - Sangria — White
8503 - Flavored Still Grape Wine — White
8501 - Sangria — Rosé
8504 - Flavored Still Grape Wine — Rosé
8502 - Sangria — Red
8505 - Flavored Still Grape Wine — Red
8507 - Wine Cocktail or Wine-Based Ready-to-Drink Beverage
8508 - Specialty-Finished Grape Wine
8509 - Other Wine Specialty

CIDER AND PERRY

9004 - Perry
9000 - Modern Cider — Dry
9002 - Heritage or Traditional Cider — Dry
9007 - Hopped Cider
9001 - Modern Cider — Medium or Sweet
9003 - Heritage or Traditional Cider — Medium or Sweet
9005 - Fruit Cider
9006 - Spiced or Botanical Cider
9008 - Ice Cider
9009 - Other Specialty Cider

SAKE AND RICE WINE

9305 - Sparkling Sake
9303 - Daiginjo
9302 - Ginjo
9301 - Honjozo
9300 - Junmai
9304 - Nigori
9306 - Flavored or Specialty Sake
9307 - Other Sake or Rice Wine

LOW- AND NO-ALCOHOL WINES

9503 - Dealcoholized or Nonalcoholic Sparkling Wine
9500 - Dealcoholized or Nonalcoholic White Wine
9501 - Dealcoholized or Nonalcoholic Rosé Wine
9505 - Nonalcoholic Cider or Perry
9502 - Dealcoholized or Nonalcoholic Red Wine
9504 - Low-Alcohol Wine — 0.5% to less than 7.0% ABV
9506 - Other Low- or No-Alcohol Wine Product

2026 Maryland Winery Challenge Control Sheet

DEADLINE FOR ENTRY: November 2nd, 2026, Ship To: Libation Media, 8665 Sudley Rd. #195, Manassas, VA 20110

Producer Name: _____ (You must register as a producer and pay your entry fee online at **MDWineryChallenge.com**)

Class Code	Vintage per label or N/A	Wine Name: Varietal, blend, or proprietary name as it appears on the label. Include Brand name if different than Winery above.	Identifying designations such as Reserve, Estate Grown, specific vineyard, etc. ONLY if on label.	Appellation per label	Percentage of Each Grape or other ingredient if any (For verification of coding)	Residual Sugar Percent	Alcohol Percentage	Retail Price USD

(Make as many copies as necessary)