

YOU'RE INVITED

You're invited to participate in the 2026 Great Lakes Winemaker Challenge, a celebration of the winemaking craft throughout the region. Wineries and vintners are encouraged to submit their finest selections for judging by a panel of experienced tasters. This event offers a unique opportunity to showcase your wines, gain valuable recognition, and gain regional and national attention. We look forward to raising a glass with you and honoring the best the region 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 www.GreatLakesWineChallenge.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, June 8th, 2026

Judging: June 9th - 12th, 2026

ELIGIBILITY AND CONDITIONS

1. Any commercial wine produced by a professional winery located in the Great Lakes region (IL, IN, MI, MN, OH, WI) may be entered.
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 entered in Competitions from previous years 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 3 additional ways wineries can win in the competition. 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.

PRESS RELEASE TO INDUSTRY LEADERS

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

LOCAL, REGIONAL, AND NATIONAL MEDIA

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

SOCIAL MEDIA

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

WEB EXPOSURE

Winners will be posted on LibationAwards.com and any other applicable websites. You may link freely to these announcement lists to enhance your brand.



HOW TO REGISTER

1. Register your organization and pay the fee of \$85 per entry at www.GreatLakesWineChallenge.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 **2026 Great Lakes Winemaker Challenge**.

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 www.GreatLakesWineChallenge.com

About Libation

We are one of the fastest growing wine, beer and spirits lifestyle brands with reach exceeding 200,000 targeted engagements within the wine, beer, spirits and lifestyle community.

Our team has over 30 years of specialty event coordination experience as well as media and marketing expertise.

Our Philosophy

Libation is on a mission to change the wine, beer and spirits competition landscape through a series of exciting and innovative state, regional and national competitions. We offer fairer competitions with more opportunities to win for all entries. We also offer unparalleled marketing of event winners.

WINE CATEGORY CLASS CODES

Sparkling Wines

- 100 Sparkling White <2.5% rs
- 101 Sparkling White >2.5% rs
- 102 Sparkling Rose <2.5% rs
- 103 Sparkling Rose >2.5% rs
- 104 Sparkling Red <2.5% rs
- 105 Sparkling Red >2.5% rs
- 106 Sparkling Fruit < 2.5% rs
- 107 Sparkling Fruit > 2.5% rs
- 108 Other
- 109 Flavored Sparkling
- 110 Traditional Method Sparkling White
- 111 Traditional Method Sparkling Rose
- 112 Charmat / Tank Method Sparkling
- 113 Sparkling Riesling / Aromatic White
- 114 Sparkling Hybrid Varietals
- 115 Sparkling Hybrid Blends
- 116 Sparkling Muscadine / Scuppernong
- 117 Sparkling Blanc du Bois
- 118 Sparkling Native American Varietals
- 119 Sparkling Native American Blends
- 120 Traditional Method Sparkling Hybrid / Native

White Wines

- 200 Chenin Blanc
- 201 Riesling dry 0.0 - 0.9% rs
- 202 Riesling semi-dry 0.91 - 2.0% rs
- 203 Riesling semi-sweet 2.1 - 4.0% rs
- 204 Riesling sweet >4.1% rs
- 205 Gewurztraminer <3.0% rs
- 206 Gewurztraminer >3.1% rs
- 207 Semillon
- 208 Muscat Varietals 0.0 - 5.0% rs
- 209 Other White Varietals
- 210 Other White Blends
- 211 White Bordeaux Type Blends
- 212 Sauvignon Blanc < \$20.00
- 213 Sauvignon Blanc > \$20.01
- 214 Pinot Gris/ Grigio
- 215 Pinot Blanc
- 216 Viognier
- 217 Chardonnay < \$20.00
- 218 Chardonnay \$20.01 - \$40.00
- 219 Chardonnay \$40.01 - \$75.00
- 220 Chardonnay > \$75.01
- 221 Other (are you SURE it's not a varietal or blend? See categories 209 and 210)
- 222 Unoaked Chardonnay
- 223 Spanish White
- 224 Gruner Veltliner
- 225 Traminette
- 226 Vignoles
- 227 Vidal Blanc
- 228 Seyval Blanc
- 229 Chardonel
- 230 La Crescent
- 231 Itasca
- 232 Frontenac Blanc / Frontenac Gris

- 233 Brianna
- 234 Cool-Climate Aromatic White Blends
- 235 Petit Manseng
- 236 Albarino
- 237 Vermentino
- 238 Blanc du Bois
- 239 Cayuga White
- 240 Moscato / Muscat Sweet White >5.1% rs
- 241 Southeast Warm-Climate White Blends

Blush and Rose Wines

- 301 Varietal Roses
- 302 Rose Blends
- 303 Other (are you SURE it's not a varietal or blend?)
- 304 Dry Rose <1.0% rs
- 305 Off-Dry / Sweet Rose >1.0% rs
- 306 Hybrid / Cold-Hardy Rose
- 307 Muscadine / Scuppernong Rose
- 308 Norton / Cynthiana Rose
- 309 Native American Rose
- 310 Fruit Rose

Red Wines

- 400 Pinot Noir < \$20.00
- 401 Pinot Noir \$20.01 - \$40.00
- 402 Pinot Noir \$40.01 - \$75.00
- 402.5 Pinot Noir > \$75.01
- 403 Sangiovese
- 404 Barbera
- 405 Italian Type Red Blends
- 406 Tempranillo
- 407 Other Red Varietals
- 408 Other Red Blends
- 409 Syrah/ Shiraz <\$20.00
- 410 Syrah/ Shiraz >\$20.01
- 411 Grenache
- 412 Petite Sirah
- 413 Rhone Type Red Blends
- 414 Zinfandel <\$20.00
- 415 Zinfandel >\$20.01
- 416 Malbec
- 418 Merlot < \$20.00
- 419 Merlot > \$20.01
- 420 Cabernet Franc
- 421 Cabernet Sauvignon < \$20.00
- 422 Cabernet Sauvignon \$20.01 - \$40.00
- 423 Cabernet Sauvignon \$40.01 - \$75.00
- 423.5 Cabernet Sauvignon > \$75.01
- 424 Other Red Bordeaux Type Varietals < \$20.00
- 424.5 Other Red Bordeaux Type Varietals > \$20.01
- 425 Red Bordeaux Type Blends < \$20.00
- 426 Red Bordeaux Type Blends \$20.01 - \$40.00
- 427 Red Bordeaux Type Blends \$40.01 - \$75.00
- 427.5 Red Bordeaux Type Blends > \$75.01
- 428 Proprietary (House) Red
- 429 Other (are you SURE it's not a varietal or blend?)
- 430 Blaufrankisch / Lemberger
- 431 Gamay
- 432 Marquette
- 433 Frontenac

434 Chambourcin
435 Noiret
436 Baco Noir
437 Marechal Foch
438 Petite Pearl
439 Cool-Climate Red Blends
440 Sabrevois
441 Crimson Pearl
442 Norton / Cynthiana
443 Petit Verdot
444 Tannat
445 Touriga Nacional
446 De Chaunac
447 Corot Noir
448 Chancellor
449 Rougeon
450 Muscadine Red
451 Southeast Warm-Climate Red Blends

Late Harvest and Dessert Wines

500 LH White Varietals
501 Muscat Varietals >5.1% rs
502 LH Zinfandel
503 Other LH Red Varietals
504 Ice Wine
505 Other
506 Late Harvest Riesling
507 Late Harvest Vidal Blanc
508 Late Harvest Vignoles
509 Red Ice Wine / Dessert Red
510 Fortified Dessert Wine
511 Late Harvest Petit Manseng
512 Late Harvest Muscadine / Scuppernong
513 Dessert Muscadine
514 Sweet Native / Hybrid Dessert Wine
515 Port-Style Red Dessert Wine
516 Fortified Muscadine

Native American and Hybrid Wines

600 Native American White Varietals
601 Native American White Blends
602 White Hybrid Varietals
603 White Hybrid Blends
604 White Hybrid Vinifera Blends
605 Native American Red Varietals
606 Native American Red Blends
607 Red Hybrid Varietals
608 Red Hybrid Blends
609 Red Hybrid Vinifera Blends
610 Native American Vinifera Blends
611 Other
612 Rose Varietal
613 Concord
614 Niagara
615 Catawba
616 Delaware
617 Diamond
618 Native American Rose
629 Muscadine White / Bronze Varietals
630 Muscadine Red / Black Varietals

631 Scuppernong
632 Carlos
633 Noble
634 Magnolia
635 Nesbitt
636 Muscadine Blends
638 Norton / Cynthiana Blends
644 Muscadine Rose

Fruit Wines, Vermouth and Other Wine Types

700 White Vermouth
701 Red Vermouth
702 White Fruit Wines
703 Red Fruit Wines
704 Meads
705 Fresh Fruit Sangrias
706 Other
707 Blackberry Wine
708 Blueberry Wine
709 Peach Wine
710 Apple Wine
711 Strawberry Wine
712 Elderberry Wine
713 Citrus / Tropical Fruit Wine
714 Fruit Mead / Melomel

Fortified Wines

800 Sherry
801 Port
802 Fortified Fruit Wines
803 Other

Cider

998 Hard Cider (contains alcohol)
999 Cider (non-alcoholic)

Distilled Beverage

900 Brandy
901 Grappa
902 Eau de Vie
903 Other distilled grape and fruit spirits

Sake

1000 Sake

Canned Wines

1100 White Wines
1101 Flavored White Wines
1200 Red Wines
1201 Flavored Red Wines
1300 Rose Wines
1301 Flavored Rose Wines
1400 Sparkling Wines
1500 Red Wine Coolers
1501 White Wine Coolers
1502 Rose Wine Coolers
1503 Flavored Wine Coolers
1504 Fruit Wine Coolers



2026 Great Lakes Winemaker Challenge Control Sheet

DEADLINE FOR ENTRY: June 8th, 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 GreatLakesWineChallenge.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 <small>(For verification of coding)</small>	Residual Sugar Percent	Alcohol Percentage	Retail Price USD

(Make as many copies as necessary)