

The Canadian Wine Market viewed from Latitude Wine Imports' point of view

scritto da Veronica Zin | 6 Dicembre 2021



Mark Briand is the Chief Wine Officer of Latitude Wine Imports, a company that has been representing great wineries from all over the world since 2012. Latitude Wine Imports is a Calgary-based wine supplier to licensed restaurants, wine boutiques, and shops across Western Canada. Its mission is to stand out in the wine market in order to establish a reputation with their clients so that they can always count on them to be one of their Western Canada wine representatives.

Mark began his sales career in the oilfield industry before switching gears and dabbling in the restaurateur business. Eventually settling in Calgary, Mark found his passion in pursuing importing and sales of premium international wines. **Mark has been the president of Latitude Wine Imports for the past 8 years** and, for this reason, we decided to interview him

to ask him more about his work in Canada.

I noticed on your website that your company seeks to represent excellent vineyards from all over the world: can you tell us more about it?

We are a small agency which deals mainly with family owned and run or smaller wineries. We do deal with a couple of larger wineries for the volume but the wines are still well made and top quality. Latitude and other agencies around our size here in Canada are trying to get the point across to the general wine drinking public that good wine isn't only not expensive but very affordable. We deal with mainly only independent restaurants and stores or boutiques so they have the right people in place to educate the customer. Those are the people we need to help us sell our wines. We build relationships with the best people we can and build on that.

As someone who works in the import/export industry, can you tell us something about how Covid-19 altered the wine market?

It changed a lot of things. People couldn't go anywhere so they had to do their own food and wine pairings and a lot of them took that time to expand their horizons on a lot of different things such as wine so it worked out fairly well for us from a sales perspective. I hope these shutdowns will have helped us out long term and moving forward.

Now that everyone is shifting to online shopping: how does your work cope with that?

There are quite a few wine clubs around and a lot of stores are selling online but there are a lot of wine drinkers heading back to the stores again. We work with a few clubs and those sales help a great deal but we still need to deal with the stores and restaurants. They both have deliveries and curbside pick up so we still need them to push on all levels.

Do you represent many Italian businesses?

Right now, we deal with 3 Italian wineries, a Chianti producer (Colli Senesi), Brunello producer and an Abruzzo producer. Always looking for more as well. We are also looking at expanding to olive oils as well.

Are Italian wine businesses well known in Canada?

Yes, it is. We love our Italian food and wine here in Canada. The Italian sections and lists are always full and hard to break into but are still popular everywhere you go.