

Thriving on the Vine: The Growth of Black Entrepreneurs in the American Wine Industry

**Monique Bell
California State University, Fresno**

Black winemakers and wine entrepreneurs have been largely omitted from the United States wine industry and its history. Despite Black vintners' presence as early as the country's antebellum period, the concept of Black wine entrepreneurs has been understudied. Ironically, the death of George Floyd in 2020 and the resulting "Buy Black" movement catalyzed widespread attention on African American-owned businesses, including those in wine production and related categories. As consumer interest and media coverage increased for Black-owned wine businesses, entrants increasingly pursued the industry through diverse business models and offerings. In the current paper, a brief history of Black commercial vintners is introduced, followed by an overview of current producers, as well as pivotal milestones, and concluding with strategies for future entrepreneurial success.

Keywords: entrepreneurs, winemakers, African American, inclusion, wine business, wine industry

INTRODUCTION

"In this country, where a lot of drink culture is owed to Blackness, very little of it is owned by Blackness," states Jackie Summers, founder of Sorel liqueur and the first known Black American to hold a liquor-making license post-prohibition (Rense, 2021).

Although enslaved African American vineyard workers are known to have cultivated statesman Thomas Jefferson's vineyards (Rinaldi, n.d.) and Black winemakers were documented as far back as 1888 (Thach, 2023), awareness and recognition of Black business ownership in the wine industry has often been overlooked. In fact, before an article by Bell, Thach, and Fang (2023), there is scant mention of Black wine producers and entrepreneurs in academic literature. The discussion of Black-owned wine businesses remained elusive among trade and popular publications until 2020 (Bell, Thach and Schaefer, 2022). In the wake of George Floyd's murder in 2020 and the subsequent civil unrest in cities and countries around the world, many businesses and consumers experienced a collective awakening to the realities of anti-Black racism at its most extreme. What's striking is that Floyd's death, the ensuing protests, and proposed legal and policy changes had at their center a commercial transaction that gravely illustrates the simultaneous power and degradation of Black economic engagement, which includes business ownership.

It is widely recognized that Black business loan applicants are given more costly rates and stifling conditions than their white peers (Atkins, 2021; Bates, Bradford, and Seamans, 2018). As Summers perceptively observes in the opening quotation, although Black consumers drive culture and trends, they often are not recognized – or justly compensated – for their contributions (e.g., enslaved Nathan 'Nearest' Green's contributions to the Jack Daniel's whiskey brand) (Risen 2017; McKinney 2021). Additionally,

alcohol is known as a “vice” product, which is in the company of other highly regulated goods and services such as cannabis, guns, and gambling. This category of goods has historical ties to racist and stereotypical views that Blacks and ethnic immigrants should not have access to them because of inherent moral defects (McGirr, 2019; Peck, 2009). As McGirr writes, “Other forms of postwar social conflict aided the growth of the (Ku Klux) Klan, but nothing did more than the 18th Amendment to turn it into a dynamic social movement. The Klan...recruited heavily from the nation’s white Protestant Prohibition organizations, promising militant action to ensure the law’s enforcement. Not surprisingly, the Klan targeted the drinking of those they identified as enemies of “100 percent Americanism” — Catholics, foreigners, and African-Americans...” (para. 13).

Returning to 2020 and George Floyd’s murder, within days of the videorecording’s broadcast, leaders from diverse industries ranging from small businesses to Fortune 100 firms acknowledged their accountability amid pervasive and pernicious anti-Black racism. Corporations vowed to listen to Black employees, engage Black suppliers and vendors, enact Black executive recruitment, promotion and retention strategies, and contribute funding to relevant organizations (Richardson, Bell, Pearson & Cruz, 2021). A robust, nationwide report revealed that America’s 50 largest public firms jointly committed \$49.5 billion to address racial inequity (Jan, McGregor and Hoyer 2021). The same report reveals that only 10% of those funds were granted, while 90% were “loans or investments they could stand to profit from” (2021; no page indicated).

Coincidentally, the first-known scholarly research on Black wine entrepreneurs, which resulted in the trade publication, “Terroir Noir: A Study of Black Entrepreneurs,” was conducted in fall 2020 (Bell, 2021). The research included both a comprehensive survey questionnaire that garnered more than 100 responses, and more than 40 in-depth, Zoom-based interviews with self-employed Black wine producers, distributors, educators and media. An analysis of the interviews revealed that racism emerged as the foremost challenge for Black wine entrepreneurs, followed consecutively by access to financial capital, sexism, industry experience, distribution, and mental health (Bell, Thach & Fang, 2023). This finding mirrors the result that 78% of survey respondents indicate that racism is a greater challenge in wine than in other industries (Bell, 2021). Indeed, Black trailblazers ‘created their table’ when they were not offered a seat in the metaphorical tasting room (Rousseau 2021). In the following article, we illuminate historical and contemporary Black wine entrepreneurs and postulate future strategies and directions for this community.

THE U.S. WINE INDUSTRY

The global wine industry represents nearly \$374 billion in annual revenues (IBISWorld, 2019), with U.S. wineries accounting for nearly \$27 billion (IBISWorld, 2020). Domestically, the top four wineries, E&J Gallo (marketer of more than 100 brands, including Barefoot), The Wine Group (maker of Cupcake and Franzia brands), Constellation Brands (producer of Prisoner, Meiomi and Charles Smith wines in addition to multiple spirits products), and Treasury Wine Estates, which is based in Australia yet holds a significant operational presence in the U.S., account for about 40% of annual revenues. California dominates domestic wine tourism and yields over 80% of the nation’s wine production. The verdant rolling hills of Napa, Sonoma, and other California grape and wine-rich counties represent \$57.6 billion in annual economic activity for the state and employ more than 325,000 Californians (Wine Institute 2015).

At the same time, many winemakers and negociants are small-to-medium enterprises (SME) that more closely resemble the artisan archetype many envision – and this is especially true for Black wine entrepreneurs. The 2020 survey of Black wine entrepreneurs, which included more than 40 wine producers, indicates that most enterprises have two or fewer employees and up to \$25,000 annual revenues (Bell 2021). Similarly, on average, wineries employ 10 or fewer workers, which indicates the 60% market share held by a formidable contingent of smaller operations (IBISWorld, 2020). As consumer preferences trend away from “Big Wine” and more toward niche and local wines, this provides some promise for Black-owned wineries. It’s worth noting, however, that corporate brands are tapping into adapting consumer tastes through “craftwashing,” a term typically applied to mega beer companies that acquire smaller operations and/or distance brands in their portfolio from their corporate ties (Howard, 2017).

BLACK WINE BUSINESS OWNERSHIP

For Black wine business owners, there are a multitude of obstacles that impede success in this seductive industry. Perhaps its unsurprising that the all-encompassing theme of racism was ranked as the foremost challenge among interview subjects, with nearly triple the mentions of the next closest theme of finances/capital (Bell, Thach & Fang, 2023). By definition, systemic racism's tentacles are ubiquitous in the economy and markets. Black entrepreneurial aspirants face a mountain of barriers, from disproportionate poverty to discriminatory lending practices wherein "Black-owned businesses face higher denial rates, receive smaller loan denominations and pay higher interest rates than their white counterparts" (Atkins, 2020; p.7). Black applicants are 25% more likely to be denied commercial loans than comparable white applicants (Bates et al., 2018). Additionally, only 4% of Black Americans are entrepreneurs compared to 12% of white Americans. Unsurprisingly, based on these conditions, Black-owned ventures are less likely to succeed.

Within the wine industry, the situation is even more dire. Less than 1% of the estimated 11,000 U.S. wineries have Black owners (Mobley, 2020), and a survey of wine professionals (that is, non-business-owners) revealed that only 2% identify as Black (SevenFifty, 2019). Compounding the bleak ownership figures are labyrinthine distribution regulations. The three-tier distribution system for alcohol was, ostensibly, established to create separation between producers, retailers, and the end consumer to ensure product safety, enhance public safety by limiting over-consumption, assure tax compliance, and prohibit monopolies and strong-arm tactics. However, the undercurrent of racism that led to Prohibition – and prompted many Black Americans to vote Democrat for the first time – is likely embedded in the legacy distribution system (McGirr, 2019; Peck, 2009). Undoubtedly, the three-tier distribution system provides another opportunity for Black winemakers to suffer from wholesaler bias and prejudice that may, ultimately, limit their retail sales.

HISTORICAL AFRICAN AMERICAN WINE BUSINESSES

John June Lewis, Sr.

Although Napa, California is heralded as America's wine country, wine commercialization has its roots in the southeast. The first commercial winery in the United States is aptly named "First Vineyard," founded in Nicholasville, Kentucky, in 1799 by John James DuFour (First Vineyard Winery, n.d.). The enterprise counted contemporaries such as Secretary of State Henry Clay and legendary Daniel Boone among its stakeholders. At the same time, presidents Jefferson and Madison were presented with the vineyard's wines while they were in the White House (First Vineyard Winery, n.d.).

Importantly, another "John" was recognized as the nation's first Black commercial winemaker. John June Lewis, Sr., the son of an enslaved woman and a Confederate Army veteran, founded Woburn Winery in Clarksville, Virginia in 1940 (Lambert, n.d.). Remarkably, Lewis was a trailblazer not only for Black wine entrepreneurs but for all commercial wineries in Virginia because, until the 1970s, Woburn Winery was the only one in the state to produce wine solely from its grapes (Lambert, n.d.).

Lewis was born in 1894 and, according to census records and modern-day genealogical websites, has a heritage that is interwoven with the Burwell family of Clarksville, Virginia, who owned the Woburn Plantation Manor House and nearby Burwell Cemetery (Lambert, n.d.). In a detailed account of the Burwell property and family lineage, Burwell's ownership of the property and land is recorded to have begun in 1799 (Lambert, n.d.). Throughout its history, the family, recognized among the First Families of Virginia, included veterans of both the Revolutionary War and the Confederacy during the Civil War.

The land was used for agriculture, including growing tobacco, and a gold mining operation suspended in 1834. Much of the crop work was done by enslaved Black people who were treated with both "affection" and discipline, according to historical accounts (Lambert, n.d.).

Lewis is documented as a "mulatto" farm laborer, lumber manufacturer and servant within the home of (his likely relative) Armistead Burwell. Lewis became enamored with wine and viticulture after serving in World War I and travelling to the Rhine Valley. As with many wine entrepreneurs, particularly Black wine

entrepreneurs (Bell, Thach and Fang, 2023), Lewis' pursuit of wine was amplified through his travel experiences (Lambert, n.d.). Lewis began growing 10 acres of wine grapes on land deeded to him by Mr. Burwell in 1933, where he produced Labrusca wines as table and dessert wines under the Virginia-Carolina brand name until the 1970s (Lambert, n.d.). As Lambert notes, "Wine writer Leon Adams attested that Lewis' wines were 'sound'..." (para. 14).

Woburn Winery ended production in the 1970s and Lewis died in 1974. While it is unclear what caused the winery's closure, one can conclude that Lewis's lack of family succession may have impacted the business. Further, as Bell (2023) found, accessing and maintaining capital often hinder Black wine businesses. Certainly, distribution and regulatory issues and competition from corporate wineries may have impacted Woburn's survival. Additionally, as Lewis aged it may have been challenging to endure operations physically and financially.

Returning to America's commercial wine birthplace in Kentucky, spirits, rather than wine, reign today. However, in recent years, Black-owned wineries and distributors have emerged in the state (Johnson, 2020). Legacy Wine and Spirits, credited as the state's first Black-owned liquor distributor, launched in Louisville, Kentucky in 2021 and includes wines by Raekwon the Chef of the prominent rap group WuTang Clan (Palmer, 2023). Additionally, Brough Brothers, owned by the three Yarbrough Brothers, purports to be the first Black-owned distillery in the state (Gonzalez, 2022). Further, Waters Edge Wineries franchisee Charlie Watkins and his family established an Elizabethtown, Kentucky location, making them the owners of that city's first winery (Ghabour, 2020).

Iris Duplantier Rideau

Nearly sixty years from the founding of Woburn Winery, an African American woman would own a winery. The first Black woman owner and operator of a commercial winery in the U.S. is Iris Rideau, formerly of Rideau Vineyards (Rideau, 2022). She also purports to be the first Creole American to own a winery (Rideau, 2022). Rideau established the vineyard and winery in 1997 in Santa Ynez Valley, California. Ms. Rideau took a winding road to becoming a trailblazing woman in wine, including becoming a teenage mother, serving as a receptionist, founding insurance and securities firms, and engaging in political activism in Los Angeles, California.

Like John Lewis, Sr., Rideau's roots extend back to the American Revolutionary War era, as she is a descendant of an immigrant Frenchman who arrived in 1777 (Rideau, 2022). Rideau was born in 1936 to a Creole American family in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, at a place and time that was "one step away from slavery," according to Rideau (Worobiec, 2022; para. 3). She recounts in her memoir that she often chose to pass as white instead of Creole to avoid the terrors of the time (Rideau, 2022). Ultimately, Rideau moved to East Los Angeles as a pre-teen, where she later became a mother and wife at 17 years old. In 1967, she translated her experience as a receptionist at an insurance agency into establishing Rideau & Associates, which would become the first woman-owned and minority-owned insurance firm to specialize in federally-funded programs (Rideau, 2022).

In 1999 upon her retirement from service at the City of Los Angeles and the State of California, Rideau purchased 22 acres of land, which included a historic adobe house, in Santa Ynez Valley, California. She planted vineyards of Rhone grapes, built a winery to process wine, focused on hiring talented women winemakers, and established a tasting room in the renovated adobe building. As a serial entrepreneur, Rideau stated that she enjoyed the challenge of learning about wine and becoming a winery owner (Rideau, 2022). Notably, Rideau's tasting room was attractive to multicultural consumers, likely at least in part due to the infusion of her Creole heritage into the winery experience through her cooking and pleasant atmosphere. As she searched for her next entrepreneurial adventure at 80-years-old in 2016, Rideau sold Rideau Vineyards (Worobiec, 2022). Despite her success, Rideau acknowledges racism's enduring reach: "Sommeliers, winery owners, winemakers—accomplished Black people who are still not recognized or accepted as readily in the wine world" (Worobiec, 2022; para. 4).

CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN AMERICAN WINE BUSINESSES

In the 21st century, Black-owned wine businesses span the nation and the three-tier distribution system yet many still face the obstacles that their forefathers and mothers sought to overcome (Bell, 2021; Bell, Thach and Fang, 2023). However, through collectives such as the Association of African American Vintners, and initiatives such as the organization's entrepreneur grants, Black wine enterprises are gaining market share and greater access to distribution. Additionally, through strategic product placements, such as Theopolis Vineyards' cameo on NBC's *Grand Crew* comedy series, and high-profile media coverage, such as the appearance of wine expert Jermaine Stone and his brand Wine & Hip Hop in the prestigious *New York Times* wine column, Black-owned brands are likely more prominent in popular culture than they have ever been (Asimov, 2023).

Andrea McBride John and Robin McBride

Hollywood screenwriters could have crafted the story behind the McBride Sisters Wine Company. Two half-sisters who didn't know the other existed for decades and who lived on opposite sides of the world in New Zealand and California, connect over their passion for wine and, in 2005, found what would become America's largest Black-owned wine company (McBride Sisters, n.d.). Andrea and Robin's current business, headquartered in Oakland, California, evolved out of a series of trial and error as they went door-to-door to sell early vintages of Eco Love, a New Zealand-sourced premium wine brand focused on environmental care (Shaw, 2015). The company evolved to offer California varietals and leaned into the founders' multinational family heritage and values of inclusion, cultural pride, and women's empowerment. The McBride Sisters' branding evokes luxury yet welcomes diverse wine enthusiasts through labels such as "Black Girl Magic" and, in a nod to their well-traveled father, "Cocky Motherf*cker" (McBride Sister, n.d.).

In 2023, the McBride Sisters became only the second Black-owned wine business to own substantial vineyards in Napa Valley, California, where they purchased a 12-acre ranch (Babur-Winter, 2023). Chardonnay grapes are already grown in the vineyard, and the co-founders are considering adding Pinot and Gamay. The sisters foresee that the property, which includes housing and amenities, will become a hub for events and gatherings of beneficiaries of their educational and empowerment initiatives (Mobley, 2023). The She Can Fund provides grants to advance women professionals in traditionally male-dominated fields, while the company's Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) initiatives introduce students to enology and viticulture (Mobley, 2023). In addition to making high-profile appearances on broadcast television, the sisters' wines are featured in first-class seating on Alaska Airlines. Additionally, the wine company has reached mass markets with national placements in grocers and retailer Target (McBride Sisters, n.d.).

Phil Long

As the founder of Longevity Wines and the president of the Association of African American Vintners (AAAV), Phil Long is a pivotal figure in Black wine entrepreneurship. In a classic founder's tale, Phil and his wife Debra began fermenting wine in their home garage as a hobby in 2002 (Lambert, Reavey & Bell, 2023). Notably, racial discrimination in a Santa Barbara, California tasting room that drove the Longs to pursue their wine business (Lambert, Reavey and Bell, 2022). Long reflects, "I stood there waiting...no one ever acknowledged me, and it was at that moment I realized that there was a need to focus more on hospitality...to create a more inclusive experience," (Lambert, Reavey & Bell, 2023, p. 1). Long continues advancing inclusion as president of the national AAAV organization and the hands-on president of Longevity Wines headquartered in Livermore, California.

The Longs introduced their first commercial vintage in 2008 under the brand name Longevity as a play on their last name and their enduring love story. Every aspect of the company's branding and marketing centers around the concepts of the heart, romance and fidelity. Unfortunately, Debra Long died in 2019, yet Long continues to illuminate their bond through his winemaker talks at the Livermore tasting room and on national stages. Longevity offers five varieties of wine and maintains mid-tier pricing at about \$25 per

bottle (Lambert, Reavey, and Bell, 2023). Long's success and widespread availability was spurred by an advantageous 2020 partnership with The Bronco Wine Company, maker of affordable Charles Shaw wine (also known as Two Buck Chuck), to produce a volume of wine suitable for national distribution (Longevity Wines, n.d.). The winery produced 3,000 cases in 2018.

Donae Burston

Contrary to many of his entrepreneurial peers, Donae Burston, founder and CEO of La Fête du Rosé, has extensive experience in wine and spirits production and marketing through former roles at Armand de Brignac Champagne and Moët Hennessy, maker of Veuve Clicquot and other luxury wines (Penrice, 2019). However, his road to the beverage industry, from roots in Baltimore, Maryland, was lucky and led by peers who were already working in wine marketing. As his industry exposure and expertise increased, Burston shifted to consulting and later proposed producing a Saint Tropez-inspired rosé for multicultural millennial consumers (Penrice, 2019).

Burston's challenging experiences as a Black wine entrepreneur echo many of those reported by others Bell's studies (2021; 2023). Namely, capital was a major barrier, as the capital-intensive winemaking process often requires hundreds of thousands dollars to get started. Since the wine is produced in France, international shipping as well as America's complicated alcohol laws proved challenging. The second-most noted barrier for Black owners was distribution in the *Terroir Noir* study (Bell, 2023), which was also a barrier for Burston. He recalls distributors would immediately reject him and try to persuade him that he didn't know the desires of a consumer segment (i.e., Black millennials) he had courted for several years as a marketing executive and consultant (McCall, n.d.). Burston recounts, "I have to get past those gatekeepers," (Penrice, 2019; para. 17).

Through Burston's determination and significant investment by Constellation Brands, one of the 'big four' in U.S. wineries, the La Fete brand is achieving new heights. Through its Focus on Minority Founders initiative, Constellation committed to investing \$100 million in Black and minority-owned businesses by 2030 (Constellation Brands, 2022). Burston pioneered the initiative with Constellation as its first partner. The rosé brand has since partnered with Delta Airlines as a wine selection, collaborated with Miami Grand Prix, and was an enduring presence in the National Basketball Association pandemic-era bubble that safely contained many wine-enthusiast basketball players (McCall, n.d.). Burston seeks to build La Fete into one of the top three rosé brands pronouncing that "rosé is the new Champagne" (Yahoo Finance, 2022).

CONCLUSION

"Wine is Black now."

– *Grand Crew* (2022)

More than eighty years have transpired since the first recorded Black-owned commercial winery in the United States. The past several decades have been marked with staggering societal changes, including the mid-century Civil Rights Movement, industry consolidation among producers and distributors, the advent of direct-to-consumer, online sales, a global pandemic that froze on-premise retailing, and recent social justice movements, including Black Lives Matter. During this time, Black wine entrepreneurs have evolved to meet the times and expand their market share by innovating, adapting, collaborating and investing in themselves. For example, the co-founders of The Sip Society, Erica Davis and Catherine Carter, identified and capitalized upon a marketplace misconception that women of color only enjoyed sweet (versus dry) wines (Thach, 2022). The Oakland, California-based entrepreneurs created a subscription service that features a variety of sparkling wines in small, individual-sized bottles (versus traditional 750 ml bottles) (Thach, 2022).

Also in Oakland, veteran Black wine marketer and event producer Fern Stroud birthed The Black Vines Festival and Community in 2011 as a space for Black wine brands and consumers to connect annually during Black History Month (Black Vines, n.d.). The event has grown to include multiple events per year and corporate sponsorships. Additionally, media veteran Angela McCrae launched the Uncorked &

Cultured media platform and community in Harlem, New York during at the start of the 2020 global pandemic (Uncorked & Cultured, n.d.). The brand has curated the inaugural Juneteenth in Napa Experience and State of Black Wine Business summits and developed the Sip Consciously directory, the first comprehensive online index of Black-owned wine producers, distributors and retailers (Uncorked & Cultured, n.d.).

There continues to be “firsts” among Black wine entrepreneurs, which includes producers, retailers (e.g., wine bars and shops), distributors, and events and media founders. Entrants have emerged beyond Napa, California to establish wine businesses in urban and predominantly Black centers of commerce, including 1010 Wine and Events in Inglewood, California, Pur Noire in Houston, Texas, The Vibrary in Stone Mountain, Georgia, and Happy Cork in Brooklyn, New York. Many wine producers have forgone capital-intensive vineyard ownership and management, replacing it with custom crush or private label opportunities. Such is the case for Ebony Wine & Spirits based in Charlotte, North Carolina, LoveLee Wines operating out of New Jersey, and Center Cork Wines in Fresno, California.

Despite these gains, with Black ownership present in states as unexpected as Vermont (Zafa Wines), Maryland (Philosophy Wines), Indiana (Sip and Share Wines), and Arizona (Cornado Vineyards), there have been setbacks and exits among the estimated 150 Black-owned wine businesses. Among those are the closing of the eponymous Jenny Dawn Cellars in Kansas City, Missouri after bouts of vandalism (Ingalls, 2023) and the transfer of ownership of Poco Wine and Beer wine bar in Seattle, Washington. Online conversations among some Black wine business owners – as well as survey responses (Bell, 2023) – indicate that interest in supporting Black businesses has waned significantly among consumers, corporate and trade partners, and legislators since the fervor of 2020 – 2021. According to the Terroir Noir report, while 65% of the more than 70 respondents somewhat or strongly agree that their businesses have benefited from DEI initiatives, fewer than half agree that the wine industry is taking meaningful action to increase inclusion for Black entrepreneurs, professionals, and consumers, respectively (Bell, 2023).

Notably, lawsuits against grants such as Fearless Fund’s Strivers Grant for Black women founders have faced discrimination lawsuits, adding another barrier for current and aspiring Black entrepreneurs (Davis, 2023). In an article on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) titled, “DEI backlash hits corporate America,” about consulting firm Paradigm’s study, Peck writes, “A backlash is rising, possibly because the DEI efforts made in 2020 had a real impact” (2023, para. 8).

Future Strategies for Success

Several strategies may support the continued growth of Black wine businesses, including several solutions identified by owners in recent studies (Bell, 2021; Bell, 2023). Coopetition, cooperating with competitors, has been prominent and productive among Black wine entrepreneurs, with 70% indicating they engage in the practice (Bell, 2021). Furthermore, trade associations such as the Association of African American Vintners have been a source of funding, collaboration, promotion, and education for its members. Bell also recommends that businesses seek formal minority business enterprise certification, or its local equivalent, to benefit from designated funding and support (2023). Several owners are utilizing crowdfunding as an alternative or supplement to traditional funding, which is perceived to be inherently biased (Bell, 2021).

From the consumer standpoint, wine club memberships are recommended as a critical, sustaining source of revenue for wine producers. Yet, to join the clubs, consumers must first actively seek and become aware of these businesses and their offerings. Public relations and marketing management expertise, financed by those firms, trade associations, or other entities, may prove vital to these organizations, which report an overwhelming deficiency in this area (Bell, 2021). Media such as Uncorked & Cultured’s Sip Consciously directory and events such as the Black Vines Festival help to connect consumers and wine entrepreneurs; therefore, support of wine-adjacent enterprises also can be valuable.

Notably, Black wine entrepreneurs may find a competitive advantage in their ability to deliver culturally competent products, services, and connections with current and potential wine consumers of color, who predominate in Generations Y, Z, and A, just as the wine industry seeks to engage with these segments (Silicon Valley Bank, 2023). A throughline that connects the Black-owned wine businesses

examined in this article is a desire to foster inclusion, equity, and advancement. Burston states, “You’ll see us doing events that are speaking to the culture and are of the culture...we want to be inclusive by all means,” (Penrice, 2019; para. 3). The McBride sisters assert, “‘Otherism,’ specifically as it relates to Black Americans and women, is something that still needs to be dispelled in the wine industry...the industry should focus on the importance of representation and making wine education more accessible for all,” (Seller, 2023; para. 11). Rideau emphasizes, “And there’s nothing like a glass of wine to break down barriers. I think we just need the time and are doing it now to create an atmosphere that allows for everyone to be comfortable, certainly over a glass of wine,” (Gaiter and Brecher, 2022; para. 15).

REFERENCES

- Asimov, E. (2023, April 27). On his podcast ‘Wine and Hip Hop,’ Jermaine Stone aims to bridge cultures. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/24/dining/drinks/cru-love-wine-hip-hop-jermaine-stone.html>
- Atkins, R.M.B. (2021). Push-pull theory in black and white: Examining racial differences in firm startups before and after the great recession. *Journal of Developmental Entrepreneurship*, 26(3), 215–16.
- Awadzi, C. (2019). African American female entrepreneurs: What keeps them successful? *Journal of Business Diversity*, 19(1), 10–14.
- Babur-Winter, O. (2023, August 31). How the McBride sisters are building a new legacy in California wine country. *Food & Wine*. Retrieved from <https://www.foodandwine.com/mcbride-sisters-wine-7852999>
- Bates, T., Bradford, W., & Seamans, R. (2018). Minority entrepreneurship in twenty-first century America. *Small Business Economics*, 50(3), 415–427.
- Bell, M. (2021). *Terroir Noir: 2020 Study of black wine entrepreneurs*. Self-published. Retrieved from <https://payhip.com/b/QuMvA>
- Bell, M. (2021, September 9). An intimate conversation with Iris Rideau. *Uncorked & Cultured State of Black Wine Business Summit*. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KIiUNpWGJzg>
- Bell, M. (2022). Pairing inclusion and growth in Central Valley wine. *Central California Business Review*, 4(1).
- Bell, M. (2023). *Terroir noir: Study of black wine entrepreneurs*. Self-published. Retrieved from <https://payhip.com/b/1FcJ2>
- Bell, M., Thach, L., & Fang, F. (2023). Examining motivations and challenges of black wine entrepreneurs using the push–pull theory of entrepreneurship. *International Journal of Wine Business Research*, 35(3). 445–466. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJWBR-07-2022-0026>
- Bell, M., Thach, L., & Schaefer, R. (2022). Unintended consequences of consumer activism: How George Floyd’s death impacted wine sales for black wine entrepreneurs. *National Business and Economics Society Conference* (Maui, HI).
- Black Vines. (n.d.). *About*. Retrieved from <https://www.blackvines.net/about>
- Conley, N., & Bilimoria, D. (2022). Barriers and mitigating strategies of entrepreneurial business growth: The role of entrepreneur race and gender. *Entrepreneurship Research Journal*, 12(3), 391–439.
- Crump, M.E., Singh, R., Wilbon, A.D., & Gibbs, S. (2015). Socio-demographic differences of black versus white entrepreneurs. *Academy of Entrepreneurship Journal*, 21(1), 115–129.
- Davis, D. (2023, October 2). *Fearless Fund barred from awarding grant to black women founders*. TechCrunch.com. Retrieved from <https://techcrunch.com/2023/10/02/fearless-fund-trial-aaer/>
- Enz, C., Dollinger, M., & Daily, C. (1990). The value orientations of minority and non-minority small business owners. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 15(1), 23–35.
- Fairlie, R., Robb, A., & Robinson, D.T. (2022, April). Black and white: Access to capital among minority-owned start-ups. *Management Science*, 68(4), 2377–400.
- First Vineyard Winery. (n.d.). *About Us*. Retrieved from <https://firstvineyard.net/>
- First Vineyard Winery. (n.d.). *History*. Retrieved from <https://firstvineyard.net/history>

- Gaiter, D., & Brecher, J. (2022, May 20). *Iris Rideau: A pioneer gets her due 'because people want to know now'*. Grape Collective. Retrieved from <https://grapecollective.com/articles/iris-rideau-a-pioneer-gets-her-due-because-people-want-to-know-now>
- Ghabour, D. (2020, September 8). *Black-owned franchise of Waters Edge Wineries to open its first Kentucky location*. Courier Journal.com. Retrieved from <https://www.courier-journal.com/story/life/food/2020/09/08/waters-edge-winery-opens-first-kentucky-location-in-elizabethtown/5716846002/>
- Gold, S.J. (2016). A critical race theory approach to black American entrepreneurship. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 39(9), 1697–1718.
- Gonzalez, J. (2022, February 21). How this Black-owned distillery is 'breaking the ceiling' in Kentucky's bourbon industry. *Louisville Courier Journal*. Retrieved from <https://www.courier-journal.com/story/life/food/spirits/bourbon/2022/02/21/how-black-owned-brough-brothers-bourbon-changing-industry/6752543001/>
- Hammond, R., Sydnor, S., & Kang, E. (2014). Reaching an underserved wine customer: Connecting with the African American wine consumer. *Hospitality Review*.
- Howard, P.H. (2017). Craftwashing in the U.S. beer industry. *Beverages*, 4(1), 1. <https://doi.org/10.3390/beverages4010001>
- IBISWorld. (2019, October). *Wineries in the U.S.* Retrieved from IBISWorld database.
- IBISWorld. (2020, October). *Wineries in the U.S.* Retrieved from IBISWorld database.
- Ingalls, J. (2023, March 8). *Wichita winery can't recover from break-in, closes up shop*. KAKE.com. Retrieved from <https://www.kake.com/story/48517335/wichita-winery-cant-recover-from-breakin-closes-up-shop>
- Iris Rideau. (n.d.). *About Iris*. Retrieved from <https://www.irisrideau.com/>
- Jan, T., McGregor, J., & Hoyer, M. (2021, August 23). Corporate America's \$50 billion promise. *Washington Post*. Retrieved from <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/interactive/2021/george-floyd-corporate-america-racial-justice/>
- Johnson, L. (2020, November 19). Kentucky's First Black Owned Distributor Legacy Wine and Spirits is Shaking Up the Liquor Industry. *Cuisine Noir*. Retrieved from <https://www.cuisinenoirmag.com/legacy-wine-and-spirits-kentucky-distributor/>
- Koellinger, P., & Minniti, M. (2006). Not for lack of trying: American entrepreneurship in black and white. *Small Business Economics*, 27(1), 59–79.
- Lambert, L. (n.d.). *Woburn Plantation Manor House Remains, Burwell Family Cemetery, & Nearby Site of Former Woburn Winery*. Southern Virginia Homefront. Retrieved from http://sovahomefront.org/_site_woburn.php
- Lambert, S., Reavey, B., & Bell, M. (2023, April). *Longevity Wines: Fermenting inclusion for black wine entrepreneurs*. (W30135). Ivey Case Publishing.
- Liu, C.Y. (2012). The causes and dynamics of minority entrepreneurial entry. *Journal of Developmental Entrepreneurship*, 17(01), 1250–3.
- Love, S. (2021, April 21). California's white wine problem. *Alta Journal*. Retrieved from <https://www.altanline.com/culture/food-drink/a35591396/californias-white-wine-problem-sydney-love/>
- McBride Sisters. (n.d.). *Our Story*. Retrieved from <https://www.mcbridesisters.com/Sisters-Story>
- McCall, S. (n.d.). *La Fete is a party and everyone's invited. Donae Burston is bringing Black wine culture to a rose party that doesn't end in summer*. Uncorked & Cultured. Retrieved from <https://uncorkedandcultured.com/2023/08/30/black-wine-culture-donae-burston/>
- McGirr, L. (2019, January 16). How Prohibition fueled the Klan. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/16/opinion/prohibition-immigration-klan.html>
- McKinney, J. (2021, December 9). New study: Black influencers earn significantly less than their white counterparts. *Black Enterprise*. Retrieved from <https://www.blackenterprise.com/new-study-black-influencers-earn-significantly-less-than-their-white-counterparts/>

- Mobley, E. (2020, June 4). Drinkers are supporting black-owned wine businesses right now. Will it last? *San Francisco Chronicle*. Retrieved from <https://www.sfchronicle.com/wine/article/Drinkers-are-supporting-black-owned-wine-15315335.php>
- Mobley, E. (2023, June 1). They grew up not knowing the other existed. Now these sisters are Napa's newest vintners. *San Francisco Chronicle*. Retrieved from <https://www.sfchronicle.com/food/wine/article/mcbride-sisters-napa-17916149.php>
- Morales, C. (2020, June 22). Prestigious wine organization drops use of term 'master'. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/22/us/wine-master.html>
- NBC. (n.d.). *Watch Grand Crew episode: Wine & Traffic*. Retrieved from <https://www.nbc.com/grand-crew/video/wine-traffic/9000255141>
- Palmer, D. (2023, February 13). *Kentucky's first Black-owned liquor distributor plans big expansion this year*. Spectrum News. Retrieved from <https://spectrumnews1.com/ky/louisville/news/2023/02/13/legacy-wine---spirits-expanding-as-kentucky-s-first-black-owned-liquor-distributor->
- Peck, E. (2023, November 27). *DEI backlash hits corporate America*. Axios.com. Retrieved from <https://www.axios.com/2023/11/27/dei-affirmative-action-supreme-court>
- Peck, G. (2009). *The prohibition hangover: Alcohol in America from demon rum to cult cabernet*. Rutgers, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt5hj2xw>
- Penrise, R.R. (2019, July 3). *Inclusive by all means: Meet Donae Burston, the black spirits guru who launched his own luxury rosé*. The Root. Retrieved from <https://www.theroot.com/inclusive-by-all-means-meet-donae-burston-the-black-1835901965>
- Peterson, R.A., & Crittenden, V.L. (2020). Exploring customer orientation as a marketing strategy of Mexican-American entrepreneurs. *Journal of Business Research*, 113, 139–148.
- Rense, S. (2021, October 1). *Jackie Summers never gave up on the rebirth of Sorel. Fawn Weaver brought it back to life*. Esquire.com. Retrieved from <https://www.esquire.com/food-drink/drinks/a37778184/sorel-liqueur-relaunch-2021-interview/>
- Richardson, P., Bell, M., Pearson A., & Cruz, R. (2021) Do black lives matter more to firms represented by women? *Proceedings of the Academy of Marketing Sciences Annual Conference. Virtual*.
- Rideau Vineyard (n.d.). *Who We Are*. Retrieved from <https://rideauvineyard.com/who-we-are/>
- Rideau, I.D. (2022). *From white to black: One life between two worlds*. 8790 Publishing Company.
- Rinaldi, R. (n.d.). *Black history month: What's wine got to do with it?* Retrieved from <https://www.vineprose.com/single-post/black-history-month-what-s-wine-got-to-do-with-it>
- Risen, C. (2017, August 15). When Jack Daniel's failed to honor a slave, an author rewrote history. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/15/dining/jack-daniels-whiskey-slave-nearest-green.html>
- Romero, M., & Valdez, Z. (2016). Introduction to the special issue: Intersectionality and entrepreneurship. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 39(9), 1553–1565.
- Rousseau, R. (2021, February 10). The drink black movement must tap the source. *Wine Enthusiast*. Retrieved from <https://www.wineenthusiast.com/culture/industry-news/drink-black-outpourings/>
- Sellers, N. (2023, June 7). *McBride Sisters Bridging Wine's Gap*. Wine-Searcher.com. Retrieved from <https://www.wine-searcher.com/m/2023/06/mcbride-sisters-bridging-wines-gap>
- SevenFifty. (2019). *2019 Career & salary survey report*. Retrieved from <https://daily.sevenfifty.com/salary-survey-2019-report/>
- Silicon Valley Bank. (2023). *State of the wine industry report 2023*. Retrieved from <https://www.svb.com/trends-insights/reports/wine-report/>
- Siraz, S., & Claes, B. (2022). All entrepreneurs are equal but some are more equal than others. In *Academy of Management Proceedings* (Vol. 1, 12853). Briarcliff Manor, NY: Academy of Management.

- Thach, L. (2022, January 25). *How two Oakland women created a million dollar wine business during the pandemic*. Forbes.com. Retrieved from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/lizthach/2022/01/25/how-two-oakland-women-created-a-million-dollar-wine-business-during-the-pandemic/>
- Thach, L. (2023, February 24). A brief history of black winemaking in the US. *Decanter*. Retrieved from <https://www.decanter.com/wine/a-brief-history-of-black-winemaking-in-the-us-498177/>
- Uncorked & Cultured. (n.d.). *Sip Consciously Directory*. Retrieved from <https://uncorkedandcultured.com/sipconsciously/>
- Wine Enthusiast. (2020). *A global guide to black-owned wine labels*. Retrieved from <https://www.winemag.com/2020/06/08/black-owned-wine-guide/>
- Wine Institute. (2021). *California Wine Statistics*. Available at <https://wineinstitute.org/our-industry/>
- Wine Marketing Council. (2019). *Wine Market Council Benchmark Segmentation Study*. Retrieved from <https://winemarketcouncil.com/research/>
- Wines & Vines. (2022). *Statistics on Number of US Wineries*. Wines & Vines Analytics. Retrieved from <https://winesvinesanalytics.com/statistics/winery/>
- Wingfield, A.H., & Taylor, T. (2016). Race, gender, and class in entrepreneurship: Intersectional counterframes and black business owners. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 39(9), 1676–1696.
- Worobiec, M. (2022, February 9). Iris Rideau on seizing opportunity in wine. *Wine Spectator*. Retrieved from <https://www.winespectator.com/articles/iris-rideau-on-seizing-opportunity-in-business-and-wine>
- Worobiec, M. (2022, June 17). Trailblazer Iris Rideau’s memoir to be published Juneteenth. *Wine Spectator*. Retrieved from <https://www.winespectator.com/articles/trailblazer-iris-rideau-s-memoir-to-be-published-juneteenth>
- Yahoo Finance. (2022, November 25). *Rose is the new champagne, La Fete*.