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California Lets Wineries Use Social Video to Promote Retailer Events Starting in 2027

The measure lifts a remaining ban under tied-house rules on video posts about winemaker dinners, tastings and similar events.

Tuesday, October 6, 2026



California wineries will be allowed to use video on social media to promote certain events held at restaurants and other retail locations starting Jan. 1, 2027, under a new state law backed by the Napa Valley Vintners trade group.

The measure, Senate Bill 1273, updates a narrow part of California's alcohol advertising rules by expanding what wineries can post online about winemaker dinners and tasting events at licensed retailer premises. According to Napa Valley Vintners, the bill has passed and been signed into law, giving wineries another way to market events that connect producers, retailers and consumers.

The change applies to promotions that were already allowed in limited form under California law. Napa Valley Vintners said wineries had been able to share certain information about eligible events and, after a 2018 legal change, could also use photos, illustrations and reposts on social media. Video, however, was still specifically barred. SB 1273 removes that remaining restriction for those event promotions.

The issue sits within California's tied-house laws, the long-standing rules that separate alcohol producers, wholesalers and retailers and limit how they can do business with one another. Those laws are meant to prevent undue influence by manufacturers over retail outlets, but industry groups have argued that some provisions have not kept up with the way businesses now communicate with customers online.

Napa Valley Vintners said it began pushing for changes in 2017 after compliance seminars and legal guidance for members showed that wineries faced obstacles when trying to promote events held at restaurants and other licensed retailers. That effort led to Assembly Bill 2452 in 2018, which broadened the kinds of content wineries could use in social media posts about those events. The group said video was left out at the time, even as short-form and live video became a more common marketing tool.

Michelle Novi, in-house counsel for Napa Valley Vintners, said consumer habits have shifted sharply since the last update. She said video has become one of the most effective ways to reach customers, especially for small and independent wineries that have limited marketing budgets.

The practical effect of the new law could be significant for California's wine business because many wineries rely on dinners, tastings and other retailer-hosted events to reach buyers directly. Social platforms now favor video content, and the new rule may make it easier for wineries to publicize appearances at restaurants, wine shops and similar venues without running into a content-based legal restriction. For the broader

beverage sector, the change is a reminder that even narrow advertising rules can shape how producers work with retailers and how consumers discover events and brands.

At the same time, the measure does not amount to a broad rewrite of California's tied-house system. The law appears to expand an existing exception rather than remove the underlying separation rules between producers and retailers. Wineries will still have to follow the rest of the state's alcohol regulations when marketing events and working with licensed sellers.

State Sen. Christopher Cabaldon authored SB 1273. Napa Valley Vintners said the bill was coauthored by Sen. McNerney and Assemblymember Aguiar-Curry. The trade group also said it worked on the legislation with outside counsel Dickenson Peatman & Fogarty and Sacramento lobbying firm Platinum Advisors.

The Napa Valley Vintners association represents nearly 550 member wineries and advocates on local, state, federal and international issues affecting the Napa Valley wine region and the wider wine trade. In its announcement, the group described SB 1273 as the result of a yearslong effort to bring state law closer to current digital marketing practices.

The new law is likely to be most useful to wineries that depend on social media to draw consumers to in-person events but do not have large advertising budgets. Under the current digital environment, video often performs better than static posts on major platforms, which can affect whether a winery's event promotion reaches potential customers. By allowing video in this limited setting, California is removing a restriction that industry members had argued no longer matched normal consumer behavior.

The timing also matters because wineries have been looking for lower-cost ways to build direct relationships with drinkers in a competitive market. Restaurant dinners, guided tastings and store events give producers a chance to tell the story behind a bottle and meet customers face to face. The new rule could help wineries promote those appearances more effectively while staying within the state's regulatory framework.

Napa Valley Vintners said the change will take effect at the start of 2027, when wineries doing business in California will be able to post video content on social media for qualifying events at retailer locations.