

“Farris is the only major law firm in British Columbia with offices in each of BC’s three major wine growing regions. We understand what it means to do business in and from BC and our clients appreciate our real world solutions.”

*-Dominic Petraroia,
Managing Partner, Kelowna*

Legal Services for the Wine Industry

British Columbia’s wineries deal with rapidly evolving market conditions and a complex and extensive regulatory system. Farris has a reputation for dealing with legal matters with efficiency and innovation. We are a high performance law firm and provide a broad range of legal services to the BC wine industry, including:

Business Formation

- Structuring business entities
- Incorporations
- Partnerships and limited partnerships
- Joint ventures
- Shareholders’ agreements

Wine Industry Licensing and Permitting

- Compliance with ongoing regulatory obligations
- Winery permitting and regulation
- Regulation of wine distribution and marketing
- Preparation and filing of winery licence and permit applications
- Prescribed buy-sell agreements

Winery and Vineyard Financing

- Start-up financing
- Raising equity capital
- Limited Partnership private placements
- VCC financing
- Term and operating loans

Land Acquisition

- Acquisition of existing vineyards
- Vineyard leasing
- Acquisition of undeveloped land
- Zoning and land use issues
- Environmental issues
- Water rights issues

Construction Law

- Design and construction agreements for wineries, vineyard irrigation systems and access road construction
- Green building and sustainable development

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Marketing and Trademark Protection

- Choosing and protecting a winery's name and label design
- Trademarks, certification marks, geographic indications, trade dress and distinguishing guise, vineyard descriptions
- Labelling and content laws
- Internet law and internet sales
- Protecting your brand

Employment Law

- Employment agreements
- Human rights issues
- Hiring an immigrant winemaker
- Migrant and seasonal worker programs
- Workplace safety
- Employee share ownership plans
- Employee benefit plans
- Union negotiations and grievances

Winery Acquisitions and Sales

- Structure, negotiate, and close purchases or sales
- Checklist of issues for winery acquisitions
- Purchase and sale agreements
- Receivership sales
- Due diligence

Business Succession

- Intergenerational planning for family-owned and closely held winery businesses
- Retirement planning
- Estate sales

Wine Industry Agreements

- Grape supply and purchase agreements
- Distribution and supply chain agreements
- Custom crush agreements
- Alternating proprietorship agreements

Taxation

- Tax and estate planning
- Transactional taxes (e.g. GST, PST)
- Structuring your business to minimize taxation

Litigation and Regulatory Issues

- Responding to compliance issues, audits and investigations
- Winery license infractions
- Host liability issues for the wine industry
- Shareholder disputes
- Challenges to inter-provincial shipments of wine
- Avoiding tasting room liability