

**Q&A WITH DAVID JOHNDROW**

**VINEYARD FOUNDER CHEERS LAW AFFECTING STATE'S WINE INDUSTRY**

**Q: Voters on Tuesday passed State Question 743, which allows wine-makers from within the state and out of state who produce up to 10,000 gallons of wine a year to sell wine directly to customers, liquor stores and restaurants. How will this change impact business for local wine producers?**



**David Johndrow**  
The founder of  
Johndrow  
Vineyards

**A:** The purpose of the new law is to give opportunities to small businesses that they did not have before. Our state is full of small, local vineyards that have been limited to promoting their products through fairs, festivals and their own wine tasting rooms if they were not working with a distributor. Under the new guidelines, small producers are enabled to make their own sales to package stores and restaurants; this is a huge win for those willing to put in that effort.

**Q: Will the new law change what wines might be available at restaurants?**

**A:** Yes, diners will now have access to wines they would have previously had to drive to wineries to try. The new law gives all small wineries equal access to develop relationships with restaurants and get their products out there. If local wine-makers take advantage of the opportunity, Oklahomans will get more exposure to what our state and region has to offer.

**Q: How are Oklahoma winemakers trying to increase awareness of their products?**

**A:** I have seen a number of winemakers getting involved with charity organizations and events. Our company personally has started a Corks for a Cause campaign where we donate \$1 for every bottle of JV label wine sold in Oklahoma to Ally's House. More vineyards are also taking advantage of technology by establishing a Web presence where they can communicate with their customers. There are a lot of great tools out there, but the most important thing a winemaker can do to create buzz is make a quality product that will speak for itself.

STEVE LACKMEYER, BUSINESS WRITER