



Wine Industry

Wine and Beverage Alcohol Industry Practice

From our offices in St. Helena in the heart of the Napa Valley and in San Francisco, Farella Braun + Martel is in the unique position to offer our clients the resources of a large, urban law firm with the specialized knowledge, approach and contacts of a local practice. We are more than just lawyers; our wine and beverage alcohol team provides a competitive business advantage to our clients.

Wine Industry Experience

Farella is considered the premier law firm in the wine industry. The firm has played the lead role in merger and acquisition transactions for buyers and sellers of wine industry assets involving both public and private investments. In addition, we work with grape growers, wine makers, distributors, domestic and international investors in the industry, consultants and suppliers of winery and vineyard equipment.

We bring to the table industry knowledge unavailable elsewhere. Farella represents large and small companies, entrepreneurs and families in the viticulture and agribusiness industries on a variety of matters, ranging from simple contracts or real estate leases to complex, tax sensitive business transactions and investments. We also provide environmental and land use advice; litigation and trial proficiency; estate, business and organization succession planning and tax law concerns. Essentially, we are our clients' business advisors, legal counsel and comprehensive resource to guide their business and familial concerns. Farella understands the global nature of the wine industry, because we are in the industry ourselves as wine growers and producers. Therefore, we are both providing and implementing our own advice.

Comprehensive Creative Service

We guide companies through significant transitions. Our teams relish the opportunity to structure unusual business ventures and execute the most innovative transaction and litigation strategies. Because the value of alcohol brands and wine businesses has increased significantly, transition is more than just a purchase, sale or familial transaction. A minor misstep could result in significant financial loss or develop into litigation resulting in costly fines and prolonged market entry.

The Farella approach begins with a detailed understanding of our client's goals, which is followed by a creative, sophisticated presentation of potential solutions and recommended options to the issue at hand. Our dedication to our client is fused with the technical ingenuity unavailable elsewhere to produce legal representation built on service, results and personal commitment.

Recent experience includes:

- Minority and majority investment in wine businesses—both cult labels and value brands
- Land use permits and variances, erosion control, water and waste water management, lot line adjustments, CEQA and environmental compliance
- Estate planning, succession plan development, wealth transfer and protection of assets
- Corporate formation and operational development, including winery startups
- Due diligence to determine the legal status and market value of brand assets, including complex title, entitlement and permitting matters
- Farm management arrangements, grape contracts and distributor agreements
- Trademarks and other protection of wine-related intellectual property

Contacts

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Related Practices

Business Litigation
Business Transactions
Employment
Environmental Law
Insurance Recovery
Intellectual Property Litigation
Real Estate and Land Use

- Construction claims, distribution rights and obligations, securities and partnership disputes, employment issues, environmental claims, intellectual property conflicts and insurance coverage issues

The Complete Package

In the increasingly sophisticated global beverage market, the bandwidth of our lawyers provides the overall strategy beverage alcohol clients need to succeed. Specifically, we counsel clients on federal and state regulations on the production, labeling, marketing and distribution of wine, beer and spirits, as well as on the structuring of licensed entities. In addition, we advise beverage alcohol importers and producers on the Bioterrorism Act, California's Proposition 65, and advertising, consumer protection and privacy, e-commerce, trade practice, antitrust and weights and measures laws. We also advise on the use, protection and exploitation of wine, spirits and beer industry trademarks and brand-related labeling issues.