

# LOCAL EXPLORERS CELEBRATES CONTINUED SUCCESS IN WINE TOURISM, IN A DEAL TO CREATE MOBILE PASSPORT APP FOR OHIO WINES

BOCA RATON, FL, UNITED STATES, February 27, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Local Explorers](#), a leading creator of mobile loyalty apps for the hospitality and tourism industry, has signed a contract to build a mobile passport app for Ohio Wines. The app will power the digital refresh of their popular Ohio Wines Visitor Incentive Program (VIP), which allowed wine enthusiasts to collect coded tickets at participating Ohio wineries and earn points towards swag and other prizes for both visiting new wineries and revisiting old favorites.



Ohio Wines VIP

The [Ohio Wines VIP](#) has been a big hit since its launch in 2013, but Ohio Wines—the state-sponsored organization that advocates for and promotes Ohio’s grape growers and wine producers—sees the app offering even greater opportunity for the program’s growth. “I believe we have close to 23,000 members from 39 different states,” said Christy Eckstein, director of marketing for the Ohio Department of Agriculture and executive director of the Ohio Grape Industries Committee. “But we’re transitioning out of the tickets and wanting to attract more of the Gen Z or a younger demographic.”

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We have close to 23,000 members from 39 different states, so now we're transitioning out of the tickets and wanting to attract more of the Gen Z or a younger demographic.”

*Christy Eckstein, Director of Marketing*

One way the app will make the program more enticing and user-friendly is by letting users see their points add up in real time whenever they check into a participating winery

on their phones. Previously, Eckstein explained, participants had to save their physical tickets and enter their unique codes online to get points.

In addition, Eckstein added, an all-digital platform will make the program easier to manage as it grows. "It'll also really help us in the office be able to maintain the growth of the program and the overall administration of it," she said.

The app also offers a number of features to enhance the Ohio Wines VIP experience for users. Besides earning points for checking into any of the over 200 participating wineries with the app, users will also be able to earn badges after visiting a certain number of wineries, learn about special events, and follow trails featuring selected wineries. (The app's navigation features can guide users from one winery to another.) They will also be able to learn about wineries that interest them before they visit, and see and order the swag available to them at certain point levels. "They'll have all that right on their phones," Eckstein said.

She added that Ohio Wines already envisions future updates to the app, such as giving wineries the ability to offer discounts on food and merchandise to app users.

Plans are already in place to let current Ohio VIP members know about the app. "We'll be letting them know after the new year that we're transitioning into an app and to be on the lookout for the app, which they'll be able to download," Eckstein said. "We will also share this information with all of our participating wineries."

For Ohio Wines, both the decision to take their passport program fully digital and the choice of Local Explorers to build the app were clear. They'd been closely watching their sister organization, the Ohio Craft Brewers Association, and its success with its Ohio on Tap passport app, also made by Local Explorers. "They seem to be a leader in that field," Eckstein said of Local Explorers. "We want to take part with a company that has experience in this field and is able to help us relaunch our program and give it a new feel, but also be able to take all the information that we've gotten over the 10 years of the program and put that into the app for us. And we felt comfortable that Local Explorers was going to be the best partner to do that."

"We are proud to also bring our specific experience with the wine industry and wine tourism to the table," said Susan Erickson of Local Explorers. "Quite a few of our recent apps, including the Taste of Nova Scotia and the Connecticut Wine Trail, feature wine trails and passport programs". Erickson of Local Explorers explained further that "additional wine organizations are picking Local Explorers, which are just being announced and Local Explorers is confident that they, along with Ohio Wines, will benefit from the insights of our past successes, as these additional organizations in the wine, spirits and craft beverage verticals, like the New Hampshire Wine Trail are in the process of coming on board in 2024".

Local Explorers apps by software designers Daruma Tech are designed to help communities better connect with visitors and local consumers by making it easy for them to discover and patronize local businesses and attractions. Each app is custom designed for the community it serves, and the Local Explorers team offers ongoing, proactive support, from development to

training to regular maintenance and updates.

To learn more, visit <https://www.localexplorers.com/>

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