



Media Brief Planning Document

Event Logistics

- October 28th, 9:30 AM
 - Located at 41 Lakefront Dr., Geneva, NY 14456
- Speakers:
 - Visit Finger Lakes CEO: Avery
 - *Wine Enthusiast* exec editor: Lucy
 - Finger Lakes Wine Alliance Executive: Ella
 - New York Wine & Grape Foundation CEO: Brooke

About the Organizations

- Visit Finger Lakes is the tourism promotion organization of Ontario County, N.Y. The organization's mission is to showcase unique scenery, outdoor recreation, food and drink, and special events in the region. Through marketing and public relations, Visit Finger Lakes hopes to support Ontario County's economic development and make the region a well-regarded tourist destination.
- The Finger Lakes Wine Alliance (FLWA) is the regional organization dedicated to elevating the visibility and prominence of the Finger Lakes American Viticultural Area (AVA), its wines, and its wineries. Established in 2004, the FLWA unites over 35 member wineries across the region.
- The Wine and Grape Foundation works to support the state's wine and grape industries through marketing, research, and educational initiatives. By fostering collaboration among growers, winemakers, and tourism leaders, the Foundation helps strengthen the overall competitiveness of New York's wine regions. Its partnership with the Finger Lakes Wine Alliance and Visit Finger Lakes ensures a coordinated effort to advance sustainability, quality, and global recognition for the region.

Speaker Biographies



About: JACQUELINE STRUM

Jacqueline Strum serves as an executive editor at Wine Country Magazine, overseeing the selection of the publication's annual Wine Region of the Year. With 8 years of experience in global wine tourism, Strum has become an expert in wine excellence. Wine Country Magazine's coverage extends to vineyard practices, industry standards, and winemaking innovation.



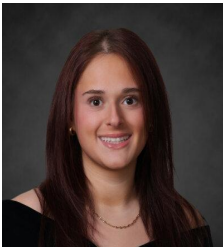
About: ALICIA RICHIE QUINN

Alicia Richie Quinn serves as President and CEO of Visit Finger Lakes, the region's official public relations and marketing organization. Quinn has worked to increase the region's visitation by more than 20% over the past five years. She specializes in infrastructure planning, visitor experience design, and collaborative tourism partnerships.



About: SAM FILLER

Sam Filler is the executive director of the New York Wine & Grape Foundation, an organization dedicated to advancing the wine and grape industry throughout New York state. With a background in both agricultural science and economic development, Filler has been essential to positioning New York as a nationally recognized wine-producing state.



About: AMY NAVOR

Amy Navor is the executive director of Finger Lakes Wine Alliance, representing over 100 wineries across the region. With a decade of experience in hospitality, Navor has pioneered partnerships with culinary leaders and tourism organizations to position the Finger Lakes as a destination for sophisticated wine travelers from around the world.

Objectives

1. **Validate dedication:** Formally celebrate the Wine Enthusiast 2025 American Wine Region of the Year designation as a validation of decades of quality improvement and innovation.
2. **Explain Economic Opportunity:** Detail the transformative "Wine Region of the Year: Elevating Excellence" initiative, emphasizing the projected economic benefits (increased visitation, job creation, and investment) to secure public and governmental support.
3. **Establish Credibility & Timeline:** Position the FLWA and its partners as strategic, action-oriented leaders by detailing the implementation timeline for infrastructure improvements and marketing initiatives aligned with the 2025-2026 tourism seasons

Audience

- We want to target national travel, wine, and lifestyle outlets that can both amplify the Finger Lakes' "Wine Region of the Year" recognition to both domestic and international audiences, while also engaging regional New York media that influence tourism and economic development. Our goal is to secure coverage that highlights the region's innovation, sustainability, and growing reputation as a world-class wine destination.
 - MEDIA LIST:
 - Erin Florio. Global Features Director, Condé Nast Traveler. 212-286-2860. erin_florio@condenast.com
 - Peter Terzian. Features Editor at Travel + Leisure. 646-783-7000. peter.terzian@dotdashmdp.com
 - Shivani Vora. Contributor at The New York Times Travel Desk. 212-556-1234. shivani@nytimes.com

Key Messages

- **Investing in the Experience**
Upgrading tasting rooms, signage, overlooks, and parking to create a seamless, world-class visitor journey.
- **Educating for Excellence**
Launching the *Finger Lakes Wine Academy* to train sommeliers and hospitality pros for top-tier service.
- **Showcasing on the Global Stage**
Promoting the region internationally — from Toronto to London — to turn Wine Enthusiast acclaim into lasting tourism.
- **Celebrating the Craft**
Hosting signature events like the *Finger Lakes Wine Summit* and harvest celebrations that spotlight local talent.
- **Pairing Food, Wine & Place**
Partnering with chefs and farms to create unforgettable food-and-wine experiences that extend visitor stays.

Event Details

- **Dress code:** Speakers should wear professional attire that reflects the modern sophistication of the Finger Lakes wine industry (tailored suits, blazers, smart dresses, and professional slacks). Avoid overly casual wear. Reporters are encouraged to dress comfortably yet professionally.
- **Security & check-in:** A dedicated media registration desk will be set up at the entrance to the classroom. All attendees must present a valid press ID or confirmation email for credential pickup. Bag checks will be conducted at the entry. A dedicated FLWA staff member will serve as the media liaison for any immediate needs.
- **Getting to the venue:** The briefing will be held in Newhouse 1, room 206B. The address is 215 University Pl, Syracuse, NY 13210. Enter through the main doors of Newhouse 1, once inside and immediately to the left, take the stairs down one floor and the classroom is the first door on the left.
- **Parking:** Complimentary on-site parking is available for all media attendees in the main University lot. Overflow parking is located across from the veteran center.

Tough Q&A

Questions:

- 1. Why is such a large infrastructure investment necessary? Doesn't the region already have a strong tourism base?**
 - a. This investment is about transforming the visitor experience from strong to world-class. The Wine Enthusiast designation will bring a new level of international travelers whose expectations have been set by Napa, Tuscany, and Bordeaux. Our strategic investments, such as improved wayfinding, scenic overlooks, and certified service staff through the Wine Academy are critical to handling the projected *25% increase* in visitation, ensuring visitors stay longer and spend more, and securing our reputation for the long term.
- 2. What makes the Finger Lakes' approach to wine and tourism different from other celebrated wine regions?**
 - a. Authenticity. Our winemakers are deeply rooted in this land, and that connection comes through in every glass. Unlike larger, more commercialized regions, we're small enough to maintain that personal touch while still offering world-class quality. The collaboration between wineries, local chefs, and tourism organizations allows us to create experiences that are both intimate and innovative.
- 3. The Finger Lakes have been recognized before, yet tourism growth hasn't always been consistent. What makes this time different?**
 - a. The difference is alignment. This isn't one organization acting alone; it's a coordinated effort between the Wine Alliance, Visit Finger Lakes, and the Wine & Grape Foundation. For the first time, all key stakeholders are working under one shared plan, timeline, and message. That collective strategy ensures lasting results instead of short-term attention.
- 4. Some locals worry that increased tourism could lead to overdevelopment and harm the region's small-town character. How do you prevent that?**
 - a. We hear those concerns, and they're valid. Our goal isn't to commercialize, it's to enhance. Every new development is guided by sustainability standards and community consultation. We want to preserve the region's authenticity, not replace it. The "Elevating Excellence" initiative is rooted in improving quality, not quantity.

Talking Points for Sam Filler

- Good morning, I'm Sam Filler, executive director of the New York Wine and Grape Foundation, and I am proud to be standing here alongside the CEO of Visit Finger Lakes and the Executive Director of the Finger Lakes Wine Alliance as we celebrate our region's recognition as *Wine Enthusiast's* 2025 Wine Region of the Year.
 - Our foundation works to enhance New York's wine and grape region by funding innovative research, advancing education, and supporting sustainable programs, which is why today's accomplishments symbolize more than just an award; they mark an important moment in which we can turn recognition into long-term opportunities.
- **KEY POINTS**
 - Having received national recognition as Wine Region of the Year, we're dedicated to ensuring long-term growth for our wine loving community by turning the spotlight on sustainable economic growth.

- o Despite its rich history of winemaking, with over 130 wineries, many visitors remain unaware of the region's global wine and hospitality offerings.
- o The New York Wine and Grape Foundation is proud to help promote the long lasting impact of the Finger Lakes' award winning reputation through the "Elevating Excellence" initiative.
- o This initiative strengthens what the region does best: high quality wine, natural beauty and warm hospitality, while investing in infrastructure and education.
- o Under this initiative, the Finger Lakes will secure our ability to thrive as a competitive travel destination by establishing the Finger Lakes Academy.
- o Rooted in elevating the visitor experience, the academy will expand professional development and training for all hospitality staff, tour guides and educators.
- o To remain competitive among established wine destinations, strategic investments in improved wayfinding and scenic overlooks will help ensure visitors can easily explore the region, resulting in extended stays and increased spending.
- o "Elevating Excellence" is expected to increase visitation by approximately 25% while generating millions of dollars in tourism revenue, directly benefiting the farmers, producers, and consumers.
- o By supporting our ethical tourism strategy, the Finger Lakes helps preserve vineyards and farmlands for generations to come.
- o The mission is to position the Finger Lakes as a global hub for wine, culture, and community by uniting wineries, tourism organizations, and state foundations under a shared vision.
- o Our foundation is making continuous efforts to conduct research that drives innovation in sustainable wine-making.
- o The success of the Finger Lakes uplifts the state's overall reputation while encouraging other regions of New York to stand alongside the best.
- o Ultimately, this initiative celebrates the connection among food, wine, people and the region's identity.

Now, please join me in welcoming the Executive Editor for Wine Enthusiast Magazine, Susan Kostrzewa.