



WINEAMERICA PERSPECTIVES

by Jim Trezise, President

August 15th, 2025

- **Magic**
- **Future Focus**
- **DC Updates**
- **Why Join**
- **WineAmerica?**
- **Colorado Wine Country**
- **Great Grapes**
- **Wine's Worth**
- **Tax Savings**
- **Future Focus Guest**

Column

**“A waltz and a glass of
wine invite an encore.”**

– Johann Strauss

Future Focus: Explaining the World of Wine

(Jim's Note: "Future Focus" is a new section designed to highlight people and businesses who, while by no means ignoring the many challenges we face today, are moving ahead in innovative ways which also help others. They are our future.)

The United States is the world's #1 wine consumer and #4 wine producer, and wine is worth \$323 billion to our economy. Because of our robust consumption, most American wine is consumed at home, but export is also an important piece of the puzzle. And a very complicated one, especially these days.

In normal times, selling wines in foreign markets is challenging because each one has different laws, regulations, and financial arrangements. Today it's far more complicated than normal because of the ever-changing situation involving tariffs, causing great uncertainty.

But there are a couple bright spots. First, the federal Market Access Program (MAP), which helps fund the export of U.S. agricultural products including wine, has been doubled to \$400 million, allowing major wine-producing states like California, Washington, Oregon and New York to boost their foreign presence. Second, there is a reliable roadmap for the international complexities of international trade: Abridge (www.abridgebev.com), created and run by longtime expert Bennett Caplan.

Bennett has been a beverage alcohol international trade lawyer for decades, working for the law firm McDermott, Will & Emery, such global companies as Seagram and Allied Domecq, and for 20 years as the Head of Secretariat for FIVS, the international equivalent of WineAmerica in that it is funded by private sector companies and associations and has a focus on global laws and regulations. After handing off his FIVS role at the beginning of

2024, Bennett redoubled his focus on Abridge, with the detailed database now covering over 110 countries. Abridge is a subscription-based, private company, but Bennett also regularly shares helpful information with a broader industry audience through seminar and conference appearances.

Right now, export may seem like a remote opportunity, but as always that will change, and the smart money will start preparing for when that happens. Abridge is one resource for helping make that happen.

Learn more at the end of this newsletter in the "Future Focus Contributor" section.

FUTURE FOCUS CONTRIBUTOR

Abridge is a relatively new resource for helping wine and other beverage alcohol companies to navigate the complex and rapidly changing environment surrounding global trade. Its founder and owner Bennett Caplan is a lawyer with decades of experience in this area, including as former head of the not-for-profit FIVS organization which WineAmerica supports. -- Jim Trezise

Embracing International Regulatory Compliance

Bennett Caplan, President, Abridge

Selling wine overseas has long been challenging, in part because each country has different laws and regulations regarding labeling norms, additive approvals, tariffs, and

certification rules. But today's environment has become far more complicated than usual due to uncertainties surrounding tariffs and other trading requirements.

[Abridge](#) was created 15 years ago to help entities engaged in international wine sales to become fully compliant with the laws of export markets. Our database is designed to help subscribers easily locate hard-to-find rules and to anticipate differences in enforcement.

Traders can avoid potential legal exposure by embracing compliance. In a situation where one missed regulation can lead to a halt in shipments or incurring fines, Abridge delivers a valuable service: reliable information, expertly organized, and easily accessible.

Abridge was the first widely available public site to offer a centralized, searchable platform with regulatory information for over one hundred countries. Our database is organized around the key categories of labeling, composition, production standards, import/export documentation, tariffs, federal taxation rates, and trade agreements. Each category is now updated daily, providing links to original legislation and official translations that enable users to verify source documents quickly and to ensure compliance with confidence.

In recent years, we expanded Abridge to [include spirits](#) and ["other alcohol beverages"](#) (e.g., RTDs, seltzers, and no/low alcohol), as well as wine. We [added the category of taxation](#), as well, and will include packaging early next year.

What has made Abridge particularly valuable is its side-by-side comparison tool, which enables users to compare differences in regulations across markets. This feature allows those in the trade to develop multi-country export strategies, to create new products that are fully compliant in selective markets, and to advocate for regulatory coherence in particularly confusing areas.

Abridge is curated by industry experts with a deep understanding of both technical detail

and application. Abridge staff is engaged in the alcohol beverage sector through our participation in trade forums and organizations such as the APEC Wine Regulatory Forum, the World Wine Trade Group, the International Wine Law Association, and the International Organization of Vine & Wine. University professors around the world use Abridge to educate their students about the significant role that regulations play in the trade.

Abridge also circulates weekly Abridge Reports on current events and significant regulatory and trade agreement developments around the world – giving our subscribers a “heads up” on upcoming alcohol beverage developments.

In short, Abridge has evolved into far more than a regulatory database—it is an essential tool to succeed in the international wine and spirits trade. You can read more about Abridge [here](#), see how it has been [received by](#) those in the press, follow us on [LinkedIn](#), and contact us for additional information.

