[Your business name] — Business Plan

Winery in [Your city] · Startup plan

Executive summary

[Your business name] is a new winery in [Your city] offering estate-labelled red and white wines, 500 cases a year; tastings by appointment at the winery; a wine club with two shipments a year; online sales shipped to the states that allow it; small private events and release parties; and wholesale to a few local restaurants and shops. The model is a small bonded winery making a 500-case vintage from purchased grapes in a leased light-industrial unit — tanks, a bladder press, a dozen barrels and a mobile bottler — and selling almost everything direct: by appointment, through a wine club and online.

Startup budget: $79,809 across 14 items, with funding still to be decided.

Twelve months from now, success looks like this: [What success looks like twelve months from now]

Products and services

[Your business name]'s core product is estate-labelled red and white wines, 500 cases a year. Grapes are bought by the ton from local growers, crushed and fermented in the fall, aged through the winter and bottled in the spring; every bottle is priced for direct sale, with the club getting the first allocation and the best price.

- Estate-labelled red and white wines, 500 cases a year
- Tastings by appointment at the winery
- A wine club with two shipments a year
- Online sales shipped to the states that allow it
- Small private events and release parties
- Wholesale to a few local restaurants and shops

Market analysis

The customers are locals and visitors who want to taste with the winemaker; the club members whose two shipments a year carry the rent; online buyers in the states you can ship to; couples and small groups booking a private tasting; and a few restaurants and shops that want a local label.

- Locals and weekend visitors who want to taste with the winemaker, not a tasting-room script
- Wine club members — the 150 households whose shipments pay the rent
- Online buyers in the states you can ship to, found through the club and the reviews
- Couples and small groups booking a private tasting or a release party
- A few restaurants and bottle shops that want a local label on the list

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Marketing strategy

Most wine will sell at the tasting table, through the club it feeds and by word of mouth; the rest of the customers find [Your business name] on Google — “winery near me”, “wine tasting” plus the town — and through the wine trail, the restaurants that pour it and Instagram, so the Google Business Profile, the reviews, the email list and a website with online ordering and the club sign-up decide whether a visit becomes a member.

- Google Business Profile and Google — “winery near me” and “wine tasting” plus your town, with the hours, the booking link and the reviews
- The wine club: every tasting ends with the club offer, and the club is the business
- Instagram — harvest, the cellar, the pour, the label — and the email list it feeds
- Local restaurants, bottle shops, hotels and wedding venues that pour or recommend you
- Regional wine trails, festivals and the county's visitor bureau
- A website with the wines, online ordering, the club sign-up, tasting bookings and your story

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Operations plan

The owner is the winemaker, the cellar hand and the host in year one, with help hired for the six weeks of harvest and the bottling day; the federal permit and the state license come before the first grape, the label approval before the first bottle, and the bonded inventory is the tax record.

- Federal permits first: the TTB basic permit and bonded winery registration (free, and months of lead time), then the state winery license and the city's zoning sign-off
- Grapes contracted by the ton from growers before harvest; the crush, the fermentation and the press in the first six weeks of fall
- Whites and rosé to tank, reds to barrel; racking, sulfite and lab checks through the winter; a mobile bottler in the spring
- Label approval from TTB before bottling; excise tax returns and operations reports on the TTB calendar
- Tastings by appointment, the club shipments twice a year, online orders shipped ground with an adult signature
- Every bottle tracked from tank to sale — the bonded inventory is the tax record

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Startup costs

What it will take to open the doors, with funding still to be decided.

Startup costs

ITEM	AMOUNT
Grapes: eight tons for the first 500 cases	$7,947
Variable-capacity stainless tanks	$11,590
Crusher-destemmer and a bladder press	$4,290
Barrels for the reds (twelve, used to new French oak)	$8,400
Pump, hoses, fermentation bins, a lab kit, a barrel rack and cleaning gear	$3,500
Bottles, corks, capsules and labels for 500 cases	$14,161
A mobile bottling line for 500 cases	$2,113
Lease deposit and first month on about 1,500 square feet	$4,016
Fit-out: floor drains, water, power for the tanks, insulation and a cold room	$12,500
TTB permit (free), state winery license and label approvals	$1,550
LLC, EIN, seller's permit and the free FDA food facility registration	$170
Insurance: the first month (liability, liquor liability, stock)	$350
Website, online ordering and the club sign-up	$0
Working capital: two months of running costs	$9,222
Total	**$79,809**

Typical range to start a winery in the US: $45,336–$116,280. Your list is what you decided to spend — replace estimates with real quotes as you get them. Website, online ordering and the club sign-up: Your Zarla plan includes the website — the wines, online ordering, the club sign-up, tasting bookings and your story — and walks you through your Google Business Profile. Having one built typically costs $1,000 to $2,000 from a freelancer.

Financial plan

The numbers below come from your own startup list and typical monthly costs for a 500-case winery in the US. Startup is heavy — grapes, tanks, barrels, glass and the fit-out — and the first sale is nearly a year away, so the working capital is as real as the equipment; the monthly lines are rent, insurance, utilities and compliance, and the price per bottle and the club decide what is left.

Typical monthly operating costs for a winery: $2,062–$7,895 a month, before the owner's own pay.

Add a monthly sales target and the plan will show how long it takes to recover the startup budget.

Typical monthly operating costs

COST	TYPICAL RANGE
Rent on about 1,500 square feet	$809–$3,206
Liability, liquor liability and stock insurance	$125–$575
Power, water and gas (the cold room and the glycol run all year)	$300–$800
Yeast, nutrients, sulfite, fining agents, lab tests and cleaning chemicals	$150–$400
Federal and state excise tax, reports and shipping compliance	$7–$300
Cartons, ice packs and carrier costs on club and online orders (mostly billed on)	$100–$400
Harvest and bottling help, averaged over the year	$0–$1,000
Ads, festivals, wine-trail dues and the club emails	$200–$600
Point of sale, the wine club and email (included with Zarla)	$50–$200
Card fees (on about $12,000 of sales)	$321–$414

US ranges for a small operation; replace with your own figures as you learn them. Lines marked (included with Zarla) are what those tools cost separately — with Zarla they are part of one monthly plan.

Risks and honest downsides

Every winery plan should say out loud what can go wrong. For [Your business name], the real risks are:

- The money goes out in September and the first wine sells the next summer — the reds the summer after — so the first year is paid from savings, not sales
- The US wine market shrank in 2025 — sales fell to $74.3 billion and direct shipments dropped 15% — and a new label sells on the club and the tasting table, not on the shelf
- Harvest is six weeks of twelve-hour days, and a stuck fermentation or a fruit-fly summer can cost a tank
- Every permit has a lead time — the federal permit, the state license, the label approval — and a bottling date missed is a vintage sold late
- Direct shipping is a state-by-state maze, and one unlicensed shipment is a violation in two states
- The club is the business: a 150-member club taking two six-bottle shipments a year is 1,800 bottles — a third of the vintage — and a 20% churn is 360 bottles to resell

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Licenses, permits and insurance

What [Your business name] needs before it can legally trade in the US. Rules vary by state and city — confirm each item with your local licensing office and an accountant.

- TTB basic permit and bonded winery registration — In the US every winery holds a federal basic permit under the Federal Alcohol Administration Act and registers its premises as a bonded winery with the Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau — through Permits Online, with no fee. The wine bond is waived for a winery that owes no more than $50,000 of excise tax a year and pays it annually, quarterly or semimonthly; new applicants tick the exemption on the application. File early: the permit is the long pole, and no wine can be made until it is issued.
- Federal excise tax and TTB reports — In the US still wine up to 16% alcohol is taxed at $1.07 a wine gallon, and the Craft Beverage Modernization Act credit takes $1.00 off the first 30,000 gallons a domestic producer removes each year — 7¢ a gallon for a small winery — with smaller credits to 750,000 gallons. The tax is paid when wine leaves bond for sale, on TTB's return and operations-report calendar; a small winery files quarterly or annually.
- State winery license, excise and sales tax — In the US the state license is the cost: Washington's domestic winery license is $100 a year under 250,000 liters ($400 above), California's Type 02 winegrower is $155 a year up to 5,000 gallons ($215 for a duplicate at a second tasting room) and the Texas winery permit is $3,000 for two years. Each state adds its own excise tax, a seller's permit for the sales tax on bottles and tastings, and the city's zoning and occupancy sign-off for a tasting room. Confirm your state's schedule with its alcohol board.
- Label approval before bottling — In the US every label goes to TTB for a Certificate of Label Approval — free, online — before the wine is bottled for sale: brand, class, alcohol content, net contents, the sulfite declaration and the government warning in the required size. A varietal or appellation claim has to be true to the grapes' paperwork.
- FDA food facility registration — In the US a winery is a food facility: it registers with the Food and Drug Administration before it operates — free — and renews between October 1 and December 31 of every even-numbered year.
- Direct shipping to other states — In the US shipping wine to a consumer in another state takes that state's direct-shipper permit, its sales and excise tax registration and its reports — one state at a time — and the carriers require an alcohol shipping agreement and an adult signature on delivery. Start with your own state and the three or four that hold most of your list; a compliance service files the rest when the club grows. Confirm each state's rules before the first shipment.
- Business registration, an EIN and a seller's permit — In the US most wineries form an LLC with their state — $40 in Kentucky, $300 in Texas, and California charges an $800 yearly LLC tax on top of its filing fee — take a free EIN from the IRS and register for the state's sales tax before the first bottle sells. Confirm the entity choice with your accountant.

Milestones: the next 30 days

The first month's to-do list for [Your business name], in order:

- Decide the first vintage — the grapes, the tonnage, the style — and talk to three growers about contracts for the fall
- Decide between your own bonded premises and a custom crush or alternating proprietorship at an existing winery, and price both
- Form the LLC, take the free EIN, register with the FDA, and start the TTB application in Permits Online
- Apply for the state winery license and ask the city about zoning for production and a tasting area
- Find the unit — drains, water, power, a cold corner — and get the landlord's consent to a winery
- Price tanks, the crusher, the press and a dozen barrels, and book a mobile bottler for the spring
- Design the label and submit it to TTB for approval well before bottling
- Get liability, liquor and stock insurance quotes, and put the website live with the club sign-up and tasting bookings
- Start the email list now — every tasting, every market, every friend — the club launches with the first release

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Appendix: what a lender will ask for

This plan tells the story and shows the numbers. If you take it to a bank, expect to be asked for these documents as well:

- Two years of personal tax returns and a personal financial statement
- The TTB permit and state license, or the filed applications with their dates
- A month-by-month cash-flow projection from crush to the first sale, and the club's shipment calendar
- Grape contracts or letters from growers, and quotes for the tanks, barrels and bottling
- The lease or the custom-crush agreement, and proof of liability and liquor liability insurance
- Your credit report and any winemaking experience or coursework

Template: replace every [bracketed] line and every estimate with your own figures. Written with Zarla's free business plan generator — zarla.com/business-plan-generator writes it from five questions.