

# SYNDICATE WINE, LLC

## Oregon Benefit Report

August 2020

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# Background

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In the summer of 2018, a group of friends came together from different backgrounds, races, genders, sexual orientations, and socio-economic experiences. We discussed problems facing small businesses in our area, and expressed a common desire to make a difference.

We would often meet after a call-out for "Syndicate Unite", and a barbeque would ensue. We leaned on each other, challenged each other, and discussed matters affecting Human Resources, Operations, Finances, Sales, Marketing, Public Relations, and Training. Combined, this group has over 100 years of experience running and managing businesses, spanning five different sectors, and intersecting around the Wine Industry.

As this team grew together over the summer, common goals emerged. We believed in the principals of honesty, integrity, transparency, and fairness in business. We wanted to build something bigger than ourselves that would allow us to facilitate positive, honest change.

An idea was born to create a business space where owners and operators could come in confidence, without the watchful eyes of employees, to discuss areas of greatest opportunity and struggle. A business lounge by day, and a wine bar at night.

Thus, was born, Syndicate Wine Bar.

The following is a transparent account of our first year in operations. We will share with you our mission, principles of operation, successes, and areas of growth. We will cover areas of sustainability, community, social justice, and internal values all while maintaining required confidentiality in government regulated areas.

Life is about how you learn from the challenges presented in a desired journey.

- Angela Anderson  
Co-Owner, Syndicate Wine, LLC

# A Values Driven Company

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Syndicate Wine, LLC is not a traditional corporate entity. We are also registered as an Oregon Benefit Company.

As noted on the Oregon Secretary of State website, "An Oregon benefit company is a type of corporation or limited liability company that considers its impact on society and the environment in the business decision-making process, in addition to earning a profit."

The purpose of this structure is to protect a business that operates outside of traditional profit motive. For a privately-owned business in which all shareholders uphold these values, the Oregon Benefit Company designation is not a requirement. Instead, for us it serves as a public attestation of our intention to balance people, planet, and profit in all that we do. Some examples from this past year include:

## People

- Merchandise created by The Printory, a Hillsboro-based screen-printing company that champions the values of minorities, specifically refugees
- Contracting services provided by Pono Construction of Beaverton, OR, minority-owned and operated
- Photography services provided by Diego G Diaz Photography, Beaverton, OR, minority-owned and operated
- Choice of vendors that specifically match our values. Wines have been removed from inventory that we have found were contributing to anti-LGBTQIA or causes not matching our own beliefs.
- Percentage of proceeds from the 2019 releases of Syndicate Wines will be released to women or minority winemakers struggling to get started.
- Artwork displayed by Mary Ann Harmer, Benefit Corporations for Good, and local artist.
- Wine paddles supplied by a local small business in Beaverton, OR ([winepaddle.com](http://winepaddle.com))
- Promotion of small local labels that do not work with distributors or have tasting rooms, specifically Résolu Cellars of Beaverton, OR.
- Switched to "take-out food allowed" to better support community restaurants that were capped at 50% dining room capacity

## Planet

- Reclaimed wood used in bar tops, high top tables, planters, and chandeliers, specifically wine barrels from Oregon Wine Country.
- Refundable recycling given to homeless in our central area of Beaverton, OR.
- Solar lighting installed in all outside seating arrangements, and boundary stanchions.
- Corks recycled into art within our dining room.
- Recycled materials used in most, if not all, consumer packaging.

- Default to reusable dishes and stemware in lieu of plastic, one-use formats.

## Profit

- Below market pricing for bottled wine to better address customer needs and demand for high value wines at lower costs
- Owners have not taken a paycheck from Syndicate in over a year so that our employees and business had a greater chance of survival.
- Revenue streams are balanced and evaluated for profitability every month so that we understand how the business model is progressing. Our current revenue streams are wine, food, beer, non-alcoholic, wine club, and web design.
- We moved Web Design over to Syndicate Consultants from Canvas Host in June 2020 to better align our business consulting model and full vision of Syndicate.
- Year over year we have seen a 26% growth overall, coming back from a 75% reduction in monthly revenue during the COVID months.

## 2019 Achievements & Accomplishments

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### Structures in Place

In February 2019, we registered our business as Syndicate Wine, LLC, dba Syndicate Wine Bar. From the start, we certified as an Oregon Benefit Company to publicly declare our commitment to balancing people, planet, and profit. We knew we wanted to work with Tom Hering and Mary Anne Harmer of Benefit Corporations for Good, as they would hold us accountable in ways B Lab (which oversees B Corporations, through which our other company had been credentialed since 2010), Green America, or other sustainability certifiers could not. If we were going down this road, we wanted to make sure our advisors included BCFG, their observations, advice, and guidance.

### Site Selection

We diligently sought a location starting in the fall of 2019, well before we registered as a business. We did not want to commit to anything until a site was possible; Not just any location would do. It needed to have a street presence, be in or around other restaurants, and be easy to find. We looked at five different properties with our agent. With assistance from the City of Beaverton, we first looked at the Bank of Beaverton (also known as the Arthur Murray Building). We worked with our advisors to put together a plan to renovate this building for mixed use: A wine bar, a winery with storage, an office, and a datacenter for the relocation of our other company. After walking through the building and extensive discussion, we found that as a designated historical building, we were estimating

\$1,000,000+ in renovations with the City availability of grant funds paying for close to \$350,000. Then we would need to add on the extra expense of tenant improvements. The dollar figure kept rising. The economic return could not be substantiated.

March and April 2019 were a huge struggle for us as a company and as individuals. We found one location, but after meeting with the landlord received comments like, "I don't see this model being successful," or my favorite, "With your experience, I don't see this business turning a profit." That was so funny. David has over 20 years-experience owning and operating a business in all facets. I have over 20 years in management with two degrees, including an MBA. Though we had never run a business co-working space or wine bar, we were currently working major contracts in business consulting and web development for wineries and restaurants. We had over five years in managing networking groups supporting and educating small businesses in sustainability, communication, and leadership, as well. We decided to move on, looking for a better match. That site faces our current location, and after watching how long it took to be fully renovated, we realized we dodged a bullet by not working with that developer.

We walked through three more spaces, imagining how we could bring our vision to life and still be a focal point as the gateway to Wine Country. Finally, the City emailed us about a site that was below our square footage requirement, but which had all the desired requests. We walked by our First Street property and wow; I was not impressed. David started thinking and dreaming immediately. We decided to walk a few of our advisors by for added consult, having them look through the windows and image the vision David had in his mind. Things started coming to life. Next step, signing a lease and securing funding.

We met with the landlord next and hammered out a lease for five years, to which we had no doubts we could commit. We also discussed the potential of more square footage if our business were to grow within those years. Our team started to work on the next step: finding an architect and contractor to do the work.



May 2019, we officially signed the lease and received the keys to our building. That night, our team gathered at 12620 Southwest 1<sup>st</sup> Street, though it was completely raw, to



celebrate with a glass of champagne. Everyone had a chance to sit back and visualize what they saw the space looking like in a full year. We shared ideas, energies, thoughts, and emotions. We shared our goals for building community, sharing great wines, and meeting new people. It was the beginning of a huge leap for some of us, uncharted territory for others, and a dream come true for David and me.

## Funding Struggles

Throughout May 2019, we worked diligently to secure funding for this new venture. Traditional banks turned us down because Syndicate would have been our first location. They told us that after we were in business for 2 years, they could look at funding options or refinance any private loans we may have secured. We then started looking at non-traditional funding sources aimed at women and minorities. Since we are 99% women-owned, we felt this would be a great opportunity to tap into some of these programs. Again, door after door was closed in traditional and non-traditional funding.

We then started looking at other sources of income. We knew we needed about \$75,000 for the total build-out. We applied for the Tenant Improvement Grant with the City of Beaverton. With city funding, landlord funding, and a small amount from a credit union, we were able to secure half of what we needed. After some creativity, we decided to self-fund the rest. It would be a stretch and not easy, but we had another company that was doing well, with substantial gains in web development and business consulting contracts.

## Establishing Our Wine Brand



On its own, Syndicate could become successful as a wine bar. Our long-term vision had (and still has) so much more planned for it. We originally adopted the name, Syndicate Wine, to encompass all of our planned and unrealized visions.

As part of this, we sought private winemakers that could produce for us wines representative of our spirit, ethics, and standards. This step saw us reaching out to local wineries and winemakers to see if there was reciprocal interest.

In our first iteration, we were able to release three private labels:

- Syndicate 2018 Willamette Valley Rosé of Pinot Noir (25 cases, Ancient Cellars, Dundee)
- Syndicate 2015 Willamette Valley Pinot Noir (50 cases, Torii Mor, Dundee)
- Syndicate 2014 Rogue Valley Cabernet Sauvignon (40 cases, Ancient Cellars)

For 2020, we again partnered with these same producers for the following labels:

- Syndicate 2019 Willamette Valley Pinot Gris (35 cases, Ancient Cellars)
- Syndicate 2019 Willamette Valley Rosé of Pinot Noir (50 cases, Ancient Cellars)
- Syndicate 2017 Willamette Valley Pinot Noir (75 cases, Torii Mor)

The process of collaborating on private label wines is challenging in many ways. The end results, however, made the effort more than worth it.

## 2019 Beaverton Wine Walk



Photo credit: Diego G Diaz Photography

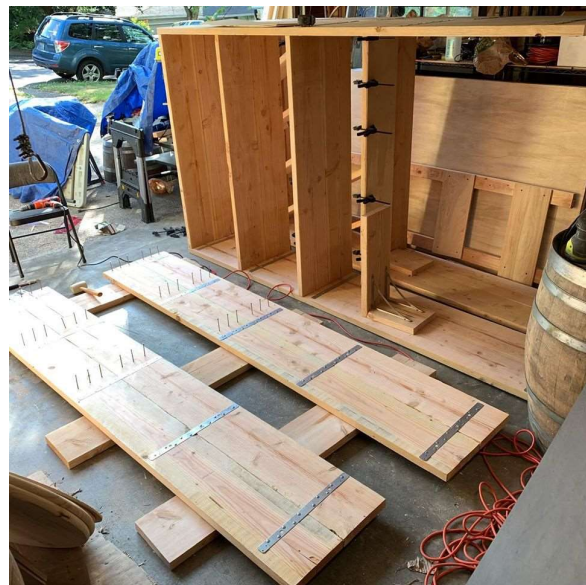


We held our first public event on May 19, 2019, as part of the Beaverton Wine Walk. We were one of ten locations in Old Town Beaverton and saw close to 400 customers come through our doors. Though rough and minimally outfitted, we got a taste of our community's thirst for wine, and saw what the future could hold. This helped us tremendously at a time of great uncertainty with funding and construction challenges.

## General Contractor

Next up, we needed a contractor to build out the space. We wanted to select a team that had similar values as our own, preferably owned by a woman or minority, and was a small, local company. We solicited the recommendation from another restaurant on our street. After one meeting and several calls, we realized this wasn't the best option and wouldn't work due to lack of communication and duplicit intent on the part of the referring business.

A friend suggested a company that her son worked for: Pono Construction NW. We called immediately. Kawai Bennet and Michael Harrison immediately saw our vision, understood our creativity and drive, and wanted to be part of this project. Never once did they doubt the vision or our direction, instead added their own flare and expertise. These two men and their team fit everything we needed in a contracting team, as well as had the know-how to help us jump through more city planning red tape. They become family immediately due to the fact that many of our friends were Hawaiian, as was Kawai. We spoke frequently of the Ohana spirit and the love of Hawaiian culture shared with us through our social circle. Now for the tough job... the work.



As Kawai and Michael diligently labored away at the shop on structural issues (plumbing, electrical, structural redesign), David would work for hours at home on the different elements of the bar including but not limited to bar tops, wine wall, seating, and lighting, many of which he built himself. David was purposeful in his designs making sure we brought forth natural, reclaimed wood and recycled wine barrels into our elements.



## Summer Speakeasy Sessions



We held several weekend “speakeasy” tastings throughout the summer, to offer the community a preview of what was to come. We rapidly built a following of supporters, who looked forward to peeking indoors at the work in progress, when our builders were not there.

## Soft Open

On July 19, 2019, Syndicate Wine Bar officially opened our doors for business. Though at the time we were ready for customers, our space was still partially under construction. The back of the bar wasn't even finished. Customers seemed to not notice. At the time, sales were through the roof for not only our Syndicate brand wines, but also the limited wines we had in stock.

## Opening Weekend

From there on, we continued to grow week after week until the final day of construction and our official Opening Weekend, August 23, 2019. With 24 seats inside and 10 additional seats outside, our tables were filled in the dinner hours and on weekends. Our staff of three, part-time employees, as well as the two owners were able to balance the needs of the customers while also telling the story of Syndicate, our mission and vision for the future.

One of the reasons we felt Opening Weekend was a huge success, was our marketing. We purchased and bottled three, 5-liter bottles of our signature Syndicate Wines 2015 Pinot Noir. Every customer that came in that weekend was invited to sign the bottle with a silver pen with the promise that they would receive a free glass of wine at our one-year anniversary (which would have been today, August 23, 2020 – so we held the fun this past Friday and Saturday!). We also brought in music from a local artist that has played for us at several events. With Josh Makosky, the bottle signing, and special food and wine specials, our

dining room was steadily filled to capacity with many customers wanting to stay all night, or exchanging numbers with new friends they had met at a neighboring table.

What happened that weekend was beyond our wildest dreams. We saw a community manifest right before our eyes. A couple celebrated their anniversary. Another customer noticed and wanted to pay for part of that bill anonymously. Before long, the story spread, and a few other customers paid a bit more. When the couple went to cash out, we had the pleasure of telling them that their bill had been paid by anonymous donors throughout the dining room all night. No amount due. Just enjoy each other.

## Beaverton Restaurant Week

In September 2019, we participated in Beaverton Restaurant Week, which brought even more publicity and brand recognition. Restaurant Week exceeded our Opening Weekend numbers and grew through the two-week process.

We were part of a program showcasing more than 80 Beaverton-area restaurants, though we had only been in business for two months. This was a huge success, as foot traffic had a steady increase, and we were able to share our Oregon Benefit Company mission and vision. We recognize that there are only two other Oregon Benefit Companies in our area, operating with the transparent promise of balancing people, planet, and profit.

## Fall 2019 Events

In late October, we participated in two Beaverton Downtown Association events: Safe Halloween, and Old Town Uncorked. Our staff did an amazing job adjusting in the moment to unforeseen numbers of new customers and participation. We took every event as an opportunity to share the Syndicate story and grow our network.



We were invited to pour wine for Denny Doyle, Beaverton's Mayor, at the kickoff for his re-election campaign. The City was one of our first champions, acknowledging interest and need for a local wine bar. We were honored to attend.



Our friends who run the Gorgeous Series of running relays, held a fun Saturday run in November from Syndicate. It was a busy Saturday and many mimosas were poured!

## Private Event Space Rental

After much deliberation, we decided to roll out an opportunity for Private Event reservations in our space. We talked about pricing, perks, logistics and staffing. As we had with many other big rollouts, we found that multiple ideas conflicted to cause huge disagreements. David and I decided to handle these events directly for the time being, as we solidified the numbers of staffing and pricing. With no payroll employees for these events, we found that we could price these events closer to customer expectations, increasing our reservation rate, opportunities, and budget recognition of our guests.

In November 2019 we received a request to host a private engagement. Our team worked together with the customer to design and create a perfect vision and surprise for his future fiancé. We added many special gifts for the couple and family so that they could remember this day forever. A year later, we still hear from this couple as they are now preparing to wed in the coming weeks. Love was in the air!



In December 2019, we began hosting holiday and company parties. Every single week, we had a different group celebrate and come together through wine and great food. We created a buffet-style line up encompassing locally sourced fruits and vegetables, meats and cheeses, and hummus from our neighboring Mediterranean restaurant, as well as breads, crackers, and desserts. Many times, we would reach out to our friends at the local bakery to cook up something special for the event. Our team not only loved working on these events, but also meeting everyone and hearing the stories of what brought them all together. We look forward to many more in 2020, if mandates permit.



## Areas of Opportunity

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### Business Lounge

A few areas we struggled with in 2019 came down to an issue with our mission and vision. We learned through the year that our vision for what Syndicate would become was too broad. At the time of inception, we envisioned a business lounge by day and a wine bar at night. As the wine bar grew, our understanding of the needs for a business lounge by day changed. We analyzed cost versus return, staffing needs, fellow business needs as well as the current landscaping in the business cooperative business model. What we found is that as an industry, those invested in business co-working were struggling, with some shutting down completely. Revenue streams were drying up as those needing spaces were asking for more and more amenities. After talking with several of our friends in this industry, as well as our own math, we decided this was not a venture we wanted to pursue for Syndicate Wine. It would require more hours and labor cost than revenue would substantiate, making this business line a complete loss.



Our employees also were not 100% percent on board as their backgrounds, at the time, were primarily in the service industry. The business consulting responsibilities were primary coming from the two owners and our advisors, who were currently running their own separate businesses. To make this work, David and I would have to fully staff these hours on our own. The business lounge model was then tabled.

## Restaurant Expectations

At the beginning of August 2019, Syndicate Wine Bar rolled out a food menu that showcased fresh local fruits, vegetables, cheeses, meats, and fresh bread. This was a huge hit. We played around with pricing versus cost of goods so that we could present the highest quality product but stay within industry standards. The menu was a great idea. Customers gave us stellar reviews on social media and as table-side delivery. The food blended well with the ever-growing wine list, cultivated by David. Food was a staple to our business model from the beginning and was on our original submission to the Oregon Liquor Control Commission. At the time of application, we were told by the OLCC that we were not required to sell food since we were only providing beer, wine, and non-alcoholic options. We added food to be more thorough and responsible as an alcohol establishment.

We hired a cook to design our menu, keep it fresh, and do our weekly shopping. Weekly shopping turned into daily shopping and our food menu became a huge item of disagreement. Issues grew with our staff, and arguments increased as we found ourselves leaving our central mission and vision for Syndicate and becoming too much of a restaurant. We continued to have staffing issues surrounding portion sizes, pricing, responsibilities, and financial accountability, as well as creative freedoms.

In January 2020, we simplified the menu to decrease expenses that our previous kitchen staff had not disclosed. As my forte is in finance, I was able to increase our food revenue streams in one short month by a few select decisions that did not compromise quality. We limited our menu to five items instead of eight. We made simpler dishes that still met the needs of the food-wine pairings. Everything had come into focus. And then, Syndicate came to a screeching halt in the Spring of 2020, as our business now had a new challenge: COVID-19.

## COVID-19 And Our Evolution

After almost a year, David and I were able to break away from Syndicate for a few days in March 2020, and at the encouragement of our advisors who saw that we ourselves were out of balance. Our staff did a wonderful job keeping the Syndicate model consistent and flowing the weekend of March 14, 2020. Did we know that this would be the last weekend we would see our current model? Never.

While on vacation, news grew of the health pandemic now known as COVID-19. We were in constant communication with our team from our hotel room in San Diego, CA, providing them leadership and insight if Oregon followed California in full shut down. First it hit California, as we were now locked into our hotel with only take-out available. Parks,

beaches, and local vacation spots all shut down thereafter. As we anxiously watched the news and messaged our team, we had to decide as a business how to proceed.

Two days after California issued a stay-at-home order, Oregon followed suit. This was the exact date of our return flight. Not only were we leaving a state experiencing the unknown, but our home state was changing before our eyes. As we were departing, we instructed our team to close the shop, sealing and storing anything like we were closing down permanently. They cleaned and scoured every corner, stacked chairs, and tossed food that would spoil before our return. Our team knew that upon our return, all employees would be put on a leave of absence. None of us knew what to expect in the coming days, weeks, or months. No one had seen or been through a health crisis like this and our world collectively was in a state of instability.

Our backgrounds in web development helped us see a path forward. Now was the time to use this to our advantage. From our phones, we logged into our security cameras and looked at the shop after hours. We started brainstorming what we would need to change to stay viable and relevant in an ever-changing landscape of hospitality. We scanned our wine wall, a central focal point at Syndicate Wine Bar. How can we introduce wines to the public if the public was on a stay-at-home order from the State Governor? How can we give our customers the experience they grew to love at Syndicate while staying at home? How can we continue our growth as a community when we were no longer able to get out and enjoy each other's company?

### *First Step: Selling Wine*

As we had been delivered take-out food and wine from restaurants in San Diego, so did we see the potential to convert our operations to online-only, with curbside pickup, or even local delivery. We'd of course need to check OLCC regulations, but we had a feeling our licensing would permit such a thing.

David and I spent the last 24 hours in San Diego working side-by-side from our laptops to add over 200 products to our website, turning Syndicate Wine Bar into an online bottle shop. If our customers could not get out, we were going to bring our products to them virtually. David vigorously started working on elaborate tasting notes so that customers could experience a wine through words, depicting aromas and flavors.

Once we came home, we knew we had to come up with a completely new business plan, one that we never imagined would happen, nor could we plan for. We were in uncharted territory and could not even rely on our professional network of experienced restaurant owners for advice. We were all adjusting at the same exact time.



Syndicate Wine Bar became an online bottle shop the day Oregon went into shut down, mid-March 2020. We decided to offer free deliveries in and around Beaverton, as well as to our friends and family outside the area. We started making a weekly run for wine deliveries in Marion and Yamhill counties once a week, all while being fully masked and gloved up. We instituted a touch-less purchasing model, where a customer could place an order online, then call us for payment and arrange for pick-up or delivery. We relocated a POS terminal to our house and switched our phone so it would ring at the shop as well as our home.

I was now taking and processing orders from my home office, while David would run down to the shop, sterilizing and gathering wine, packaging, and delivering each order. This made sense. We adjusted. We adapted.

### *Second Step: Public Programs*

Through this new model, we were able to capture sales, though not nearly as many as before, but enough to break even on wine purchases. We were down 75% from our original model, but without payroll and many other operational expenses, we were able to manage. Our landlord also gave us a rent reduction for two months as well.

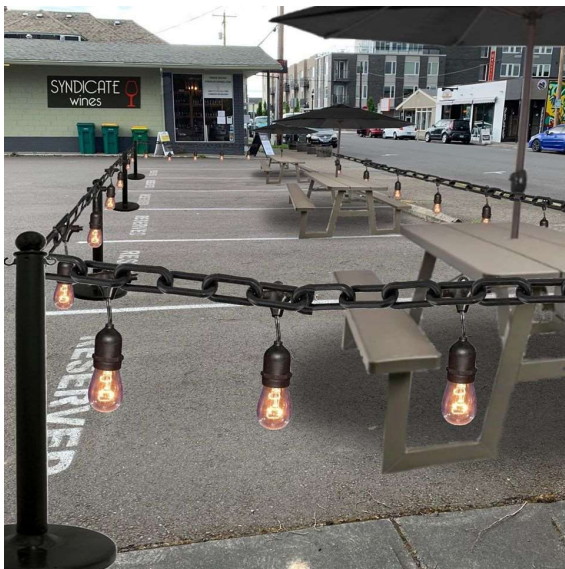
At this point, we started looking into State and Federal programs assisting small businesses during this crisis. One from the City of Beaverton gave us a full month's rent. One from the Small Business Administration gave us a grant for \$1,000 per employee. We just kept looking and applying for others.

Then news came out that the federal government was discussing a program called the Payroll Protection Program. This program would grant a low interest loan to a small business at 2.5 times their monthly payroll. After considerable research and application, we discussed the idea of taking on debt when we did not know how we would pay for it. Any responsible borrower should educate themselves before taking out a loan without means for repayment. We did not want to take out more debt and pushed back against our banker numerous times. We were too new, less than a year old and we were still paying off debt from our build out.

As the days began increasing with no solution in sight that our old business model would return, we started brainstorming ideas, if and when, the money ran out or our State didn't reopen in a week or two. Days turned into weeks. Weeks turned into months. Months turned into a full quarter of doors closed to public seating.

From my background in finance, everything I read about the Payroll Protection Program showed flaws. One of the basic requirements was the ability to apply for forgiveness if you can hire back your staff. With Syndicate Wine Bar closed due to mandates, there was no way to hire anyone back for. We still did not have in-person customers. Everything was still online through our e-commerce delivery service. I just could not justify bringing back staff members when there was nothing to do but clean. Our amazing staff would be under-utilized.

Then the landscape changed again. In the middle of May 2020, Washington County was approved for Phase 1 opening on June 1, 2020. It was a fast scramble to figure out how we could extend our outside footprint. OLCC revisions were filed. Landlord and fellow tenants gave us permission to extend into our parking lot in the evening hours, with the understanding that we would break down all tables and boundaries every night. David went back to work designing a concept. My finance brain started looking at the numbers. How could we afford this with a 75% reduction in our main revenue stream?



Phase 1 Re-Open: The Vision



Phase 1 Re-Open: The Reality

Customers began emailing us. Our advisory committee suggested that we create a sponsorship program that would allow community support to bring us back. Thus, the Sponsor a Table Program was built. Overnight we added a page to our website and links for anyone interested to contribute to this outside vision. David had masterfully created an outside vision so our customers could see the idea. And then, magic happened:

Within 24 hours we had received donations for about half of the funds needed for the new parking lot seating.



The middle of June 2020, the City of Beaverton rolled out the Open-Air Recovery Program to allow restaurants to expand into street parking spots. With the approval from our landlord and co-tenants, we were able to double our outside seating footprint once again. We revised our designs and updated our website to include more opportunities for sponsorship.

Struggles and challenges always happen, and this was no different. Getting through different levels of red tape in the Open-Air Seating program was a struggle. We were asked to supply information that other applicants were not. We were sent multiple emails a day clarifying our design, our elements, our structures, and our seating selections.

Looking back, I am glad we fought for and through these challenges to open seating for 54 total customers outside, because with Phase 1 we were limited to just 10 seated customers inside. That was not going to balance out in the end.

### *Third Step: Food Service*

After a year in business, the stresses coming from the kitchen, and COVID-19, we felt as a business it was time to discontinue food operations in lieu of a different model. The margins were not worth the increased stress. COVID-19 was the final deciding factor.

We started devising a plan that would increase food sales for the neighboring restaurants who served take-out all while decreasing our cumbersome kitchen issues: OLCC said in the beginning, that our licensing did not require us to provide food. Since there are eight restaurants in a one- to two-block vicinity, what better way to compliment these exquisite talents than to have a space that allows outside food, while also pairing wines in a socially distanced space?



Arturo, delivering food from Top Burmese



Take-out food pairs well with our wines!

Never did we realize how this major change in our operations would also fulfill our desire to create a community space inclusive for all, decrease our internal operation issues, and create a necessary reprieve for customers feeling anxiety and stress. Sometimes struggles do turn into something much more beautiful than we could imagine.

## Personal Health and Balance

A big area of struggle for David and I, is personal balance. We have been incredibly careful with our employees at both companies to ensure all have a minimum of two days off each week, but we never made sure we followed suit. As soon as we committed to the Syndicate journey, we effectively began working two full-time jobs. We were managing the day to day operations of our primary business, but spending every other waking hour building Syndicate Wine Bar, seven days a week.

There were many nights during the build-out phase that David would be working in the garage on new elements, trying to keep up with the contractors back at the bar. Up to and including Soft-Open, we found that sleep would be down to a couple hours each night. From July to August 2019, as small details were finished at the wine bar, sleep increased, but to only four to six hours. We still worked day and night.

## Wine Bar Hours

One thing we struggled with the first year, was appropriate hours of operation. We had a clear idea through our business plan to extend weekend hours, to draw interest from the Beaverton Farmer's Market. We began with store hours of Monday through Thursday, 4-9pm, Friday 4-10pm, Saturday 11am-10pm, and Sunday, 11am-9pm. The hours were all over the place. Most Saturdays and Sundays would result in two to four customers before 4pm. We were never sure, so we were there with our team, which resulted in overstaffing, all just waiting. We ran this schedule throughout the Summer of 2019. Payroll costs were high, but we felt this was best of the business. In the end, the hours never generated the revenue we were desiring and by Fall we re-evaluated the plan.

Through the Fall of 2019, we decided that closing one day each week would be more financially viable, since Mondays and Tuesdays brought in little revenue during a four-hour shift. This did not match our metrics for daily break-even expenses. We decided that closing Tuesday, leaving this day for deep cleaning or Private Event reservations would be ideal.

During this same time, I began getting sick, with severe nerve and neurological issues. I had to pull back and reduce hours on my feet and in the shop. I had to limit my duties for the company to home-based finance and operations. David started covering more shifts. Still, we worked both companies all while taking care of our employees. Our certifiers had strong conversations with us about personal balance and health needs. It was a hard conversation to hear but it needed to be said. We kept pushing through with a few changes. I would work less active floor hours (down to one shift a week) as well as take on the kitchen management with the daily duties.

In January 2020, we decided to make more decisions with our other company that would allow us more time at Syndicate and less at the other business: David was able to delegate most of his duties; I was still working there, three to four days a week.

By March 2020, I was excited because Syndicate finally had an amazing set of staff. They acquired new wine and food training once a month, led by David. This pool included employees on temporary status that had been with us from the very beginning. They now had great relationships with each other and amazing teamwork. We were ready to confidently leave on vacation.

I was also starting to feel better. Spasms were decreasing. Neurological issues were reducing. Things were getting better. We confidently left on vacation.

### *COVID-19 Adaptations*

COVID-19 snagged us again by making us focus on health over everything. As a high-risk person, we now started learning extremely fast what we could and could not do. Masks all the time. Gloves required. We would sterilize every bottle with a bleach solution. As a force of nature, COVID made us stop. It made us rest. It made us reduce stress because business dropped 75%. All of our employees were now on leave. We would have to process one or two orders a day, of which I could process at home and David could drive around for delivery. Balance was finally being achieved... in the middle of a pandemic.

We have adapted and evolved with the changing times, and as mandates have changed every few weeks.

With the blessing of a warm Oregon Summer, we were able to create a safe, outdoor, and socially-distanced space. Through the Open Air Recovery Program, the City granted us three parking spaces along 1<sup>st</sup> Street. This enabled us to add to our lot seating, with "garden" picnic tables in one parking space, and "cabanas" with Adirondack chairs and beach umbrellas in the other two parking spaces.

The overwhelming customer response to these adaptations has brought us business levels on par with this time last year, or even better, despite no kitchen, pandemic rules, and high anxieties. Our staff have continued to step up, evolving our organization's dynamic and energy, and the results are continued balance for us all.

## 2020 Goals

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In the middle of a pandemic, it can be hard to see a way through. For us, setting goals, dreaming of a bright future, and challenging ourselves to continue growing aren't just a way through: They are a matter of survival.

Goals give purpose. Purpose creates will. Will builds strength. And, strength endures.

If there is one thing that 2020 has shown us, it is the resilience and strength, not only of ourselves and our team, but that of the community of which we are part. Friends, family members, staff, City leaders... they have all rallied in various ways to support us through some dark hours.

Syndicate was founded from a desire to create real, lasting community; To break bread together, and share in a bottle of wine. While it's still too early to know what the next 12 months may bring, we have seen what is possible when genuine people come together for a common cause. That is, after all, the definition of the word, "syndicate".

- Angela and David Anderson, Founders and Co-Owners

