

Windsor Vineyards

Site Review

The goal of a site review is to analyze the current state of your website from a design, usability, and SEO standpoint and come up with some key takeaways that can be used to implement better strategies at addressing any issues related to those key areas.

User Experience & Design

A great user experience is key to gaining a user's trust and loyalty... and the sale.

We reviewed the Windsor Vineyards website and noted some important insights and recommendations to improve the design and user experience.

Top Findings

- Design Lacks Emotion / Contrast
- UX Best Practices Not In Use
- Checkout Process Cumbersome
- Design Inconsistency
- Homepage Too Complex
- Label maker Needs Revamp

The screenshot shows the Windsor Vineyards website interface with several annotations:

- Navigation:** (800) 289-9463 CONTACT, LOG IN / REGISTER (2)
- Search:** Search Wine
- Logo:** WINDSOR VINEYARDS
- Shipping:** 1¢ SHIPPING ON 12+ BOTTLES* See shipping info »
- Header:** WINES ▾ WINE GIFTS ▾ CUSTOM WINE LABELS ▾ BUSINESS GIFTS WINE CLUB SIGN UP & SAVE 15% »
- Left Sidebar:**
 - RED WINES (46px)
 - Cabernet Sauvignon (need more contrast for selected items)
 - Merlot
 - Pinot Noir
 - Syrah & Petite Sirah
 - Zinfandel
 - Sangiovese
 - Carignane
 - Red Blends
 - WHITE WINES (41px)
 - SPARKLING & DESSERT WINES
 - ASSORTMENTS
 - AWARD WINNERS
 - BEST SELLERS
- Main Content:**
 - CABERNET SAUVIGNON** (88px)
 - KING OF THE RED GRAPES
 - Known for its character, structure, and rich fruit flavors, Cabernet Sauvignon is a favorite of many and for good reason.
 - Image not vertically aligned with text
 - Product Grid:
 - #11698: 2014 CABERNET SAUVIGNON Napa Valley, Platinum Series. Price: \$32.00. Button: 2 ADD TO CART.
 - #14379: 2015 CABERNET SAUVIGNON California. Price: \$14.00. Button: 2 ADD TO CART. Annotation: dropdown height inconsistent with button
 - #14221: 2014 CABERNET SAUVIGNON North Coast, Private Reserve. Price: \$20.00. Button: 2 ADD TO CART.
 - #10643: 2014 CABERNET SAUVIGNON Alexander Valley, Platinum Series. Price: \$30.00. Button: 2 ADD TO CART.
 - #10969: 2013 CABERNET SAUVIGNON North Coast, Private Reserve, 1.5L. Price: \$42.00. Button: 1 ADD TO CART.
 - #14805: 2015 CABERNET SAUVIGNON California, 12 Pack, 375ml. Price: \$108.00. Button: 1 ADD TO CART. Annotation: too little horizontal spacing
- Bottom Section:**
 - PERSONALIZED WINE LABELS (71px)
 - complimentary with every order
 - The king of red grapes, Cabernet Sauvignon is known for its character and diversity. Cabernet is a favorite of many and for good reason, with a range of flavors and styles, you're sure to find a Cab that pleases your palate. Add a unique personalized wine label for a memorable wine country gift.

Design Insights

We try not to judge a design based on how it looks or the images used or layout style. Instead, we look at how it makes us feel, is the structure of the design uniform, and is it intuitive for the user when trying to make decisions. Here are some insights we gleaned from our review.

Color and Contrast

Contrast, lines, and white space should be used to guide users through the site. Currently, there is very little contrast in colors to guide the user's eyes towards the main areas of a page you want them to focus on.

Design Inconsistency

We try to look past a theme or design of a website and focus on design patterns and what best practices to use. The current design has some inconsistencies with the look of buttons – some are square and others have rounded edges.

Spacing and white space are another area that should have some uniform standards. Looking at the marked up screenshot above, you see vertical spacing of elements and white space. A more unified spacing standard between various elements and ensuring that items are vertically aligned will ease any strain on the user's eyes and make the layout cleaner. There are also some issues with padding between image and text.

Homepage Too Complex

The homepage of your site should be easy for users to scan and quickly grasp what you offer and why they should purchase from you. The hero graphic on the homepage invites you to purchase new releases but right below that is an even larger graphic competing for attention. We would recommend simplifying the homepage to focus your message around two or three product offerings. Simplifying the homepage would also reduce the overall size of the page, which would result in a faster page load. Currently the homepage is around 2MB and loads in about 4 seconds according to our tests.

Element Positioning Distracting

The search box in the header seems to take up a lot of space. Is this size justified based on user interactions? We would recommend finding a way to reduce the visibility of this element unless it can be justified. We would also recommend testing some new layouts for the header to create a more balanced look.

Header UX Best Practices

Modern design patterns for the header recommend that the header is still visible as the user scrolls. We recommend changing the existing header so that it is 'sticky' on scroll. The Cart link currently takes you to the shopping cart page. We would recommend that users be able to see their cart without having to go to a separate page.

Customer login should be quick and easy and not take away from the user's shopping experience. Currently, the login/register interaction requires you to go to a new page. A better design pattern is to use a modal (popup) or a dropdown to let the user quickly login and keep shopping. If the user needs to register instead, then you can have a separate page for creating an account.

Another useful best practice is to take advantage of the Login with Facebook API forms. These smaller interactions are particularly helpful for mobile users, who do not like filling out signups and increased conversions.

Recommendations for header:

- Make header sticky so that it is visible when scrolling down the page
- Use AJAX or similar technology for viewing cart instead of redirect
- Use AJAX or modal for customer login
- Investigate adding Facebook login

Navigation UX Best Practices

User must click to enable the dropdown navigation in desktop view. This is a bad usability pattern as it hides the contents of the dropdown and adds an additional click. Another problem area is the size of the dropdowns. Whenever possible, try to reduce the amount of navigation elements.

We also noticed that for many of the larger top nav items, the interior side nav does not match what a user sees in the dropdown. This could confuse users. There is also little indication of what section they are in.

Recommendations for navigation:

- Have dropdown display on hover instead of click (desktop view)
- Reduce and possibly combine items in your dropdown navigation. As an example, the dropdown for custom labels display links to labels for New Years, Christmas, Thanksgiving, etc. that are completely unnecessary and only serve to confuse the users
- Create main landing pages for each top navigation element – wines, wine gifts, etc.

Checkout UX Best Practices

The checkout process should be simple, straightforward and fast. Users should be able to see where they are in the checkout process and what steps are left.

Checkout on mobile devices require additional insights. Typing and text input on mobile devices are a UX challenge; typing tends to be slower than they are on desktops. Touch screens also require the need for on-screen keyboards that take up half of the usable real estate. Therefore, you should keep text input to a minimum on mobile devices.

Recommendations for desktop/laptop users:

- Use field validation instead of form validation (validate input immediately)

- Make fields like address and email smaller

Recommendations for improving the checkout experience on mobile devices:

- Break up the checkout process into multiple steps rather than a long page
- Use a progress indicator
- Use field validation vs form validation (validate input immediately)
- Default to numeric keyboard for zip codes and telephone numbers

Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

A search friendly website is helpful in reducing your paid search budgets.

Google continues to adjust their algorithm and adjust their criteria for search rankings. While much has changed over the last few years, content is still king when it comes to ranking high regardless of what changes Google may make to their search algorithm.

Top Findings from Moz

- Organic search traffic was down 14% on Google (April 2017)
- Search visibility is down 22% since February 15
- Need more targeted keyword heavy content
- Page title for homepage and label pages should be reviewed
- H1 and H2 tags should be reviewed and refined (H1 most important on-page tag)
- Keywords need to be refined
- Traffic from social media is minimal

SEO Best Practices (items in red need immediate attention from Windsor Vineyards)

- **All pages on website should use HTTPS instead of HTTP.** Google heavily prefers secure sites.
- Use keywords in the URL of page
- Pages should load quickly; 3 seconds or faster is recommended.
- **Website should have a sitemap.xml file for Google to parse**
- **Website should have a robots.txt file to limit what Google/search engine can index**
- Compress images and use appropriate image format. Will help load times and experience.
- **Limit server calls; try to reduce amount of js/css called by combining files**
- **Compress js/css by taking out whitespace**
- Use alt tags on images for accessibility. Basic best practices.
- Page titles should contain main keywords FIRST, then brand text (less than 60 characters)

- Description should be 55-160 characters and be understandable/readable
- H1, H2...H6 tags should contain the primary keywords targeted
- Internal text links should contain keyword phrases
- Content should contain primary and secondary keywords throughout the page but flow 'conversationally'. Keywords should not be just stuffed in. Can be done significantly on product level and carefully on category level.
- Content should be at least 50 words and at least 300 characters in length; research shows that content heavy pages rank much higher in general
- Try to answer questions with your content. This is helpful for AI assistants like Alexa, Google Now, and Siri.
- Limit popups/subscription modals on mobile devices (Google now penalizes for this on mobile sites – the small newsletter mobile popup should be ok though). All pop-ups need to be able to closed out with an X in upper right for Google.

Recommendations for SEO

- Address items in red under SEO Best Practices above (also see Next Steps at end)
- For keywords, look at adding additional keywords around events like bachelorette parties, birthdays, graduations, and anniversaries
- Create a social media plan and calendar to improve social media engagement
- Review number of server request for top pages and find ways to lower
- Review overall page size for top pages and try to reduce the size with asset compression (images, javascript, css)
- Create landing pages around top keywords and test results
- Refine copy to make it more conversational and improve keyword density
- Move category copy from bottom of page to the top if possible (Google gives more relevance to copy that is higher on the page)
- Display short product detail copy on the category pages

Social Media Insights

Social media is an important tool for creating an image of your brand, to advertise special promotions, and tell your story. We've added some brief insights on your usage of these social media platforms and recommendations.

Twitter

Windsor Vineyards has just over 3000 followers. Currently, Windsor has tweeted 1,285 times but only have 297 likes and even fewer retweets. The last tweet was sent on February 18th. We would recommend tweeting at least once per day. There should be a mix of branded tweets, organic tweets based on the current trending topics and some tweets that show your brand as an authority on a subject.

Facebook

Windsor Vineyards has a very active Facebook compared to Twitter. Several posts have well over 100 likes and dozens of shares. This is the type engagement you should strive for. We

did notice that most of the recent posts are only about the Winepology promotion. Windsor Vineyards should work to create more variety in their posts. Share related news or posts about various wine topics you believe your audience would enjoy. Use contests and light hearted fun to increase engagement further. Create a newsletter signup form that connects to your existing newsletter database.

Instagram

Windsor Vineyards currently has an Instagram account with 4,279 followers. Several of the Instagram posts I reviewed had several hundred likes and many comments. However, it appears that Windsor Vineyards is not actively engaging with followers as I saw several questions posted that were unanswered. We recommend that Windsor Vineyards engage with customers and try to answer any question or comment a follower may have. These small interactions can make a huge difference to a follower and add a level of sincerity. Another recommendation we have is to be sure to use appropriate hash tags that will drive even more engagement.

Recommendations:

- Create a social media plan and schedule
- Use a service like Hootsuite to automate social media posting and monitoring
- Use trending topics and pop culture to increase followers and engagement
- Tweets, posts and Instagram images should not focus on just one promotion. Variety and relevance are keys to engagement
- Respond to questions and comments when appropriate
- Look at integrating your Instagram, Facebook, and/or Twitter feeds into the website

Competitor Analysis – personalwine.com

Competitor analysis is a good way to ensure you are not being outworked.

Personalwine.com is a competitor that sales wines with custom label designs, wine gifts, drinkware, and accessories related to wine. We took a brief tour of the website and came up with some insights.

Homepage Insights

The site is easy to navigate, follows consistent design patterns, and evokes emotion. It has a hero image related to an upcoming holiday (Mother's Day), followed by an infographic type image that shows an overview of the process of creating and buying personalized wines.

Their navigation is clean, with dropdown links to a small amount of subcategories.

We also notice that their homepage is not cluttered with a bunch of different messaging. The main message in the hero is to create a custom label for your wine. Then an emotional appeal in the form of a 'Why Personal Wine' letter with the owners signature. Below that are content and CTAs for Wines and Accessories.

Category Page Insights

The Red Wine category page loads quick and is easy to scan. There is no sub-category menu but there is a horizontal menu to refine this category so you can quickly switch to white wine or sparkling or rose.

The layout is well spaced and consistent. Contrast is nice with use of red, gray, black and white.

Product Page Insights

The product page has a large image of the bottle within a carousel structure – you can switch to see the bottle with a sample personalized label. The copy is very warm and conversational. You can easily choose to customize the label or buy it with the regular label. Below that there is some additional information on bulk purchasing and even exact date shipping if ordered today. Followed lastly by a large testimonial on a nice warm background image.

Custom Label Maker

Their label maker uses HTML5 and Javascript. It is very clean and intuitive to use. They have several categories you can browse or create your own from a template or scratch.

Checkout Process

The checkout process is clean and simple. The use best practices with input validation and a stepper process that tells you where you are in the checkout process.

What we can learn from this competitor

We can learn quite a bit about how a modern ecommerce shop that specializes in wine and custom labels should be built. The way they designed their label maker is something to review when a new label maker app is developed. Although their inventory of wines is much smaller, striving to create an elegant and easy to navigate category system should be emulated. This competitor uses best practices for ecommerce, design, and SEO.

Next Steps

To help make sense of this report, we've created some action items and broken them down into groups of things that Windsor Vineyards will need to address, items that we can possibly help tackle, and recommendations that will require some more research into how your system works to see if they are viable.

Tasks for Windsor Vineyards

- Update website so that the entire site uses the secure HTTPS protocol instead of HTTP
- Create xml sitemap of products for Google
- Create updated copy for top pages (we can advise)

Tasks We Can Help With (some require access to backend or server)

- Create style guide for more consistent design elements
- UX investigations of problem components like the header, nav, checkout
- Implementing sticky header
- Design and code new homepage versions to test
- Design and code landing pages that target specific segments/keywords
- Image optimization for high resolution / desktop screens
- Create xml sitemap for google (may need access to backend)
- Create robots.txt file
- Keyword research, Moz administration
- Write more SEO friendly page titles and descriptions (backend access needed)
- Write more SEO friendly H1, H2 tags (backend access needed)
- Social Media management and reporting

Tasks That Require More Knowledge of Coresense software

- Limit server calls by combining js/css files
- Compress js/css files
- Revise checkout process code
- Placement of category text / images

Thanks

Thanks for the opportunity to work with you. We should schedule a call to discuss this report and come up with a plan and timeline for addressing applicable recommendations, responsible parties and timing.