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LCBO CUSTOMER SURVEY SHOWS ONTARIANS "GOING LOCAL" WHEN BUYING WINES AND BEER

A recent LCBO customer survey shows many Ontario consumers are going local with their wine and beer purchases. Of 2,505 people surveyed by telephone in February and March of this year, 64 per cent said they had purchased an Ontario wine in the past three months and 57 per cent said they had bought either a mainstream domestic beer or Ontario craft beer in the past 30 days.

The results are consistent with LCBO sales trends which show Ontario VQA table wine sales grew by almost 15 per cent in 2010-11 versus 2009-10, the fourth consecutive year of double-digit growth. Imported wine sales during the same period were up 6.6 per cent.

"Working with LCBO to promote the "go local" trend, VQA wines have become the frontrunner in sales growth and the natural choice for wine drinkers seeking quality, versatility and value," says Hillary Dawson, President, Wine Council of Ontario. "We're optimistic that this trend will continue through the fall and into the holiday season."

VQA table wine sales are currently up almost 13 per cent since April 1 this year, in advance of LCBO's annual Ontario wine promotion (September 11 to October 8) which traditionally has further boosted VQA sales.

LCBO sales of VQA wine exceeded \$100 million in 2010-11.

LCBO supports Ontario VQA wines with additional shelf space in its stores, increased product listings, staff training and year-round promotional activities.

"The success of VQA wines also speaks to the craftsmanship of Ontario winemakers who produce high-quality, versatile, award-winning wines," notes Bob Downey, LCBO Senior Vice President, Sales & Marketing. "Ontario wineries have also developed appealing new brands with attractive packaging and innovative marketing."

Ontario craft beer continues to be the fastest-growing LCBO beer segment with sales in 2010-11 up almost 53 per cent.

"A growing number of LCBO customers are choosing to "go local" with Ontario craft beers because of their premium quality and distinctive styles," adds Downey.

Many LCBO stores feature prominent displays for OCB products and trained staffs in select stores promote Ontario craft beers with their customers.

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