

City of Carmel-by-the-Sea
Wine Tasting Policy
(3/3/2015)

Purpose

To establish guidelines for the review and approval of wine tasting facilities in the Central Commercial and Service Commercial Districts in the downtown.

Policy

The General Plan encourages a balanced mix of uses that serve the needs of both local and non-local populations. The Planning Commission recognizes the demand for establishing wine tasting facilities but also recognizes that their proliferation could impact the balanced mix of uses that the General Plan encourages.

Definition

A wine tasting room is a stand-alone establishment with a Duplicate Type 02 ABC license, in which the primary purpose to encourage patrons to purchase wine for off-site consumption. Establishments should not operate as a wine bar, where the primary purpose would be for patrons to consume wine on premise other than for the purpose of wine tasting. It is recognized that tasting rooms host occasional promotions and special events to encourage sales and marketing of wine for the education and development of current and potential customers.

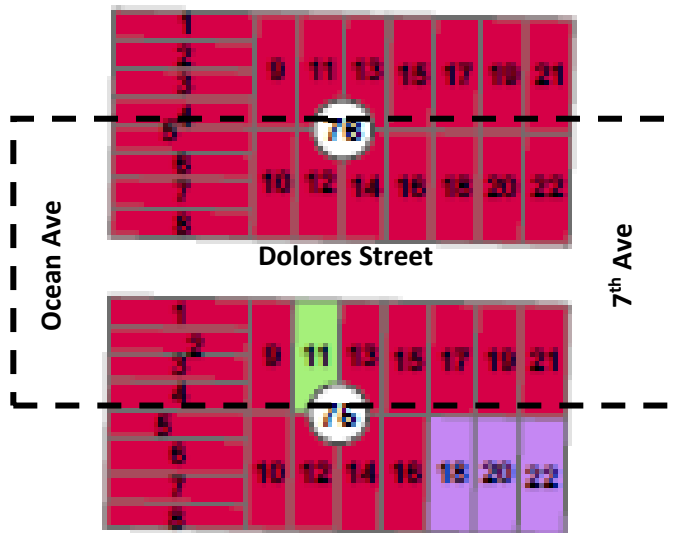
The following standards are recommended and shall be considered by the Planning Commission in its review of wine tasting permits:

1. Wines originating from Monterey County Vineyards and Wineries and locating their off-site tasting rooms in Carmel are desired and strongly encouraged. The tasting room should have a Duplicate Type 02 ABC license of a primary Type 02 ABC licensed winery located within Monterey County. All wines stored, displayed, and offered for sale and tasting should have been produced in a Type 02 Bonded Winery located in Monterey County with the vast majority (i.e. 75% or more) from grapes grown in Monterey County.
2. No more than three wine tasting Use Permits for new locations shall be issued within any 12-month period. To encourage diversity in the Commercial District, retail wine tasting shops located north of Ocean Avenue are strongly encouraged.
3. A wine tasting room may be permitted a limited number of special events specified through the Use Permit for the purpose of marketing and educating current and potential customers on wine.
4. In order to avoid the appearance of a bar, the wine tasting service and seating area should generally be limited to no more than 30% of the floor area of the retail space. The remaining area should primarily consist of wine-related retail display.
5. In general, the size of the retail and wine tasting area combined (office and storage excluded) should be no larger than 1,000 square feet.

6. Tasting should only involve traditional wine based products such as still wines, sparkling wines or Port-type products, no other alcoholic beverages should be permitted to be tasted or purchased.
7. The maximum serving size should be 2 ounces per serving. Customers should not be permitted to drink bottles of purchased wine in the store and no wine tasting should take place on public property.
8. Light snacks such as cheese, crackers, and bread may be served; however, meals are not permitted.
9. In order to encourage diversity and maintain a balanced mix of uses, no more than five establishments offering tasting should be permitted within any standard two-block area as depicted in Figure 1.* For smaller blocks including Blocks 70, 71, 72, and 73; or for other blocks in which these boundaries do not apply, the Planning Commission shall consider proposals on a case by case basis that meet the intent of this density limitation.
10. Night time hours should generally be limited to no later than 9:00 p.m.
11. Wine tasting associated with other uses such as retail food, art galleries, clothing stores, and the like is discouraged.

*For the purposes of this policy a “standard two-block area” would include all commercial spaces on both sides of a street located between the next two cross streets. The cross streets at the end of the blocks are also included up to the mid-point of each block.

Figure 1: Example of Standard Two-block Area (max 5 wine tasting establishments)



Addendum (8/10/16)

Wine Tasting Room Events

Routine Events: These are normal business activities that are strictly for the purpose of promoting wine sales. These events generally do not involve a large number of attendees, live music, or any activities outside of the building. Wine tasting rooms are allowed a maximum of 2 routine events per month and a total of 24 routine events per year. Routine events include activities such as wine club events, library tastings, and pairing functions, such as wine and chocolate, wine and cheese, or pairings with other food products that are not classified as full meals.

Special Events: Special events are permitted live music and can be held for general social functions that may or may not be for the purpose of promoting wine sales. Pursuant to Municipal Code Section 9.16.030, the business is allowed a maximum of 4 special events per year, subject to written authorization from the Community Planning and Building Director upon review of each specific request.

* A Live Music Use Permit is required for regular live music (CMC 9.16)