

# MEININGER'S

ESSENTIAL READING FOR THE WINE AND DRINKS INDUSTRY

## INTERNATIONAL

INSIGHTS

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### US Wine Industry Fights Back With New Marketing Campaigns

It might feel like it's all gloom and doom in the wine industry right now, but two separate groups are creating positive energy around wine. **Felicity Carter reports.**

#### THE SECOND INITIATIVE

In January 2024, noted American wine writer Karen MacNeil posted a video on Instagram called Why I Hate Dry January, in which she called the annual ritual “self-righteous and Puritanical” and a “baby step towards another Prohibition”, though she was clear that she believes people should do whatever is right for them.

The post touched a nerve, garnering more than 17,000 likes, shares and other reactions. “Soon after that, I learned that a large percentage of GenZ and Millennials intended to participate in Sober October,” says MacNeil. “The opposite of sober is, of course, drunk. This struck me as very divisive. The implication that all wine drinkers get drunk when they drink wine was flat out wrong.”

As she notes, the Dry January and Sober October campaigns between them take up 17% of the calendar year — and they're growing in popularity. According to a recent survey done by Wine Opinions and Colangelo & Partners, more than half of respondents aged 21 to 39 said they'd participated in one of these events in 2023, while nearly two thirds indicated they were likely to participate in one or both this year. Concerned, MacNeil says she decided to “tell wine's positive story. And I wanted to do something that wine lovers everywhere could participate in.”

**Her idea was a national campaign, Come Over October, to encourage wine lovers to invite friends and family to come over and share wine together.**

MacNeil then called communications professionals Gino Colangelo and Kimberley Noelle Charles — the founders and principals of Colangelo & Partners and Charles Communication — and ran the idea past them. The three of them subsequently founded a company called COME TOGETHER —A Community For Wine LLC, which is “committed to creating and sharing positive, inclusive consumer information about wine and its historic role as a communal beverage”.

The comeoveroctober.com website is currently under construction, but once it's live, it will list events and promotions, along with downloadable messages and design assets that can be used by any member of the trade, anywhere in the world.

“Come Over October is being planned as an annual event. Why? Because we need it,” says MacNeil. “Because wine is a catalyst for the human relationships that sustain us all.”

Or, as the Wine Institute's research subjects might put it, wine is perfect for #makingmemories.



Karen MacNeil, wine writer and author of the *The Wine Bible*