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## Stones lend cool allure to an Okanagan icewine

Ex Nihilo Vineyards to sell Sympathy for the Devil product after reaching deal with iconic band

**Brian Morton, Vancouver Sun; With Canwest News Service**  
Published: Tuesday, April 08, 2008

The Rolling Stones are about to shine a light on B.C.'s wine industry.

Ex Nihilo Vineyards Inc. near Kelowna will begin marketing their limited-edition "Sympathy for the Devil" icewine on May 1 after the company worked out a deal with Mick and the boys to form a licensing partnership.

It's all part of a trend toward celebrities attaching their names to wine products.



**View Larger Image**  
Rolling Stones Keith Richards (from left), Ronnie Wood, Charlie Watts and Mick Jagger have given the thumbs up to Ex Nihilo Vineyards' limited-edition "Sympathy for the Devil" icewine.

Dave Hogan, Getty Images; Photo illustration Vancouver Sun

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Harder refused to say how much The Rolling Stones will make in the licensing agreement, only that "The Rolling Stones do get paid."

"I was also fascinated by their music and their business model. They do a good job at it."  
He said bottles will sell for about \$125.

Meanwhile, a new study conducted by research company Nielsen has found that sales of celebrity wines are up nearly 19 per cent in U.S. grocery stores since last year.

"Celebrities are increasingly lending their names to wine and spirits, for a variety of reasons," said Richard Hurst, senior vice-president of beverage alcohol for The Nielsen Company. "While some celebrities have had a long-standing personal affinity for these product categories, others view these products as extensions of their established 'lifestyle brands' and have connected with willing supplier partners to produce and market them. Some suppliers, particularly wine suppliers, do not have the resources to launch big advertising and promotional campaigns and a celebrity can lend a brand-instant recognition. Ideally, the celebrity's reputation also helps reinforce the company's image in the marketplace.

"Several factors are fuelling the growth of celebrity wines," added Hurst. "First, existing brands are expanding and gaining new distribution through new line extensions. Second, more celebrities have launched their own brands in the past year or have had suppliers launch products under their names. As these brands have proven themselves, they've gained distribution in other retail outlets, which has further stimulated growth. And third, savvy marketers leverage the 'celebrity' benefit into expanded marketing programs via in-store vehicles, outdoor events and traditional and online media."

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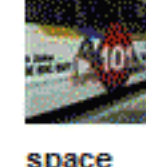
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Gary Vaynerchuk, host of the Thunder Show webcast on www.

winelibrarytv.com, said that celebrity wines are "the next new marketing oasis." "It's a holy grail opportunity for celebrities to build their own personal brand. Unlike beer and liquor, wine is the brand of a higher lifestyle," he said. "For a celebrity, the cost of entry is also very low. It's very easy for a Larry Bird, Mariah Carey or Madonna to say, 'I like drinking it,' and they have instant credibility for millions of people."

The Liquor Control Board of Ontario said that wines endorsed by Wayne Gretzky will sell 18,000 cases (or \$2.7 million) over the next 12 months, and wines endorsed by Dan Aykroyd over 11,000 cases (\$1.7 million).

Both were among the top-10 bestselling wines of 2007.

Spokesman Chris Layton said all new celebrity wines have been selling well and significantly better than new, non-celebrity brands.

Other celebrity wines are endorsed by: Mike Weir, Tommy Lasorda, Bob Dylan, Mariah Carey, Lorraine Bracco, Larry Bird, Fess Parker, Frances Ford Coppola, Barbra

Streisand, Sting, Paris Hilton and Mario Andretti.

Ex Nihilo Vineyards will also be launching their own premium Ex Nihilo red and white wine brands this spring. For more information, go to [www.rollingstonesicewine.com](http://www.rollingstonesicewine.com) or [www.celebritycellarscanada.com](http://www.celebritycellarscanada.com).

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