

SPECIAL EDITION

**A Culture of Fine Wine:
The Discipline of Brand Building
through Commercial Excellence**

OCTOBER 15, 2026

NEWSLETTER



Kevin Murphy, Executive Vice President of WDW

Q&A WITH KEVIN MURPHY, EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT OF WDW, PART I

WDW was founded in October 2015 in New York and soon after expanded to New Jersey, generating \$16MM in revenue in 2016 across the two states. Since then, WDW acquired the revered fine wine specialist Galaxy Wine Company in Oregon (June 2018), making it a bi-coastal operation; expanded its distribution to Connecticut (October 2018), completing its representation in the Tri-State area; and most recently expanded Galaxy's operations into Washington state (Jan 2022).

WDW crossed the \$100 Million revenue threshold in 2025. Today, WDW operates in five states with 110 employees and representing nearly 800 winery partners, and is projected to do \$110MM in business with 490,000 cases sold in 2026.

With more than a decade of business under its belt, Executive Vice President Kevin Murphy reflects on the past ten years, and shares what's to come for the fine wine wholesaler.

In the early days of WDW, you and Benjamin Kirschner, Senior Vice President of Sales, built the business alongside eight sales reps – five of whom are still with the company today. What does it mean to work with such a tenured team of selling professionals?

"This question speaks right to the culture of who we are. Across industries, we are living in a time where people don't commit to things for a long period. But I believe people really do ultimately want to work at a place where they feel valued and like they're part of something bigger. Our team is a testament to the fact that you can build a career that integrates into your life. Benjy and I work to foster that environment every day, and it's why we have such a committed team that's been with us from the start.

"It's the same from a supplier standpoint. Suppliers, from my experience, want to be somewhere they feel they're part of the fabric of the organization – not just for a year but for multiple decades. And I'm not going anywhere. Benjy's not going anywhere. We've done this together for 10 years, and we're going to do it together for another 10 years.

"We're not hugely vertical as an organization. There aren't layers and layers of middle management, and that's something that our winery partners really value – they all have a direct line to Benjy and me. That level of personalization and connection is critical to who we are."

In the company's first full fiscal year (2016), WDW sold 76,000 cases and generated \$16MM in revenue in New York and New Jersey. Today, WDW operates in five states and is projected to do \$110MM in business with 490,000 cases sold in 2026. Can you speak about that growth from a geographical perspective?

"The expansion of WDW over the past decade was both deliberate and opportunistic.

"From a geographical perspective, we expanded our state footprint starting in New York in late 2015, then New Jersey at the start of 2016, and then Connecticut in 2018 – the idea being that once we really established a market from a structural and profitability standpoint, then we could expand into another market. So that's precisely what we did with New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut.

"The acquisition of Galaxy, on the other hand, was very opportunistic. Becoming a wholesaler in Oregon wasn't something we were necessarily looking to do, but the Galaxy portfolio and path to market—built by industry veterans **Matt Elsen** and **Bob Liner**—were culturally aligned with what we were building on the East Coast. So when an opportunity like that presents itself, you have to take advantage of it.

"Just as we did a state-by-state expansion in the Tri-State, once the Galaxy Oregon business came on the market, we were well-positioned to move into Washington. The Pacific Northwest is no different than the East Coast in that way – if you're in New York, it makes sense to be in New Jersey, and if you're in Oregon it makes sense to be in Washington because operationally there are a lot of market parallels. We're only four years in with our Galaxy Washington business, but that's where we see significant growth opportunity. Washington has a 60% larger market share than Oregon, so in the next 3-5 years, we expect to double or triple that business."



EVP Kevin Murphy and Castello di Volpaia Proprietor Federica Mascheroni-Stianti



EVP Kevin Murphy, Bisol 1542 President Gianluca Bisol, and SVP Sales Benjy Kirschner



EVP Kevin Murphy (left) and VP Sales Danielle Ball (front, right) with Galaxy OR Sales Team at Domaine Serene

NJ Sales Rep
Brittany Onorato

Upstate NY Sales Rep Ralph Rubino, CT Sales Dir Mike Tobin, Upstate NY Sales Rep Kevin Jones, Upstate NY Sales Rep Anthony Natale, and Empire Regional Manager Chris Raftery

VP Sales Jerred Wolff (center)
with Galaxy WA Sales Team at Syncline Winery

The Early Days of WDW

SVP Sales Benjy Kirschner and
EVP Wholesale and Operations Kevin MurphyUpstate NY Sales Rep Kevin Jones, SVP Sales Benjy Kirschner,
NY Sales Rep Gabrielle Palay, President Rocco Lombardo,
EVP Wholesale and Operations Kevin Murphy,
NY Sales Rep Anthony Casagrande,
and former Operations Manager Jason OhNY Sales Rep Jessica Lichtenthal,
EVP Sales and Marketing Shannon Coursey,
SVP Sales Benjy Kirschner, NY Sales Rep Allie LaPorte,
French Portfolio Director Alban de Brosses,
and NY Sales Rep Frank DeBellis

WDW has remained exclusively a fine wine wholesaler, at a time when many distribution businesses are consolidating to include wine, spirits, and beer. Why has a commitment to fine wine remained at the heart of WDW?

"Because we see the opportunity in the market. As the distributor tier consolidates, many wholesalers are stretched thin across spirits, beer, and wine, which often means wine doesn't receive the specialized attention it deserves.

"As a **fine wine-exclusive portfolio**, we've made brand building central to who we are, and we have an obligation to foster those personal relationships between our family partners and our restaurant partners. We believe fully in fine wine, especially as it relates to restaurants and experiencing wine with food around the table."

You talk about being brand builders. How have you done that in the past, and why is now a good time to bring on more suppliers?

"Oftentimes suppliers will come to us being underdeveloped in the market, and we're able to fast-track their business along an expedited timeline because of the dedication of our team. **We focus on prominent placements in the on-premise because that's where brands are built** – by passionate sommeliers who will champion a winery partner's story – **and we also focus on high-end retail placements** where you have owners who will take the time to educate the consumer. Our average retail bottle price is \$34 with WDW East Coast and \$22 with WDW Galaxy, which reflects our portfolio makeup – we specialize in that Super Premium, Ultra Premium, and Luxury price point.

"Now that our portfolio has matured, our team has the resources and the bandwidth to launch a few new winery partners who share the same values as us."

Marketing & Social Media Manager Stephanie Jusino
and Galaxy OR Sales Rep Kate SealeyGalaxy WA and OR Import Portfolio Manager
Chris Stambaugh