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# Bella Rose, Modern embark on new recycling effort

## First-in-WNY recycling venture a 'win-win' for community

**BY TERRY DUFFY**  
Editor-in-Chief

Call it a groundbreaker for the area's wine industry.

Recently, Bella Rose Vineyard and Winery in Lewiston unveiled a new Earth Day-themed recycling partnership with Modern Disposal that will allow for a proper disposal/productive future for consumed wine bottles.

No, it's a not for a new collection of wine bottle art décor or something similar, although that likewise sounds interesting. This program involves the actual recycling of discarded wine bottles for something productive, such as use in highway building materials.

"It's just a very sustainable way of doing something with the bottles that don't fall within NYS (bottle) recycling programs," said Mike Schweitzer of Bella Rose. "And obviously there's a huge need in the industry for it. It's something that's done in California up and down the entire state. And New York is lagging behind."

Schweitzer, along with Modern officials and 1st District Niagara



County Legislator Irene Myers, announced this week that Bella Rose is the new site of a permanent drop-off for glass bottle recyclables – wine bottles and the like. While the state has offered bottle/can deposit/recycling programs for some

time, such is not the case for other containers – namely wine bottles.

Schweitzer pointed to some impressive EPA data he came across when it comes to the actual disposal practice of wine bottles, which he called disturbing. Did you know,

From left, 1st District Niagara County Legislator Irene Myers joins with Modern CEO Michael McInerney, Bella Rose Winery's Michael Schweitzer, Modern Vice President of Operations Robert Trunzo and Vice President of Post Collections, Operations and Sales Al Davis in announcing a new wine bottle recycling effort.

for example, that, of the estimated 300 million cases of wine sold in the U.S. and consumed by the public, roughly 210 million wine cases end up in landfills?

He said roughly 60% of a wine's carbon footprint is in the production of the wine bottle and that, according to EPA estimates, 70% of all wine bottles are not even recycled. Further, glass once locked up in a landfill never breaks down and will remain in its current state upward of 5,000 years into the future.

Talk about a throwaway culture.

According to Schweitzer, a mere 28% of all the glass the American public buys actually gets recycled.

"It is a shame, because glass can be recycled forever; and turning old product into new represents a big win for the environment," he said.

So what's this new glass recycling program all about?

Modern recently placed a special collection Dumpster down the driveway at Bella Rose, located at 1243 Ridge Road, in Lewiston, just west of Town Hall. Open to the public, it now provides for the safe, environmentally friendly disposal of wine bottles and similar glass containers that would otherwise go to a landfill.

"All glass bottles in this Dumpster will be used as plastic glass aggregate. PGA is a safe and credible alternative to other natural aggregate materials such as gravel, stone or sand," Schweitzer said. "By using PGA, a significant volume of waste can be kept out of landfills and used in a sustainable way" such as large municipal projects – water installations, highway work and the like.

"What we want to do with the glass is make processed glass aggregate," said Al Davis, vice president, post collections operations and sales at Modern. "It's a substitute for sand and gravel material, and it's something that a little contamination won't bother it."

"There's other recycling options for glass," he continued. "Like one piece of ceramic, it can be a contaminant for that. ... So we're going to process the material (glass) and we're going to use it to replace things for sand and gravel (use) ... for things like pipe beddings, or drainage (uses) things like that."

"We're also going to work in conjunction with the Town of Lewiston and some of their highway projects and use some of that also. We got plenty of demand for using the material."

Davis said the program continues to grow in interest in other parts of the country.

"It's done in New England and others where they crush the material," he said. "Some highway departments even have their own crushers to do it. You can blend it with virgin sand and gravel also if you need to."

"We'll be able to process it with our equipment that we have at Modern and be able to use that material. Hopefully, the word will get out to other wineries (on this) and we can

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