

The
Wow

e-newsletter

by Ken and Dahlynn McKowen

Principles

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Build It and They Will Come

In this month's issue, we're going to demonstrate how we created a website around one of our new books, and how you can do the same with your titles. Since writing is a fulltime business for us, we tend to go all out regarding promotion; keep this in mind, as it's not necessary to do everything we do.

With the release of two major travel books within a month's time, this fall has proven busy for us. *The Wine-Oh Guide to California's Sierra Foothills* dropped nationwide on October 15th and the *Best of Oregon and Washington's Mansions, Museums and More* was released just last week. Both books were created under contract with publisher Wilderness Press.

While the Oregon/Washington book is a sequel to our award-winning, state-focused travel series—an easy sell as our audience and the media have seen this style of book before with our California tome—the *Wine-Oh! Guide* is our newbie. Also a series, the first book is about California's Sierra foothill wineries. As such, we needed to create an audience for this new series and develop a readership and author platform.

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December Issue:
Following, Bending
and Breaking!

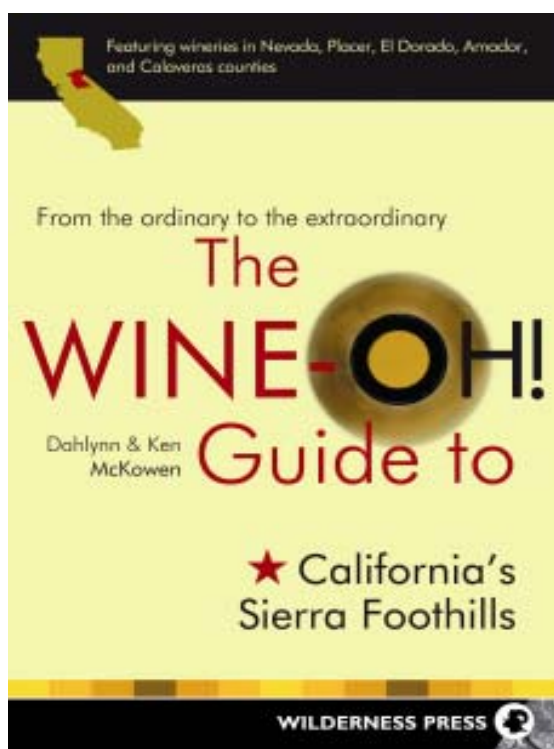


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Build It and They Will Come

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As we've explained in the past, it's imperative to have a solid marketing plan in place before pitching a publisher; our plan was completed on paper 18 months ago when we first proposed the title to Wilderness Press. We began implementing the plan just prior to the book's release. Garnering media attention was the easy part considering Dahlynn's publicist background and media contacts created and nurtured with both the "3M" series (what we affectionately call the museum, mansion, mission/more books) and our Chicken Soup books. But with the *Wine-Oh! Guide*, one of our primary marketing goals was launching a website dedicated solely to this new book series. This is something we had not done with our previous books.



Before we begin, it might be a good idea to open the website and follow along as a reference: www.WineOhGuide.com.

First, we purchased two domain names. Why? Because of two different possible spellings: "wine-oh" or "wino." Depending on how a reader spells the word, either on purpose or by mistake, they will be directed to the book's official website: www.WineOhGuide.com. The second domain purchased was www.WinoGuide.com, the alternate, but incorrect, spelling.

Next, we listed the website—in bold letters—throughout the entire 320-page book, especially in reference to interviews. Originally, 17 winemaker interviews were part of the manuscript, but the publisher decided to drop the price of the book due to the downturn in the economy; as the book approached the galley stage (layout), 30,000 words had to be cut from the 84,000-word manuscript. Since the 17 interviews made up more than 25,000 words, we pulled and placed them on the website. As a result, when reading a winery destination story in the book, readers are directed to the website to also read the entertaining interview. To add to the hype about the website, it is also prominently displayed on the book's back cover.

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Ken created the *Wine-Oh! Guide* website with existing software and tools used to build our other three websites (www.PlacesToDiscover.com, www.PublishingSyndicate.com and www.RangerKen.com), and all tie into each other. Of course our primary need for the website was to offer the book for sale, but the next step was just as important: to entice readers to join our official “Wine-Oh! Club.” Using a database program via KickStartCart, readers join the club just as you did with your subscription to this e-newsletter. While it’s not free, KickStartCart is a user-friendly software program and well worth the cost (www.KickStartCart.com).

A visit to www.WineOhGuide.com will show you the endless fun we have had with the site, from those winemaker interviews to posting winery recipes to event announcements. The site is growing every day, and pages under construction include media postings, a Wine-Oh! Club page, and a partner’s page. And at this time, we’re utilizing Google ads, but the plan is to sell/barter ad space with wineries and like products.

But what good is a great website if you can’t get readers? To date, this has been accomplished through advertising, partnership opportunities with like sites, and media coverage and appearances. For example, the *Sacramento Bee* did a great story on the book, and the hits on the website that day quadrupled, and membership in the Wine-Oh! Club rose 600 percent. The big push will be in early December with both print and broadcast media spots, all pointed at the book and website. To add to the advertising, the majority of the 83 wineries in the book have linked their websites and wine clubs to the site, and visa versa.



You’re probably wondering about social networking; this is something we have avoided with a vengeance for years. Because we are associated with *Chicken Soup for the Soul*, we receive thousands of e-mails each month from people all over the world requesting favors from us. What they don’t realize is that we’re not Chicken Soup, we simply contract with them. But recognizing the value of on-line social networking and driving readers to our site, we’re in the process of building a Facebook Fan page. We’ll see what happens from there!

Creating a website around your book is a great way to promote your work, but it requires creativity, hard work and constant nurturing (i.e, updating). Keep in mind that while it’s your book up there for the world to see, it’s also a reflection of you; work with the goal of sharing your words and self with your readers, and entice them to keep coming back for more!



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HOT STUFF! HOT STUFF! HOT STUFF! HOT STUFF! HOT STUFF!

Chicken Soup for the Soul www.ChickenSoup.com

Runner's Soul (previously *Endurance Sports*): **Deadline: Nov. 30, 2009** **TITLE CHANGE!**

Mothers and Daughters: **Deadline: December 31, 2009**

Christmas and Holidays: **Deadline: January 15, 2010**

Dieting and Fitness: **Deadline: January 31, 2010**

New Moms: **Deadline: February 28, 2010**



Devotional for Moms:
Deadline: Feb. 28, 2010



Family Matters:
Deadline: Feb. 28, 2010

Grandmothers: **Deadline: March 31, 2010**

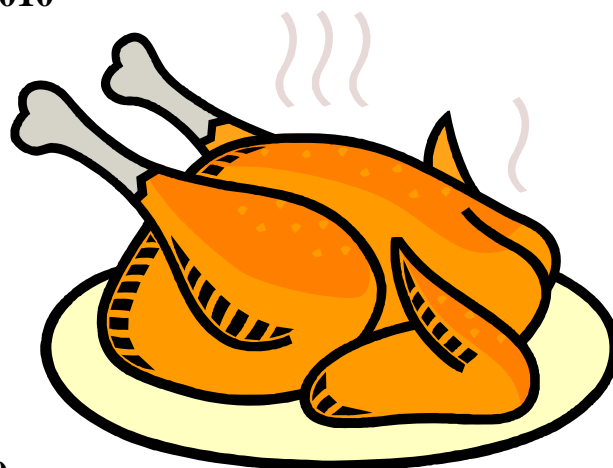
Grieving and Recovery: **Deadline: March 31, 2010**

Grieving and Recovery for Dog Owners: **Deadline: March 31, 2010**

Grieving and Recovery for Cat Owners: **Deadline: March 31, 2010**

Preteens: **Deadline: March 31, 2010**

Teens: **Deadline: March 31, 2010**



Happy Thanksgiving!



Cup of Comfort www.CupofComfort.com

For Golfers: **Deadline: December 15, 2009**



For Couples: **Deadline: April 20, 2010**

Go for it! Get published! 