

# SA wine businesses going global with online tools

 By [Luke McKend](#)

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The arrival of Google Street View in the winelands is only one aspect of how South African wineries and exporters are increasingly looking to technology and innovation to capture and retain new customers, both locally and globally, in a competitive and ever-changing market.

Google Street View in South Africa boasts the most comprehensive database of winelands imagery in the world, from [Klein Constantia](#) to [Jordan Wines](#), allowing users to view and navigate through wine estates, vineyards, historic buildings and gardens. This year we've been busy collecting imagery of several dozen more wineries to add to Street View.

The arrival of Street View in the winelands, however, is only one aspect of how South African wineries and exporters are increasingly looking to technology and innovation to capture and retain new customers, both locally and globally, in a competitive and ever-changing market.

## Embracing online marketing

Many wineries have set up their own websites, allowing customers to find them easily and buy wine online. A significant number are taking their digital strategy further by embracing online marketing.

Take [Noble Hill](#), for example, a 30-hectare vineyard near Franschhoek that makes red wine, white wine and [olive oil](#). It started using Google Maps about a year ago, with the belief that more and more people are planning trips to the winelands online.

"The process to sign up and display photos, opening hours, contact information, and customer reviews on a Maps listing is very easy," says Kristopher Tillery, director at Noble Hill. "Pretty soon we had a professional-looking [listing](#) which cost us nothing, and has reaped great financial results."

## Google AdWords

Noble Hill also uses Google AdWords to boost its business and sales, and draw visitors to its [niche Latin and Mexican-inspired restaurant](#).

When companies advertise with Google AdWords, they select keywords that trigger their ads. The ads only appear when users are looking for something directly related to the company's product or service and businesses only pay when someone clicks on their ad.

Noble Hill estimates that every US dollar its spends on AdWords brings in 10-15 US dollars in revenue to the restaurant - quite a return on investment.

### Another good example

[Cybercellar.com](http://Cybercellar.com), a leading online wine retailer in SA, is another good example. When Cybercellar opened its virtual doors way back in December 1998, Google had only just been born, AdWords didn't exist yet, and convincing South Africans to part with their hard earned cash via the Internet was an uphill battle. But slowly and surely, the popularity of buying wine online grew.

As Cybercellar CEO Fiona Phillips explains, "When we expanded into Europe a few years ago, AdWords was invaluable to us in terms of acquiring new EU and UK customers. It's an ongoing process, as there's no finish line. Whilst we use alternative marketing methods to look after customer retention, when it comes to customer acquisition, Google AdWords is critical."

Cybercellar is planning to launch soon in the US, and it is already looking at a completely new Google AdWords campaign for that specific market, taking into account how different users search for specific brands.

### Can afford to think big

In summary, with today's online marketing options, wine businesses can afford to think big and break down international barriers. All they need is a website, Google AdWords and a few other free Google business tools, and they can begin reaching customers far and wide.

#### Geo-tool tips:

- **Claim your free business listing in [Google Places](#):** any business with a physical location can be listed for free on Google Maps. You can include phone numbers, opening hours, a photo, etc.
- **Embed the [Google Maps API](#) into your site:** it's better than a static map and easier for people to find you. It's quick and requires no technical knowledge, but your users get all the benefit of a fully interactive map so they can come and visit.
- **Driving directions:** one of the key things people want to know in order to visit your premises is how to get there from wherever they live. Save time creating directions and embed the [Driving Directions gadget](#) (for examples of businesses using it in the UK, see [here](#)). It automatically creates detailed directions to your location.

#### AdWords tips:

- **Use [Google Global Market Finder](#)** to easily assess which international markets are searching for SA wines. This free tool automatically translates your chosen wine-related keywords into local languages and tells you how much it will cost to be at the top of the ad rankings in different countries. Then you can decide which international markets are the most cost-efficient and then create campaigns which target these customers, helping you to capture a global audience.
- Use the [Keyword Tool](#)** to generate keywords you may not have thought of. The AdWords system favours tightly-themed Ad groups: consider how best to segment your advertising campaigns. Will you segment by vintage? By region? By price?
- **Get creative with which keywords you decide to bid on.** You may be a winery, but perhaps you offer a shuttle service from Cape Town as well? Or, how about a cross-promotional campaign featuring popular

cheese-pairings?

- **Think in terms of ROI!** Both [AdWords](#) and [[www.google.com/analytics/](http://www.google.com/analytics/) Google Analytics]] offer flexible ways in which to track site-visits and purchases that originated through online advertising. See exactly which keywords generated the most sales and adjust your bids accordingly.

## ABOUT LUKE MCKEND

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