



## **Fearless Importing Under Fire: How Tariffs Threaten a 39-Year-Old Family Wine Business Built on Global Roots**

For nearly four decades, [New York-based VOS Selections](#) has built a reputation as one of the New York region's most trusted importers of wines, spirits, and sakes from around the world. With just 19 employees and a deeply curated portfolio spanning six continents, VOS is a proudly independent company grounded in one mission: **to bring the world's finest, most authentic small-batch beverages to U.S. consumers. But now, the company's future is in jeopardy.**

The recently imposed "Liberation Day" tariffs threaten to unravel everything VOS has spent a generation building.

"We aren't just importing bottles—we're importing culture, family legacies, and centuries of craftsmanship," said VOS founder and president Victor Schwartz, who launched the company 39 years ago with his mother. "These new tariffs strike at the heart of that mission."

VOS specializes in wines and spirits that cannot be replicated in the United States—products intrinsically tied to the soil, climate, and traditions of their native countries. From Chianti grown in the hills of Tuscany to indigenous varietals from Lebanon, Hungary, or South Africa, VOS selections are defined by their terroir—a concept that makes domestic substitution impossible.

"Authenticity matters," Schwartz said. "You can't make a Tuscan wine in Oregon. Our customers know the difference—and so do the farmers whose families have cultivated these vineyards for generations."

The new tariffs, which require immediate payment upon a product's arrival at U.S. ports, have already caused serious disruptions for VOS:

- **Uncertainty has frozen the market:** Buyers are holding off on orders. Distributors are hesitant. VOS has already canceled shipments and delayed portfolio expansions.

- **Cash flow is under immediate strain:** Even if VOS passes costs on to customers, the company won't see revenue from those sales for months—while tariffs must be paid up front.
- **The timing is impossible:** States like New York require prices to be locked a month in advance, forcing VOS to gamble on unknown tariff rates that could render products unprofitable overnight.
- **The ripple effects hurt everyone:** From domestic warehouse partners to U.S. truckers and even American wineries in VOS's portfolio, reduced cash flow and purchasing capacity are cascading through the business's supply chain.

And while the administration has announced a temporary pause for certain goods, the reprieve is limited—and the uncertainty is growing. “We’re expected to plan summer shipments now, with no way of knowing if a 10%, 50%, or 150% tariff will be due when they arrive,” Schwartz explained.

For small importers like VOS, this is more than a paperwork headache—it’s an existential threat. “We’re not a conglomerate with multiple divisions to absorb the shock. We can’t win a price war with global giants,” Schwartz said. “This is the kind of policy that favors scale, not quality. And it punishes the businesses and consumers who value integrity, transparency, and taste.”

VOS remains committed to the artisans it represents—many of whom have become like family. Schwartz’s own daughter now works at the company, continuing the legacy started nearly four decades ago in a tiny office shared with his mother. **“This business has always been about relationships—built on trust, loyalty, and a love of what we do. That’s not something you can tariff away.”**



Victor Schwartz and his daughter Chloe

