

# MOIRAE CHOQUETTE



TOMATO WHEELS - EDMONTON, AB

**“B**uild a Global Brand. Feed the World.” The goal is ambitious, but it is the heart and inspiration behind Moirae Choquette’s company, Tomato Wheels.

Tomato Wheels designs Lambrusco, a sparkling red wine intended to be chilled and sipped. They directly source their grapes from Emilia-Romagna, Italy, where they collaborate with a fourth-generation family-owned and operated vineyard. During a visit to DOSC, an Edmonton restaurant that carries Tomato Wheels Lambrusco, Moirae shared her story, background, and the ultimate “why” behind launching her company.

“As I was doing market research, I discovered a gap in the North American market for high-quality, well-made Lambrusco. I thought to myself, if no one else is going to fill this gap, then it’s going to be me.” Recognizing her lack of in-depth knowledge about wine, she sought out experts to assist her on her journey. One key person was sommelier Brad Royale. Together, they searched for and negotiated an exclusive deal with a fourth-generation vineyard in Italy to produce exclusively for Tomato Wheels.

After launching in October 2022 and selling out the first batch in just three weeks, Moirae’s challenge became maintaining the availability of Tomato Wheels Lambrusco on store shelves. Early challenges stemmed from the learning curve of being an entrepreneur. “I never set out to be an entrepreneur. I have been very much following my intuition. The challenge is that when I have one task to do, it actually takes me five steps to complete it. I have to research, learn how to implement, and then execute it.”

She overcomes these challenges by surrounding herself with like-minded and experienced individuals who are willing to help. She encourages other entrepreneurs to step out of their comfort zones and seek assistance. “When you’re starting, you’re never going to be the expert, and it’s incredible how many people are willing to help each other.”

As with other entrepreneurs, securing funding was crucial, and Moirae highlights the support she received from Apeetogosan Métis Development Inc. was paramount. “In the Canadian liquor industry, I don’t warehouse my own product. It goes directly to the government. So, at a traditional bank, I couldn’t get a loan because there were no assets for them to seize in case of default. It became really complicated because how do you get started without funding? I knew if I could fund one order, I could use that revenue to invest back in my company and get things moving in a positive direction. That’s when I discovered Apeetogosan. In addition to financial support, they reviewed my business plan and assisted in developing the financial model. It’s incredible to have organizations ready and willing to support entrepreneurs who are just starting out.”

Moirae’s ultimate goal is to build a global brand and contribute to feeding the world. She sees Tomato Wheels as a revenue source to support that objective. After a transformative experience in India and comparing it to the privileges in North America, she was inspired to find more ways to contribute to food security, starting

with combating hunger in Canada. “Though my business has pivoted a few times, I always allocate a portion to giving back and feeding folks who are hungry.”

“I believe I’ve been guided to this very moment by simply focusing on what brings me joy and following the path of least resistance. For me, when people ask, ‘What is your passion?’—it’s creativity. And I bring that to everything I do.”



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