

The following document is a letter from Omar Bueller, dated December 22, 2015.

For accessibility please call (707) 565-1900

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County of Sonoma  
Permit and Resource Management Department  
2550 Ventura Ave.  
Santa Rosa, California 95403  
(707) 565-1900 Fax (707) 565-1103

December 22, 2015

Dear PRMD:

We are requesting permission to add alcohol sales to our use permit. We sell local artisan products such as cheese, charcuterie, olive oils, crackers, cookies, chocolates, and soaps. We also prepare coffee and crepes for takeout. Our original use permit was issued in 2011. We opened in 2013 and have been an appreciated member of the community by locals and tourists alike. I think they support my efforts to promote specialty food items that are produced locally by farmers, and other entrepreneurs.

My primary focus when I opened was cheese, as I had been making it myself for a year and a half, and saw a need for a specialty retailer to help them reach the customers. By happy accident, I discovered an olive oil producer from Sebastopol whose oils have done very well for both me and him. I have made efforts to get local charcuterie and meats into the shop as well.

I have friends who make apple ciders and I would very much like to have them in my shop. Their products pair well with cheeses and are a good way to promote local producers looking to add value to family apple orchards and build a market for a new category. I do not anticipate the alcohol sales will take more than 20% of the sales floor.

A challenge that makes me different and competitive from other businesses in the area is having things other stores in the area do not. Ciders are not widely distributed in our area as far as I can see. I would carry other items, but again the criteria is they be very special and have a local connection.

Sincerely,

Omar Mueller

**Jennifer Faso**

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**Subject:** FW: Freestone Artisan Cheese - Updated Project Description

December 13, 2016 Update to Application # PJR-001 / Project File # UPE15-0115

After successfully conducting our business in Freestone for over three and a half years, it is clear that we provide more than just cheese and local olive oil to our community. Many of our neighbors come in to discuss issues that affect our small town. Parents regularly bring in their children for their favorite crêpe as an after-school or weekend treat.

We enjoy the conversations that happen in our store and feel that that kind of engagement in the community makes it more vital. Through these interactions we get to know what our customers enjoy about our shop, and also what kind of products they hope to find in our store. We get daily requests daily about "where is the wine section?", because most cheese shops usually offer wine and other beverages.

First and foremost, our customers come in for cheese, charcuterie and olive oil, (and perhaps, a little conversation). They enjoy finding other locally made products that make our shop special. Changing our product mix would not increase how many people come to the shop, but it would allow us to supply the items that many of my customers are asking for. In addition, it provides an opportunity to introduce, promote and educate our customers about the excellent, local cider and wine producers in Sonoma County.

Agro-Tourism is a dimension that is relevant for the application to sell alcohol on premises. We like to think that we are selling more than cheese in our little shop. Memorable experiences are what we hope our customers will remember and will look forward to returning again and again. We have a cheese map that points out all the locally produced cheese producers and encourages people to explore and learn about those Sonoma County locations that make cheese and/or raise dairy animals.

The role we have played in the community is positive as well. Since we have opened in 2013 we have hired high school students to work part time on weekends. Our shop offered the first jobs these young adults have held. There are other businesses that do this, but our shop puts these kids in front of customers all day, and obliges them to interact as adults with some very worldly people. It is these kinds of skills that build confidence and real-life professional skills. We take the mentoring aspect of our business very seriously that began in 2010/2011 when volunteering at the Ceres Project in Sebastopol as one of the chefs to train high school students how to professionally prepare and cook exceptional and healthy food for local residents with chronic illnesses.

We have inquired to see if our Freestone neighbors and visiting guests approve of our carrying locally produced wines and ciders. The response has been overwhelmingly positive, with many our customers enthusiastically willing to sign their name in support.

This cheese shop has been a labor of love for my wife, Giovanna, and I. We had been looking to open a business in our west county community for some time and were excited when this foreclosed property went on the market. It was truly a derelict property after years of an absent landlord renting to individuals conducting illegal activities. After we acquired the property, the neighbors told us how frightened they were by the renters who, had pit bulls, surrounded by electrified fences. The next door neighbor was too intimidated to complain about the loud music regularly blasting at night .

We went through the full process to upgrade the property and bring everything up to current State Codes with the help of your specialists at PRMD. Our ADA ramp is something that has made many of my customers happy, including my contractor, who binged up his knee and was the first customers to use it. We created a space that is a beautiful addition to the Freestone Historic District.

Sincerely,

Omar & Giovanna Mueller

December 22, 2015/ updated March 22, 2016

Dear PRMD:

We are requesting permission to add an ABC Type 20 “ Off- Sale, Beer and Wine” alcohol license to our use permit. We sell **local artisan products** such as cheese, charcuterie, olive oils, crackers, cookies, chocolates, and soaps. We also prepare coffee and crepes for **takeout**. We will not conduct on-site tastings or allow consumption of the low-alcoholic beverages we plan to offer. Our original retail Use Permit was issued in 2011. We opened in 2013 and have been an appreciated member of the community by locals and tourists alike. I think they support my efforts to promote specialty food items that are **produced locally by farmers, and other entrepreneurs.**

My primary focus when I opened was cheese, as I had been making it myself for a year and a half, and saw a need for a specialty retailer to help them reach the customers. By happy accident, I discovered an olive oil producer from Sebastopol whose oils have done very well for both me and him. I have made efforts to get local charcuterie and meats into the shop as well.

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take more than 20% of the sales floor. When we talked to neighbors about our intentions, after they were informed about the new alcohol license, many of the initial responses were: "Oh, I like cider!"

A challenge that makes me different and competitive from other businesses in the area is having things that the other stores do not. Ciders are not widely distributed in our area as far as I can see. I would carry other items, but again the criteria is they be very special and have a local connection. The neighbors that reside in Freestone have been very supportive of Freestone Artisan Cheese, bringing their children, spouses and grandparents to the shop for snacks, special occasion cheese platters and general family outings.

Sincerely,

Omar Mueller

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Best always,

*Freestone Artisan*  
380 Bohemian Highway  
Freestone, CA 95472  
(707) 874-1030