

PETITION TO FINE, SUSPEND, OR	*	BEFORE THE ALCOHOLIC
REVOKE THE ALCOHOLIC	*	
BEVERAGE LICENSE OF WINE	*	BEVERAGE HEARING BOARD
SOURCE, LLC T/A JASON'S WINE	*	
& SPIRITS IN THE NAME OF	*	FOR
BINITA B. SHAH FOR A CLASS A	*	
BEER, WINE AND LIQUOR 7-DAY	*	HOWARD COUNTY, MARYLAND
OFF SALE LICENSE	*	
	*	Case No.: 25-22
	*	

DECISION AND ORDER

The Board of License Commissioners for Howard County, Maryland (the "Liquor Board"), pursuant to Rule 1.02(A) of the Liquor Board Rules and Regulations, has delegated the authority to hear and decide cases to the Alcoholic Beverage Hearing Board for Howard County, Maryland (the "Hearing Board").

On July 22, 2025, the Hearing Board heard the Petition of Howard County, Maryland and Detective Mark Baxter, the Alcoholic Beverage Inspector (collectively "Petitioners"), to Fine, Suspend or Revoke the Class A Beer, Wine and Liquor 7-day off sale license of Binita B. Shah (the "Licensee" or "Respondent"), held on behalf of Wine Source, LLC t/a Jason's Wine & Spirits ("Jason's Wine & Spirits"), located at 9339 Baltimore National Pike, Suites 4-10, Ellicott City, MD 21042.

The hearing was properly advertised, and the property posted pursuant to the Alcoholic Beverages Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland. The Licensee was represented by Mr. Chris DeCarlo, Esquire. The Alcoholic Beverage Inspector and ATCC Agent were represented by Tsega Girma, Esquire.

All of the documents on file were incorporated into the record by reference.

ALLEGATIONS

Allegations of the Petition are set forth below:

- On August 7, 2024, Detective Mark Baxter met with Agents David Marple and Mike Sofelkanik from the State of Maryland Alcohol, Tobacco and Cannabis Commission (ATCC), to conduct a retail inspection of Jason's Wine & Spirits.
- Upon entering the store, Detective Baxter and Agents Marple and Sofelkanik contacted the manager, Saurahb Patel, and advised him of the reason for the visit.
- During the inspection, products that were offered for sale that were either rare, allocated, or that might not be available in Maryland were identified, based on the ATCC Agents' training, knowledge and experience. The following products were found:
 - Two 750 mL bottles of Colonel E.H. Taylor Rye
 - One 750 mL bottle of Michter's Bourbon
 - One 750 mL bottle of Michter's Straight Rye
 - One 750 mL bottle of Lone Whisker Bourbon
 - One 375 mL bottle of Blanton's Bourbon
- The Agents explained to Mr. Patel that they had questions about the origin of the products and requested the specific invoices for them.
- After allowing much time to locate the invoices, Mr. Patel was unable to produce them. Agent Sofelkanik explained to Mr. Patel that his office would be seizing the products listed above that were not accounted for by way of an invoice from a licensed wholesaler and was provided a receipt for the seizure.
- The Respondent has committed the following violations:
 1. Liquor Board Rule 4.01(A) – Records;

2. Liquor Board Rule 4.04 – Compliance with Laws and Regulations;
3. Liquor Board Rule 4.08 – License Holder’s Responsibility;
4. Liquor Board Rule 5.08 – Acts Contrary to Law; and
5. Liquor Board Rule 5.11(A) – Relation with Wholesalers.

SUMMARY OF TESTIMONY

Agent Mike Sofelkanik, agent and inspector of the Maryland Alcohol, Tobacco and Cannabis Commission (ATCC), was sworn in and testified before the Hearing Board.

Agent Sofelkanik testified that he was looking for valid licenses and invoices during the routine inspection of Jason’s Liquors, and that he was unsure if Binita Shah was at the liquor store during that time. Agent Sofelkanik stated that he found 6 bottles of assorted liquor for which there were no purchase orders, and that the seized alcohol was currently in an evidence room, pending trial. Agent Sofelkanik stated that Mr. Patel was able to provide invoices for other liquor inventory, but that he had no inventory records for the 6 bottles in question. Agent Sofelkanik stated that upon further investigation he found wine inventory labels cut out, preventing discovery of how those bottles were procured and where they was being delivered to. Agent Sofelkanik testified to his incident report and errors in the Petition, and he stated that he checked 10 to 15 other products, of which all had appropriate invoices. Agent Sofelkanik stated that the licensee is required to keep accurate records for all alcohol on the licensed premises, that the business had recently been purchased, and that bulk transfer records were not provided. Mr. Sofelkanik stated that he did not receive any contact from the store owner after the inspection, that he prepared an inspection report, that the business records were orderly, and that the manager was cooperative.

Saurahb Patel, manager, was sworn in and testified before the Hearing Board.

Mr. Patel stated that he was present during the inspection, that he was asked questions, and that he was cooperative. Mr. Patel stated that during the inspection he did not have invoices for the 6 bottles, that the products were in a storage area, and that the liquor store was purchased in August 2023. Mr. Patel stated that the inventory was probably purchased as a part of the sale of the business, that the missing records for 4 of the 6 bottles in question were subsequently located, and that an email was sent with photos of those invoices within 2 days of the inspection. Mr. Patel testified to Southern Glazer's Wine & Spirits invoices, and he also testified to an email from RNDC which included purchase history data. Mr. Patel stated that he did not think the bottles were obtained from an unlawful source and that he now has proper inventory for all of the alcohol on-site. Mr. Patel testified that for a period of almost a year after the purchase of the business, they did not account for all of the inventory on the licensed premises.

Binita B. Shah, licensee, was sworn in and testified before the Hearing Board.

Ms. Shah testified that she purchased the business in August 2023 and that the inventory was included with the store. Ms. Shah testified to the Affidavit of Transferor document and stated that the 6 bottles were not unlawfully purchased or gifted by a customer. Ms. Shah stated that she understands her role as the resident agent and that all bottles currently in the store all have invoices. Ms. Shah stated that she sent an email with the missing invoices to the ATCC agent two days after the inspection, and that she also self-reported 2 other bottles that were unaccounted for, which she discarded. Ms. Shah stated that she was before the Hearing Board in June 2024 for a sale to a minor, and that she could not recall the penalties that were incurred. Ms. Shah stated that she knows that alcohol without proper records must be removed from the liquor store.

The following exhibits were entered into the record:

County Exhibits:

1. *ATCC Incident Report – August 14, 2024*

Joint Exhibits:

1. *Email from Binita Shah – August 9, 2024*

Licensee Exhibits:

1. *ATCC Inspection Report – August 7, 2024*
2. *Retail Alcohol Inspection Report by Det. Mark Baxter – August 7, 2024*
3. *Southern Glazer's Wine & Spirits Invoices – May 10, 2023 and December 1, 2023*
4. *Email and Purchase History Data from RNDC – August 8, 2024*
5. *Affidavit of Transferor (Bulk Sales) Document – August 31, 2023*

Based on the evidence presented at the hearing, the Alcoholic Beverage Hearing Board makes the following Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law:

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. The Hearing Board finds that Binita B. Shah is a Licensee on behalf of Wine Source, LLC t/a Jason's Wine & Spirits ("Jason's Wine & Spirits"), for a Class A Beer, Wine and Liquor 7-day off sale license located at 9339 Baltimore National Pike, Suites 4-10, Ellicott City, MD 21042.

2. Detective Mark Baxter, Petitioner, at the time of the Petition, was a sworn Howard County Police Officer, specially assigned and designated, pursuant to the applicable laws, as the Alcoholic Beverage Inspector for Howard County. In this capacity he has the obligation, duty and responsibility to investigate any licenses liquor establishment for any violations of the applicable liquor or other laws which may occur in the licensed establishment.

3. Howard County, Maryland is a chartered county, organized pursuant to law, and the authority, through the exercise of its police power, to enforce all of the laws relating to alcoholic beverages.

4. On or before May 1, 2024, Respondent applied for and received a Class A Beer, Wine and Liquor 7-day off sale License for Wine Source, LLC t/a Jason's Wine & Spirits, 9339 Baltimore National Pike, Suites 4-10, Ellicott City, MD 21042. Jason's Wine & Spirits is located in Howard County and is subject to the jurisdiction of the Board of License Commissioners for Howard County.

5. At all times relevant to these proceedings, Respondent was responsible for the operation of Jason's Wine and Spirits and was responsible for ensuring compliance with all local and State laws concerning the distribution, sale, and transfer of alcoholic beverages to members of the public.

6. On August 7, 2024, Detective Mark Baxter met with Agents David Marple and Mike Sofelkanik from the State of Maryland Alcohol, Tobacco and Cannabis Commission (ATCC), to conduct a retail inspection of Jason's Wine & Spirits.

7. Upon entering the store, Detective Baxter and Agents Marple and Sofelkanik contacted the manager, Saurabh Patel, and advised him of the reason for the visit.

8. During the inspection, products that were offered for sale that were either rare, allocated, or that might not be available in Maryland were identified based on the ATCC Agents' training, knowledge and experience. The following products were found:

- Two 750 mL bottles of Colonel E.H. Taylor Rye
- One 750 mL bottle of Michter's Bourbon
- One 750 mL bottle of Michter's Straight Rye

- One 750 mL bottle of Lone Whisker Bourbon
- One 375 mL bottle of Blanton's Bourbon

9. The Agents explained to Mr. Patel that they had questions about the origin of these products and requested the specific invoices for them.

10. After allowing much time to locate the invoices, Mr. Patel was unable to produce them. Agent Sofelkanik explained to Mr. Patel that his office would be seizing the products listed above that were not accounted for by way of an invoice from a licensed wholesaler and was provided a receipt for the seizure.

11. The Respondent has committed the following violations:

- a. Liquor Board Rule 4.01(A) – Records;
- b. Liquor Board Rule 4.04 – Compliance with Laws and Regulations;
- c. Liquor Board Rule 4.08 – License Holder's Responsibility; and
- d. Liquor Board Rule 5.11(A) – Relation with Wholesalers.

12. The Hearing Board finds that it is necessary to impose a fine of One Thousand and 00/100 Dollars (\$1,000) and a fee of Two Hundred Seventy and 00/100 Dollars (\$270) for the cost of the hearing as provided by Rule 7.05(B).

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

1. The Hearing Board concludes that Binita B. Shah is a Licensee on behalf of Wine Source, LLC t/a Jason's Wine & Spirits ("Jason's Wine & Spirits"), for a Class A Beer, Wine and Liquor 7-day off sale license located at 9339 Baltimore National Pike, Suites 4-10, Ellicott City, MD 21042.

2. The Hearing Board concludes that the Respondent has committed the following violations:

- a. Liquor Board Rule 4.01(A) – Records;
- b. Liquor Board Rule 4.04 – Compliance with Laws and Regulations;
- c. Liquor Board Rule 4.08 – License Holder’s Responsibility; and
- d. Liquor Board Rule 5.11(A) – Relation with Wholesalers.

3. The Hearing Board concludes that it is necessary to impose a fine of One Thousand and 00/100 Dollars (\$1,000) and a fee of Two Hundred Seventy and 00/100 Dollars (\$270) for the cost of the hearing as provided by Rule 7.05(B).

ORDER

For the foregoing reasons, and upon finding a violation of Liquor Board Rules 4.01(A), 4.04, 4.08, and 5.11(A), it is this 28th day of August, 2025, by the Alcoholic Beverage Hearing Board of Howard County **ORDERED:**

1. That a **FINE of One Thousand and 00/100 Dollars (\$1,000) and a FEE of Two Hundred Seventy and 00/100 Dollars (\$270) is HEREBY IMPOSED** upon Binita B. Shah (the “Licensee” or “Respondent”), on behalf of Wine Source, LLC t/a Jason’s Wine & Spirits (“Jason’s Wine & Spirits”), located at 9339 Baltimore National Pike, Suites 4-10, Ellicott City, MD 21042 and **SHALL BE PAID NO LATER THAN September 30 , 2025.**

ANY PERSON AGGRIEVED BY THIS DECISION AND ORDER MAY APPEAL THE DECISION TO THE LIQUOR BOARD WITHIN 10 DAYS OF THE DATE OF THE DECISION, IN ACCORD WITH RULE 6.14 OF THE HOWARD COUNTY LIQUOR BOARD RULES AND REGULATIONS.

ATTEST:

**ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE HEARING
BOARD OF HOWARD COUNTY,
MARYLAND**

Kel L. Berg
Kel L. Berg
Board Administrator

/S/
Steven Chen, Chairperson

/S/
Steve Hunt, Vice-Chairperson

**REVIEWED BY HOWARD COUNTY
OFFICE OF LAW
GARY W. KUC
COUNTY SOLICITOR**

/S/
Ed Coleman, Member

/S/
Beth Johnson, Member

/S/
Hyunjae Shin, Esquire
Senior Assistant County Solicitor

/S/
Claire Kim, Member