



Wine Tourism Development Information

Creating appeal: a visitor friendly cellar door

Being distinctive and memorable to the visitor

There are hundreds of cellar door wineries in New South Wales. What is going to make yours memorable to the visitor? Think about the wineries, or B&B's that you have visited – how many can you remember clearly? Which ones have you revisited? What makes a winery/cellar door memorable?

There are a number of ways of being distinctive and memorable for your visitors:

- The design & physical appearance of your winery/cellar door and its setting within the surrounding environment or landscape
- The ambience generated internally
- The service and atmosphere generated by your staff
- The product – the wines themselves.

It is not generally enough to have only one of the above to create a memorable experience for the visitor. The wines may be very good, but if the service is abrupt, if people feel intimidated, or if the appearance of the winery is uninviting, it is more likely that either you will be forgotten in a few days, or will only be commented on negatively when your visitors are asked by their friends how they enjoyed their visit to the wineries.

Creating a good first impression

The Entrance

First impressions matter. How easy are you to find? Do you have adequate signage from all major roads leading to your cellar door? You should check this with your visitors and the tourist information centre. You know how to find your place, but what about a visitor who has never even been to your region before.

Signage

- Those at the front gate set the tone – the style of your sign, the information on it (such as opening hours) – all create a first impression.

Car park

- Mud spattered shoes do not get a winery visit off to a good start. The car park does not have to be sealed, but it must be well drained and pot holes filled in regularly. "Where do I park" is the first thing a visitor thinks of. If it is difficult to

park or there is confusion about where to park, it does not create a good impression.

Landscaping

- The style, maintenance and look of the landscaping also create a first impression. A few barrels with some flowers is most likely forgettable. If you are interested in gardens, make yours a feature of your cellar door, but ensure it is well maintained.

The look from outside – the building itself

The look of your building can make you memorable or forgettable. Decide on a style that reflects your product's image. It may be historic, folksy, rustic, modern, cottage, imposing, or grand, but it should be authentic. Attention to detail, creativity, functionality and innovation are more important than grand design and spending a fortune on an architectural statement. A colorbond shed could, with clever design, landscaping and layout, be exciting and welcoming, but it takes imagination and professional help.

Enhancing existing facilities

- If an existing facility is being considered, and it has visibly become tired and run down, consider using similar principles to renovate or revitalise the facility - either externally, internally or both.

Consistency of image

- Your cellar door design and "look" should reflect your product's image and be consistent with your label design. Spend as much time and expertise on getting your cellar door design and furnishing right as you spend on your label, especially if your cellar door is your principal retail outlet.

Attention to the outdoor areas

- Outside facilities, such as places for people to linger on a terrace, a place for picnics, and especially children's play areas are facilities to be considered. Many wine tourists have children who get bored easily – if they have somewhere safe to play outside, the parents will have more time to taste your wines, relax and buy.
- Indoor-outdoor connections and relationships - both visual and physical - such as are achieved through astute structural & design linkages (doorways, windows with a scenic outlook, etc) should be explored to further enhance the overall feel and visual/physical flow of the place.

Interior Ambience

Aim to create an inviting atmosphere upon entry to the cellar door – include design elements and features that feed a variety of the visitor's senses. By way of example, if situated in a cold climate area, consider the merits of a hearty fire and appropriately positioned fireplace (assuming this can be achieved in a manner which does not impact on the wines).

Walls

- The walls should have more on them than certificates or medals won at wine shows. These are found everywhere to the point of losing their value.
- Wall space can be used to educate the visitor on your wines in a subtle and interesting way, such as a history of the vineyard – old photos – if you have a winery with significant history and heritage.

Wine information

- Information on grape varieties – there are some posters available from peak organisations, or make your own collation. For example, If Cabernet is your premium product, make up a Cabernet poster – why you grow it, pictures of the bunches, picking time, how the wine is made, how your climate influences the flavour – wine tourists are hungry for this type of information.
- Develop a montage of “A year in the vineyard” with photos and a small amount of text from pruning in winter, to budburst, flowering/fruit set, veraison, to harvest and autumn colours. These can make beautiful posters and be educational.
- A montage on “How our wine is made” explaining the basics of winemaking using photos and a display of some items used in winemaking, will make your cellar door interesting without the need to give winery tours.
- Articles or a poster on “What makes our wines special” can be used to market your leading products.

Using and promoting local talent

- Link up with local artists – you might have sufficient room to have a display by a local artist – ceramics, woodturning, fabrics, glass and metal works or paintings. These exhibitions could change every few months, or you might develop a relationship with one artist, where you become a way of showing local culture and make your cellar door

more interesting at the same time. Many local artists are really keen to have their work displayed (particularly with the prospect of a sale and these could also be commissionable). A useful partnership of art and wine could result. Local artists can also create distinctive furnishings, fittings, wall features/hangings, etc., to add character to your facility.

Promoting the best of the wider region

- Information or a display on the local region is another idea for making your cellar door a total experience – photos of local national parks or scenic attractions, a display of heritage items or similar gives the visitor something more than just a tasting room/retail wine shop.

Considering families

- If you have room, a small children's play area of just a toy box with some toys such as duplo, will be really appreciated by young couples with small children. They need to be able to keep their children nearby, but will not stay and taste/buy if the children get restive. You don't need to turn your sophisticated cellar door into a kindergarten, and alienate the older couples, but just a small acknowledgement that small children need to be entertained may bring big rewards from their parents.

This series of Wine Tourism Development Factsheets was developed from Wine Tourism Workshops conducted by Tourism New South Wales in 8 wine regions of NSW in June 2000. The workshops were prepared and presented by project consultant Juliet Cullen of Effective Marketing Communication.

For more information concerning tourism product development, obtain a copy of Tourism New South Wales' publications list and order form. Phone (02) 9931 1111.



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