



Wine Tourism Development Information

Providing a total visitor experience

Motivation and expectations of visitors to wineries

People visit wineries for a range of reasons, but these generally include the following:

- To have a good time – entertainment
- To learn a bit more about wine generally and the particular winery & wine region
- To taste the wines and perhaps buy some

While a cellar door is a retail outlet for the winery or vineyard, it is much more than that for the visitor. To the visitor, it is an experience, and not an isolated experience – it is part of a wider experience of the region they are visiting – Hunter Valley, Orange, or Griffith for example.

The essential difference between a cellar door in a wine region and a bottle shop in a capital city, is that the visitor to a cellar door wants much more from the visit than simply to purchase a bottle of wine. They want a personal experience they cannot get at the local bottle shop back home. Higher expectations also arise in relation to the personal feel and attention levels of the customer service provided.

The visitor arrives with certain expectations – that they will be able to “browse” (taste) the wines; that they will learn something in an informal, entertaining way and not feel awkward or intimidated; that they will discover a new taste sensation, a new wine to take home.

The visitor context and frame of mind

A visit to the local bottle shop is made in the context of shopping, but a visit to a cellar door is made in the context of leisure, entertainment and a holiday. The customer is in a much different frame of mind when they enter a cellar door than when they visit a bottle shop.

To successfully meet the expectations of such visitors, and to make sales, the cellar door operator needs to understand this difference. While the aim of the cellar door operator may be to sell wine to the visitor, the approach must meet the visitors needs for education and entertainment. The visitor wants to be engaged, to interact with the cellar door staff, in a way that

does not necessarily happen to the same extent (if at all) in a retail shop.

A cellar door visit as part of a wider tourism experience

Most visitors to wineries do so as part of a day trip, short break or weekend away. They don't drive for 2 hours just to buy a bottle of wine. They come to a region to experience its character, its food, its lifestyle, its cultural attractions, to visit friends and relatives, and increasingly to unwind and relax. A desire to have fun and escape the stresses of the city can often be involved. Something as simple as a change of scenery and a chance for romance also play a role for many. Clearly there is an emotional investment in a weekend away, so there are greater expectations of every aspect of it.

The visit to a winery is just one of many experiences the visitor will have in their 48 hour stay in a wine region. Just as important will be:

- Accommodation
- Dining experiences, including cafes, takeaways, coffee
- Hospitality of operators and locals
- Variety, quality and authenticity of attractions and activities
- Ease of getting around – signage and roads – and ease of finding information and maps (that *work* from the perspective of a first time visitor not a more familiar local resident)
- Availability and provision of trusted, reliable advice on all of the above

Visitor satisfaction and positive ‘word of mouth’

If any of these components of the experience do not meet the visitor's expectations, or are poor quality, the experience as a whole will be downgraded and the wider region suffers. With repeat visits and word of mouth recommendation being the most important motivators for tourists, a poor experience - with for example dining - may overshadow the best efforts of the cellar door staff.

The tourism experience is made up of all these components and while people may be somewhat forgiving of poor signage, they

are unlikely to recommend a visit to a region where getting lost trying to find the winery is a real possibility.

Strategic Partnerships

Cellar door operators and wineries, therefore, do not operate in a vacuum from other tourist operators. The person running the guest house, the restaurateur, the hot air balloon operator, the golf course manager and the cellar door operator are all servicing the same person in the course of 24 hours. All are members of the same team – the team promoting its region and its own particular products.

For new and emerging wine regions, it is important to take an inventory of the elements of the local tourism industry. Find out which accommodation places, restaurants and attractions are likely to meet the needs of your winery visitors. Who has the same quality and standards that you have? Link with those people to ensure that your visitors enjoy their entire stay.

Possible initiatives

- Develop partnerships with like-minded operators.
- Make sure that if you operate a B&B or café, that you have visited the other operators, such as wineries, galleries, museums. Take yourself on a tourism experience and judge for your self if it makes the grade.
- Work closely with the local tourist information centre to promote both your region and your operation/product.
- Identify complementary operators whose products & services can enhance your visitor's experience.

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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