

WINE TOURISM: WHERE TERROIR AND
TRAVELLERS MEET

DATE : **JULY 2013**

Would you prefer...red or white?

Young or more matured?

Wooded or fruity?

Full bodied or light?

Dry or sweet?

Strong nose or soft?

New world or old?

Californian or Chilean?

Swan Valley or Stellenbosch?

Chicken or beef?

Business or pleasure?

Over the past two decades, the coming together of the wine industry and tourism has proven to be a perfect blend of economic sectors. The innate characteristics of winelands make for natural points of attraction for travellers seeking the unique home-grown sights of a destination. Whether located alongside jagged cliffs, tucked into mountain terrain, or in vast open valleys, standing poetically and symmetrically under sun-nurtured skies the world's vineyards offer destinations some of the most picturesque photo-moments.

The not-so-long-ago traveller experience of *come, pose, click, post* and *carry-on* has, however, been changing quite dramatically as the opportunity of wine tourism becomes more and more clear and compelling, for all around the table.

Attracting an array of wine drinkers, and non-drinkers, alike, winelands are becoming a much sought after destination for travellers far and wide. From day visitors and quick get-away stay seekers, to destination wedding guests, wine tasting course goers and festival fans, meeting attendees to conference planners, the beauty of the experience extends beyond the bottle itself.

As a result, with growing entrepreneurial spirit, wine regions are increasingly opening their estate doors to visitors, as well as their tasting rooms and meeting rooms, their amphitheaters and artisan kitchens, their gardens, their gift shops, their grand histories, and more and more so, their gabled home-style hotels with heavenly views. Working hand in hand with the tourism industry, the wine industry is finding new ways of building their brands and business models, while destinations are finding a way to strengthen their identity, diversity, year-round viability of offering, competitiveness, and, also, brands.

And let us not forget the power of the silver screen on this increasingly sexy and sought after tourism segment. Now that is something worth raising a glass to!

A NATURAL PAIRING

But the toasting does not stop there.

Together, wine and tourism have the ability to unlock significantly enhanced economic activity, across a nation's industry framework.

At the surface, the benefits of promotion of the wine industry through tourism are rather transparent: increased exposure to a nation's wines opens the opportunity for greater trade and export, greater brand exposure in-destination and when the traveller returns home. With greater

demand comes the stimulation of greater supply – more growing, more processing, more bottle and other materials manufacturing, more packing, more shipping. More earnings. More jobs. More investment. More opportunity.

Add in tourism, and the opportunity growth becomes more deeply rooted. Reason being, when it comes to wine tourism, growth occurs at many levels:

- Economically: increasing year-round economic activity of not just the local wine industry, but also the restaurant trade, hotels and B&Bs, art shops, local wine / cheese / other specialist food stores, spas, souvenir shops, and more.
- Socially: mobilizing community participation in the tourism sector, creating enhanced sense of belonging, contribution and opportunity,
- Environmentally: protecting, preserving, and proudly promoting the natural setting and all of its inter-dependent parts, and
- Competitively: creating a unique platform for regional identity and attraction of activity.

For all of these reasons, wine and tourism make for a natural pairing...like fireplaces and Merlot, sunsets and Chardonnay, destination visitation and job creation.

PEOPLE, PLACE AND POSSIBILITY, ALL BOTTLED UP

Across the globe, a number of destinations have become well known for their wine tourism offerings. Some *Old World*, some *New*, these wine tourism destinations are building an offering, and industry, that now act as a critical complement to the total destination proposition.

An invaluable niche segment, wine tourism today, in many parts of the world, drives the identity and interest of regions. Why make the trip? Indeed, the wines are exceptional. But it goes far beyond that...

Through a nation's wine tourism industry, a country's approach to life is showcased – appreciation of natural environments, gastronomy, enology, and the art of pausing to enjoy the '*here and now*'. For some, the belief is simply this: those who know, and love, their wines are just that much more sophisticated in, well, appreciating the finer things in life.

Add in a few promotional ingredients, and a hint of ego by association, and you have the makings of a leading wine tourism destination all bottled up!

Wine tourism has successfully evolved "*wanna see*" into "*wanna be*."

And "*wanna learn*".

Over and above the quest to taste some of the region's finest wines and cuisine, wine tourists are able to feed a number of interests through a wine tourism experience, gaining greater awareness and appreciation for:

- The history of a place – its wine growing past, its architecture, its art, its culture
- The natural wonder of a region – the breathtaking settings that accompany wine growing areas
- The celebration of the grape – wine related events, seasonal/harvest times of come-together, festivals
- The wellness of wine – the fresh air, fine food, spa and slow life feeling fabulous of wine region lifestyle

To get a real taste of the vineyard is to be able to drink in the total wine tourism experience.

THE PERSONAL PLEASURE OF THE PALATE

So where in the world can one most often hear the glasses clinking and cameras clicking? Preferences are as diverse as the grapes themselves...

Great Wine Capitals <http://greatwinecapitals.com/> one of the world's leading networks behind the promotion of wine tourism in established wine producing regions, lists their Top 10 wine tourism destinations worldwide. From Bordeaux to Napa, Christchurch to Cape Town, their listing reflects the remarkable global reach of wine tourism.

Offering a different short-list, *BK Wine Tours* <http://www.bkwinetours.com> lists their must-visits, stretching from Austria to Australia, and across the USA, with stops in Europe.

And then there is *Wine Magazine's* 10 best Wine Destinations as recently revealed on CNN.com/travel <http://travel.cnn.com/wine-mag-publishes-10-best-wine-destinations-2013-368121>

But what about Canada's Niagara on the Lake?

Or Santa Barbara's Wine Country, literally put on the map by the 2004 Indy film hit "*Sideways*", and that now even boasts a '*Sideways Wine Tour*' retracing the famous footsteps and wine choices of the movie's stars and storyline.

http://www.santabarbaraca.com/includes/media/docs/Sidways_Map-Apr10-web.pdf ?

Ultimately, like wine itself, and travel, deciding on the 'perfect' wine tourism destination is all a matter of personal taste.

PRECIOUS FINDS

Rather like a wine cellar's private reserve, one of the wonderful aspects of wine tourism is its ability to lead travellers to tiny, lesser known, parts of a destination. As an example two special finds of the Cape wine industry in South Africa.

The Cape winelands are well known by both avid travellers and wine aficionados across the globe. The Stellenbosch, Paarl and Franschhoek regions are high on the list of 'must see' attractions for visitors from across the country, continent and world. But nested within the winelands are a number of special spots which, once discovered, leave visitors feeling a particular sense of blessing.

One such vineyard is, interestingly, unknowingly driven past more than tourists would be happy to know. Why? Because of its location in the unique-soil, seaside region of Walkers Bay. Most tourists making the trek down this stretch of road focus their gaze out the right hand side of the car, looking for signs of whales as they drive to the Oceanside town of Hermanus. For a rare, delicious treat, however, turn left! And follow the signs to the award winning Bouchard Finlayson boutique winery <http://www.bouchardfinlayson.co.za/> Established in 1989, Bouchard Finlayson is nestled on the side of a fynbos-carpeted mountain – a proven perfect location for the production of Pinot Noir. The elegant winery turns tastings into lingering, favourite holiday memories – especially when the tale of the wines is shared by the winery's absolutely charming winemaker, Peter Finlayson.

Another special find? A winner of the Great Wine Capital award for 2013 that has turned a winery into a magnificent celebration of wine history, lifestyle and life itself: La Motte <http://www.la-motte.com/> Found in the lovely Franschhoek Valley, and with a history dating back to 1695, the wine farm was bought in 1970 by one of the nation's greatest industrialists and conservationists –



COMPASS – Insights into Tourism Branding

the late Dr. Anton Rupert – who applied his vision and passion towards the estate's remarkable restoration. With the next generation of the family now at the helm, today the estate stands tall and graceful as a winelands-based home of cuisine, culture, art, architecture, history, music and heritage...and exceptional wine.

As demonstrated by these wineries, and thousands across the globe, the beauty of the wine tourism offering goes far beyond the grape.

Here's to a niche segment of tourism that works seamlessly cross-sectorally to stimulate the economic, social, cultural and competitive advancement of the destination.

Cheers!

- ENDS -