

## **Paper 7: Establishing a Conceptual Model For The Sustainable Wine District**

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### **Introduction and Overview**

Tourism in regional areas provides an excellent opportunity for economic development, employment and regional branding and local industry growth. Wine tourism has gained momentum over the past decade and is a major tourism activity (Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 2011). In 2006–07, sales of Australian wine totalled approximately 1.23 billion litres with table sparkling and fortified wines constituting more than 90% per cent of local wine consumption. Wine production is a significant industry in Australia employing 28 000 people (Queensland Government, 2008) and generating related employment in the retail, wholesale, tourism and hospitality industries. Despite this

significant economic significance in Australia, only limited success has been enjoyed by smaller regional centres. Some major regional areas such as the Margaret River, McLaren Vale, The Great Southern Region and the Hunter Valley have had success branding as both a tourism and wine tourism destination whereas smaller regional centres such as the Granite Belt (Queensland Wine Industry Association 2009) have struggled for the same level of awareness, notoriety and success. Many untested reasons have been suggested with government programs designed to assist winemakers in achieving profitable cellar door operations and maximising cross-promotional opportunities with aligned business operators running within the wine regions (Queensland Government 2009). Irrespective of these practical programs little specific academic research into regional wine tourism has been undertaken (Getz & Brown, 2006).

It is argued that a region as a destination brand, the quality of product and the wine brand and popularity are the drivers of visitation (Grape and Wine Research and Development Corporation 2011; Seoho & Crompton, 1990; Woodside & Lysonski, 1989). Seoho & Crompton (1990) suggested these as the basis for the evoked set and attitude toward a destination. Current research has also examined destination loyalty and choice by examining the causal relationships among destination image, tourist attribute and overall satisfaction, and destination loyalty (Chi, & Qu, 2008). The study supported the notion that image plays a key role in satisfaction, visitation destination and loyalty. Other empirical research finds that the destination's image and one's self-concept the tendency for the tourist to visit that place initially (Beerli, Meneses & Gil 2007). With wine tourism it could be proposed that the self concept of the wine tourist as a wine buff, the image of regions as a wine producer and wine brand quality will all play a role in their wine region choice as a destination.

Destinations are a combination of tourism products including accommodation, transportation, shopping, climate, attractions, culture and tours, and infrastructure that offer an integrated experience to the traveller (Cassidy 2009). In most instances, destinations are regarded as well defined geographical areas or regions. According to Buhalis (2000), it is now recognised that a destination has a 'perceptual concept' which the consumer can interpret subjectively according to their past experiences, cultural background, reason for visit and educational background. Hence it is important to develop the socio-demographic profile of the wine tourist to the wine regions of Queensland and so develop an appreciation of the relevant and potential market segments targeted for each region. Little research has looked specifically at profiling buyer behaviour, destination choice and the wine tourist or examined the drivers of image, brand and buyer behaviour in the smaller less known regions based on this premise. This research aims to offer insight into the wine-tourist in the context of the smaller, less known regional centre which has been positioned to offer a more boutique orientated product. This research will position the need to advance much needed knowledge on the profile of the regional wine consumer and offer a set of propositions positioning future research and strategies. This paper aims to establish a set of topic areas and a system of relationship for empirical studies for research that will contribute to knowledge in this area. Overall, a research program in this area will offer strategies and recommendations to aid the regional wine producer and regional tourism and support development of the smaller regions. This paper will culminate in offering a research agenda and set of propositions that will identify the way forward.

### **Discussion and propositions**

This paper offers a brief overview of a critical set of factors that influence the success of small

regional wine tourism as a destinations choice, cellar door sales and future retail sales with each these variables as factors that would contribute to regional revenue and growth. We suggest that several factors worth examining in a future research agenda that will advance the linkages between the wine tourist, the destination and the vineyard in wine tourism wine sales and overall regional development. The paper proposes a nascent conceptual framework for future empirical research for the smaller regional wine districts. As discussed issues of wine user segmentation, improved quality and innovation of the wine and wine practices, alignment and advancement of services offering including wine related and non wine related, image of the wine brands, wine region and destination, cooperative branding for the region and the wine and cooperation of regional management systems all collectively play some part in the development of the region and sales success. The following model and propositions in figure one give a brief overview of factors for future research.

The following propositions emerge from the extant literature. They are as follows:

1. Ownership and ability of winery (Carlsen, 2004)., marketing collaboration between regions, and brand of the region as a wine producer (Dimara, & Skouras, 2005; Charters & Ali-Knight, 2002).. have a positive relationships with wine brand.
2. Marketing collaboration between regions (Aylward, 2005) and ancillary services (Hall, Sharples, Cambourne & Macionis, 2000; Getz & Brown, 2006) provided have a positive relationship with brand as a tourist destination.
3. Marketing collaboration between regions (Crawford 2008) and ancillary services and brand perception of wine destination (Lofman 1991; Beames 2003) has a positive relationship with wine tourism destination choice.
4. Perception of wine quality (Lockshin & Spawton, 2001). wine tourism (Dimara, & Skouras, 2005; Charters& Ali-Knight, 2002).and region as a destination all have a positive impact on

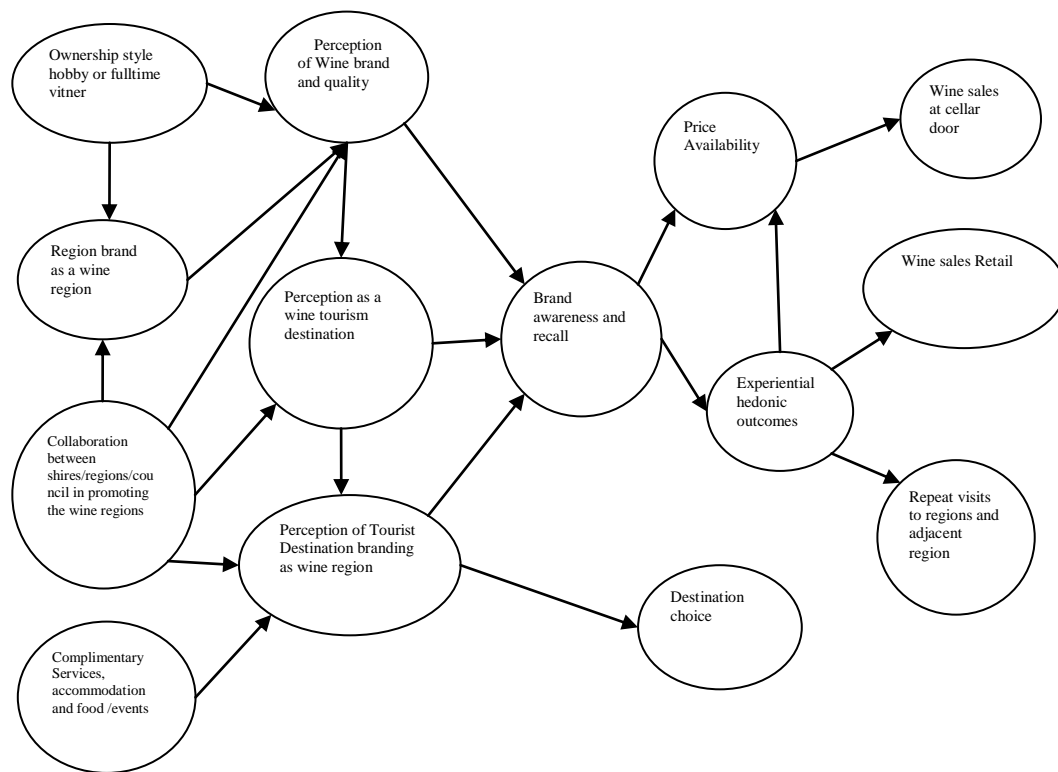
destination choice.

5. Perception of the region as a wine producer (Dimara, & Skouras, 2005; Ali-Knight & Charters, 2002), and tourist destination have a positive relationship to brand recall and choice as a destination.
6. Wine brand (Lockshin & Spawton, 2001). tourism brand and destination (Hall, Sharples, Cambourne & Macionis, 2000; Getz & Brown, 2006), brand all have a positive relationship on brand recall and awareness.
7. Brand recall and awareness of wine tourism, wine brand (Lockshin & Spawton, 2001) and destination (Hall, Sharples, Cambourne & Macionis, 2000; Getz & Brown, 2006) has a positive relationship to destination choice.
8. Brand recall and awareness of wine tourism, wine brand (Lockshin & Spawton, 2001).and destination ((Hall, Sharples, Cambourne & Macionis, 2000; Getz & Brown, 2006)) moderated by price and availability and hedonic outcomes has a positive relationship to cellar door purchase.
9. Brand recall and awareness of wine tourism (Charters & Ali-Knight, 2002), wine brand (Lockshin & Spawton, 2001) and destination (Carlsen, 2004). moderated by price and availability and hedonic outcomes has a positive relationship on retail purchase.
10. Brand recall and awareness of wine tourism (Hall, Sharples, Cambourne & Macionis, 2000; Getz & Brown, 2006), wine brand and destination moderated by price and availability and hedonic outcomes has a positive relationship on repeat visits.

This research will provide wide ranging, practical and sustainable benefits to regional wine marketers, policy makers, regional government tourism bodies and the allied wine groups to develop the quality branding and marketing of wine products in the smaller regions. This area of research is innovative and original being the first of its type looking at the system of relationships presented. There is no doubt that smaller regional producer will

be advantaged by research of this type

Figure 1 Conceptual model: the proposed system of relationships for Regional Wine Tourism.



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