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CASE STUDY 3.1

Tasmanian wine: Best served with a unique cultural experience

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Consumers seek experiences or products that satisfy their needs. Not surprisingly, there are many different categories of needs, wants and desires, which cater for the differences between people and how they choose to spend their lives. Marketers can better understand, and even predict, consumer behaviour by researching the type of needs and motives consumer's experience. Human beings have a set of basic needs—for

example, food, water, and safety—and generally these don't change. However, the more complex forces and motives that drive behaviour do change depending on the situation and the individual. Furthermore, consumers can be compelled to buy certain products and behave in certain ways because of either rational or emotional reasons, or some combination of both. Products that connect to consumers' emotions, such as wine, art, music, and food go beyond the fulfilment of basic needs. Products in these categories provide consumers with the opportunity to satisfy more personal and subjective goals such as their desire for pleasure, status and knowledge.

In Tasmania, a number of wine producers are using their understanding of this facet of consumer behaviour to expand the range of cultural experiences available at their cellar door or vineyard. They realise that drinking premium wine, consuming fine food and attending cultural events is a logical mix of products and experiences, particularly for the middle-aged, educated and high-income market segment. This marketing strategy enables them to not only enhance the wine

▼ Image of Josef Chromy vineyard



Josef Chromy Wines, like many Tasmanian vineyards, host arts, music and cultural events in their vineyard and cellar door gardens.

Source: Kim Lehman.

tasting experience, but attract a wider range of consumers and tourists that have higher-order needs and aspirations. When these consumers visit the cellar door or attend a winery event, the wine producer can begin a relationship with them. This is then maintained through the use of marketing communication tools such as exclusive wine club offers, email newsletters and social media updates.

The Tasmanian wine industry

Over the past few decades, the quality and quantity of wine produced in Australia has increased. Simultaneously, lifestyle changes have led to wine becoming a beverage that many consumers now appreciate and enjoy. As Australia's only island state, Tasmania is heavily influenced by its maritime climate and separation from the mainland. Many gourmet food and beverage products thrive in Tasmania thanks to its reliable rainfall, fertile soils and long growing seasons. These climatic conditions are ideal for growing certain grape varieties like riesling, pinot noir and chardonnay. Many people are surprised to learn that the Tasmanian cool climate wine industry actually started in the 1880s, when an ex-convict planted a vineyard just north of Hobart. Over the next 100 or so years the small number of Tasmanian winemakers struggled, for a combination of climatic and social reasons. But in the late 1950s the industry was rescued, thanks largely to a Frenchman in the North and an Italian textile merchant in the South of the state. Today, Tasmania is home to approximately 160 licensed wine producers¹. The industry is still very small in scale when compared with other Australian wine regions in South Australia, Victoria and New South Wales. However, Tasmania's small size complements the premium products it offers. In fact, many producers struggle to keep up with the demand for their wine each vintage. In addition, the prices for both Tasmanian grapes and wine are among some of the highest in Australia¹.

In the past five or so years the state has developed a reputation as a premium wine tourism destination, where consumers travel to regions with the aim of exploring vineyards, cellar doors and pursuing other wine related activity². The opportunities for wine tourism are particularly strong in Northern Tasmania, where more than 30 wine producers have established a wine touring route in and around the Tamar Valley. A key characteristic of wine tourism in Tasmania is that the majority of cellar doors are staffed by the owners or winemakers themselves. They are also located within close proximity to superior food growing regions, so the opportunity for consumers to enjoy a combined food and wine experience is a definite drawcard.

▼ Image of A Day on the Green poster



A Day on the Green is a travelling summer music festival, attracting consumers who enjoy a combined music/wine experience.

Source: Reproduced with permission of Roundhouse Entertainment.

Recent research of Australian consumer perceptions of Tasmania revealed that the state is well known for its association with history and heritage, and food and beverages.³ The Tasmanian government and Brand Council are supportive of the trend towards cultural tourism. This is evident in Tasmania's tourism campaigns, some of which have adopted a strong arts and cultural theme. For example, in September 2012 a nostalgic and 1970s-inspired series of print advertisements was launched aimed at attracting couples seeking an enriching and romantic experience.⁴ Visitors have also flocked to the state following the establishment of the Museum of Old and New Art (MONA). In the summer months, Tasmania also plays host to a number of food, music and wine festivals.

What do cultural/wine consumers seek?

It is a fact of life that we all seek different experiences and spend our time and money in many different ways. Consumers vary regarding the choices they make, and their level of involvement with product categories. Understanding consumer involvement helps marketers predict consumer needs and motivations. For example, high-involvement consumers are generally motivated by the pleasure they receive from the product, rather than its purely functional utility.⁵ Consumers of aesthetic products such as art and entertainment would also fall into this high-involvement category.

The wine market comprises a mix of consumers ranging from new wine drinkers to wine enthusiasts and connoisseurs. Wine connoisseurs enjoy consuming all things related to wine and typically purchase wine from merchants or direct from the producer rather than a large liquor store.⁶ For premium wine producers in Tasmania, connoisseurs represent an ideal consumer to target because they have a 'keen thirst for knowledge' and are typically high income earners, university-educated and are more mature-aged.⁷ On both a demographic and psychographic level, wine connoisseurs are quite similar to art enthusiasts, who have

been found to visit museums and art galleries because of their desire for new experiences, aesthetic pleasure and to expand their knowledge.⁸ The needs and wants of cultural consumers have also been described as hedonistic and self-gratifying, rather than functional and utilitarian.⁹

Research surrounding the consumption of wine indicates that consumer behaviour depends not only on the product itself, but also on the situation and environment in which wine is consumed.¹⁰ Such situational and environmental factors can, therefore, add to the consumer's cultural experience. Typically cellar doors are located near the vineyard, which itself can be an aesthetically pleasing environment. Cellar doors or tasting rooms have a fundamental role to play in wine and food marketing. Not only do they provide consumers with a purpose-built facility for trialling and purchasing a product, but they are also a starting point to an ongoing relationship with the wine brand and wine experience.

However, wine producers can create more value through offering consumers a bundle of self-gratifying products and experiences at the cellar door. Indeed, an increasing number of Australian wineries have restaurants, accommodation and retail outlets within or near their cellar doors.¹¹ Offering such a range of enriching experiences is likely to trigger a desire in the consumer to become more involved in the product category and learn more about wine. Clearly, then, in order to fully satisfy their customer's needs and wants, wine producers must engage them (while they are at the cellar door or vineyard) by offering other, hedonistic cultural experiences that match those that wine provides.

Cellar door experiences

Resulting from the demand for more enriching experiences, many Tasmanian wine producers are expanding the range of experiences available at their cellar door. As such, Tasmanian wineries and vineyards are evolving into a hub of leisure activity. Depending on the season or day of the week, wine consumers can stroll around gardens, listen to live music, admire artwork and enjoy restaurant-quality food. This combination of cultural activity not only satisfies the consumers' basic needs, but also adds a strong element of pleasure to the experience. For wine producers, displaying art in their cellar door or hosting musicians in their vineyard also enables them to target a broader range of consumers, some of whom may not be wine drinkers.

Located just outside of Hobart, Meadowbank Estate offers consumers a rich and entertaining wine experience. As one of Tasmania's largest cellar doors, Meadowbank has a strong affiliation with the arts sector, evidenced by its regular art exhibitions, concerts, special wine tastings and food and wine events.¹² Within the cellar door consumers can opt for a traditional wine tasting, or match sample wines with seasonal produce prepared in the onsite restaurant. They can also learn about the history of Tasmania's wine industry in the Loft Gallery upstairs, which features a timber mosaic floor piece titled 'Flawed History' by Tasmanian artist Tom Samek. Meadowbank's founder Gerald Ellis said at the opening of the floor piece in 2005 that he commissioned the quirky artwork as a way of putting some fun back into wine.¹³ This supports his overall wine philosophy, which is that wine should be enjoyed with one or all of the following: good company, food, music, art and ambience.¹⁴ Meadowbank Estate clearly provides a range of cultural experiences that engage and satisfy consumers. By doing so, they also increase the chance that their cellar door visitors will purchase a Meadowbank wine in the future, and possibly return to Tasmania as a wine tourist.

Moore's Hill, in northern Tasmania's Tamar Valley, offers visitors to its cellar door a cultural experience through its connections with local artists. For the past two years Moore's Hill has worked closely with the West Tamar Arts Group, through hosting various art exhibitions in its picturesque cellar door. Moore's Hill is also one of five Tamar Valley wine producers to take part in the biennial ArtEntWine festival, launched in October 2012.¹⁵ This new initiative takes place over three weeks and involves wine producers collaborating with 20 local artists to offer a combined art, wine, history and cultural experience. Consumers can also purchase a 'New Vintage in the Valley' tasting passport, which enters them into a prize draw if they visit the cellar doors of all five participating wineries during the festival.

Josef Chromy Wines, also in northern Tasmania, has developed a reputation for hosting a range of cultural activities at its cellar door and in its expansive vineyard. Most notably is the 'Day on the Green' travelling music festival, which since 2010 has included the Relbia-based winery in its national tour. This successful rock concert series attracts thousands of locals and visitors to Josef Chromy, where patrons can consume estate-grown wine and gourmet food while being entertained by international artists. Past headline acts have included Tom Jones, Blondie and the Pretenders.¹⁶ Josef Chromy Wines also offers a range of other cultural experiences such as film festivals and Sunday winery tours. One recent addition to their cultural calendar are degustation dinners in its restaurant, where local chefs prepare regional dishes to complement Josef Chromy's award winning wines. Described as 'hedonistic evenings', the events combine a 5-course dinner with the release of a new Josef Chromy sparkling wine, and take place two or three times a year.¹⁷

Arguably the most hedonistic experience in Tasmania's wine industry (and perhaps Australia's) is available at the Moorilla Estate cellar door in Hobart. Moorilla was one of the first serious wineries to be established in Tasmania and has a long history of combining art and wine, with music concerts being held on the grounds, and a small antiquities museum housed in a Roy Grounds designed building. In January 2011 the Museum of Old and New Art (MONA) opened and Moorilla Estate became part of the MONA corporate brand. Consumers can now visit the Moorilla cellar door as part of their journey through the MONA experience. If they are in need of more engagement, Moorilla offers wine tours, wine master classes and various flight, lunch and wine packages. There are also boutique apartments on the site, with visitors able to eat, sleep, drink and visit the museum all within the MONA site. At certain

times of the year MONA and Moorilla also host large concerts ranging from symphony orchestras, pianists, single musicians and international rock bands.

Tapping into consumers' desires

Tasmanian wine producers have recognised the logical connection between wine, food, music and art for their consumer. This has enabled them to not only attract more visitors to their cellar doors and increase awareness of their premium wine product, but also to engage with consumers on a deeper, more emotional level. The cultural experience offered by Tasmanian vineyards is certainly not unique to the state, however, Tasmania's reputation for fine produce, spectacular scenery and a rich colonial heritage has an important role to play in enriching cultural activity. Tasmania is seen by consumers as a place where you can lose yourself in a world quite different to that left at home. By providing the consumer interested in wine with other cultural experiences, Tasmanian wine producers satisfy the consumer's hedonistic desires, those beyond the basic needs all humans share.

Clearly, as consumers satisfy those basic needs, new, deeper desires for satisfying experiences are likely to emerge—the desire for self-fulfilment, for instance. Tasmanian wine producers have successfully anticipated these deeper desires for hedonistic products and now offer a diverse range of cultural activities to engage their consumers and strengthen the relationships vital for long term success in the industry. Importantly Tasmanian wine producers realise that their consumer has different motivations to those in other product categories. They understand that the variability found in consumer behaviour is a little like the flavour complexities of a good bottle of wine—sometimes predictable, but many times not!

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Questions

1. Outline the characteristics of wine connoisseurs, art enthusiasts, music lovers and fine food fanatics. What common values do they all share?
2. What types of physiological needs and psychological needs do consumers satisfy when consuming wine and cultural experiences?
3. Using motivation theory, explain how Tasmanian wine producers influence consumer behaviour.
4. Given the profile of the cultural consumer you have discussed in Question 1, what other experiences could wine producers offer at their cellar door to attract cultural consumers? What other products could benefit from linking to the cultural consumer?