

REBRANDING A COMMODITY-BASED WINE REGION

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Abstract

How does a region or country develop its 'brand'? Consumers use this cue as one indicator for product quality and other product features, but little research has focused on how a place of production should develop and position its brand especially to satisfy different stakeholder groups, such as growers, processors, consumers and the people. Without any brand or distinctiveness, most food products (including wine) are perceived and traded as commodities. This results in lower prices to growers and processors. Newer wine regions or those with a history of producing generic wines for blending face a 'chicken or egg' dilemma. Should they focus on a specific grape variety in promotion? Should they promote the overall region by name? In this era of wine tourism, should they focus on wine and tourist related attractions as the means for raising the awareness of their region? Regional branding is typically mooted as answer to this problem, but the issue remains as to how to decide what the best branding and positioning strategy is in order to raise the profile of a region and build wine consumers' share of mind.

This paper explores the means to decide how to reposition and rename an Australian wine region, the Riverland, in order to generate greater salience and facilitate wine consumers' purchase decision. The Best Worst method has been used to compare features that were chosen to represent this region best. Wine producers, grape growers, wine writers, wine distributors, and consumers were provided with 13 different attributes to evaluate. The results showed key similarities between the consumers and wine professionals, but also some differences. The positioning recommended by industry groups and consultants was not supported by either professionals or consumers.

Introduction

How does a region or country develop its 'brand'? There has been extensive research on how consumers use country of origin (COO) and region of origin (ROO) in making product choices (Han and Terpstra, 1988; Cordell, 1991; Ettenson, 1993; Tse and Gorn, 1993; Leclere et al., 1994; Maheswaran, 1994; Gil and Sanchez, 1997; Häubl and Elrod, 1999; Van Ittersum, 2001; Lockshin et al., 2006; Perrouty et al., 2006). Consumers use this cue as one indicator for product quality and other product features, but little research has focused on how a place of production should develop and position its brand especially to satisfy different stakeholder groups, such as growers, processors, consumers and the trade.

Over time, some countries or regions seem to have developed from generic commodity producers to well-known origins commanding a price premium. Electronic products for example are perceived to be significantly higher in quality when made in Japan compared to Indonesia (Tse and Gorn, 1993). One area where origin plays a very large role is in wine. Countries, such as France and Italy, and regions within these countries, such as Medoc and Chianti have become luxury brands in themselves (Landon and Smith, 1998; Nerlove, 1995).

Wine is now an international product produced in dozens of countries and exported throughout the world (Rabobank, 2008). The range of places of production and the thousands of individual

producers make wine a complex and risky product for consumers to buy (Mitchell and Grottel, 1988; 1989). Wine is a product that comes from a 'place' (and not necessarily one place), which can be a country or a region within a country. Most countries require a bottle of wine to indicate the origin of the grapes making up the wine (historically to prevent fraudulent producers claiming false origins). Over time, some of these origins gained status and became surrogates for wine quality.

The question of positioning a brand has become the basis of marketing strategy since Ries and Trout's classic book, *The Battle for Your Mind* (1986). Our research focuses on how relatively new wine regions can decide to brand and position themselves. In the wine sector it would seem that well-known regions developed over a long period of time, producing grapes and wines that gained a reputation among wine drinkers and wine writers. Also in the wine sector most of these well-known regions are strongly associated with specific *terroir* and grape varieties, since not all grapes make good wine in different environments.

Newer regions or those with a history of producing generic wines for blending face a 'chicken or egg' dilemma. Should they focus on a specific grape variety to promote? Should they try and promote the overall region by name? In this era of wine tourism, should they focus on wine and tourist related attractions as the means for raising the awareness of their region? Finally, the stakeholders in a region may differ in their choice of the position to develop. Grape growers in the region may have a different concept than winemakers, some of whom buy the grapes for blending with grapes from other regions. Wine writers and other opinion leaders may offer a different set of opinions, which perhaps carry more weight in the market. The wine trade, who distribute and sell the wine and the final consumer may all hold differing opinions on the best position for a particular wine region.

The article starts with a literature review regarding the importance of COO and ROO when branding food products / wines and the importance of brand salience to create share of mind for a brand. We then present the methodology used to assess the image and features associated with a region, and the sampling method. We used Best-Worst Scaling in an innovative way to evaluate the potential positioning strategies across the different stakeholders. The main findings follow. We conclude with a discussion of the findings and their implications for any regional wine branding strategy.

Background

How important is COO/ROO and branding for a wine region?

'Country image is the overall perception consumers form of products from a particular country, based on their prior perceptions of the country's production and marketing strengths and weaknesses' (Roth and Romeo, 1992). The term product country image is a broader more accurate descriptor than country of origin or made in and defines the image of the country and the thoughts such images create in the minds of consumers (Papadopoulos et al., 1990). Region and country of origin relate to the same definition for wine regions.

A broad consensus of research contends that the wine region of origin adds value in consumers' eyes as it represents a significant choice criterion (Gil & Sanchez, 1997; Quester & Smart, 1998;

Angulo et al., 2000; Tustin and Lockshin, 2001; Ling and Lockshin, 2003; Lockshin et al., 2006), for which consumers are prepared to pay (Combris et al., 1997; Gergaud, 1998; Nerlove, 1995; Skuras and Vakrou, 2002; Schamel, 2000, 2005; Schamel and Anderson, 2001).

Generally all of these studies also recognise the fact that consumers attribute value to other signs of quality present on a wine label, whether it is the grape variety, price or brand. On the other hand, very few of them consider the hypothesis that the value of a region of origin can vary depending on other signals with which it is associated.

To our knowledge, only Tustin and Lockshin (2001) and Perrouty et al., (2006) take this factor into account and show that there are significant interactions between price level and type of region, but not between region of origin and brand. The results obtained by Tustin and Lockshin (2001) and Perrouty et al. (2006) are quite surprising, insofar as other non-wine literature shows country of origin equity is a function of the type of brand and the price level with which it is combined on the label (Chao, 1993; Cordell, 1991; 1992, Han & Terpstra, 1988; Wall et al., 1991).

Some other researchers have shown that other attributes like warranties (Thorelli, Lim and Ye, 1988) or intrinsic attributes (Cordell, 1991) may significantly moderate the country of origin equity. In parallel, Van Ittersum (2001) has shown that the theoretical literature on country of origin is adequate and pertinent to analyse how region of origin affects the consumer choice process.

When a product has a high proportion of attributes that can only be assessed during consumption (experience attributes) as with wine (Chaney, 2000), then the ability of consumers to assess quality prior to purchase is severely impaired, and consumers will fall back on extrinsic cues in the assessment of quality (Speed, 1998). But in Australia there are over 16,000 different labels emanating from over 2,000 different wineries, while Europe may have over 100,000 different labels (Lockshin, 2001). Consumers are also shown to develop a small repertoire of brands, which may well be a collection of brands and generic types, such as grape varieties or regions of origin.

Batt and Dean (2000) found that the origin of the wine was the third most important variable influencing consumers' decision to purchase wine in Australia, following price and brand as first and second most important factors. In Europe, research by Skuras and Vakrou (2002), Dean (2002), Koewn and Casey (1995) and Gluckman (1990) suggest that country of origin is a primary and implicit consideration of consumers in their decision to purchase wine. Recent research by Lockshin et al. (2006) and Goodman et al. (2007) confirmed region to have an important impact on wine purchase depending on the country.

Landon and Smith (1998) suggest that given the incomplete information on quality, consumers rely heavily on both individual firm reputation based on the past quality of the firm's output and collective or group reputation indicators. In that sense, regions that have been able to build a strong reputation using one particular feature would be able to distinguish themselves from other regions, but also to create a 'hook' that will impact consumer purchase decisions. The reason why a ROO can be used as a hook to capture wine consumers' share of mind is now further developed.

Hooking wine consumers' share of mind: building brand salience

As mentioned earlier, the wine industry is fragmented and thousands of wine brands compete against each other. When visiting a wine store, consumers make their choice between many brands (more than three thousand in some cases) and may or may not have a brand in mind to purchase. As in most retailing, wine consumers shop in several stores (i.e. are not loyal to one single store) and most of the consumers are not loyal to one brand (Keng and Ehrenberg, 1984; Ehrenberg et al., 2004), generally considering a set of brands they know. In other words, wine consumers will purchase a brand depending on multiple factors due to the type of store, the circumstances of the purchase situation, the occasion of consumption and their wine involvement (Lockshin et al., 2001).

What will attract the consumer's attention during the shopping experience is critical to any purchase intent. The cues associated with each wine, characterizing the positioning of a wine (and its brand) are meaningless if they don't make sense in people's mind. Developing the number and the intensity of connections that will link a particular brand or wine with a wine consumer's shopping trip is therefore the relationship that any winery should focus on. This relationship is encapsulated into the concept of brand salience (Sharp, 2006).

Product or brand salience is the propensity of the product or brand to be noticed or thought of in buying situations (Romaniuk and Sharp, 2004). Brand salience is more than the traditional top-of-mind brand awareness measure. It covers the memory associations that a consumer will have for a product or a brand at one specific point in time, (preferably) during his/her buying trip. The challenge for all these (wine) brands is to be thought of in as many situations and occasions as possible. And the greater a brand is thought of (or the greater the number of attributes that come to mind associated with a product), the greater the chance for this brand to be chosen. As greater salience leads to a greater likelihood of retrieving the cue in a purchase situation (Romaniuk and Sharp, 2002), we assume that wine regions with greater salience (opposed to greater awareness) are more likely to be chosen (assuming also that these wines are physically available).

This is really challenging for all wineries that compete worldwide. It has been shown previously that COO / ROO has various effects on consumer wine choice and also that region of origin is somewhat to very important in the buying process for wines. Due to the number of regions competing on the market, and due to the tiny set of brands a consumer could have in mind, it sounds evident that the bigger the wine region (brand), the greater the chance to build its salience and thus, the greater the chance of this region (brand) to be thought about and purchased.

The biggest wineries (mainly wineries established in the new wine world), due to their worldwide marketing activity, may not care about wine regions, but focus on typical FMCG (fast moving consumer goods) marketing. The brand is used to capture the share of mind of wine consumers which requires a huge amount of advertising and promotion. For the small and medium sized wineries that can't compete on their own with these big advertising and promotion budgets, increasing the salience of the wine region they are located in is another (cooperative) way to overcome the brand salience issue (Ling and Lockshin, 2003). Therefore, cooperation within a wine region is justified from a competitive perspective and the bigger the salience of the region, the greater the chance for all the wines of this region to be thought of in the purchase situation.

In order to create this mental network, it is critical to assess and measure the salience of the product or brand. One way to do so is to present some attributes and then ask them to name a product or brand that they link to these cues. Romaniuk et al. (2003) measured the salience of different Australian wine regions. Using the number of times one region is mentioned across the attributes provided to the respondents, their findings showed that 4 regions in Australia were mentioned more than 60% of the time when given a list of potential attributes: Barossa Valley, Margaret River, Coonawarra, and Hunter Valley. Creating salience by linking to various attributes is critical to any wine firm as it enables them to capitalize on the cues that are most associated to the region and to build the 'nodes' in the memory network. For example, Margaret River is most associated with the cues 'different' and 'expensive' (Romaniuk et al., 2003), so Margaret River wineries selling wine with these attributes are well placed to capitalize on the existing salience.

Some regions have been using a grape variety to create that awareness and share of mind, such as Sauvignon Blanc in New Zealand. But a single grape variety is something relatively easy to imitate, and sooner or later, another wine region may be well known as well for that grape variety. Many consumers may not use region for lower priced wines (Lockshin et al., 2006), and therefore this strategy allows competitors to gain salience without using regional cues. In other words, a single grape variety is one hook, but wine regions can't rely on only that one. Some other regions used a specific location and soil to produce, make and age wine. Champagne is a well known example, and all the Old World wine appellation systems have been built on this relationship between an area and its dedicated wines.

In the recent years, wine tourism increased the importance of wine regions building specific images (nodes) and salience. Not only the wine, but the region itself is promoted. It gives the wineries an opportunity to increase salience of the region by buildings nodes not directly connected to the wine, e.g., 'sea and vines' for the McLaren Vale, 'wine trails' in Queensland, and the 'Clare Valley Riesling Trail'.

Therefore, building brand or wine region salience requires us first to identify the cues or attributes that already are linked more strongly with the region.

Methodology

Measuring wine region salience using Best-Worst Scaling

The key factors that any brand salience measure should exhibit are a representative range of cues used to think of the brands, recall measurement relative to competitors, and focus on whether the brand is thought of (Romaniuk and Sharp, 2004). The easiest way to measure brand salience is the 'pick any' method, where respondents match brands with the attributes that best characterize each of the brands (Romaniuk and Sharp, 2003). However, first the relative importance of the various cues needs to be measured. We used the Best-Worst Scaling (BWS) method where respondents are asked to choose the best (most representative) versus worst (least representative) features of a region to determine which cues were most valued and most salient.

BWS has been developed by Louviere and his colleagues (Finn and Louviere, 1992; Marley and Louviere, 2005). BWS models the cognitive process by which respondents compare three or

more items and then select the one that represents the most of a characteristic and the one that represents the least of a characteristic. By doing so, the goal is to measure the relative utility of issues, items, or attributes included in a generic set of those issues, items, or attributes. Statistical information gathered from each choice set is much richer as BWS measures all issues on a common scale with one issue serving as the origin (Finn and Louviere, 1992). The model assumes that respondents behave as if they are examining every possible pair in each subset and then they choose the most distinct pair as the best-worst, most-least, maximum difference pair (Cohen and Neira, 2003). Therefore, the BWS model requires respondents to make trade offs among benefits, which makes BWS a more discriminating way to measure attribute importance than either rating scales or the method of paired comparison (Cohen, 2003; Finn et al., 1993).

Interpreting the scale is relatively easy to do as the simple difference between Best-Worst scores is a close approximation of the scale values obtained from multinomial logit analyses (Finn and Louviere, 1992; Marley and Louviere, 2005; Bednarz, 2006). The theoretical foundation will not be discussed in this paper, and readers interested in that matter could refer to Marley and Louviere (2005) for further details. The BWS approach has been applied to a various range of topics including wine consumer choice (Goodman et al., 2005).

Research design

A web-based questionnaire was designed to assess the features most versus least associated with an Australian wine region, namely the Riverland. Web-based (on-line) questionnaires are more commonly used today. As pointed out by Sparrow (2006), questions should be carefully designed to not influence respondents toward a specific response. A BWS design avoids such an issue as people have to compare and choose in a list of features the one that best and the one that least represents the Riverland and its wines.

Rather than reporting raw scores, the results have been standardized into a 0 to 100 scale¹, making the interpretation and comparison (between groups) of the findings simpler.

A Youden type of BIBD (balanced incomplete block design) was used, including 13 different features (or attributes), appearing in groups of 4 in 13 different choice sets (see Figure 1 for one of these choice sets). Each item appears the same number of times with every other item.

The 13 features were selected based on a literature review of the Riverland and its wines (SAWIA, 2007; Riverland Tourism Association, 2007; RWIDC, 2007). Each of these items was expressed as representative of the Riverland by the various stake-holding groups. The South Australian Wine Industry Association (2007) released a branding strategy report related to the main wine regions of South Australia. From this report, we extracted some features that would

¹ The following formula has been used to standardize the results:
$$Score = \frac{\left(\sqrt{\frac{Best}{Worst}} - Min \sqrt{\frac{Best}{Worst}} \right)}{\left[100 / \sqrt{\frac{Best}{Worst}} - Min \sqrt{\frac{Best}{Worst}} \right]}$$

represent the Riverland and its wines: generous people / generous wine, eco-friendly region / wines, wetland and nature, drinkable on every occasion, the Murray River, plenty of fruit, wine for relaxation. Two of these features were also highlighted by Riverland Tourism Association (2007) as characterizing this region: ‘*For South Australians, the River itself was the single draw card for the region, associated with riverboats, and camping holidays*’. Following discussion with the Riverland Wine Industry Development Council and based on the report released by this association (RWIDC, 2007), we extracted one feature that the Association wanted to be recognized as very good at: Petit Verdot; one that represents the slogan of the association: most popular Australian wine; and one feature representing the Riverland wine industry: innovative. The remaining features were chosen as part of the project itself. ‘A brand for everyone’ reflects the great range of wines from the region (all the big Australian wine companies are established there). ‘Viognier’ has been chosen to counterbalance and check the popularity of this grape variety compared to the other one (Petit Verdot). ‘Good value for money’ has been chosen to test Australian popular thoughts linked to the wines produced in this region.

Figure 1: example of one choice set

The figure shows a survey interface with two sections. The top section is titled "Which of the following features would you associate MOST with the Riverland and its wines?". Below this title is a list of four features, each with a radio button: "Drinkable on every occasion", "Petit Verdot", "Eco-Friendly region / wines", and "The Murray River". The bottom section is titled "Which of the following features would you associate LEAST with the Riverland and its wines?". Below this title is the same list of four features, each with a radio button.

Other information collected was related to wine consumption behavior: wine drinking frequency, wine involvement, and awareness of the Riverland wine region.

Sample / population interviewed

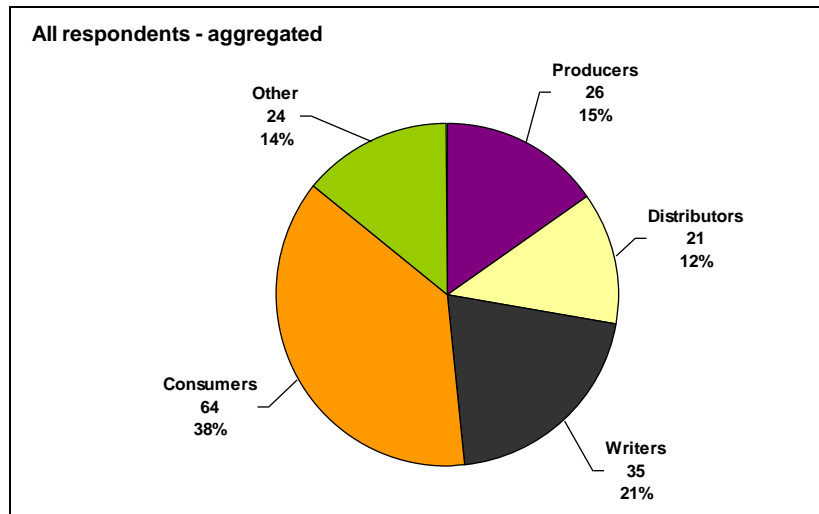
People targeted in the survey were initially wine professionals due to the purpose of the project. However, some wine consumers were interviewed, adding to the stakeholders (see Figure 2 below). Respondents who never heard about the Riverland were not included in the final analysis.

Wine professionals included wine writers located in Australia (mainly) and New-Zealand, wine distributors, wine producers from the Riverland, and other wine professionals. A list of wine

writers and wine distributors was extracted from the Australian Wine Industry Directory (Winetitles, 2006). Wine producers from the Riverland were contacted and recruited by the Riverland Wine Industry Development Council. Other wine professionals included people working in wine associations or wine marketing.

Wine consumers were recruited using a list of staff members working in a University, including professional and academic staff.

Figure 2: Sample of respondents



The sample is not aimed to be a representative sample of Australian wine consumers nor Australian wine professionals. The objective was primarily to target wine trade people, with a focus on wine writers and wine journalists. In that sense, having 35 wine writers can be seen as a good coverage of that profession. Wine consumers have been interviewed to check the extent of differences in their perceptions compared to wine professionals. Both are convenience samples.

The survey was run for 10 days from the mid to end of May 2007. The sample includes wine consumers and wine professionals. Significant differences were found between these two groups:

- Wine professionals drink wine more frequently (for some of them, it is part of their 'job').
- Wine professionals have a good memory of the last wine they purchased, including both the grape variety and the region.
- Wine professionals give more importance to the grape variety and the region (as attributes of the wine) compared to other attributes such as brand and price.
- Wine professionals have a stronger interest in wine.
- Wine professionals are more likely to be a male, and older.

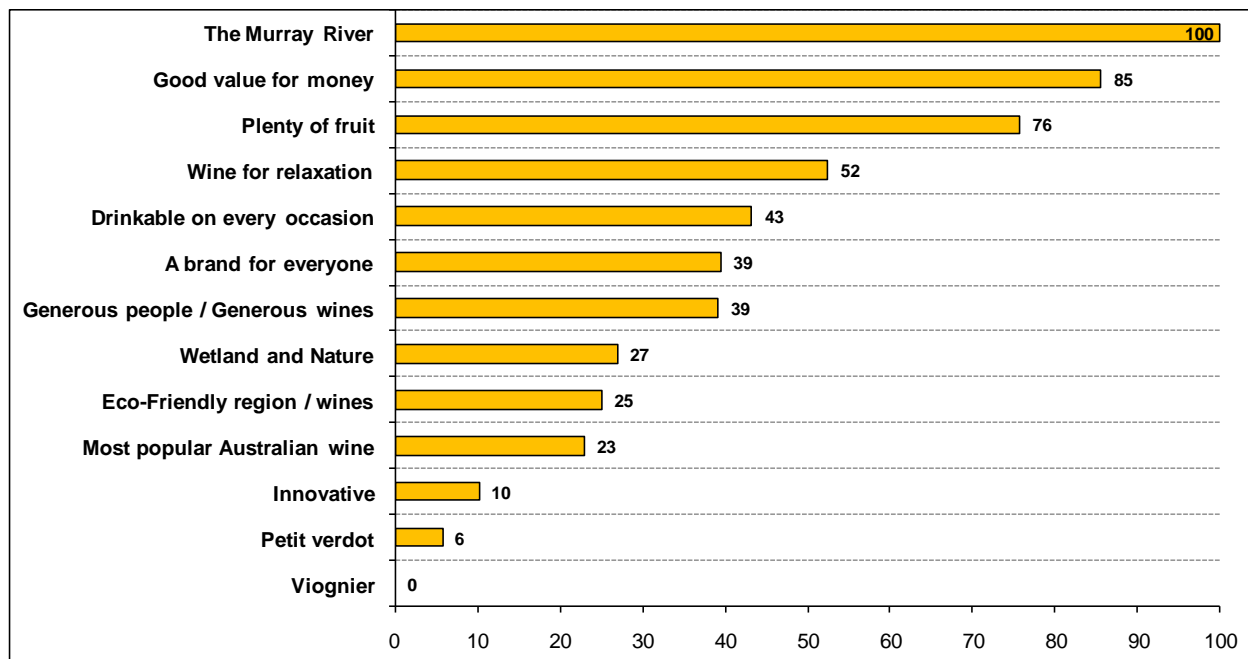
Therefore, we may expect differences in the way people would rate and characterize the region (Riverland) and its wines.

Results: Features associated most and least with the Riverland and its wines

General picture-all respondents

The feature people are more likely to associate with the Riverland and its wines is the Murray River, acquiring the highest relative score of 100 (see Figure 3). This feature is significantly different to the two other following ones: good value for money (with a probability of being chosen highest of .85) and plenty of fruit (with a probability value of .76). Then, wine for relaxation is seen as half likely to be associated with the Riverland and its wines (compared to the Murray River).

Figure 3: Features associated most versus least with the Riverland and its wines ($n=170$)



At the other end of the scale, the two grape varieties tested in the survey (Petit Verdot and Viognier) are least likely to be associated with the Riverland and its wines.

Due to differences between the consumers interviewed and the wine professionals, we would expect some differences in the way people associate features with the Riverland and its wines.

'Segmentation' of the population (highlighting differences)

Both categories consider the Murray River as the feature most likely to be associated with the Riverland and its wines, but in close association with good value for money and plenty of fruit for the consumers. The 'shape' of the graph (Figure 4) indicates that both categories have similar perceptions of the Riverland and its wines, and only five features are rated differently (circled on the graph): good value for money, generous people / generous wines, wetland and nature, eco-friendly region / wines, most popular Australian wine. Good value is rated higher by consumers, whereas the eco-friendly side of the region is rated higher by the professionals.

Figure 4: Features associated most versus least with the Riverland and its wines (consumers versus professionals)

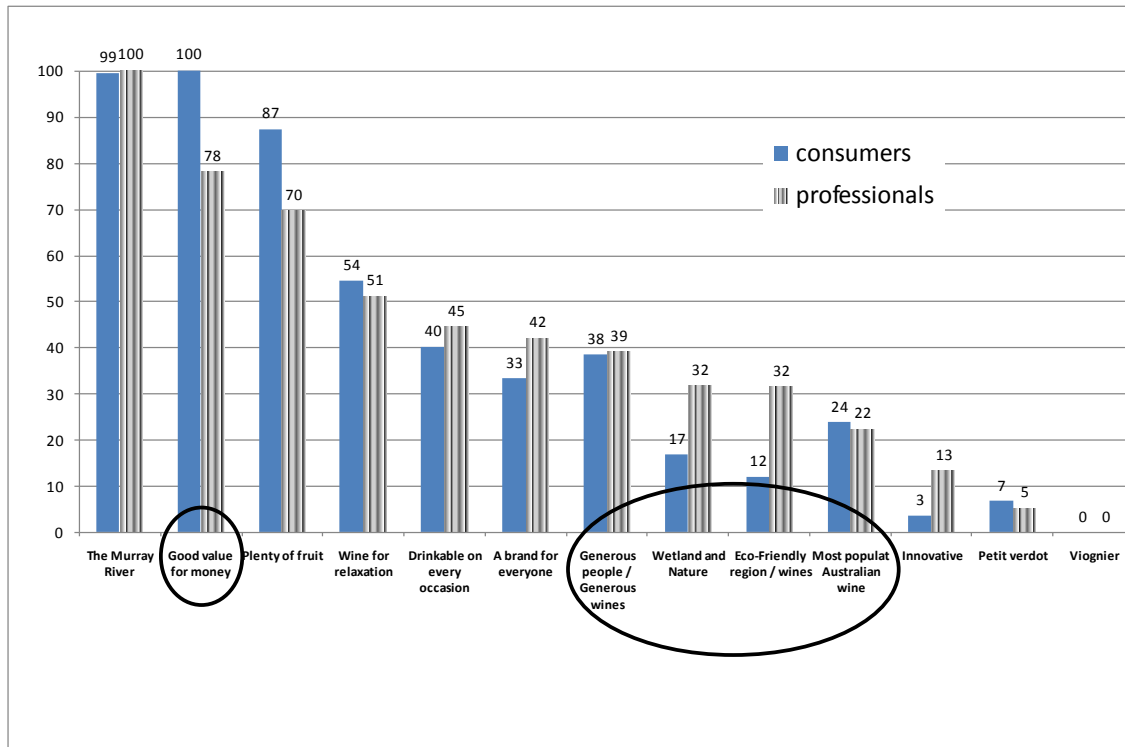
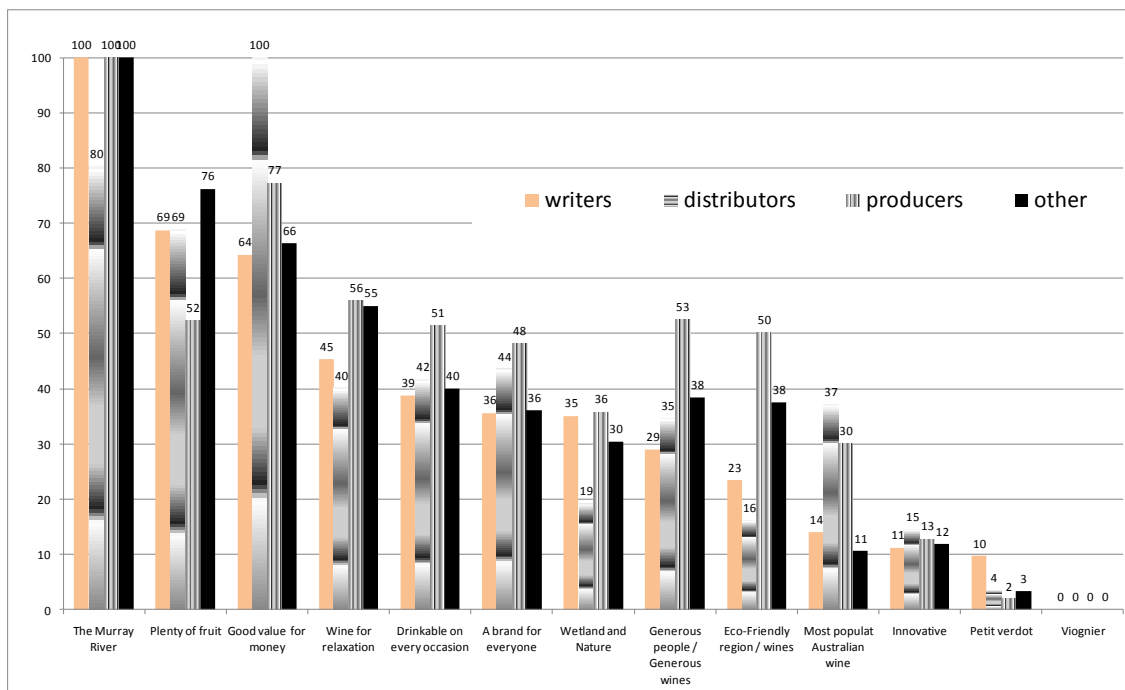


Figure 5: Features associated most versus least with the Riverland and its wines (among professionals)



Among professionals (Figure 5), writers, producers, and other professionals are most likely to choose Murray River as the best feature, compared to good value for money for the distributors. At the end of the scale, the two grape varieties are least likely to be chosen as the best feature of the Riverland and its wines.

Discussion and conclusion

With regards to the initial objective of redefining the branding strategy of a wine region, we assumed following the literature review that a geographical indication (or name) is an important attribute for consumers to choose wines. But we also argued that the brand used by the wine region should be thought of as often as possible during a wine consumer's buying trip. The greater the salience of the brand, the greater the probability the brand will be thought of and the greater the chance for the brand to be chosen.

Concerning the Riverland wine region and its wines, the findings presented above clearly indicate a few avenues for this re-branding process. Importantly, the findings are quite homogeneous among the different stakeholder groups. Despite some visual differences, the perceptions of writers, distributors, producers and other professionals do not significantly differ. This may be due to the small numbers in each group. Between professionals and consumers, there is a consensus with the three most important features of the Riverland wine region and its wines, and a seeming awareness issue with the eco-friendly side of the region for the consumers.

The professionals working in the Riverland wine region expected respondents to emphasize the grape variety positioning of the region in order to promote and increase its awareness. Petit Verdot was expected to be used as the way to build the reputation of the region. This positioning is in line and consistent with the Australian wine regions way of being recognized around the world. The Barossa Valley is well known for its Shiraz. The Clare Valley is well known for its Riesling. The Hunter Valley is well known for its Semillon. However, our findings indicate that such a positioning and the two varieties considered unique to the region are not salient to any of the respondents. The issue here would be to educate wine drinkers (consumers) about the two varieties, as it seems not many Australian wine drinkers know the Petit Verdot or Viognier grape varieties. Then, the education process should be completed with a linkage between the grape(s) and the region. This can be seen as a long range option.

Several attributes were tested due to the involvement of the Riverland wine industry in the project. One concerned innovative wine making processes, because the region includes the biggest Australian wineries using innovative practices. Another one focuses on the environmental aspects based on some work done by Banrock Station Winery. Banrock Station developed a positioning of its wine as eco-friendly in the mid-1990s, by creating a wetland and protecting / saving birds and nature. Its slogan communicates such a message: 'Fine wine – Good earth'. But at the end of the day, that message and cue is not shared by the people interviewed and is not a cue that people will be likely to associate with the region and its wines. To some extent, eco-friendly positioning is not yet seen in Australia with great potential.

Generous people / generous wines cue was chosen to test the wine region's positioning proposed by the South Australian Wine Industry Association (SAWIA). The Riverland brand essence is supposed to encapsulate 'generous' as its main asset: generous wine flavor, generous people, generous production (the largest region in Australia). Our findings suggest that building salience with this feature (generous) is not appropriate at this time. This cue (i.e. score obtained by 'generous') can't be statistically distinguished with three others: wine for relaxation, drinkable on every occasion, a brand for everyone. In other words, the 'friendly' side of the region, which has also been proposed by the SAWIA as part the Riverland brand assets, is one third to half as likely to be chosen as an important feature associated with the region and its wines compared to the top features.

The last three features: plenty of fruit, good value for money and the Murray River are the features the Riverland should be focusing on as they are the features that all respondents are likely to associate most with the region and its wines. Plenty of fruit reflects the fruity character of Australian wine, which can be seen as a distinctive touch and a kind of competitive advantage. In Australia, the Riverland is also well known for its citrus / fruit production. Therefore, many people may link the fruits and citrus to this region and establish a connection in their mind. As many popular premium (under \$10 AUD) wines come from the Riverland, it is not completely surprising to have good value for money as an important feature associated with the region. Most of wines from this region are low priced, but with a good commercial quality.

The Murray River is the feature that respondents associate most with the region and its wines. The Murray River is the largest and most important river in Australia. The drought and the way to manage the Murray-Darling basin have led to plenty of articles and awareness regarding that name. In other words, The Murray River is a feature that people know about, are more aware of compared to Riverland, and would remember more easily. Moreover, as stated to the Riverland Tourism Steering Committee, the Riverland's core attribute is the river. There is also an opportunity for the wine region to capitalize on the river and its well known boat touring and boat hiring, which makes winery visits attractive.

In a broader perspective, the Best-Worst Scaling approach has been successful in measuring features that should be used when deciding the branding strategy of a wine region. Due to its power of discrimination, we found a consensus among different stakeholders indicating the features that can be used to create salience in a wine drinkers' mind.

Referring back to the literature review, our findings reinforce the power of a geographical name (Murray River) to be used as a cue when branding a wine. Our findings also demonstrate that a ROO or a geographical name can be used if it makes sense to the consumer, in other words, if it maximizes its chance to be thought of during the consumer's buying trip. Some regions have built a reputation with a grape variety. Others should capitalize and mobilize the cues that make sense, in a broader perspective, for the various stakeholders. The Murray River has extensive coverage in the media due to the drought. The Murray River is well known for its boat trips and cliffs. In brief, new wine regions or commodity based wine regions should consider their positioning and competitive advantage by enlarging the base of their regional branding, i.e. not using only wine related cues. Acting with and using complementary links with the region (tourism, drought, fruit producing region, river, etc.) that make sense for the consumers is the key to succeed on the shelves, while competing with regional brands better recognized for their

wine quality. Not all consumer segments will choose wine based solely on wine quality measures.

Conclusion

The objective of the paper was to show how a wine region branding strategy can be developed using the BWS approach. It has been argued that the geographical name (or COO / ROO) is commonly used and valued by the consumers as an attribute linked to specific wines. The main advantage of a geographical name is its distinctiveness. However, a name (COO or ROO) does not make sense if not linked with other features that encapsulate the salience of the region or brand.

Some wine regions around the world are growing in awareness, others are declining. Consumer awareness of one specific wine region is not what matters most. The important aspect for the region to consider is how it can catch one piece or one share of a consumers' mind when in front of many labels of wine. Building the salience of the region and the salience of the brand is therefore the concern of the region.

BWS allows the comparison and then ranking of the features that best versus worst characterize a wine region. Based on the findings collected from wine professionals and wine consumers, three features are more likely to be associated with the Riverland and its wines: the Murray River, good value for money, and plenty of fruit. Such findings are useful for the process of redefining the branding strategy of the region. It gives the features the region should use when promoting and communicating the region and its wines. It also indicates to what extent a positioning already decided could be implemented with success or not in the short term. In other words, trying to create distinctiveness using a grape variety such Petit Verdot does not seem the right thing to do.

The main conclusion of the project is that a wine region should not think that a geographical name is sufficient to characterize, brand and promote the region. Other features should be added to the region in order to help the consumer to choose a wine from the region.

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