

# **MOTIVATIONS OF YOUNG PEOPLE FOR VISITING WINE FESTIVALS**

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## *Abstract*

Traditional wine marketing efforts have targeted established wine drinkers who are at least forty years old. These people are typically the largest consumers of wine. Recently however, more attention has been focused on younger people and efforts to develop their interest in wine consumption.

Interest in younger consumers began as the wine industry began to realize that these people are the next potential group with the income and ability to purchase wine. Therefore, venues such as special events and festivals that can attract young people and provide an opportunity for them learn about wine can be important in influencing their attitudes and potential wine purchases.

Food and wine festivals are one type of event that has become very popular in many countries. A large number of cities throughout the world have developed community events in order to promote wine and build local identity. This is especially true in new world wine regions where there is considerable interest in learning about wine. These events are often several days long and may coincide with the grape harvest or release of new wine.

Many researchers recognize the need to encourage interest in wine among younger consumers in order to ensure the long-term survival of the wine industry (Fountain & Charters, 2004; Mitchell et al., 2000). There has been concern that the majority of wine is consumed by people aged 40 and older and that younger age groups have little interest in wine consumption. Levine and Morgan (2004) pointed out that the wine industry looks beyond the aging baby boomers market for its next generation of

consumers. The goal is to identify the characteristics of these new market segments, find ways to reach them, capture their attention, and bring them to the wine world.

Only recently efforts have been made by wine companies to appeal to young consumers. There have been a number of efforts to develop programs to attract young people to wine. For example, the Wine Brats movement is the first attempt to capture the youth market. The movement was started to help develop a strong core of young people who could be a new generation of wine consumers. Operating under the "*Changing the Face of Wine*" slogan, Wine Brats is a nonprofit organization that seeks to demystify wine among the younger generation through a variety of events and educational programs.

Festivals can help attract young people as they typically offer opportunities to socialize and a variety of entertainment and music options. This association with the wine industry and the relaxed setting can help motivate young people to become interested in wine.

The purpose of this study is to identify the motivations of young visitors to two festivals – one in Indiana and the other near Dallas, Texas. This study will examine their motivations and other characteristics and compare them with older visitors to these same festivals. By understanding the characteristics, attitudes, and behaviors of selected groups this can permit event organizers to tailor promotions and develop desired services.

Data have been collected from the two wine festival sites which will provide added information than if the data were from the same festival. The festivals are very different in nature and by comparing the data there may be additional insights concerning the nature of visitors and their motivations.