

Major Attributes of Tourism Attractiveness of Wineries and Their Influence on Direct Sales

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Abstract

Purpose: Wine regions are also destinations for tourists. The significance of such a region for tourist maps depends on various factors like for instance a beautiful landscape, good (i.e. comfortable, fast, and safe) paths for cycling, interesting routes for walking, or special cultural attractions and events. But successful marketing of such a region as a destination for wine lovers is difficult without really interesting vineyards or wineries. What services do wineries or vineyard owners have to offer to be attractive for tourists? How can they increase direct sales? And what role does wine tourism have in this context?

Design/Methodology/Approach: These issues will be dealt with in a detailed literature review. Furthermore visitors of five chosen wineries in the region of Franconia (Germany) were interviewed to find out their criteria for attractiveness of wineries. Face-to-face interviews resulted in 200 valid answers.

Findings: Vital for all marketing efforts like tasting and direct sales are a good product quality and service, as well as friendly sales staff. Although the survey confirmed that wine cellar visits and vineyard tours were only subordinate attractions, in relevant literature (worldwide) time and again attractive options especially designed for tourists are mentioned. These options increasingly play a role for differentiating the individual wineries from competitors. And last but not least tourism attraction features for wineries are also important for securing an influx of tourists and thus securing the competitiveness of a wine region.

Practical implications: It is possible to obtain high quality wines at various places all over the world but the combination of an interesting vineyard architecture and a beautiful landscape, as well as offers for tourists to actively experience these features (i.e. an interesting and instructive tour through the vineyard) can be decisive for tourists to want to visit the region.

Key words:

Wine tourism, direct sales, criteria of attractiveness, tourism services

1. INTRODUCTION

The wine economy is subject to major changes and constantly focuses on finding new ways to stand out from competition and secure success. Competitive pressure (in Germany) is increased by establishing wines from abroad (New-World-Wines) on the market, by a growing commercial pressure, and the increasing importance of the internet as a platform for information and channel for commerce. Apart from that changed customer demands like for instance a stronger event orientation force winemakers to go new ways.

Direct sales from the vineyard (stationary direct sales) for instance are perceived as a distribution channel with a great customer binding potential and the possibility of achieving high margins. What attracts potential customers about buying directly from the producer is for instance the direct contact with the producer as well as the possibility to get first-hand information about the product and place of origin. But according to Saaler, Jacobi-Ewerth, and Hoffmann direct sellers as well as normal trade equally experience a decline in customer loyalty. So direct sales to customers are not alone sufficient to secure a living and achieve satisfactory sales figures.

In relevant specialized literature wine tourism respectively wine related event offers for tourists from winemakers serve as a means to make visits more attractive and promote direct sales. A detailed survey of facts which have an influence on attractiveness of wineries for tourists still remains to be done. The target of this article is to show which issues are important for tourists apart from the taste of wine and design of the bottle. What makes a winery or vineyard attractive (for tourists)? What motives do people have to visit a certain winery? How can direct sales be improved? The target is to get plausible answers to these questions.

2. DIRECT SALES AT THE VINEYARD

Direct sales are an attractive entrepreneurial sales option. In a trade scenario carried out by the University of the Saarland in Germany they found out that direct sales “at the farm gate” (also called cellar door sales) are gaining importance and no longer only a market niche. (Winkelmann, 2013). Numerous publications generally emphasize that higher profit margins are the advantage of direct sales due to saving the markup. (Antz et al., 2006; Khachaturian and Rice, 2008). But precise values based on economic data to show these advantages are in many cases still not available. For American wineries Olsen and Hermsmeyer have calculated that direct sales at the vineyard have a margin saving range of 25% to 50% (Olsen and Hermsmeyer, 2008). For Germany the Deutsches Weininstitut has results. According to current figures approximately 18% of privately consumed wine was bought directly at a vineyard in 2011. But this share makes up 24% of sales turnover and thus confirms – as well as higher average prices (5.50 €/per liter) – that higher profit margins were achieved. (Deutsches Weininstitut GmbH, 2013). The interpersonal contact between sales person and customer (ideally face-to-face) when visiting the vineyard is the chance to build up and intensify customer relationships (Winkelmann, 2013; Thach and Olsen, 2006; Groß, 2008).

For stationary sales (direct sales at the vineyard) the wine makers have salesrooms on their premises where they can meet customers (for instance a “Vinothek” /wine shop). At this occasion the sales person should motivate the customer to a sightseeing tour of the vineyard and thus make use of and benefit from a Pull-Strategy [1]. What the customer perceives and experiences on site like for instance an attractive salesroom or a supplementary touristic offer is beneficial for sales.

At this point it should be mentioned that wine can be sold to private as well as to commercial customers. As both groups presumably come to the vineyard for different reasons the design of

the company buildings also has differing levels of importance for both groups. Focus as far as this is concerned should be on the final customer.

3. A WINERY AS A TOURIST ATTRACTION

A vineyard or winery must meet various requirements in order to attract visitors. It begins with sign-posting so that it is easy to find and reach by car, then the premises should be in a proper condition to attract customers, and friendly and competent sales personnel should also be available. But first and foremost it is of importance that wine makers must create attention for their premises and convince customers to come. In this case local or on site offers are of great importance, because in particular tourists look for interesting experiences and features. This chapter will outline various different offers for tourists and the respective requirements.

3.1. Measurability of Tourism Attractiveness

Until now research work focused on tourism attractiveness was only sporadically performed as the assessment and evaluation of what attracts tourists is a difficult and rather complex field of research. The challenge in this context is that the influence of the experienced attraction is partially perceived consciously whilst on the other hand there is an unaware perception. Furthermore it is also necessary to specify the various motives for a visit in order to be able to differentiate factors for an analysis i.e. one must distinguish the factors of attraction of wineries perceived by tourists from those of the local population. And as there is no stereotypical wine tourist this in turn can also have an influence on research results.

An accepted definition of the syntagma „tourism attractiveness“ has yet to be found in specialist literature. In his article on the subject Formica emphasizes that tourism attractiveness „depends on the relationship between the availability of existing attractions and the perceived importance of such attractions.“ (Formica, 2006) This contribution therefore intends to introduce various offers concerning wine tourism and to give reasons for their selection with regard to the presented research activities. The analysis explains which components are to what extent of importance for the attractiveness of a winery or vineyard from the visitor’s point of view. What must be taken into consideration is that the underlying data was the result of interviews and thus preliminarily analyses the components of attraction of a winery which were consciously perceived. Links to results of an analysis carried out by Longo in New Zealand (1999) referring to the importance of attributes when selecting a winery to visit will be given later on in this article. (Hall et al., 2000)

3.2. Basic information on wine tourism

Various different definitions of the term wine tourism currently exist. One established definition is by C.M. Hall. He describes wine tourism as: „visitation to vineyards, wineries, wine festivals and wine shows for which grape wine tasting and/or experiencing the attributes of a grape wine region are the prime motivating factors for visitors“ (Hall et al., 2000). This definition clearly shows that wine tourism is characterized by a multitude of offers resp. is composed of these factors. Getz includes: Wine tasting, Dining, Sightseeing, Shopping, Learning and Recreation. The touristic offer should thus ideally be a combination of adventure, learning, and recreation. In this context it must be considered though that the intensity of wine related activities to a great extent depends on the motivation of the target group. (Getz, 2000)

With reference to the preferred activities of wine tourists Getz states the following: „Their activities in the destination might be very focused on visiting wineries for tasting, or more in depth to include learning about viticulture and wine production.“ (Getz, 2000) Therefore the quality and diversity of what a winery can offer is not only of importance for the economic

situation of the wine maker himself but also for the creating of value for the whole destination. (Mancino and Lo Presti, 2012). For tourism this means an enlarged offer portfolio and for wine makers it is an additional source of income. At the same time the portfolio for wine tourism is not only limited to the offer of a winery but must be seen as a complex structure in the field of destination management. As resources for the wine tourism industry can be considered the terraced vineyards and hill slopes, wine cellars, routes for walking, festivals, and shows as well as other wine related activities and places. Catering and accommodation facilities are an essential supplement for the tourism offer. (Hall et al., 2002)

3.3. Fundamentals of a tourism orientated winery

For wineries, opening for tourism means to extend resp. enlarge the original production business by including additional tourist-orientated services. Next to all normal activities (cultivating vines, grape harvesting, wine production etc.) the winery must now also concentrate on ensuring procedures and processes concerning new offers/services.

Fig. 1: Original offer and supplementary offer of vineyards / wineries (Source: own graphic)



Challenges arise when two business branches like tourism and production co-exist at a location which formerly was only in production-related use. In the last few years the operators / owners of such dual use locations have tried to solve this problem by adding changes to the building's design or other features as dividing elements. It is important to maintain a balance between limiting access to areas for safety related reasons and providing tourists (participants of company tours) the close up experience of wine making. As visitors sometimes directly come in contact with the production area, arrangements concerning the presence of visitors must be made to avoid disturbances in production or even having to interrupt the work process. Therefore it is necessary for the company to set out conditions beforehand which enable a successful opening for tourism and minimize disadvantages as far as possible.

In principle consistent and uniform quality standards must be implemented and are essential for all event offers, as overall quality depends on the sum of its parts even if their influence presumably varies insofar a search individual part has more or less influence on overall quality. (Zielke, 2004). It is certain though that a consistent customer orientation is necessary and therefore principles and/or guidelines for the organization of a winery with tourism offers must by all means comply with expectations and wishes of the target group. It is also necessary to bear in mind that there is no one and only perfect marketing concept which can be transferred to all businesses. Maintaining diversity and the different regional characteristics (traditions, building culture, etc.) is an essential element for establishing a wine tourism attraction for visitors.

Cambourne et al. emphasize, that a wine cellar which is opened for tourists should comply with certain expectations. Prerequisite is that it is easily accessible. A sufficient number of car

parking facilities should be available as well as perfect quality on site. Wine in bottles should be taken for wine tasting events and the expertise of an oenologist is helpful. Hospitality plays an important role for customer satisfaction and friendly and competent staff is an absolute must.

McDonnell and Hall define various dimensions, which are of importance for wine cellar visits:

- Surroundings and outside attractiveness (i.e. architecture, car parking facilities, sign-posting),
- Surroundings and inside attractiveness (i.e. interior design, furnishing, decoration, equipment, order and cleanliness)
- Ambience
- Staff
- The product
- Merchandise articles, brochures
- Direct and indirect external factors (i.e. external information about the vineyard). (McDonnell and Hall, 2008)

In particular smaller wineries often do not have a representative wine cellar and thus cannot make adequate use of certain options or possibilities. (Dübner, 2004) Their marketing activities are restricted to being listed in wine guides and signs on the building. (Frochot, 2002)

Hashimoto and Telfer stress the importance of distinguishing the own winery from other suppliers in the field of wine tourism. Due to the large amount of local suppliers in a wine region, which each have the product wine as a major point of attraction, it is important to create additional offers. Exceptional culinary experiences, cooking courses, and special events are possibilities for wineries to distinguish themselves from the broad mass and thus attract customers. (Hashimoto and Telfer, 2003)

3.4. Structuring wine tourism offers

For wineries and vineyards there are various possibilities to participate in wine tourism. One possibility is to have **permanent attractions**, these in most cases require changes to the building. In this category you can also count the design of an attractive salesroom, the opening of a “Straußwirtschaft” or a restaurant on site as well as providing accommodation possibilities. The latter includes holiday flats with self-catering as well as a hotel affiliated to wine.

Apart from the aforementioned wine makers can also offer various activities to visitors. A list which by no means claims to be complete is the following example:

- Guided visits on winery premises (i.e. company tours, tours of nearby vineyards, visits to the wine cellars)
- Guided walking tours
- Seminars and courses
- Culinary offers (i.e. picnic at vineyard slopes, dinner in the wine cellar) (Müller and Dreyer, 2010)

The visit to the wine cellar is very often the main reason for visiting a winery. Ali-Knight and Carlsen declare that opening the wine cellar for tourists is an excellent possibility to intensify customer contacts and bind customers to a certain vineyard. (Ali-Knight and Carlsen, 2001) The wine cellar is considered as a sort of shop window for the business. „It’s not just about wine tasting but about providing a whole experience to make a visit memorable and which will translate into future sales of wines.” (ACIL Consulting, 2002) The total experience is of vital importance. The background of the landscape, the design of the wine cellar, information on site,

friendliness of the personnel, and experience value are determining factors for customer satisfaction. (Roberts and Sparks, 2006) According to O'Mahony more than 50% of the visitors of a wine cellar subsequently to their stay buy wine of the respective winery. (O'Mahony et al., 2008)

Connected to these forms of offers are in most cases **events** because festivals and events in the field of tourism are of increasing importance in particular when considering the growing experience-orientation within society.

3.5. Event orientation of wineries

Current trends are substantial challenges for wineries. They must act if they want to animate customers to continue to visit the winery and thus be able to profit from sales at the vineyard. Customers are increasingly pleasure-seeking and experience orientated and have high expectations concerning attractions on site which are not only restricted to wine tasting and buying wine. Apart from that customers also wish to have a sophisticated ambience for wine tasting events. The search for an exceptional experience is an increasing trend and this must be considered for product and offer arrangements. It generally is not possible to directly create an experience but the framework conditions for a personal experience can be organized (experience production). According to Dreyer and Linne and based on findings from Müller and Scheurer and Mikunda these factors include well-being of the visitors, telling a story, building-up anticipation / tension, determining attractions and activities, creating event zones, designing event sceneries, as well as orientating visitors in space and time. (Dreyer and Linne, (2011); Müller and Scheurer, (2004); Mikunda, (1998).

And in fact for the direct marketing business a general trend to strive for a world-of-experience/adventure winery is perceivable (Woschek et al.; 2011) but in the sense of the aforementioned many factors still have to be cleared. The surroundings and the atmosphere on site can contribute to image-building of an enterprise and can be an incentive to acquire a product for potential customers (even at a later time in a shop or restaurant). According to statements in literature, the design and layout of a shopping centre can positively influence consumers' satisfaction whilst shopping and has an influence on the length of their stay in the centre as well as often leading to impulse purchases. Here further empirical studies and adaptations based on trade and marketing literature are necessary.

4. EMPIRICAL STUDY CONCERNING FACTORS OF ATTRACTIVENESS OF WINERIES

By means of an empirical study the authors have tried to further underline the results by finding out which aspects of attractiveness are essential for the visit of a vineyard. This survey based on results of a literature review, which dealt with topics concerning forms of offers and a requirements profile for wineries in connection with wine tourism. Already in chapter 3 hints were given concerning factors which should be considered to successfully participate in wine tourism. The main target of the study is to find answers to the following survey questions:

- Which facts or offers in principle have an influence on the perceived attractiveness of a winery for tourists?
- How do visitors of a winery value these influential factors with regard to their importance?
- Are there notable different answers to research questions depending on which winery was visited?
- Are there differences to a survey with similar investigations, performed in New Zealand in 1999?

The question that arises is which factors have the most influence on customers and what makes them consciously or unconsciously choose the winery they want to visit. Coupled to these aspects were also questions concerning their attitude towards wine purchasing in general, and if wine already had been bought on site resp. if on site purchases are planned.

4.1. Methodology

For the face-to-face interviews which were held in autumn 2013 visitors of wineries were interviewed. To increase the amount of sample answers a small number of questionnaires were also laid out in wineries and staff members actively promoted them.

Target was to find out why visitors of a vineyard had decided to visit this vineyard and what makes a visit attractive or where should improvements be made. Attached to the questionnaire was also a list of questions concerning visitors' assessments of the general aspects of attractiveness of a winery for a visit. This topic was the basic element of the questionnaire. Factors which, according to relevant specialized literature, can have an influence on visit attractiveness like for instance: architecture, friendliness of service personnel, were classified in a four-part scale with a ranking from very important to unimportant. The combination of open and closed questions offered the chance to catch first impressions of the asked persons and on the other hand gear attention to certain factors (as mentioned in examples). An optic separation of the questions helped to make sure that the answers of the persons participating in the questionnaire were not influenced by answers which appeared in detail later on in the questionnaire and referred to attractiveness of wineries.

The survey concentrated on five different wineries in the region of Franconia (Germany) which is characterized by a high density of interesting and innovative viticulture enterprises. All interview locations were in the conurbation area in and around Würzburg and it was hoped that this would minimize regional influences as the predominant aim was to determine factors of attraction of the individual wineries and achieve a high comparability as far as surroundings (landscape, topography etc.) were concerned.

In total a sample size of 200 valid answers was achieved. The allocation of samples were as follows: three of the participating wineries had a sample size of 50 each and in two smaller businesses there were 25 completed questionnaires each.

4.2. Results

For those persons asked the wine quality is the most important factor of choice for selecting a winery for a visit. As a source of information concerning quality for instance are awards given to wine brands or wineries (for instance Berlin Wine Trophy) or a listing in reknown wine guides like GaultMillau, but also word-of-mouth recommendation. At this point it must be mentioned that four of the five sites where questionnaires were placed are mentioned in the wine guide GaultMillau 2013.

Reason for the visit and visit frequency

The importance of wine quality is reflected in the fact that 87% of the questioned persons bought wine at the respective winery. According to information given by the survey participants the larger part of them purchases wine directly from a winery or vineyard which means that the large part of the participants also visits a winery or vineyard several times per year. Only 7% had never visited a winery or vineyard before. If questions directly refer to a visit to the winery where the survey took place on site then the following results were obtained: the majority of the visitors was well acquainted with the winery due to previous visits. Sometimes slightly less

than 50% of the questioned persons had visited the winery for the 3rd or more times. This gives rise to the presumption that the majority of the interviewed persons live nearby in the region (only those persons who leave their familiar environment are considered day trippers and thus per definition are counted as tourists). Furthermore the wineries Sommerach, Weingut am Stein, and Juliuospital also experience a greater number of one-time visitors and therefore these figures were higher. In order to avoid that the majority of the questioned persons were locals or persons living in the region, all interviewed persons were also asked to state where they came from. By adding the postcode it was possible to clarify that only 20% of the interviewed visitors of a winery directly came from Würzburg. Another 30% came from towns in the region (identical postcodes) but after clearing interviews by the authors they could be counted as tourists (day trippers or overnight guests). The remaining half of the interviewed persons mainly came from Southern Germany or Central Germany. Thus a mere sample composition can enable a determination of tourism attraction criteria for wineries.

But what raised the attention of the visitors to make them visit a winery? When analyzing the survey independently from the winery where the survey was conducted it becomes obvious that 113 of the questioned persons (56%) heard of the winery through friends and acquaintances. In second position of the ranking were wine periodicals and journals 18.5%. 24 of the questioned persons (12%) declared that they had heard of the respective winery through the Internet, whilst further 22 persons stated that they had come across the winery by chance when driving past. All other percent values refer to travel guides or magazines, tourist information centres etc. Thus it can be stated that word-of-mouth recommendations at least amongst the participants was the largest medium of advertising or main channel for spreading the information. The Internet with a percentage of 12% has lesser importance resp. entails considerable extension potential.

Demography of winery visitors

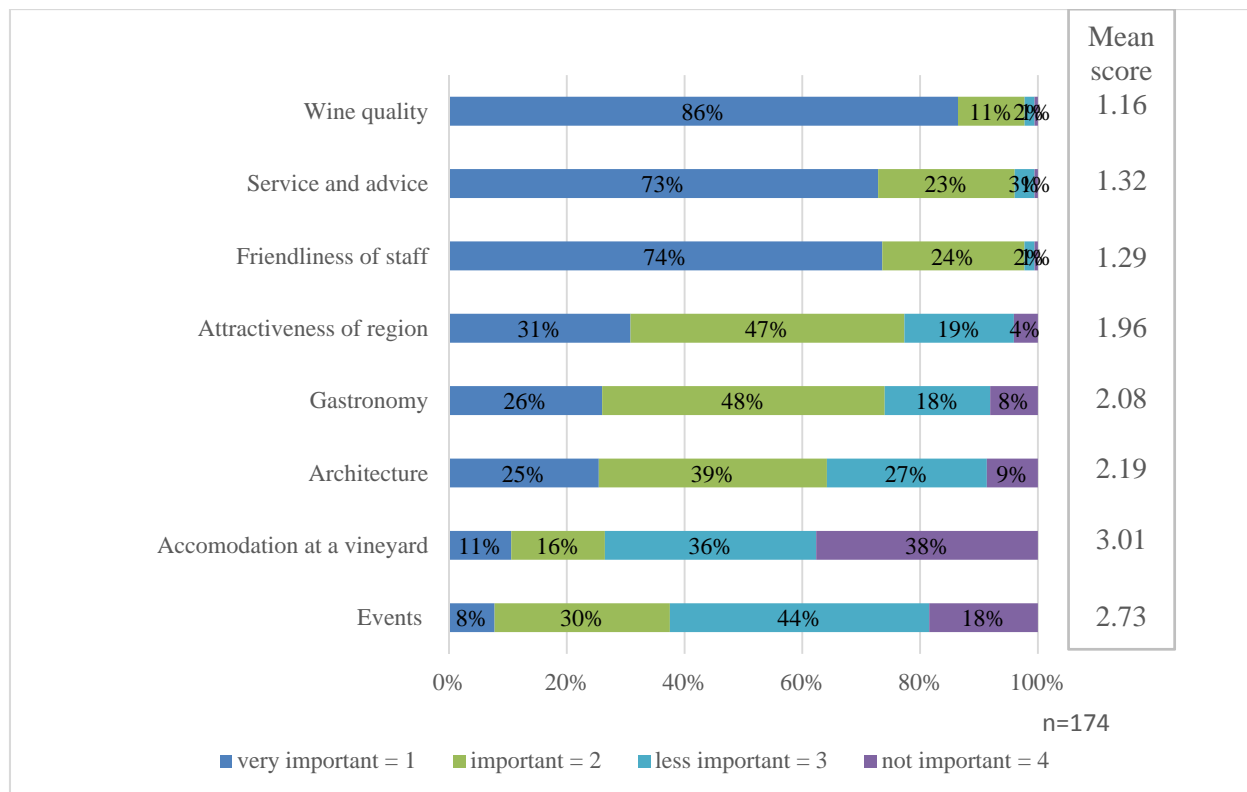
When looking at the demographic profile it becomes obvious that slightly more men than women were questioned and that they were accompanied in most cases by their partners, friends or family members. This fact as well as the age structure of the survey participants complies with the results and findings of other surveys like for instance those of Mitchell, Hall, and McIntosh, or Williams and Dossa (Mitchell et al., 2000; Williams and Dossa, 2003). In this survey 67% of the persons questioned were older than 46 years and the result thus corresponds with the demography of wine lovers or traditional wine tourists.

Attraction factors

As afore mentioned the quality of wine is according to the persons questioned with a mean score of 1.16 (for nearly all respondents very important) the leading criterion for deciding to visit a certain winery. Nearly just as important were friendliness of staff and customer service and information on site (average value of 1.29 and 1.32). These results correlate with findings of other surveys and clearly show the importance of so-called soft facts in the wine selling business. As an example at this point one can mention the survey carried out by Longo in New Zealand. In her survey she identifies friendly service as the most important attribute in selecting a winery to visit with a mean score of 1.24 (evaluated on a scale from 1 to 5). This issue not only has an influence on the impression a visitor gets of the winery but according to statements of the persons questioned, it also has an influence on their buying habits. Complementary to these findings is a survey conducted by Johnson which also confirms that personalized customer treatment and friendly service by owners/operators of a winery or their staff is considered as particularly significant for attracting visitors. (Hall et al., 2000) Thus wine quality, customer

service, and information as well as staff friendliness are by far the most important sales criteria. The following diagram shows the ranking of the criteria.

Fig.2: Evaluation of criteria: attractiveness of wineries (Source: own survey)



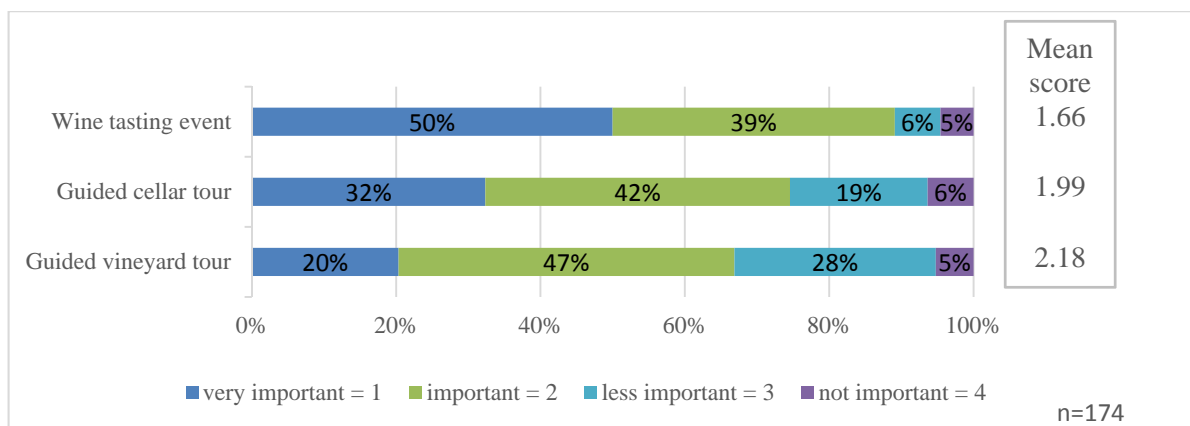
For three quarters of the questioned persons the attractiveness of the region was important or very important. Very similar are factors for gastronomy and what was considered as slightly less important was architecture. In particular this was surprising in this context as architectural innovations at the location of wineries according to numerous articles in the press very often clearly lead to an increasing number of visitors. In an interview with the management of the winery Tramin (South Tyrol) the authors were informed that due to the attractive new building, sales at the vineyard could be increased by 50%. Together with other factors though which the persons questioned considered as more important, architecture as criterion loses in importance as a guaranteed success factor. This alone makes it clear that there are still research gaps which remain to be closed.

The fact that issues like events and accommodation possibilities at a winery seem to be less important (just a mean score of 2.73 and 3.01) could be influenced by various aspects. For instance there was no event worth mentioning scheduled when the interviews were held. This leads to the conclusion that the questioned persons were not that interested in events or have other motives for coming to the winery. An explanation for why the issue accommodation possibilities at a winery was also considered as not that important, might be the fact that a high percentage of locals or day trippers living in the region were interviewed. For these persons the criterion accommodation has no importance. Despite these potential influences it can be noted that these results are similar to the results of the survey conducted by Anna Marie Longo in New Zealand (Hall et al., 2000)

Generally speaking one can say that an assessment or evaluation is a subjective view and that personal motives are decisive. Tourists probably might be more interested in supplementary offers than local people who come to the winery primarily to buy wine. In this case the quality

of wine and customer service are primary components. As wine tasting events are generally also visited by both target groups to the same extent this also explains the high level of importance of this activity for the questioned persons (average value of 1.66). This also correlates with Longo's results in New Zealand. Here 87.2% of the visitors definitely or most probably wanted to participate in wine tasting at the winery in the course of the day. (Hall et al., 2000) Guided wine cellar tours are also considered as very important by 32% of the questioned persons and 42% at least rated this criterion as important in the German study. This implies a mean score of 1.99. These offers therefore are a point of attraction for wineries. But in comparison with other above listed issues these criteria seem to be less important for the choice of a winery to visit. A new comparison with the survey performed in New Zealand clearly shows differences. Here the majority of the questioned persons stated that they would highly unlikely or definitely not be interested in taking part in a winery or vineyard tour.

Fig. 1: Evaluation of criteria: a selection of activities at a winery (Source: own survey)



As a result to the question “What criteria make this winery attractive for you?” significant differences between the individual locations, where the question was posed are noticeable. But nevertheless all have one issue in common: all interviewed persons stated that the quality of wine resp. the selection and brands was a main criterion. This criterion is leading in the ranking list concerning factors of attractiveness for all objects included in the survey.

For the winery Winzergenossenschaft Sommerach (www.winzer-sommerach.de) a large number of answers referred to architecture or ambience. The factors friendliness of staff, price/performance or regional attractiveness were not considered to be a primary objective associated to the question of what makes a winery attractive for a visit.

The winery Weingut am Stein (www.weingut-am-stein.de) convinces through the wine quality as well as an extraordinary architecture combined with an unparalleled view of the city of Würzburg. This was mentioned by all interviewed persons. Other factors which were increasingly considered as positive were also friendliness of staff and expert advice. A few answers also referred to the location at the “Würzburger Stein” or the organic production of wine, to which this winery is dedicated.

The winery Weingut Hirn (www.weingut-hirn.de) attracts attention through its extraordinary “Hundertwasser” (famous artist) architecture and is well known for this. This fact is also predominant in the results of the interviews. Furthermore the quality of the wine was also positively mentioned, but 14 of the 25 interviewed persons emphasized that the main attraction

was definitely the architecture. Ambience, food, and the location were also mentioned but were less frequently considered as factors for attractiveness.

The other two wineries included in the survey Juliusspital and Bürgerspital differ considerably from all the others. At the winery Juliusspital (www.juliusspital.de) more than half of the total of given answers referred to wine quality and the selection of wines as a decisive criterion which make a visit of the vineyard / winery attractive. In addition the location of the winery near the city was also considered as very attractive. Surprising was the fact that ambience and architecture seemed to play no or only a small role for the interviewed persons although the wine cellar, which can be visited, only recently was redesigned. The later also applies to the winery Bürgerspital (www.buergerspital.de). Here all interviewed persons attached high importance to the good quality of wine as a criterion. Furthermore eight of the interviewed 25 persons stated that they mainly visit the winery Bürgerspital because of the people they can meet there (customers) and consider this as attractive. For locals the Bürgerspital, with its large and attractive area for gastronomy, is also a popular meeting place and location where much time is spent together with others.

On the whole the ranking (listed separately according to winery) shows the above mentioned results obtained on the basis of pre-formulated criteria given to interviewees/visitors of wineries, and thus the criteria for attractiveness of a winery or vineyard were confirmed by the survey. A positive aspect is that of the 171 valid answers only four of the interviewed persons stated that they would not visit the respective winery again.

The wine quality is the predominant criterion but also friendliness of staff and customer service and expertise advice are considered as very important although both later issues were not mentioned very often in the open question field. But nevertheless some of the apparent shifts in ranking or differences show that some of the business-related features must be considered for a wine tourism related positioning. It is thus important for a winery to know which advantages or potential it has and to expand these.

4.3. Limitations

The performed survey is a very good indicator as to which factors from the point of view of customers are of importance for the attractiveness to visit a winery. This question is often influenced by numerous factors and reflects personal or individual perceptions. Therefore many questions still remain unanswered. In order to receive representative results an extension of the survey should be considered. For example a still outstanding research hypothesis is that features of attraction which in particular are of interest for “wine specialist” tourists i.e. tourists with a profound knowledge of wine differ from those of the casual wine-drinking tourists. For the later mentioned tourists for instance visits to other interesting nearby sites or a visit program combined with wine (i.e. wine-tasting and walking tours in the region) counts as a holiday experience or highlight.

Furthermore numerous persons were interviewed which had visited the winery several times before. This can also be a fact which can lead to distorted answers. Discrepancies between the various wineries concerning the number of visits also result from the fact that visitors sometimes were questioned whilst participating in a company tour or respectively when they were in the shops. It is possible that in these cases different motives for a visit and thus differing ideas are reflected. Comparisons in particular with the survey carried out in New Zealand by Longo show that regional differences exist but these could also be a result of other influences. As mentioned in the above survey a large amount of locals resp. persons revisiting the wineries were questioned. In New Zealand on the other hand only approximately half of the questioned persons at the respective winery had visited the winery before (Hall et al., 2000). A follow-up

survey should thus be planned in order to be able to precisely name influences and enable an evaluation with respect to their influential strength. Moreover the objects of the survey are not very comparable, which on the one hand is requested to determine distinguishing factors but on the other hand excludes a clear ranking. But this can hardly be avoided as viticulture in Germany or respectively the German winemaking industry is strongly characterized by individuality and the independent personality of the wine-growers which in particular is a result of the existing small artisan structure and the numerous family-owned companies.

5. CONCLUSION AND OUTLOOK

Wine regions are also destinations for tourists. If they are important enough to be shown in a tourism map depends on various facts like for instance a beautiful landscape, comfortable and safe paths for cycling, interesting routes for walking, or particular cultural attractions and events. Without really interesting wineries or vineyards such a region as a destination for wine tourism cannot exist or can only be marketed with difficulties. The wine makers themselves on the other hand are in competition with other wineries in the region and even more with wine makers throughout the world. With an attractive winery the sales of the individual enterprise can be increased and furthermore a higher profit margin can be achieved by means of direct sales.

As a basis for all sales efforts count the classical criteria for sales like good product quality, service, and customer friendly and competent staff, criteria which are also valid for wine tasting events and vineyard sales. And even if customers mention wine quality in first place it still remains a worthwhile aim to invest in increasing the attractiveness of a winery. For locations which are alongside busy roads an attractive architecture alone can animate motorists to a stop. The interior design and decoration at a “point of sale” (wine tasting area, wine shop) have an influence on the sales atmosphere and thus can influence the customers’ willingness to buy.

Although the survey confirmed that wine cellar visits and vineyard tours are only partially factors for attractiveness of a winery, in literature worldwide these additional more tourism orientated offers are frequently mentioned. They play a larger role in particular as an element to distinguish individual wineries from competitive businesses. And these factors of attractiveness for wineries also serve as means which preserve the competitiveness of a wine destination. It is possible to obtain high quality wines at various places all over the world but the combination of an interesting vineyard architecture and a beautiful landscape, as well as offers for tourists to actively experience these features (i.e. an interesting and instructive tour through the vineyard) can influence tourists to want to visit the region.

NOTES

[1] The reason for the visit is not solely buying wine but also the expectation of experiences on site. For instance wineries hold back special brands of wine which they only offer for sale at the vineyard. This can also be a possibility to attract potential customers. (Getz, 2000)

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