

WINE TOURISM AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Wine has developed into one of a lifestyle product, and correspondingly there is an increasing trend where wine tourism is viewed as a personalized experience where travellers can experience culture, lifestyle, gastronomy, and territory. This is evident with the increase in wine tourists and the number of wine producers featuring a cellar door. However, the development of a wine region requires strategic planning through the support of gastronomy tourism, value added services and cohesion amongst stakeholders.

Growth in wine tourist visitor numbers is leading to increased integration between wine production and tourism (Alonso et al. 2014). It is estimated that there were a total of 60 million visitor nights to Australian wineries in 2014-15, with overall expenditure totalling \$9.2 billion (Gillespie and Clarke 2015). In California, some 21 million visitors and \$2 billion in expenditure annually were directly related to the wine industry (Ag Marketing Resource Center 2014). A recent review of wine tourism research found that the largest proportion of research focused on economic and regional development (Gómez et al. 2018). Research into regional development included case studies of regions (e.g. Hojman and Hunter-Jones 2012), analysis of wine routes (e.g. Bruwer 2003), networking and alliances (e.g. Contò et al. 2014), as well as branding (e.g. Lockshin and Spawton 2001). Successful regional development is closely tied to the work and collaboration of regional associations and local government to support; the promotion of the region and local businesses, establishment of facilities such as a visitor centre, in addition to the long-term sustainability of the region (Alonso and Liu 2012). However, there does not appear to be analysis on regional development using a developed framework.

This working paper proposes to apply the gastronomic tourism framework developed by Hjalager (2002) to three wine tourism regions. These regions will include a well developed mature wine tourism destination, the Barossa Valley in South Australia, a mature tourism destination but new to wine tourism destination, Alsace, France, and finally a new to wine tourism destination, Granite Belt, Queensland Australia.

Wine tourism is consistently described as more than just tasting wine or even just visiting a winery. Visitors are seeking experiences that they can remember that extends far beyond the cellar door. Mature wine regions have realised the importance of developing food, culture and tradition into their destination image. The development of gastronomic and wine tourism within a destination is complex due to many stakeholders and their sometimes-conflicting strategic goals. The typology of value added in gastronomic tourism framework is used to analyse the stages of wine tourism development of three wine tourism regions. Through this analysis, it is envisaged that a wine tourism destination could use the framework to develop their strategic plan and long term positioning.

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