

## Buying into a regional brand: The naming of Central Otago Wineries

**Joanna Fountain**

*Lincoln University, New Zealand*

[joanna.fountain@lincoln.ac.nz](mailto:joanna.fountain@lincoln.ac.nz)

**Daisy Dawson**

*Lincoln University, New Zealand*

[Daisydawson@gmail.com](mailto:Daisydawson@gmail.com)

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- *Purpose: The purpose of this paper is to analyse the meanings and sources of winery names in the Central Otago wine region. In particular, two questions are addressed: To what extent are the elements of the Central Otago regional wine story apparent in the winery names of the region? Are there discernible differences in the elements emphasised in the more established wineries and those that have been launched more recently?*
  - *Design/methodology: A content analysis of the websites of national and regional wine organisations and other sources established a database of 105 wine brands based in Central Otago. The origins and brand stories behind the winery names were analysed, using information included on the wineries' websites, books, magazine and newspaper articles and other marketing and promotional collateral. From this a number of themes and subthemes were identified.*
  - *Findings: Many of the elements fundamental to the Central Otago regional brand feature prominently in the naming of the wineries in the region, particularly landscape features based on the mountains and rocky terrain, as does regional heritage, particularly based around the gold-mining history of Central Otago. Names derived from personal heritage and experience are frequent also. The emphasis and source of winery names of long-established versus more recent wineries differ, with the former having names much more likely to be derived from landscape features. By comparison, the newer wineries are more likely to refer to personal heritage and experience in name origin, while attempting also to 'place themselves' in the region in their naming patterns.*

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Key words: Regional wine brand, winery names, Central Otago

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The spatially embedded nature of wine production renders “place” a powerful component in the marketing and branding of wine. In the case of wine regions, the regional characteristics that are used to differentiate one region from another include the perceived quality of the wine, the varietals grown, and the *terroir* of the region. *Terroir* in this context includes not only the unique combination of soils, climate and topography of a region, but also the human and cultural assets; the unique stories and heritage of a place that weave together to create a cultural landscape (Charters, 2006; Leader-Elliott, 2006). Many long-established wine regions have enduring and powerful narratives of place. Mention “Bordeaux” and an image is conjured up in the mind, whether related to the wine from the region, or to the area as a holiday destination. For recently established wine regions, however, this place image or brand is often relatively weak. Thus, many of these newer wine regions seek to create regional brands to compete in a global wine market alongside the long-established winemaking reputations of Old World regions.

One wine region which has successfully developed a strong regional brand in a short space of time is Central Otago, a rapidly expanding wine growing district in the South Island of New Zealand. Despite a commercial wine industry dating back less than 30 years, Central Otago has become renowned as a producer of premium Pinot Noir. Drawing on awe-inspiring scenery, the stories of a few hardy wine pioneers, and the nineteenth century heritage of gold-mining and pastoral farming, Central Otago offers a strong brand proposition. Pivotal to the dissemination of this regional brand story is the Central Otago Winegrowers Association (COWA), and COPNL, a specialised regional marketing organisation formed by COWA. The regional brand story is spread also via the synergies created between the wine and tourism sectors. The stories of wine and travel writers visiting the region, the blogs and tweets of general tourists travelling through Central Otago, and the experiences of wine tourists engaging with wineries at cellar doors and at wine events add to the connection with the regional brand (Dawson et al., 2011a).

A further way in which a regional brand story may be shared is through the naming of wineries, and the wine labels presented to the consumer. Winery names (and wine labels) are acknowledged to play an important role as conveyors of place myths and as a source of differentiation for wine brands in a crowded marketplace (Banks et al., 2007; Bruwer and Johnson, 2010). Cumulatively, they can act as significant conveyors of regional brand stories, however few academic studies have explored this issue in any depth.

The purpose of this paper is to analyse the meanings and sources of winery names in the Central Otago wine region. In particular, two questions are addressed:

1. To what extent are the elements of the Central Otago regional wine story apparent in the winery names of the region?
2. Are there discernible differences in the elements emphasised in the more established wineries and those that have been launched more recently?

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Building regional wine brands

The wine industry represents a particularly interesting case study of the way place remains relevant, and perhaps increases in importance, within a globalising economy. Over the past decade, the development of wine regionality has gained increasing attention in geography, marketing and tourism literature (e.g. Alonso and Northcote, 2009; Banks et al., 2007; Bruwer and Johnson, 2010; Charters et al., 2011; Dawson et al., 2011a; Easingwood et al., 2011; Hayward and Lewis, 2008; Murray and Overton, 2011; Overton and Heitger, 2008). For example, Overton and Murray (2011) argue that rural places, such as wine regions, are being transformed by the dual processes of globalisation and industrial restructuring in complex and often contradictory ways. These processes are resulting in both ‘downscale’ and ‘upscale’ strategies, with ‘downscale’ strategies associated with mass production and a general homogenisation and ‘placelessness’, while ‘upscaling’ results in more attention to the specificity of place and more “localised and locally-identified production” (Overton and Murray, 2011, p. 63). In this way, wine regions associated with large scale production often lack a strong regional image while at the same time regions associated with premium and high quality wine construct strong ‘myths of place’ (p. 64), emphasising region-of-origin and contributing to a strategy of product differentiation.

A dominant source of place branding of wine in the Old World is a region’s *terroir*, predicated on the notion that “quality and distinctiveness of product is a function of place; the essence of a place can be found – and consumed – in a glass of wine” (Overton, 2010, p. 761). *Terroir* refers to the unique combination of soils, climate and topography of wine producing regions, coupled with the cultural resources and heritage of the region so that “the use of the concept of *terroir* involves the making of stories or myths about a region and its wine” (Overton and Heitger, 2008, p. 441; see also Charters, 2006). The history of vineyards and the winemaking traditions are interwoven with the broader heritage and cultural traditions of the region into the narratives of place which are central to the marketing of premium wine regions and wine-related experiences (Alonso and Northcote, 2009; Banks et al., 2007; Leader-Elliott, 2006). It should be stressed that these place myths are always social and cultural constructions (Banks et al., 2007; Charters et al., 2011). ‘The past’ becomes a resource, and, through a selection process shaped by political and marketing imperatives, only a small proportion of the available stories and cultural traditions are selected to represent the region (Gade, 2004; Ulin, 1995).

The association between wine production and heritage is particularly engrained in the culture of wine consumption in the Old World (Alonso and Northcote, 2009; Gade, 2004; Hayward and Lewis, 2008; Ulin, 1995). However a sense of heritage and tradition is recognised as an important cue for quality and authenticity in a wine (Beverland, 2006; Easingwood et al., 2011; Gade, 2004). Thus, while the history of wine making and wine culture is largely missing in emergent New World wine regions, these regions focused on ‘upscaling’ often seek to connect the wine industry to other elements of local heritage – such as the arrival of the first settlers, or the history of other industries in the region – and to incorporate this link into their marketing strategies (Alonso and Northcote, 2009; Banks et al., 2007; Overton and Murray, 2011). For

example, in the Chilean context, various approaches and techniques are used to build a strong narrative of regionality. These techniques include making linkages to the Old World, through naming, imagery and brand stories, or through presenting images of an idealised Chilean colonial past (Overton and Murray, 2011).

## **2.2. Winery names and labels as conveyors of place myths**

Winery names (and wine labels) play an important role as conveyors of place myths (Banks et al., 2007; Bruwer and Johnson, 2010). The stories behind a winery name and its labels can be important in differentiating a particular wine brand in a crowded marketplace. Gade (2004) suggests that winery names and the design of wine labels can convey powerful messages about nobility, tradition and ‘placeness’. For example, the use of ‘Chateau’ ‘Domaine’ or ‘Estate’ in a winery name may be seen to indicate tradition, and being bound to a particular place through time (Gade, 2004; see also Banks et al., 2007). The use of family crests similarly suggests tradition and continuity that may or may not be a reality. Overton and Murray (2011) report that few Chilean wine brands use place names in their branding, however wine labels commonly include images from Chile’s landscape. This includes elements not visible from the wine regions themselves, such as the Andes Mountains. Chilean wine labels frequently include images of old haciendas or European-styled Chateaux in this landscape setting, which are themselves a social and cultural invention in their Old World origins (Ulin, 1995).

By comparison, Banks et al. (2007) argue that “producers in New Zealand have a tendency to conceive of and market their product with a strong emphasis on the place, region, or country of origin” (p. 32), in part due to the boutique and artisanal nature of their product, but also due to the strong emphasis on landscape and the natural environment in other narratives of place, such as the branding of Tourism New Zealand. They argue that Australian wine brands place less emphasis on regionality. These assertions seem to be borne out in their analysis of a relatively small sample of wine labels. Fifty-five per cent of the New Zealand wine brands had place related names, compared with only 24 per cent of the Australian wine brands. New Zealand wine brands were more likely also to have an image as the dominant element (61% compared to 56%), with only eight percent of the New Zealand wines having no image on the label (Banks et al., 2007, pp. 26-27).

## **3. CONTEXT**

### **3.1. The Central Otago wine region and brand**

The wine industry of Central Otago has experienced rapid growth since the mid-1990s, both in terms of the hectares planted under vines and the number of wineries and wine labels in the region. While the roots of grape-growing in Central Otago date back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it was not until the late 1990s that the industry began to expand rapidly (Oram, 2004; Saker, 2010). From six wineries, and seven hectares in production in 1990, by 2000 there were 39 wineries and 280 hectares in production (Woods et al., 2012, p. 8). Since this time the floodgates have opened, or as local wine pioneer Alan Brady has put it “all hell broke loose” (cited in Saker, 2010, p. 229). The area under vine increased by 625 per cent between 1998 and 2009 (Saker, 2010, p. 229) and by 2010 there were 111 wineries and 1540 hectares in production (Woods et al., 2012, p. 8). The success of Central Otago as a wine region is often attributed to the hard work of a small group of individuals in the early 1990s who defied ridicule and the horticultural wisdom of

the day to plant grapes to make wine (Cull, 2001; Oram, 2004). Today, Central Otago has developed a global reputation as a producer of premium Pinot Noir, to the extent that wine writer and critic Matt Kramer announced in 2005 “Central Otago Pinot has become New Zealand’s red wine equivalent of Marlborough Sauvignon” (cited in Saker, 2010, p. 229; Woods et al., 2012).

Environmental assets are clearly an important component of Central Otago’s regional wine brand. The unique environmental attributes of Central Otago are responsible for cultivating its high quality wines, and a narrative of *terroir* is explicitly emphasized in regional wine marketing (Ballantyne, 2011, p. 6). The pure air and water, the awe-inspiring landscapes, distinctive seasons, and rocky soils leave a profound impression on many visitors and residents alike. This setting presents a particularly challenging and risky environment for grape growing also; great extremes of climate, rugged and often inaccessible landscapes, bitterly cold night time and winter temperatures coupled with scorching summers, all in the driest region in the country.

Against this backdrop, stories of gold-mining pioneers and other early settlers persevering to make a living and extract wealth from a hostile terrain create a powerful narrative of place. It is a relatively simple transition from these gold-mining stories to the ordeals and challenges which faced the pioneering winemakers. In this way, the experience of individuals who succeed in cultivating a sophisticated and beautiful wine from a dry, rock-covered and unforgiving terrain echo those of the rugged gold miners who found gold in this harsh environment. In promoting Central Otago’s identity as rooted in a pioneering rural history, wine producers (and marketers) are utilizing the heritage branding of Old World wines in a uniquely New Zealand context (cf. Alonso and Northcote, 2009; Overton and Murray, 2011).

### **3.2. Factors in the success of the Central Otago regional wine brand**

There are a number of factors that have contributed to the success of the Central Otago regional wine brand, but one important feature is the strong culture of collaboration within the region’s wine industry. From the outset, the wine producers in the region realized that their small size of operation and production meant that it would be difficult to develop ‘individual market clout’, so developing and aligning themselves to a regional brand image was a crucial early strategy (Ballantyne, 2011). Over the years they have worked together to achieve their aims, freely sharing winery and viticultural know-how; a culture which continued as the wine industry in the region expanded (Caple et al, 2010; Woods et al., 2012). The Central Otago regional wine brand has been very carefully developed, nurtured and protected by the Central Otago Winegrowers Association (COWA), and their marketing arm, COPNL (Central Otago Pinot Noir Limited), which has spearheaded the marketing of the region’s Pinot Noir for the last decade (Dawson et al., 2011a; Woods et al., 2012).

A second factor in the strength of the Central Otago regional wine brand has been a primary focus on one varietal and a premium market niche, with quality controls applied to the wine sold under the Central Otago Pinot brand. The strong place myths around the regional heritage and traditions, including the ‘romance’ of the gold-mining era, are another key in the success of this regional brand. While the experiences of wine pioneers in the region is seen as analogous to those of the miners, the location of wineries on or near old mining sites and the physical evidence of the remains of mine tailings ensure a vibrant and memorable narrative can be supported by visual cues. In this way, the regional brand contains many elements identified as

important authenticity cues for wine brands (Beverland, 2006), and for regions perceived to have strong regional identities (Easingwood et al., 2011).

Another important factor has been the synergy in the Central Otago regional wine brand with the broader Central Otago 'World of Difference' brand, developed by Tourism Central Otago. This strong and well promoted regional brand is populated with rugged rural characters, a pioneering history and spirit, as well as an awe-inspiring landscape (Howden, 2012). Extensive overlap exists between the elements of the natural and cultural landscape important in the region's tourism branding and the marketing of the region's wine in many regions (Hall and Mitchell, 2002), and this is the case in Central Otago. International and domestic tourists have long been enticed to New Zealand by images of inspirational mountain vistas and sparkling lakes from the Central Otago region (Overton and Heitger, 2008). In fact, Saker (2010) goes so far to suggest: "Many a New Zealand Pinot Noir producer from regions further north has expressed the view that the seductive physical beauty of Central Otago has played a key role in drawing consumers to the region's wines, the alleged thought sequence being that such god-given beauty must surely provide god-given wine" (p. 228). But the Central Otago regional brand goes beyond this, creating a stronger sense of a cultural landscape (Woods et al., 2012, p. 10).

### **2.3. Potential challenges to the brand**

While the Central Otago regional brand is the envy of many other regions, there is some cause for concern that the strength of the brand may be diluted by contradictory messages. One source of concern is the rapid growth of the wine region, resulting in many new investors. While many of the new winery owners have moved to the region for lifestyle reasons, others remain resident in other parts of the country or overseas (Dawson et al., 2011b). Charters et al. (2011) have identified the significance for wine regions of all stakeholders associated with a territorial brand sharing a vision and "understanding a common culture, history, story and mythology" (p. 11). This can be difficult to achieve if those making decisions about winery brands and labels are not physically present in the region much of the time, or do not have a long history or knowledge of the area. This is an issue also with the proliferation of wine companies with no base in the region buying Central Otago wine or grapes and creating their own Central Otago Pinot Noir wine brand and label without any personal commitment to the region (Ballantyne, 2011; Woods et al., 2012).

Related to this is a growing concern that the strength of the brand may be diluted by the sheer number of wineries. The high prices commanded for Central Pinot has attracted many new producers, some without any background or knowledge of winemaking, and it is felt by some that a variable quality of wine being produced by some of these wine brands is the result. Furthermore, the pressure of finite demand for Central Otago Pinot Noir, as well as the economies of scale possible for some of the larger operations based outside the region, has seen Central Otago Pinot Noir being sold at much lower price points, potentially compromising the integrity of the premium reputation of the regional brand (Charters et al., 2011; Woods et al., 2012). To date, little if any, academic research has been conducted to determine if these fears are being realised.

## **4. METHODOLOGY**

The research on which this paper is based began by establishing a database of the wine brands based in Central Otago. To achieve this, the websites of national and regional wine organisations were searched, supplemented by other commercial and industry websites. For the purpose of this research, wine brands owned by wineries first established in other regions but which have expanded into Central Otago have been excluded, the rationale being that these wine brands would not have names reflecting engagement with grape growing or wine making in Central Otago. This procedure resulted in a database of 105 winery names. A number of wineries in the region have witnessed name changes since their establishment, either as a result of a rebranding exercise or due to the arrival of new owners. In this situation, only the current winery name has been analysed.

Once these wineries were identified, the principal researcher proceeded to analyse the origins and brand stories behind the winery names. In most cases, this information was included on the wineries' websites, but in some cases other sources, such as books, magazine and newspaper articles and other marketing and promotional collateral (brochures, wine back labels), were analysed for additional information. In some situations no explicit explanation of the source of the winery name was given, but in these cases the origins were generally obvious, particularly where the referent is a landscape feature, place name, or immediate family name. In the majority of cases where the source of the name was not immediately clear, the origins are explained on the website, often in quite detailed stories.

The winery names and the stories behind these names were analysed for emergent themes by the principal researcher. The starting point for these themes was existing academic literature research exploring the topic of regional wine branding and naming. Based on this, broad themes were identified around landscape/topography features, place names, regional heritage and personal heritage, with sub themes emerging within each of these categories. The vast majority of identifiable origins for winery names could be included in one of these broad themes, however a few additional themes were added at this stage, particularly relating to vineyard characteristics and practices. Winery names often had more than one meaning or source. In order to capture the rich and complex nature of the naming process, in this situation these wineries were included in more than one category. Once major themes and sub themes had been identified, the second researcher independently categorised the data, using the themes identified by the principal researcher, but adding categories of her own, or renaming existing categories. In the vast majority of cases both researchers categorised the winery names in the same way; where there were differences in the categorisation these were discussed until an agreement could be reached. In this way, investigator triangulation added to the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings reported below (Denzin, 1989).

## **5. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **5.1. Winery Names**

Table 1 presents the results of the analysis of the meanings and origins of winery names. As stated above, names often had more than one meaning or source, in which case they are included in more than one category in Table 1. For example, the Auburn website explains that the winery name was inspired by the dominant colour of the landscape, the rich history of gold-mining in the region, and the British heritage of the region that sees the dominance of the 'burn' suffix,

referring to a stream or creek in the Gaelic language, thus: “[a]dopting this heritage, we ... chose to use the “burn” suffix and partner it with **Au**, the chemical symbol for gold” (Auburn, 2012). It should be noted that the name origins of six wineries were unclear, so are not included in this table. Similarly, five wineries had origins that do not correspond to one of the themes identified, and they have been excluded.

**Table 1: Meaning and Source of Winery Names**

<b>Landscape (all)</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>34.3</b>
Mountains/Ranges/Hills	19	18.1
Landmarks/Rocks	7	6.7
Flora/Fauna	7	6.7
River	3	2.9
<b>Place names</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>16.2</b>
District/Area/Road		
<b>Heritage (all)</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>30.4</b>
Gold-related	18	17.1
Farm-related	7	6.7
Other local heritage	5	4.8
Regional personality	2	1.9
<b>Personal (all)</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>25.7</b>
Family name	7	6.7
Personal heritage	13	12.4
Personal experience	7	6.7
<b>Vineyard characteristics/practices</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4.8</b>

### 5.1.1. *Landscape features and place names*

Table 1 reveals that the most common source of winery name is some aspect of the natural landscape; over a third of the wineries (34.3%) alluded to the influence of a landscape feature in their naming. Topographical features, such as mountains, ridgelines and rocky outcrops, were the most common source of these names, and the focus on schist and rock in winery naming reflects the centrality of these elements to the articulation of the *terroir* of the region (Ballantyne, 2011). In some situations winery names are based on the real names of topographical features, while in other cases they are more representative of a regional landscape characteristic. This includes some ‘invented’ names used to “evoke particular regional qualities or place associations” (Banks et al., 2007, p.27), such as ‘Bald Hills’ and ‘Schist Hills’. The following are typical examples of explanations given for landscape-based names:

Mount Michael vineyard overlooks the township of Cromwell from its vantage point on the lower slopes of Mount Michael, one of the peaks in the Pisa Range at the foothills of the great Southern Alps (Mount Michael, 2012).



The inspiration for our wine label Judge Rock comes from the little known schist landmark called **Old Judge Rock** on the southern road entry into Central Otago at Millers Flat (Judge Rock, n.d.)

Bald Hills is located on Cornish Point Road. Bannockburn. The property is bordered by the “bald” Cairnmuir hills (Bald Hills, 2013)

It is somewhat surprising that waterways, such as the Kawerau and Clutha Rivers and Lake Dunstan, which visually dominate much of the Cromwell Basin, rate few mentions in these brand stories.

The research by Banks et al., (2007) included place names in the same category as landscape features in their analysis. In the current research, names of districts and roads are included in a separate category (e.g. Tarras Vineyards, Felton Road). The rationale for this is that landscape features are so central to the visual imagery of the Central Otago brand story, whereas location or road names often have less of a visual connotation. It is acknowledged, however, that the distinction between place name and landscape feature is at times fuzzy. For example, ‘Gibbston Valley’ is a place name but is clearly a landscape feature also. To ensure there was no double counting of names of similar origins, no winery name was included in both a landscape and place name category. Overall, 16.2 per cent of wineries traced their names to a named place. As is the case with the landscape features, at times there is little in the way of a brand story surrounding these names, whereas in other situations the place names are explicitly explained in relation to the heritage of the area. Combining the landscape and place name categories, the proportion of place related names in Central Otago wineries is 50.5 per cent, relatively similar to the 55 per cent of New Zealand wines with place-related names identified in the study of Banks et al. (2007).

### **5.1.2. Heritage**

Some aspect of heritage of the region was an influencing factor in the naming of 30.4 per cent of the wineries in this study, with more than half of this number referring to the history of gold-mining in the region in the rationale for their name:

The largest Quartz Reef deposit in New Zealand lies beneath the vines at Bendigo Station. The Historic gold town on Bendigo was mined from 1862. Now the sun-drenched north facing slopes are becoming famous again... (Quartz Reef, n.d.)

Perseverance Estate derives its name from a current wheel gold dredge, built in 1886 by the “father” of gold dredges, Louis Gards. This dredge worked at Mutton Town Point on the Clutha River until 1889 (Perseverance Estate, 2010)

At times, elements of landscape and gold-mining heritage combine in the brand story:

The name ‘Prophet’s Rock’ is taken from a prominent local landmark in Central Otago, named after pioneering goldminer ‘Bob Prophet’ who had the gold claim at the site. The decision was further reinforced by the presence of a similarly enormous rock at the centre of the Bendigo vineyard (Prophet’s Rock, 2013)

However other elements of heritage are represented also, perhaps most notably the history of farming in the region, providing a rich vein of backstory for the following wine brand:

Our vineyard, Gibbston Highgate Estate historically made up part of the lower Waitiri Station farm. The original land was a high-country merino sheep station where the “highgate” was opened in spring to let the sheep roam over the mountaintops once the snow had melted. (Gibbston Highgate Estate, n.d.)

Accounts referring to agricultural heritage are often apparent in the brand stories of wineries that still bear the name of previous (e.g. Chard Farm) or ongoing (e.g. Northburn Station) agricultural operations on the site, and for this reason wineries named after farms or stations were included in this heritage category.

While not included in the table above, an analysis of the use of place-bound descriptors in winery names (Banks et al., 2007; Gade, 2004) reveals that 15 wineries had ‘Estate’, ‘Farm’ or ‘Station’ in their name, suggesting a connection to a particular place. It is our argument that the use of ‘Vineyard’ in a winery name provides a similar sense of place connection, and 21 wineries included ‘Vineyard’ in their name. Thus, more than a third of all wineries (34.3%) in this research ‘placed’ themselves in this way.

### **5.1.3. *Personal meanings, heritage and experiences***

Personal meanings, heritage and experiences are mentioned as a source by almost a quarter of all wineries (23.8%). This category includes wineries with the name, or a derivative of the name, of a current owner (e.g. Van Asch, Brennan, Ellero), or with the name of an ancestor (e.g. Rippon). In the case where the names of ancestors are the source of winery names, the name used sometimes alludes to a family winemaking heritage in the Old World (e.g. Mondillo, Valli); a characteristic noted in other New World wine regions (Overton and Murray, 2011).

In some cases, the winery name refers to other aspects of personal heritage – family histories, childhood memories, and family homes. In these situations, the brand stories developed are often quite dramatic, but may tell a story quite removed from the Central Otago regional brand, as in the case of the following:

Archangel is built upon a foundation of hope, love and survival; a story of destiny. Seventy years ago in Arkhangel’sk, Siberia, two refugee girls began a courageous journey to freedom, traversing continents to finally meet. A generation later, their children ensure that the same spirit inspires Archangel Vineyard (Archangel, n.d)

Personal experiences included also the experience of setting up and establishing the vineyard and winery (e.g. Akarua, Two Paddocks).

### **5.1.4. *Vineyard characteristics and practices***

Given the emphasis in Central Otago on narratives of *terroir*, it is perhaps surprising that only five wineries explicitly mentioned vineyard characteristics or practices as a source of a winery name. For example:

The severe pitch of the land meant our vineyard had to be carved into the hillside one step at a time, with just enough room on each terrace to plant only one or two rows of vines. There are 25 terraces in all (25 Steps Vineyard, n.d.).

## 5.2. The influence of date of establishment on winery names

In light of the concern amongst some wineries in Central Otago that the flood of new wine brands is diluting the regional brand name, this research explored whether the length of time a winery had been established in the region affected the origin and source of their winery names. To investigate this, the wineries were separated into two categories – those established before 2000 (referred to here as ‘Established’) and those set up since this time (referred to as ‘Newcomers’). The year 2000 was chosen as the cut off point, as this is when many commentators have suggested that the wine industry ‘took off’ in the region (see Saker, 2010). For this analysis, those wineries where the origin of the name was not clear have been excluded; this left a sample of 99 winery names. Only one source or origin of each winery name was included in this part of the analysis, and identifying dominant origin was not always an easy task; often the sources of the names were tightly interwoven together. It is acknowledged, therefore, that the categorisation is somewhat subjective, but the independent analysis by the two researchers, and further discussion subsequent to this analysis, has increased confidence over this process.

Table 2 reveals that when the dominant sources or origins of winery names are identified, there is shift in the relative importance of various categories. While landscape features (32.4%) remain the dominant source of winery names, heritage (22.2%) is a little less significant than personal origins (24.3%), suggesting a somewhat secondary role for this naming origin. What is apparent also is that there are some quite noticeable differences between the age of the winery and the origins of winery name. Established wineries are much more likely to have a brand name primarily based on a feature of landscape (45.7% compared to 20.7%). Whereas 26.1 per cent of Established wineries had reference to a mountain or hill in their name, the corresponding figure amongst Newcomers was 11.3 per cent. Similarly, natural landmarks featured much more strongly in the brand stories of Established (10.9%) compared with Newcomer wineries (1.9%), whereas place names feature more strongly in the naming of Newcomer wineries (15.1% compared to 8.7%). Combining these two categories, while over half (54.4%) of Established wineries had a place related name this was the case for a little more than a third (35.8%) of Newcomer wineries.

There are noticeable differences also in the use of elements of heritage in brand stories. While a little more than a fifth of all Established (21.7%) and Newcomer wineries (22.7%) refer to heritage in their naming, the types of heritage referenced differ. While the likelihood of the wineries’ brand story being based on gold-mining heritage is similar, established wineries are more likely to refer to elements of the region’s farming heritage (8.7% compared to 1.9%). Newcomers alone refer to other elements of the region’s local heritage, including personalities and built landmarks (9.5%).

Newcomer wineries are more likely than established wineries to use personal names or personal heritage and experience as a source of winery name (28.2% compared to 19.6%), and there is evidence also that the two groups differ in their attempts to ‘place’ themselves in the region. Newcomers are more likely to refer to vineyard characteristics and practices than Established

wineries, although the numbers doing so are small. However, Newcomer wineries are much more likely to include ‘Vineyard’ in the name of their wine brand; 30.5 per cent of these wineries do so, compared with 6.5 per cent of Established wineries. This finding suggests perhaps the perceived importance of highlighting the winery’s physical presence in Central Otago, at a time when increasing numbers of wine brands are not located in the region. Given this, it is somewhat surprising that more of these wineries do not refer to landscape features in their naming.

**Table 2: Key Meaning and Source of Winery Names by Establishment Date**

CATEGORY	Established % n=46	Newcomers % n=53	TOTAL% n=99
<b>Landscape (all)</b>	<b>45.7</b>	<b>20.7</b>	<b>32.4</b>
Mountains/Ranges/Hills	26.1	11.3	18.2
Landmarks/Rocks	10.9	1.9	6.1
Flora/Fauna	6.5	5.6	6.1
River	2.2	1.9	2.0
<b>Place names (all)</b>	<b>8.7</b>	<b>15.1</b>	<b>12.1</b>
District/area			
<b>Heritage (all)</b>	<b>21.7</b>	<b>22.7</b>	<b>22.2</b>
Gold-related	13.0	11.3	12.1
Farm-related	8.7	1.9	5.1
Other local heritage	0.0	5.7	3.0
Regional personality	0.0	3.8	2.0
<b>Personal (all)</b>	<b>19.6</b>	<b>28.2</b>	<b>24.3</b>
Family name	4.3	9.4	7.1
Personal heritage	10.9	11.3	11.1
Personal experience	4.3	7.5	6.1
<b>Vineyard characteristics</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>7.5</b>	<b>4.0</b>
<b>Other</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>5.7</b>	<b>5.1</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

Many of the elements fundamental to the Central Otago regional brand feature prominently in the naming of the wineries in the region, particularly landscape features based on the mountains and ridgelines, rocks and schist. While waterways and rivers are prominent in the visual imagery of the region, this is not reflected in winery names. Heritage, including the gold-mining and pastoral history of the region, plays a significant role in the naming of wineries, but it is often a secondary source of meaning. Personal experience and personal heritage features very strongly in the explanation of winery names. While this could be a potential source of concern if it dilutes the regional brand, the Central Otago brand is a place myth populated with rugged rural characters, a pioneering history and spirit, and in most cases the stories of personal heritage reinforce, rather than contradict this brand story. However a regional brand is never static, and there is always scope to extend a regional brand story to ensure on-going inclusiveness (Charters et al., 2011).

There are some differences in the emphasis and source of winery names for wineries established in the 1980s and 1990s and those established this century. Regardless of establishment date, however, wineries seem to be generally reinforcing themes integral to the Central Otago regional brand story in their naming, albeit different elements. Of particular interest is the indication that Newcomer wineries are aware perhaps of the need to ‘establish their credentials’ and ‘place themselves’ in the region. They do this in two ways; by incorporating narratives of regional heritage into their brand story to give them an aura of legitimacy and tradition, and by using place bound descriptors in their name, in particular ‘Vineyard’, to a greater extent than Established wineries. Interestingly, however, these wineries are much less likely to incorporate elements of the landscape in their winery names than those wineries established before 2000.

This paper has explored only a small fraction of the brand story developed by Central Otago wineries surrounding the naming of the wineries. Wine labels, and the stories surrounding these, play a crucial role in reinforcing winery and regional brands and will be the subject of a future paper. There is scope to examine more closely other elements of brand stories developed by these wineries, including narratives establishing ‘belonging status’ in the region (Fountain, 2002) and further analysis of the narratives of *terroir* (Ballantyne, 2011). Future research could examine also consumer perceptions of these winery names and wine labels; it may be that the meaning and origins of names are interpreted quite differently by consumers than by the wineries themselves (or by these researchers). Finally, it is unclear from one case study whether the patterns in winery naming are specific to Central Otago or reflect more general patterns of naming in wine regions. For this reason, a comparative analysis exploring the winery names and labels in different regions, both within and beyond New Zealand would provide interesting insights into wine regionality and winery branding.

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