



## VISITOR PROFILES AND MOTIVATIONS FOR VISITING AN AUSTRALIAN WINE FESTIVAL

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### **Abstract**

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## Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to profile visitors who attended Winter Wine Fest (WWFest) 2003 and their motivations for visiting the festival, as a basis for informing marketing and management recommendations aimed at improving the festival experience of visitors as well as contributing to the literature on special events in the wine tourism industry. The paper also provides a foundation for further research, including replication of this study's methods at other festivals and wine tourism events and suggestions for exploring variables not included in this study.

In order to do this the study adopted a cross-sectional survey strategy, using a 35-item on-site self-completing questionnaire. The instrument included slightly adapted versions of existing motivational scales and subscales, as well as measured social group membership and several other socio-demographic variables, many of which were designed to facilitate comparisons with Bureau of Tourism Research data. Based on the 273 respondents to the survey, the paper provides a socio-demographic profile of the average respondent together with frequencies and percentages on a number of variables, with some multivariate analysis of motivational differences based on social group membership.

The profile of the 'average' WWFest visitor was found to be female, working full-time, aged between 45 and 64 years old, and living in a household that has an annual income between \$78,000 and \$103,999. These demographics reflect the profile of the 'average' wine enthusiast. The visitor, in all likelihood, is attending the festival for the first time, having decided to visit it only a week out from the event after hearing about it via word-of-mouth recommendations. Travelling from metropolitan Melbourne, the average visitor is primarily attending the festival to gain knowledge and expand his/her intellect about wine (that is, for cultural exploration purposes), and to a lesser extent, to socialise and because of the festival's novel premise.

Visitors can be segmented based on the social group within which they visit the festival, the largest proportion visiting with friends (48%), followed by couples (33%), families (15%) and only four percent attending solo. There were significant differences between these segments in the motivations to attend the festival, with family groups more likely to be driven by kinship-related motives (e.g. the opportunity to do something the family could do together) in contrast to those who visited with friends, who were more likely to be express motives associated with known-group socialisation (e.g. to be with others who enjoy similar things).

The visitor profile data together with the motivational results suggest that festival organisers should find ways to differentiate their product and improve their marketing to provide themselves with a competitive advantage over the plethora of leisure and recreation activities available to consumers. In order to survive the increasingly competitive tourism industry, festival marketing should be informed by an understanding of the consumer (target market). If a festival organiser can design a festival that targets particular markets based on their distinct differences (for example, targeting the differences between the social groupings of couples versus friendship groups versus families), then they are better positioned to facilitate favourable experiences and repeat visitation amongst its target audiences.

# VISITOR PROFILES AND MOTIVATIONS FOR VISITING AN AUSTRALIAN WINE FESTIVAL

## INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Festivals and special events offer a unique and valuable contribution to Australian culture and it comes as no surprise that they have become a major part of Australian life, with approximately 1.5 million Australians attending festivals and special events annually (Bureau of Tourism Research 2003). Along with ambient attractions (such as climate, scenery, culture, and wildlife) and permanent attractions (such as theme parks, historical sites, sports facilities, and convention centres), festivals and special events comprise one of the three major categories of tourism attractions (Getz 1991). Given that festivals are growing in number and diversity, this is inevitably leading to increased competition. As consumers can spend their leisure time and income on a plethora of alternate activities (Burns and Holden 1995), organisers find themselves searching for a competitive advantage to ensure a festival's success and longevity in the tourism industry. It can be argued that a better understanding of consumer motivation provides an important avenue for gaining an edge in this competitive marketplace.

With this in mind, this paper presents selected results from an in-depth study of the motivations of visitors to Winter Wine Fest (WWFest), a regional wine festival that occurs annually on the Mornington Peninsula in Victoria during the Queen's Birthday weekend in the month of June. The festival first began in 1987 at *Arthur's Restaurant* and since then has been held at numerous venues around the Mornington Peninsula region such as *The Atrium*, *Mount Martha Valley*, the *Mornington Peninsula Regional Gallery*, and the *Frankston Cultural Centre*. In 2003, WWFest operated out of its 2002 venue, *Red Hill Recreation Reserve and Showgrounds*, which is located in a relatively undeveloped agricultural area of the Mornington Peninsula. As part of a three-day event titled *Winter Wine Weekend* (WWW), WWFest occurs on the Saturday (in 2003, it was on 7 June) and provides visitors with the opportunity to taste more than 150 wines from 38 Mornington Peninsula vineyards. In turn, the single-day festival is meant to act as an enticement to visitors to visit individual events occurring at various wineries in the region on the remaining two days of WWW. From the organiser's point of view, the idea behind the event is to promote the Mornington Peninsula wine region and market it as a leading producer of high quality, maritime, cool climate wines.

The research study sought to examine motivations of visitors attending this one-day regional wine festival, and in particular the influence of 'social groups' on the motivations for attending a festival. For the purpose of this report, a social group is defined as a unit comprised of individuals who recognise each other as members of the group and draw normative influences and meaning of which this shared meaning is reciprocally acknowledged (Cheek and Burch 1976). . Individuals do not function as independent entities in society; rather they interact with other people. The personal motivational drives of individuals are filtered and redirected by the social circles of workmates, family, and friends (Burch 1969). The theoretical contribution of the study was that it investigated the relationship between social group and motivation in a context that has not previously been researched, namely, a wine festival in regional Australia. The literature that informed the study is overviewed briefly here.

The literature on consumer behaviour has sought to explain the purchasing behaviour of consumers using a variety of different theoretical constructs. One such construct that has gained attention in the tourism field has been the intangible phenomenon of motivation (Crompton and McKay 1997; Iso-Ahola 1989; Ross 1994; Ryan 1997), although it is surprising that little research has been conducted on visitor motivations in the continuously burgeoning festivals and special events industry. With the complexity and seemingly unpredictability of tourist behaviour, it would be imprudent to assume a causal relationship between motivation and festival visitor behaviour. Nevertheless, this study focused on motivation in explaining tourist behaviour since "*motives are the starting point that launches the decision process*" (Crompton and McKay 1997:425)

Much of the wine tourism research conducted to date has placed little to no emphasis on regional wine events, despite these events often attracting significant numbers of visitors to a wine region and helping build loyalty to the region and its wineries. For regions such as Martinborough in New Zealand, these wine festivals are crucial to the success of not only its wineries, but to the region itself. Not only does the Toast Martinborough Annual Festival attract significant numbers to the region, but it has also been a driving force in developing an awareness of the region and its potential to produce quality wine amongst wine consumers (Beverland, Hoffman and Rasmussen 2001).

Wine tourism research has explored variables such as demographics, reference groups, and cultures, but few studies have focused on the internal variable of motivation. Similarly, despite the emergence of several tourist motivational theories during the 1970s, little research was conducted on special events and festivals until quite recently (Mohr, Backman, Gahan and Backman 1993). However, attitudes have changed and motivation research into festival attendance is now seen as invaluable to the success of the wine tourism industry, helping to provide festival organisers a better understanding of these consumers' behaviour (Kotler and Cox 1988; Mitchell, Hall and McIntosh 2000).

The motivational literature has developed, tested and validated a number of measurement scales in recent years (Crompton and McKay 1997; Scott 1996; Backman, Backman, Uysal and Mohr Sunshine 1995; Mohr, Backman, Gahan and Backman 1993; Uysal, Gahan and Martin 1993), and a review and analysis of this literature led to the adaptation of six subscales for the current study, discussed in more detail in the next section. It was also clear that identifying the current socio-demographic characteristics of WWFest visitors would be a contribution to the literature as well as help organisers to more effectively market and refine the product to match visitors' needs and wants. Consequently, an investigation of both the socio-demographics of visitors (including their social group membership) and their motivations for visiting WWFest was undertaken.

## **METHODS**

In order to complete the study, a 35-item self-completing questionnaire was administered on-site to visitors attending WWFest. The survey collected socio-demographic information of visitors including one question on social group membership, and measured motivations for attending the festival using 21 items representing six underlying 'subscales' (see Appendix A).

By using field assistants and multiple distribution and collection points, the study succeeded in administering 513 questionnaires to a random sample of adult visitors throughout the event. This is approximately 20 percent of the total population of visitors to WWFest on the day, using rigorous field sampling methods to minimise sampling bias. Other than an unknown level of non-response bias (273 questionnaires were returned, yielding a response rate of 53%) and some shortcomings in the instrument itself, limitations of the study were minimal.

Data were analysed using both univariate and multivariate statistics for each of the independent and dependent variables in the study. As already mentioned, two theoretical constructs operationalised in this study were social group membership (an independent variable) and motivation to visit the festival (six motivational subscales comprised of 21 items). Measures of central tendency such as the mean and standard deviation of the dependent variables were used to assess the normality of their distributions, and supplementary tests of the assumptions which underlie the use of parametric statistical techniques were also performed including independence of observations and homogeneity of variance of the study's variables (Kranzler and Moursund 1999; Pallant 2001; Williams 1986). Confirmatory factor analysis was used on the motivational subscales, and MANOVA was then performed on the composite mean score of each of the extracted motivational dimensions to test for statistically significant differences between the different social group types.

## FINDINGS

The remainder of this paper reports selected results, including the socio-demographic profile of visitors to Winter Wine Fest (WWFest) 2003 and a description of their motives for visiting the festival. More in-depth analysis of the variables that explain motivational variation among visitors is reported elsewhere (name withheld during review process).

A univariate descriptive analysis was conducted to reveal the socio-demographic profile of the 'average' visitor to WWFest (see Table 1). The profile of respondents revealed that visitors to WWFest were most likely to be between the ages of 45 and 64 years old (47%), with a substantial portion of visitors aged between 25 and 44 years old (42%). The gender of the attendees were split nearly evenly with slightly more females (52%) visiting WWFest. Almost two-thirds travelled to the festival from the Melbourne metropolitan region (64%), with over three-quarters of the visitors reporting an annual household income of over \$52,000 (78%). Visitors to WWFest were more likely to be employed in full-time working positions (87%).

**Table 1: Demographic Profile of Winter Wine Fest Visitors (N = 273)**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	131	48
Female	142	52
<b>Age</b>		
18 to 24 years old	19	7
25 to 44 years old	115	42
45 to 64 years old	128	47
65 years and over	11	4
<b>Employment Status</b>		
Working (part-time or full-time)	238	87
Unemployed	5	2
Retired or on a pension	16	6
Mainly doing home duties	9	3
Studying (part-time or full-time)	5	2
<b>Annual Household Income</b>		
\$1 – 25,999	11	4
\$26,000 – 51,999	49	18
\$52,000 – 77,999	60	22
\$78,000 – 103,999	66	24
\$104,000 – 129,999	27	10
\$130,000 or over	60	22
<b>Area of Residence</b>		
Mornington Peninsula region	74	27
Melbourne metropolitan region	175	64
Other	24	9

Further univariate descriptive analysis was conducted to reveal the various visitation habits of visitors to WWFest (see Table 2). For the majority of visitors (70%), it was their first visit to a festival in 2003. Similarly, many attendees were visiting WWFest for the first time (71%). A

substantial proportion of visitors had heard about the festival via word-of-mouth communication (40%), with the greater part deciding to visit WWFest only a week out from the event (43%).

**Table 2: Visitation Characteristics of Winter Wine Fest Visitors (N = 273)**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Are You a General Festival-Goer?</b>		
First festival visit for 2003	191	70
Have visited another festival in 2003	82	30
<b>Type of Winter Wine Fest Visitor</b>		
First-time WWFest visitor	194	71
Repeat WWFest visitor	79	29
<b>When Did You Decide to Visit WWFest?</b>		
Up to 1 week ago	117	43
1 to 2 weeks ago	41	15
2 to 4 weeks ago	46	17
Over a month ago	69	25
<b>How Did You Hear About WWFest?</b>		
Radio	5	2
Television	3	1
Magazine	55	20
Newspaper	44	16
Word-of-mouth recommendation	109	40
Internet	9	3
Other (includes visitor centre and wineries)	48	18
<b>Mornington Peninsula Visitation Habits</b>		
First-time visitor to the Mornington Peninsula	30	11
Repeat visitor to the Mornington Peninsula	243	89
<b>Reason for Visiting Mornington Peninsula</b>		
Leisure and recreation	237	87
Visiting friends and relatives	33	12
Business	3	1
<b>Type of Social Group</b>		
Alone	11	4
Couple	90	33
Friends	131	48
Family	41	15
<b>Size of Visitor Groups</b>		
One	11	4
Two	93	34
Three or Four	101	37
Five or more	68	25

Attendees at WWFest were predominantly repeat visitors to the Mornington Peninsula region (89%), with almost 90 percent travelling to the region for leisure and recreation purposes (87%). Almost half were attending the festival with friends (48%) with the remainder largely couples (33%). Visitors were most likely to attend the festival in groups ranging in size of two to four (71%).

To identify the top motivations for visiting WWFest, the arithmetic mean scores of the 21 questionnaire items that measured the different motivations for festival attendance were calculated. Confirmatory factor analysis was conducted first, after which the motivations were analysed as factors or subscales of motives, as presented in Table 3.

**Table 3: Top Motivations for Visiting Winter Wine Fest**

Rank	Motivation	Mean Score
1.	Cultural exploration	4.0
2.	Known-group socialisation	3.8
3.	Event novelty	3.7
4.	External socialisation	3.2
5.	Family togetherness	2.5
6.	Recover equilibrium	2.4

Note: Respondents ( $N = 273$ ) utilised a five-point Likert-type scale to indicate the importance of each motivation for attending Winter Wine Fest (1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral; 4 = agree; and 5 = strongly agree).

Using the subscales listed in Table 3, the important motivation for visiting WWFest was *cultural exploration* (mean score = 4.0), defined as a desire to gain knowledge and expand intellectual horizons through enriching pursuits (Crompton and McKay 1997). Almost equally important for WWFest attendance in terms of their respective mean scores of 3.8 and 3.7 were the motivations of *known-group socialisation* (defined as the desire to interact with members of a group with which one is familiar) and *event novelty* (or the desire to seek out new and different experiences through the unique offerings of WWFest). The fourth-ranked motive for visiting the festival was *external socialisation* (or the desire to seek out/interact with individuals with which one is not familiar). The least important motives for visiting WWFest were associated with desires in enhancing family and kinship relationships, and refreshing oneself mentally and physically from normal day-to-day stresses, namely *family togetherness* (mean score = 2.5) and *recover equilibrium* (2.4).

The study also examined how festival visitors who attended in different social groups (alone, with their partner or spouse, in an extended family group, or with a group of friends) differed in their motivations for visiting the festival. The results showed that family groups primarily attended WWFest to strengthen kinship relationships (family togetherness motive) whereas those who travelled to the festival with friends exhibited motives associated with known-group socialisation. There were no significant differences between the four social groups attending the festival for the motives of event novelty and cultural exploration, with all groups exhibiting similar desires to attend the festival for its educational and novel value. Furthermore, there were no significant differences found among the four social groups for the external socialisation motivation for visiting a regional Australian wine festival.

## DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Several points of discussion arise from the research results and these are addressed below.

Considering the nature of WWFest (a single-day festival in regional Victoria), it is appropriate to compare the demographic profile of its visitors with that of the 'average' Victorian day visitor. In 2002, the average Victorian day visitor was most likely to be female, aged between 25 and 44 years old, working full-time, and living in a household that had an annual income between \$26,000 and \$51,999 (Bureau of Tourism Research 2003). The 'average' WWFest visitor was consistent with the notion of the average Victorian day visitor in terms of gender and employment status but differed in the demographic variables of age and annual household income. A WWFest attendee was more likely to be slightly older and to earn more than the average Victorian day visitor. This is unsurprising when taking into consideration that "*wine consumption in general is highest among older, higher income groups, there is every reason to expect that wine events can attract the same people*" (Getz 2000:170). This finding suggests that the festival is largely attracting the intended market – that is, wine enthusiasts.

Most festivals draw from a relatively local area whereby their continued viability depends on a high level of repeat visitation (Crompton and McKay 1997). In the context of WWFest, a strict interpretation of its local area would include only the Mornington Peninsula region. With only 27 percent of WWFest visitors coming from the Mornington Peninsula and 29 percent of attendees being repeat visitors, one could argue that the viability of WWFest was in danger of coming to an end. However, Getz (2000) offers a brighter prospect for the viability of WWFest in that he states that the demand for wine events comes largely from day visitors who reside within a close driving distance of the event, with even larger audiences expected in popular touring regions. Considering that the Mornington Peninsula was the eighth most visited tourism region in all of Australia in 2002 amongst day visitors (Bureau of Tourism Research 2003), and that 92 percent of attendees at WWFest lived within a close driving distance of the event (27% from the Mornington Peninsula region, 65% from Melbourne metropolitan region), the viability of WWFest seems assured. Almost 90 percent of WWFest attendees were repeat visitors to the Mornington Peninsula region, with the majority visiting the region for leisure and recreation purposes (87%). This is perhaps unsurprising considering the touristic appeal of the region.

WWFest is an annual event used to promote the Mornington Peninsula's wine region and its wines, one that attracts a diverse range of people from varying socio-demographic backgrounds. Based on the visitor profile data, organisers may wish to revisit the marketing strategies and media currently being used to attract visitors to the event.

With respect to visitor motivations for visiting WWFest, the most important motives were *cultural exploration, socialisation* and *event novelty*. This finding is consistent with Crompton and McKay's (1997) assertion that individuals are likely to attend a festival based on the motivations of cultural enrichment, education, novelty, and socialisation. Moreover, the findings support those of Crompton and McKay (1997) and Scott (1996) who found varying levels of importance placed on certain motivations for visiting. Visitors to a wine festival were more likely to attend for cultural exploration reasons, compared to those individuals visiting, for example, a corn festival who would have done so for its novel value, whereas attendees at a hot air balloon festival were more likely to have attended because of social needs.

Given that the most important motive for visiting WWFest was cultural exploration, special attention must be made and acted upon to ensure the festival meets the visitor's desire to gain knowledge and expand intellectual horizons. Failure to meet these needs (as well as their secondary needs i.e. socialisation, event novelty, etc.) seems likely to reduce visitor satisfaction and the likelihood of repeat visitation which may in turn affect the likelihood of success of future WWFests.

Both the socio-demographic and the motivational findings suggest that this particular festival could do a better job of marketing itself. With the motives of cultural exploration, event novelty, and



socialisation being the main reasons for visitors to attend WWFest, promotional materials might need to incorporate (or even develop products) that address how the festival satisfies these needs. In terms of product development, ideas such as offering discounted group ticket sales or offering combined festival-entry and accommodation packages (including a shuttle bus service) appeal to the motives of socialisation and novelty. Increasing the number of information lectures/sipping sessions and providing information about wine education classes might appeal to those who visited WWFest primarily for cultural exploration motives.

To test the robustness of the theoretical constructs explored in this paper, it is proposed that this study's methodology be replicated at other wine festivals, both domestically and internationally. It would be valuable to compare this study's findings with that of other similar research studies conducted in a wine festival context to determine whether the current study's conclusions can be generally supported.

There is a need for further testing and refinement of the research instrument in order to develop a methodology and set of instruments suitable for measuring the motivations of visitors in any festival context. Methodological extensions of the current study might include further delineation of the social group variable, using other components of travel behaviour such as product bundles and benefits sought. Furthermore, qualitative techniques such as in-depth interviews and focus groups might be utilised to triangulate the underlying motivations for festival participation. This would enable more in-depth exploration of an individual's reasons for attendance at a festival, more so than what could be measured in adopting a purely quantitative approach. Excluding the alone social unit (which accounted for only four percent of the sampled responses) from the analysis of future research on wine festival motivation and attendance might also improve the validity, reliability and generalisability of future research results.

In conclusion, there is certainly scope for further research on motivations for attending a wine festival, and such research would build on the current study's theoretical, methodological and practical contributions to both the wine tourism and the festivals and events sectors of the tourism industry.

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## APPENDIX A: COMPOSITION AND SOURCES OF MOTIVATIONAL SUBSCALES

**Cultural Exploration** motivational subscale comprised of:

- F1) My ideal Winter Wine Fest involves looking at things I have not seen before.
- F5) I want to see new things at Winter Wine Fest.
- F8) I want to experience food, wine, and music at Winter Wine Fest that is different from those in my own environment.
- F11) I came to Winter Wine Fest to increase my knowledge of food, wine, and music.

A reduced subscale adapted from Crompton and McKay's (1997) 'cultural exploration' motivational subscale, Cronbach's alpha 0.88.

**Recover Equilibrium** motivational subscale comprised of:

- F2) I go to Winter Wine Fest to relieve boredom.
- F9) I attend Winter Wine Fest to recover from my usually hectic pace.
- F14) I have to go to events like Winter Wine Fest from time to time to avoid getting in a rut.
- F16) I like to attend Winter Wine Fest to reduce built-up tension, anxieties, and frustrations.

Subscale adapted from Crompton and McKay's (1997) 'recover equilibrium' motivational subscale, Cronbach's alpha 0.81.

**External Socialisation** motivational subscale comprised of:

- F3) I go to Winter Wine Fest because it is a chance to be with people who are enjoying themselves.
- F15) When attending the Winter Wine Fest, I like to meet new people.
- F19) I like to go to Winter Wine Fest to be with and observe the other people who are attending.

Subscale adapted from Crompton and McKay's (1997) 'external interaction/socialisation' motivational subscale, Cronbach's alpha 0.77.

**Event Novelty** motivational subscale comprised of:

- F4) I came to Winter Wine Fest because I enjoy special events.
- F7) I came to Winter Wine Fest because I have heard about the festival and it sounded like fun.
- F13) I came to Winter Wine Fest because I was curious.
- F21) I came to Winter Wine Fest to enjoy the unique atmosphere.

Subscale adapted from Formica and Murrmann's (1998) 'event attraction and excitement' motivational subscale, reliability alpha 0.80.

**Family Togetherness** motivational subscale comprised of:

- F6) I came to Winter Wine Fest to bring my family closer together.
- F12) I came to Winter Wine Fest because I thought the entire family would enjoy it.
- F20) I came to Winter Wine Fest to do something the family could do together.

Subscale adapted from Scott's (1996) 'family togetherness' motivational subscale, reliability coefficient 0.81.

**Known-Group Socialisation** motivational subscale comprised of:

F10) I go to Winter Wine Fest so I can be with my companion(s).

F17) I like to go to Winter Wine Fest with a group.

F18) I go to Winter Wine Fest to be with others who enjoy the same things I do.

Subscale adapted from Crompton and McKay's (1997) 'known-group socialisation' motivational subscale, Cronbach's alpha 0.76.