

British Columbia Wine Institute

WINE & FOOD TOURISM STRATEGY 2016 – 2019



WINES OF
BRITISH COLUMBIA

Savour this place

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WELCOME

Welcome to the British Columbia Wine Institute's (BCWI's) Wine & Food Tourism Strategy 2016 – 2019.

BC has never been in a better position to grow its wine and food tourism market. Wine and food tourism is on the rise globally. With award-winning wines, amazing cuisine and incredible destinations, BC has the potential to evolve into a go-to destination for wine and food tourists.

This strategy outlines BCWI's plans for doing just that. In alignment with Destination BC (DBC), destination marketing organizations (DMOs) and wine and food tourism providers, we're heightening awareness of BC as a wine and food destination, and growing the marketplace for our local providers. Read on to see what we're up to.

LETTER FROM BCWI CEO MILES PRODAN

Continued growth and interest in British Columbia's wine and food tourism sector make it an exciting time to be part of this thriving industry.

Canada's Wine Economy – Ripe, Robust, Remarkable, the 2015 economic impact of the wine and grape industry in Canada, reports that the British Columbia Wine Industry generated greater than \$600 million in tourism and employment revenue for the British Columbia economy and that our wine regions receive more than 1,000,000 visitors annually.

Currently 80 per cent of visitors to BC's primary wine touring regions already have had an exceptional wine touring experience, and wine touring is a primary driver to plan a trip. Wine and food have long been the perfect pairing. We have learned that wine tourism is a far more compelling reason than food tourism to visit a destination, but once people are in the destination, wine and food become equally important to creating a great experience, each amplifying the other. The quality of the wine, the passion of the people and the picturesque landscape ensure that our guests leave with unforgettable experiences.

Our wine and food tourism strategy is based on findings from research conducted over many years through Destination Canada, Destination BC and our own deep dives into BC's wine and food tourism experiences.

With continuing engagement from stakeholder groups at all levels, the strategy was developed and will be executed in alignment with our provincial tourism marketers, wineries and the culinary sector. It is designed to grow wine and food tourism across all wine producing regions, with emphasis on locations where wine touring has the strongest draw.

The Okanagan Valley is our most frequently visited area, but as our research supports, all BC wine regions have tremendous growth potential: Similkameen Valley, Fraser Valley, Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands, as well as emerging regions that include Kamloops and the Creston Valley.

With our beautiful wine regions ripe for major growth, we have very exciting times ahead. Let's all raise a glass of BC wine to that!



Miles Prodan
President & CEO

LETTER FROM DBC CEO MARSHA WALDEN

Globally, tourism is growing exponentially. Looking ahead, BC's wine industry has a very real opportunity to become the most sought-after wine region on the planet. We know that when travellers choose a destination, wine and culinary experiences are often a key travel motivator. And, with the growing excellence of British Columbia's wine and culinary experiences, we are perfectly positioned to capture a greater share of international travel.

From cultivating local talent into world-renowned chefs, to welcoming guests in elegant accommodations amid award-winning vineyards, British Columbia's food and wine businesses offer the transformative experiences our visitors seek. As part of the fabric of a vibrant tourism sector, our vineyards create compelling reasons to visit BC and weave together the places, people, and products that make a visit truly memorable.

The BC Wine Institute's *Wine & Food Tourism Strategy* will continue to support the success of individual operators and our tourism economy as a whole. We are working together to help BC become the most highly recommended destination in North America. Cheers to that!



Marsha Walden
CEO



STRATEGY AT A GLANCE

Our Goal: Where We Want to Go

By 2020, we will increase Kamloops, Kelowna, Penticton and Osoyoos hotel revenues to \$177 million and BC winery direct sales across British Columbia by 5% in litre sales.

- Increase hotel room nights in wine-primary regions.
- Increase direct from winery sales across BC.

By March 31, 2019, we will achieve the following targets:

- The number of BC and Alberta residents considering wine touring in British Columbia will increase by 5% over Destination BC Benchmarking August 2016 findings.
- 35% of BC and AB residents will agree that BC offers great wine touring experiences.
- The Net Promoter Score needle for wine touring in British Columbia will increase from 27 to 32.
- Social media conversion and engagement will increase by 25%.
- Winery visitors across BC will increase by 5%.
- Hotel revenues in wine-primary regions will increase by 2%.

Our Strategies: How We're Going to Get There

- Elevate the stature of wine tourism in British Columbia.
- Move visitors around the regions.
- Support and promote wine and food visitor advocacy.
- Partner with DMOs to produce wine and food tourism marketing initiatives.
- Build a data-driven wine and food tourism strategy.



INTRODUCTION

BC is an unparalleled wine and food tourism destination. It offers a diversity of wine experiences for every palate and price point, with a well-established food scene, internationally-renowned chefs and restaurants, and an array of local food experiences. Best of all, visitors can experience all of this in one of the most remarkable places in the world, where their experiences are further enhanced by spectacular scenery and offerings: gorgeous vineyards, charming island communities, and an abundance of outdoor and sightseeing experiences.

Every year, 1,000,000 tourists visit BC to taste wine, generating a tourism economic impact of more than \$600 million. Not only that, there's a vast potential for attracting more.

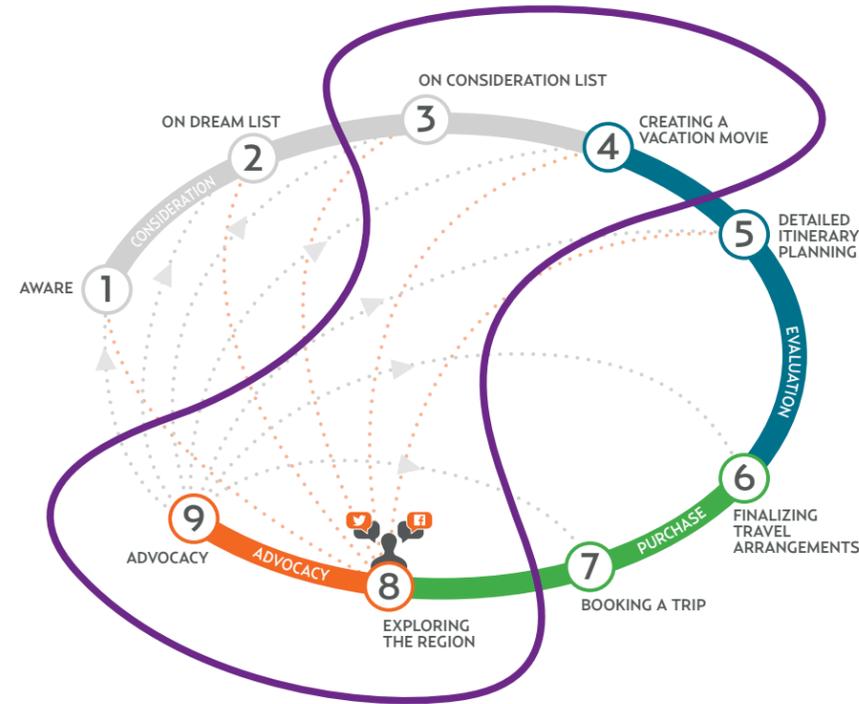
As the province's lead wine industry trade organization, the British Columbia Wine Institute (BCWI) works in close partnership with Destination BC (DBC) to promote and grow BC's wine industry, and advocates to government on behalf of its members.

With this Wine & Food Tourism Strategy 2016 – 2019, we outline the efforts we have undertaken and are currently undertaking to promote wine and food tourism in BC. We continue to implement new initiatives, strengthen existing efforts, and put plans and practices in place. We also know that wine tourism experiences aren't the same across the province, so we've created distinct strategies and tactics to promote our differing regions, from the established to the emerging.

The Okanagan Valley was named one of the 10 best wine destinations of 2015 by Wine Enthusiast Magazine, ranked #1 wine region in the world by The Huffington Post, and dubbed the 2nd best wine region to visit by USA Today.

A Research-based Approach

We believe it's imperative to operate from a strong base of knowledge. Therefore, this strategy is based on target audience research conducted by Destination Canada, wine and food research conducted by DBC, stakeholder consultation across BC and our own deep dive into visitor perceptions and experiences.



Our Tourism Partners

Our partners are a key part of our strategy. To ensure we are delivering our messages in an effective, coordinated manner, we are aligning with our tourism partners – including DBC and DMOs in wine touring regions. This also ensures we are creating a stronger marketing impact, reducing duplication of effort, and enhancing visitor experience.

To do this effectively, we are aligning our efforts in accordance with consumers' paths-to-purchase. A path-to-purchase describes the series of steps and decisions a visitor makes from the time they first become aware of a destination ("Really? They grow grapes in BC?") to their actual trip, as well as how they share their experiences when they get back home.

BCWI focuses on four phases of the path-to-purchase: getting on the consideration list, helping the potential visitor create a vacation movie, encouraging visitors to explore the region and supporting visitor advocacy.



On Consideration List

Travellers are seriously considering visiting this destination in the next two years.

Creating a Vacation Movie

Travellers are seriously starting their investigation into this destination, building an idea of what they would be doing, and deciding whether there will be enough to do. They are reassuring themselves it will be a truly memorable experience. In essence, they are creating a vacation movie in their heads.

Exploring the Region

Once they have arrived in the destination, they are making the decisions on where to travel and what to see.

Advocacy

Before, during and after their trip, visitors are promoting the destination by telling the stories of their experience. This can be in person or online.

Moving visitors along the path-to-purchase is one of the most important ways we work with DBC. In some markets, DBC takes the lead (get on the dream list). In other markets, we coordinate with DBC and the individual destinations (get on the consideration list), and in other markets, we will lead as we move them around the destination helping visitors enjoy memorable wine and food experiences. In all cases, we work with an integrated marketing program and aligned marketing messages, to ensure our mutual efforts are efficient and effective.

WHAT IS A WINE AND FOOD TOURIST?

For the purposes of this strategy, it's important to define what a wine and food tourist is. This helps us focus our marketing efforts and provide a clear measure for evaluating success.

Wine and food tourists are people who visit wineries, breweries or distilleries for the express purpose of tasting and/or buying wine. They may visit numerous wineries, or simply incorporate one or two wineries as part of a larger trip. They also travel at least 50km for the purpose of a leisure trip; this may be a day trip or overnight visit.

The food experience is an important part of their trip. When they travel, wine and food tourists will often visit restaurants attached to a winery, brewery or distillery. They may also seek out locally-grown or foraged food (for sale by the producer), or locally-focused restaurants.

What Do Wine and Food Tourists Want?

Visitors expect a wine and food experience to offer:

- **Variety** – From simple and easy, to high-end and luxurious
- **Local** – Ingredients, specialties, terroir
- **Crafted** – Thoughtful, passionate preparations
- **Sensory** – Part of the overall sensory experience of wine and food tourism

What Motivates Wine and Food Tourists?

Wine and food tourists are looking for experiences and memories they can take home with them. A great wine or food experience includes learning something new, developing a personal connection to the passionate person who made it, building an appreciation for the winemaking experience, or a having a sense of feeling "in the know." Experiences are about meeting a farmer or a winemaker, having a special dinner, or drinking a bottle of wine with a special someone.

These stories are key to a successful tourism experience. And when the visitor shares experiences and stories with others, it fuels advocacy for the whole province.

"It was the pairing of a glass of Pinot Blanc with fresh and local BC sockeye salmon with a Dijon mustard and brown sugar glaze. The flavors and textures of the salmon and wine complemented each other perfectly. The wine was clean, crisp, and full-bodied with apricot, peach and plum flavors. It had a great balance of minerality and acidity. Adding to this wonderful experience was the beautiful scenery consisting of majestic vineyards and orchards and sparkling lakes resulting from warm, radiating sunlight that bounced off them."

– Visitor intercept research



KEY INSIGHTS

Before developing this strategy, we pulled from research and focus groups to dive deeper into wine and food tourism in BC. This research included:

- 64 in-depth intercept interviews, engaging 201 visitors
- An online survey with 380 participants across Alberta and the Lower Mainland
- A social scan of 60,068 users in Alberta, BC and Washington
- Focus groups with potential visitors in Seattle



Here are some key insights that influenced the development of this strategy.

Food + Wine = Memories

Wine touring is the strongest driver for people to visit a destination. It's what inspires the trip and what they research the most before they leave.

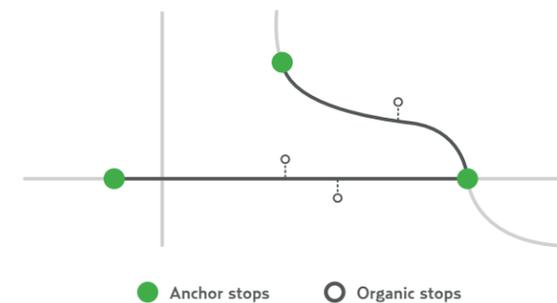
Once visitors are in BC, they are inspired by the combination of wine and food, which work together to create experiences and memories – at the wineries, in the fields and around town. There is an opportunity to leverage and amplify the extensive amount of existing wine and food content online.

Trips Tend to Happen Organically

Visitors make general wine touring plans before they travel, and don't make specific plans until they are in the destination.

Once they are in destination, many visitors have "anchor wineries" that serve as the starting points of their touring. Anchor wineries may be a favourite winery of a return visitor, or a "must visit" winery for a new visitor.

Visitors then branch out from their anchor to explore two to three more wineries, which are found more organically. Many will simply stop at wineries they see on their way to or from their anchor winery.



Visitors Are Surprised by Their Experiences Most Visitors Are Not Wine Connoisseurs

While wine touring in BC, visitors are most surprised by the beauty of the region, the number of wineries, the quality of the wines and the overall wine touring experience. Because the experience exceeds their expectations, visitors go to more wineries than they planned and buy more wine than they expected.

Food plays an important role. When visitors have an outstanding food experience, this, in turn, enhances their wine touring experience and the likelihood they will recommend the destination to others.

Local Hosts Play a Huge Role

Local hosts are extremely influential and will guide visitors to their favourite wineries. However, they often only recommend three or four wineries. Increasing locals' appreciation of the region will encourage visitors to travel around to more wineries.

Many locals are significantly more familiar with the local wineries than those a bit further away. Their appreciation of the region could be enhanced – which will in turn encourage their guests to travel further and explore more wine and food experiences.

There are two types of wine and food visitors: wine enthusiasts and wine experiencers.

Wine enthusiasts live for wine. They want to learn something new about wine, and develop a personal connection to the winemaker. Fine wine and fine food belong together, and they will seek out and pay for both. Enthusiasts represent just 8% of the market, but if they are part of a larger group, they will make most of the decisions. Their influence exceeds their size.

Wine experiencers like wine, but are not terribly demanding about their wine choices. Wine is a reason to visit a destination, but not the only one. They want the total experience: food, lodging, outdoor activities, visiting friends and relatives, exploring and celebrating. Experiencers represent over 60% of the market and are particularly interested in visiting the iconic wineries in a region.

We need to be careful to avoid making wine and food tourism inaccessible for the typical visitor. Far more visitors like to drink wine they enjoy than prefer to drink high quality wine.

While the wine enthusiast cares strongly about quality, the majority of travellers simply want to drink wine that they enjoy. For this more typical tourist, wine touring is less about the specific wineries and more about the beauty and feeling of the whole experience.



Social Media Shows Growing Role of Wine and Food

Analysis of online conversation about wine and food touring in our primary markets indicates that positive sentiment is growing 3.2 times faster than sentiment for tourism overall. The beauty of the region is the biggest contributor to positive sentiment, followed by the quality of wine, then quality of food.

Within the wine and food conversation, BC wine regions account for 37.6 % share of voice among all North American wine destinations.

The Okanagan Valley is the iconic destination generating extremely positive sentiment. It plays a critical role in driving awareness around the BC wine regions, driving 81% of the BC wine conversation volume.

All BC wine regions are well known for their outdoor activities, sights and landmarks. Due to the climate and natural landscape of the wine regions in BC, it is unsurprising to see these regions driving such high conversation volumes in these areas. These attributes set the BC wine regions apart from the competition and play a major role in shaping the image and perceptions of the destination.

Each Region Has Strengths and Weaknesses

The Okanagan Valley has a strong wine and food tourism reputation among target markets. It ranks the highest of all the regions for beauty (e.g., wineries and vineyards along the lake) and second for access to outdoor activities (e.g., water activities, hiking). Of all the BC wine regions, the Okanagan Valley has the total package.

Vancouver Island is best known for its access to the active outdoors, ocean and beaches (ranking #1 among all regions). The region also generated the most use of the word "local" in conversations, an indicator that visitors to the island are actively seeking out local products more than other regions. However, awareness of its wine and food tourism offering is quite low.

Wineries and vineyards in beautiful mountain settings significantly contribute to the overall image of the Similkameen Valley. This region also has a rustic charm that appeals to visitors looking for that hidden gem.

The Gulf Islands are a beloved treasure of the BC coast, with beautiful landscapes and ocean views. However, the artisan mentality and handcrafted products are what make the islands truly unique.

As part of the Lower Mainland, the Fraser Valley is well known and easily accessible. There is a novelty to having a 'winery in my backyard.' However, it is little known outside of the region.



Growing the Seattle Market

While Seattle is our nearest neighbour and highly values the tourism product in BC, the wine and food tourism product barely hits the radar. There is a perception that Canada is too cold to grow grapes and BC wines are not visible in stores or restaurants.

Once presented with the BC wine and food tourism experience, there is great interest. Without much greater awareness of BC wines, it will be very difficult to raise awareness of wine and food tourism in BC.

Competing Information Channels

Crowd-sourced food recommendations (e.g., TripAdvisor, Zomato) and mapping services (i.e., Google Maps) are heavily used by visitors to find and travel to wineries, restaurants and other providers. Competing with these sources requires that we provide more authentic or unique content to visitors and potential visitors. We also need to ensure that our strategy is integrated with these channels.

Matching Communications to Needs

Wine and food travellers need different messages and use different channels before they travel, while they are in the destination and after they return home. Matching the message to the channel will increase the efficiency and effectiveness of our marketing efforts.

CUSTOMER JOURNEY

Behaviors

- Enthusiasts: wine a primary reason
- Experiencers: wine a secondary reason

- Decide to wine tour
- Allocate time to wine tour
- Conduct winery research

- Confirm time
- Conduct winery research
- Choose anchor wineries
- Maybe choose others
- Make lunch reservation

- Pick route
- Choose impulse stops

- Drink wine and reminisce
- Tell stories about the trip and the wineries visited

Choose Destination

Pre-trip Planning

In Destination

The Day

Post-trip

Tools

- Destination imagery
- Destination stories
- Word of mouth
- Visit friends and relatives
- Social media postings

- Website
- Overall destination information
- Wine touring information
- Word-of-mouth
- Social media postings

- Mobile web
- Brochures
- Word-of-mouth
- Social media postings

- Navigation apps
- Mobile web
- Way finding
- Winery recommendations
- Brochures and maps
- Social media postings

- Drinking wine
- Visiting liquor stores
- Social media postings



Wine Regions Have Different Offerings

Not all of BC’s wine regions offer a similar wine tourism product. There are differences in the density of wineries and availability of other tourism products and infrastructure. Among short-haul consumers, the Okanagan Valley is the only region where wine touring is cited as the primary or secondary reason to visit. Satisfaction with wine and food tourism on Vancouver Island is very high, indicating a strong growth opportunity.

CATEGORY	DEFINITION	INFRASTRUCTURE	REGIONS INCLUDED
Wine-Primary	Wine is a primary reason to visit.	Critical mass of wineries Abundance of tourism experiences and infrastructure	Central and South Okanagan Valley (Lake Country South)
Wine-Secondary (a)	Wine touring is available, but not the primary reason to visit.	Wineries broadly distributed Abundance of tourism experiences and infrastructure	North Okanagan Valley, Vancouver Island (Saanich and Cowichan Valley)
Wine-Secondary (b)	Wine is the primary reason to visit, but there is a lack of tourism infrastructure.	Sufficient wineries in concentrated area Modest tourism experiences and infrastructure	Similkameen Valley
Wine-Emerging	Wineries are present, but there is not enough density to be promoted as a primary reason to visit.	Few wineries and broadly distributed Tourism experiences and infrastructure present	Fraser Valley, Kamloops, Prince George, Vancouver Island (Nanaimo North), Gulf Islands

Summary of Key Insights

Opportunities

- Increasing locals’ knowledge and appreciation of their wine region will help influence visitors to explore more wineries on their trip.
- Inspirational messages are more effective in the consideration stages.
- A broad range of wine and food experiences are important to communicate while visitors are in destination.
- The Okanagan Valley’s positive reputation can raise awareness and elevate perceptions of wine and food tourism across BC.
- Visitors want to experience other tourism activities along with wine and food experiences.
- Online channels have a strong influence in planning and in destination decision-making.
- Sharing research learnings with the wine and food industry will increase partnership and alignment.
- Wine enthusiasts want detailed information about wines and the winemaking process.
- Wine experiencers are more focused on the overall wine touring experience.
- Partnering with DBC and local destinations will be the most effective way to market wine and food, along with other tourism experiences.
- Growing the Seattle market will require focusing on key influencers – liquor stores and restaurants.

Challenges

- The extremely diverse wine and food landscape makes it difficult to market regions in the same way.
- There are limited marketing resources to effectively and efficiently grow wine and food tourism in established and emerging regions.
- There is a very low awareness of wine and food tourism in Seattle.
- There is lower awareness of wine and food tourism of wine regions beyond the Okanagan Valley and Similkameen Valley.
- It’s challenging to align wineries that have a diverse range of marketing needs.



TARGET AUDIENCES

In defining our target markets, we looked at a variety of criteria: current wine and food tourism volume and spending, short- and long-term growth potential, and consumer interests, as well as behaviours and values. Our target audiences are based on three criteria: geographic location, wine appreciation and traveller segmentation.

Geographic Markets

Geographically, we focus on regional drive markets, which represent the majority of wine tourism in BC. Our priorities are:

- British Columbia (with emphasis on the Lower Mainland)
- Alberta (with emphasis on Calgary)
- Washington (with emphasis on Seattle)

BC and Calgary are established markets, with room to grow for visitation. They are aware of wine and food touring in BC and appreciate the quality of BC wine and food.

Washington is a growth market. While there is high awareness of BC as a tourism destination, visitors are not overly aware of wine and food tourism in BC. There is an opportunity to grow the market over a medium- to long-term timeline.

Wine Appreciation

Wine experiencers and wine enthusiasts are important audiences. The experiencer is the largest market segment and represents the meat and potatoes of wine and food tourism. They are also the most concerned with the overall tourism experience.

The enthusiast is the key influencer. They are a small market segment, but they will lead larger groups of experiencers around the region and to their favourite wineries, restaurants and food producers.

In some situations, we will target experiencers and at other times we will target enthusiasts.



Explorer Quotient Segmentation

The Explorer Quotient (EQ) is an award-winning tool developed by Destination Canada, which provides insights into why and how different people like to travel. EQ examines people's personal beliefs, social values and views of the world, to understand why different types of travellers enjoy similar travel experiences in entirely different ways. It's a very useful tool to help focus marketing efforts on visitors most likely to visit and appreciate the destination.

To determine the best audiences for wine and food tourism, we analyzed a number of factors:

- How much wine and food experiences drive the decision to travel
- The interest in visiting BC
- How much they are likely to spend on their next trip
- How much people appreciate wine and food experiences once they are in destination
- The size of the EQ segment
- How much the other activities in BC appeal to them

This analysis identified a wine and food tourism potential for all EQ segments, but two segments stand out as having high potential: Free Spirits and Authentic Experiencers.

Both Free Spirits and Authentic Experiencers are true wine and food tourists. They travel specifically for these experiences, and influence their friends and colleagues to do the same. By focusing our efforts on these two segments, we align with DBC's efforts, and ensure our marketing is focused on the same visitors.

Our primary audience is the Free Spirit.



FREE SPIRITS

Free Spirits love fun and excitement in their travel experiences and adventures, and are the visitors most interested in wine and food tourism.

Having good stories to tell is very important – stories with prestige and exclusivity. They are the most likely to post photos and stories about their wine and food experiences – both while in destination and when they return home.

Pairing wine and food activities with outdoor experiences is particularly appealing, as is dining at restaurants with international reputations.

These activities allow Free Spirits to show off to their friends and family back home. And these visitors will enjoy these activities year-round.

Free Spirits will treat themselves, and spend whatever they can afford to have a good time and feel indulged through memorable experiences.

Free Spirit want to spoil themselves and be rejuvenated through their wine and food experiences.

Social channels and traditional travel advertising, including online video, are the most effective ways to reach Free Spirits.



AUTHENTIC EXPERIENCERS

Authentic Experiencers seek new experiences and cultures. They want to escape to a place with authenticity, to see a destination like it really is – not the “packaged” place some destinations present. They want to meet the winemaker, the producer and the chef.

Creating memories and sharing experiences is important, particularly those that involve wine and food. They value the broader tourism experience – appreciating nature and participating in a variety of activities.

Authentic Experiencers are spontaneous – rather than planning everything up front they like to make their

decisions mid-trip. They are less influenced by the brand and more by the authentic experience.

It is important that the places they visit are distinct from other destinations and the history of the culture is as important as the culture today.

Value conscious, these visitors want to know they are getting a good deal.

Authentic Experiencers are influenced by peer-to-peer recommendations – online and in person. They are most likely to ask a local where they like to go and follow that recommendation. This has led to some of their best moments.

Naturally, they are storytellers when they get home in both words and photos.

OUR STRATEGY

By 2020, we want to increase Kamloops, Kelowna, Penticton and Osoyoos hotel revenues to \$177 million and BC winery direct sales across BC by 5%.

To reach this overall goal, we want to achieve the following specific marketing goals:

- Increase hotel room nights in wine-primary regions
- Increase winery visitation in secondary and tertiary regions
- Increase direct from winery sales across BC.

Our Objectives

By March 31st 2019, the following measures will be met:

- The number of BC and Alberta residents considering wine touring in British Columbia will increase by 5% over Destination BC Benchmarking August 2016 findings.
- 35% of BC and AB residents will agree that BC offers great wine touring experiences.
- The Net Promoter Score needle for wine touring in British Columbia will increase from 27 to 32.
- Social media conversion and engagement will increase by 25%.
- Winery visitors across BC will increase by 5%.
- Hotel revenues in wine-primary regions will increase by 2%.

Survey visitors are divided into three groups:

- Detractors who are unlikely to tell others to visit and might even damage the reputation of a destination.
- Passives who are not excited enough to tell others about their travel experience.
- Promoters who are loyal enthusiasts likely to return and rave about their travel experience.

The NPS is calculated by subtracting the percentage of detractors from the percentage of promoters.

NPS is regarded as the question that best predicts the future growth of the tourism industry. It is one of our key measures that will be tracked over time.

More information is available at:

www.destinationbc.ca/Resources/Monitoring-and-Evaluation/Net-Promoter-Score.aspx

Net Promoter Score

The Net Promoter Score (NPS) is a simple metric that helps destinations monitor the engagement of their visitors. It reflects the likelihood that visitors will recommend a destination/experience to friends, family or colleagues.



Our Strategies

To accomplish our goals, we have developed six strategies, which align with the efforts of DBC and DMOs.

All three types of regions (wine-primary, wine-secondary, wine-emerging) are supported through this strategy, but with different tools and tactics. In wine-primary regions, there is greater emphasis on extending the wine touring season by expanding into the shoulder seasons. In other regions, efforts are focused on growing peak seasons. Overall, we are encouraging visitors to extend their stays so they can expand their wine and food tourism experiences by visiting additional areas within the region(s).

Elevate Wine and Food Tourism in BC

- Paint a picture of the sheer, stunning beauty of the wine and food touring experience
- Highlight iconic wine and food experiences
- Use awards and recognitions to promote the quality of the wine
- Promote selected wine festivals and events that will elevate the stature of the region

Move Visitors Around BC

- Within each region, provide information and motivation to travel more widely within the regions and around the province
- Identify and promote relevant food experiences
- Encourage winery direct sales

Support and Promote Visitor Advocacy

- Create advocates to encourage repeat visits and word-of-mouth recommendations
- Aggregate and distribute online ratings and reviews
- Encourage pre- and post-trip wine purchases
- Partner with DMOs to produce wine and food tourism marketing initiatives
- Work with DMOs to create initiatives that are easier to take to market (without “taking over” wine marketing initiatives that DMOs manage)

Develop and Distribute Content as a Strategic Marketing Asset

- Identify gaps in current content marketing and work with tourism partners to fill these gaps
- Distribute the content through current and new digital marketing campaigns

Monitor and Grow the Strategy

- Continue tapping into research and analytics to modify tools and tactics, and hone marketing efforts
- Work with wineries to gather key online marketing performance indicators to help evaluate the strategy (i.e., winery direct sales)

Build Influencers

Develop a network of wine and food tourism influencers, including retailers, chefs and sommeliers.

We are executing these strategies through three streams of initiatives:

Foundation – Building visual and written content that will support all marketing activities

Enhancement – Enhancing initiatives that are currently being executed by BCWI

Growth – Developing new initiatives to build wine and food tourism

Foundation

This stream of initiatives refers to the ongoing building of our foundation: video and photography assets, as well as wine and food offerings.

Build up Video and Photography Assets

A strong asset library plays a critical role in our marketing efforts. We use video and photography assets in media relations, social media, marketing collateral, online materials and advertising efforts. We will work with Crowdriff to identify, share and promote visual assets.

In 2016 it was identified that the wine and food assets (video and photography) were limited, and don't fully represent the wide range of wine and food touring activities across the province. To build our library, we began by conducting research into which images visitors are most likely to respond to. Through a gap analysis of the content, and assess quality of imagery, and mapping of assets against the Free Spirits and Authentic Experiencers EQ segments. We have conducted multiple video and photography shoots and continue to develop and promote these assets.

This initiative will be measured by the number of suitable wine and food assets available in each region of the province.

Build a Food Tourism Products Library

Tourism products consist of businesses that should be included as wine and food destinations. BCWI has a comprehensive list of wine products, and our list of food products is constantly being enhanced.



Enhancement

BCWI executes a number of initiatives to promote wine tourism in BC, such as our British Columbia Wine and Food Touring Guide, and our Chef Meets BC Grape event. As part of our strategy, we are enhancing these programs in the following ways:

Wine and Food Touring Guide

The BC Wine and Food Touring Guide is an essential tool for moving visitors around the region.

Communications Campaigns

While BCWI engages in numerous communications initiatives, we are developing a strategic communications campaign to support initiatives such as Chef Meets BC Grape, a wine and food retail promotion, and an online video (see next section).

Campaigns are being executed in an integrated manner across digital media, radio, elevator ads, outdoor and TV closed captioning sponsorship. In wine regions with less traffic, campaigns focus on digital media. When BCWI has the opportunity to engage in outdoor and radio advertising, creative materials are being designed and produced specifically for these media outlets.

Social Media and Media Relations

While social media and media relations have always been part of our efforts, we are intensifying our work in these areas. Specifically, we are seeding and encouraging visitor and local social media conversations to raise awareness of BC wine regions. As part of this, we are providing in-market travellers with relevant information to encourage them to explore further, and to build upon local host knowledge. We are also targeting our efforts with local and international media, to further raise the stature of BC as a wine and food tourism destination.

Chef and Sommelier Recommendations

Recommendations from experts are powerful tools for visitors. Our website currently contains resources for travellers – such as a Trip Planner, and wine and food pairing tips. We are enhancing that content with recommendations from chefs and sommeliers across the region.

We are asking chefs and sommeliers across BC to write short articles about their favourite things to do in the wine regions.

(Besides recommendations for wineries and restaurants, writers can also recommend other activities.) For instance, a local chef can post an article about his five favourite wineries. A winemaker can talk about where she likes to eat after a late night scrubbing the vats.

Chef Meets BC Grape

Chef Meets BC Grape is an extremely successful initiative hosted by BCWI. This one-day celebration of wine and food culture is held every May in Calgary, Victoria, Vancouver and the Okanagan Valley. Top chefs from across Canada and renowned BC restaurants create small plates perfectly paired with BC wines. Attendees taste hundreds of BC VQA Wines. These events elevate perceptions of the wine and food touring experience and inspire visitors to plan trips to BC wine regions.

In 2018, we are expanding this successful initiative to reach more markets and engage a greater number of influencers and potential visitors.

Ongoing Research

Our research has proven to be essential to building the current strategy and refining ongoing initiatives. Further research will dive into visitor attitudes and determine how to move people around the regions and across the province. Social listening and analytics help modify digital tools and tactics.

We are working with wineries to gather key online marketing performance indicators to help evaluate the strategy (i.e., winery direct sales).

To measure the progress of this strategy, benchmarking research will be conducted every two years.



Growth

We are implementing new initiatives to strengthen our efforts, including the creation of a video and a retail promotion.

Inspirational Video

55% of all travellers view online travel videos early in the path-to-purchase. Of these, 62% are influenced by the videos they see. Building an emotional and compelling image of the wine and food tourism experience is a focal point of this strategy.

BCWI, with the help of industry partners, is creating a video that will encourage and inspire visitor travel, highlighting the unique elements of each region. This video is one of our primary tools for elevating the wine and food tourism experience. It is supported with a social media and online distribution strategy, and available to DMOs across the province.

Wine and Food Retail Promotion

Wine and food pairings are a natural way of promoting BC's products. We are executing #buylocal consumer tasting events at targeted *Wines of British Columbia* BC VQA Wine stores in Save-On-Foods grocery stores.

At these events, people are offered samples of BC wines paired with tasty bites made from locally-sourced meat, cheese and produce. The featured wines and products are sold on-site. This event is an easy way for shoppers to support local businesses, and targets visitors who are shopping for their vacation needs. We use social media to leverage the event to generate unpaid media coverage across the community.

This event is being expanded to include other multi-location private liquor retailers.

Best of BC Wine Country Awards

There are very few things more influential on the consumer decision-making process than an unbiased third-party endorsement. 90% of general consumers read online reviews and 88% of them trust the online reviews as much as personal recommendations.

This was the motivation for our Best of BC Wine Country Awards, a crowdsourced initiative that invites the public to vote on their favourite BC wine experiences (which includes both wine and food offerings). We received nearly 2,000 entries from consumers and visitors from across BC and Alberta, with award winners announced in fall 2017.

This crowdsourced content is being promoted across social media and online channels. In coming years, we will continue to enhance the program. Using geographic and interest targeting (wine and food), we will deliver distinct messages to the separate wine regions in BC.

BC VQA Wine Awareness Campaign

BC VQA stands for British Columbia Vintners Quality Alliance. The BC VQA program is an appellation of origin system that guarantees the origin of the wine and ensures that it meets certain quality standards. Since our target audience tends to make their purchase decisions "at the shelf," this is the place to better promote the BC VQA standard.

We are launching a BC VQA Wine awareness campaign to help make the BC VQA standard top of mind among consumers, and promote visitation to the region. This campaign focuses on the wine experiential, making wine relevant to the topics that generate conversation and interest amongst their social circles.

Traditional holidays generate a lot of interest in wine and food, such as Thanksgiving and Valentine's Day. We are creating unconventional wine and food pairings for popular culture events. Through social media, these event-based wine and food pairings will further engage our audience.

BC Wines Mobile App

The BC Wines Mobile App is an integrated, fully responsive mobile application that encourages visitor travel throughout the region, drives wine sales back to participating wineries and gathers analytical data to refine marketing efforts.

The app allows visitors to access their saved wine trips generated through the new Trip Planner site, or build a new one on the app. In 2018 we will work to create a program that once in the destination, visitors can access exclusive tasting offers through a paid passport program that augments the visitor experience and builds long-term loyalty.

The wine trip tool is being enhanced by the addition of a more robust set of food products, including:

- Winery restaurants
- Local food restaurants
- Local food producers/foragers
- Farmers' markets
- Local roadside stands
- Locally-focused food trucks

BC Wine and Food Signature Event

Current wine and food events are very successful on a local or regional level. They are an important part of wine and food tourism marketing and represent some of our most successful partnerships.

There is an opportunity to create a signature event, one with national and North American stature that will promote the diversity of BC wine and food tourism. It will showcase wineries and local producers and include a strong food component, including local producers, cooking demonstrations and presentations.

This event will be developed in 2018 to be launched in 2020. It will be designed to heighten the understanding of wine and food tourism among visitors, industry, trade, wine media and tourism media. The event will be positioned around shoulder seasons to help compel visitors to travel during these times of year.

SUMMARY

Wine and food tourism is a tremendous opportunity for the sector and BC overall. It inspires people to visit and ensures they have a story-worthy experience. Wine and food tourism naturally integrates with broader tourism experiences.

We can grow wine and food tourism by inspiring more people to come, by moving them around the region and the province and by increasing their awareness of the spectacular experience to be found here.

We will do this by working with our destination, winery, food and producer partners.

Individual tactical plans will be specifically targeted at the distinct needs and opportunities of each region.

Sources

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