

THE POTENTIAL OF WINE TOURISM: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF NEW ZEALAND

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Recent published information suggests that New Zealand's wine industry continues to grow rapidly. An activity related to the wine industry, wine tourism, is developing in wineries that provide cellar door sales, tasting rooms, restaurants, tours to their vineyards, and even accommodation. These developments demonstrate the potential of wine tourism as an alternative activity for travellers to rural areas, and as a business concept for wineries. However, still today research on wine tourism in New Zealand has been limited, including the way in which winery visitors are presented in the wine tourism literature. This paper reports the results of an exploratory study that investigated potential relationships between different winery visitor groups in New Zealand, including their commercial contribution in the form of winery expenditures. The results confirm significant differences among various visitor groups when comparing their age, income, or whether they are domestic or international. These findings could have significant implications for the wine and wine tourism industries.

Wine tourism, winery visitors, New Zealand

INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

In recent years, the concept of wine tourism has received a lot of attention from researchers. This activity includes visitation of vineyards to experience service production processes (O'Neill, Palmer, Charters & Fitz, 2001), and to taste the actual tangible wine product (O'Neill, Palmer & Charters, 2002). Wine tourism has also been associated to visiting wineries, vineyards, wine shows and festivals; in these environments visitors can experience the characteristics of a wine region (Macionis, 1996, in Hall, Sharples, Cambourne, Macionis, Mitchell & Johnson, 2000).

Studies highlight the potential of wine tourism for future growth (Hall, Cambourne, Macionis & Johnson, 1997; Jago, Issaverdis & Graham, 2000; Hort+Research, 2000), its potential benefits for the wine industry (Dodd, 1995; Hall, 1996, in Beverland, 1998), and even for the tourism industry (Dodd & Bigotte, 1997; Carlsen & Dowling, 1999; Charters & Ali-Knight, 2000; Hendery, 2001). Research has

also emphasised the potential of wine tourism as an income earner (King & Morris, 1998; Ali-Knight & Charters, 2001; Brandmeir, 2004), including gains for host communities and travel destinations (Getz, 2000). Wine tourism can therefore be a motivational factor to travel (Macionis & Cambourne, 1998), and also a critical aspect of the travel experience (Jago, Issaverdis & Graham, 2000).

However, there is evidence against New Zealand's wine industry becoming involved in wine tourism as a broad strategy. Earlier studies indicate that wine tourism may prove a luxury for wineries using this concept to promote their wines, especially if the smaller wineries cannot supply enough product volume to their distributors (Beverland, James, James, Porter & Stace, 1998). The belief that wineries receive very limited direct benefits from visitors or tourists is another reason why some businesses are rather cautious about embracing the wine tourism concept (Hall, Cambourne, Macionis & Johnson, 1997). Other studies note that visiting a winery does not automatically translate into either on-site or future consumer purchases; therefore, visitation may have very little value (Jago, Issaverdis & Graham, 2000). Further, even if many visitors purchase wines during their visit, their subsequent purchases from the same winery are not guaranteed. Estimates reported by Jolley (2002) suggest that on-selling of wine brands to individuals after their winery visit was limited to only one-third of visitors. However, wineries depend highly on visitors' purchases to justify the costs of their operations (Jago, Issaverdis & Graham, 2000).

Overall, these issues suggest that knowledge about the wine tourism concept as a business strategy appears to be limited among winery entrepreneurs. Moreover, very limited information is available about owners' reasons for wine tourism involvement or non-involvement. While a few researchers have ventured into this area in recent times (see for example, Fraser and Alonso, 2003), for the most part these issues have been given little attention. This is also the case regarding the experiences of those businesses already involved in wine tourism. Getz (2000) discusses this dimension from an international perspective, but it has not been investigated in New Zealand wineries.

Taylor and Warren (1998) note that the distant location of some wineries from main tourist destinations, lack of promotion due to the considerable costs involved, and lack of infrastructure in the form of accommodation, transportation, and support services are challenges that may prevent some wineries from joining the wine tourism bandwagon (Taylor & Warren, 1998). These limitations may particularly affect out-of-region, out-of-country, and senior visitors, who may not possess the means to travel to these wineries.

In contrast, some studies suggest that developing an attractive image of wineries in New Zealand to the international visitor market might be a strategy to follow. Van Aalst and Daly (2002) indicate that 75% of overseas visitors are not very familiar with New Zealand wines; however, when they learn about these products, they value the experience. This suggests that promoting and improving visitors' perceptions of wineries, as well as their winery experience, may increase their interest and involvement. Van Aalst and Daly (2002) suggest providing business hours that match visitor needs, especially in the case of winery restaurants. However, there is little evidence that these approaches would necessarily result in increased interest, sales, and future repeat-purchase of wines overseas. In addition, strategies such as wineries having opening hours to suit customer needs may result in extra costs for businesses, such as the need to hire more staff.

However, despite the numerous challenges, there are indications that illustrate the potential to further develop wine tourism as a leisure activity in New Zealand. For example, the popularity of dining at a café or restaurant among both domestic and international visitors (Tourism Research Council, 2006a, 2006b), the increase of international visitors (Tourism Research Council, 2006a), the growth of the wine industry (Wine Institute New Zealand, 2005), and the hospitality industry (Statistics New Zealand, 1997, 2005) are all key factors suggesting future opportunities for wine tourism.

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The Winery Visitor

Wine tourism research has attempted to identify the wine tourist in various forms. For example, studies have made use of marketing concepts that describe the use of consumer segmentation variables, including geographic and demographic (Kotler, Armstrong, Saunders & Wong, 1996; Wedel & Kamakura, 2000). These approaches have been adopted in a number of wine tourism studies (South Australian Tourism Commission, SATC, 1997, in Getz, 2000; Mitchell, Hall & McIntosh, 2000; Charters & Ali-Knight, 2002; Mitchell, 2002). The demographic approach, which investigates visitor characteristics such as age, level of education, occupation, level of wine knowledge, and income has been widely referred to (Howley & van Westering, 1998; Macionis & Cambourne, 1998; Nixon, 1998; SATC, 1997, in Charters and Ali-Knight, 2002; Jolley, 2002; Bruwer, 2004; Tassiopoulos, Nuntsu & Haydam, 2004).

Another approach, profiling, refers to personality and characteristics of two types of travellers: the psychocentric, who prefer safety and security, and tend to travel to places they feel more comfortable and familiar with (Neal, 2003), and the allocentric, individuals with different, rich interest patterns, who focus on a variety of challenges and pursuits (Plog, 1991). Profiling has helped identify visitors' psychographic characteristics, including attitudes, lifestyles and values (Charters & Ali-Knight, 2002). Plog (1977, in Ryan, 1995) introduced the concept of psychographics, and it has been widely discussed by a number of researchers (Plog, 1991, 2001; Ross, 1994; Galloway, 1998; Kotler, Armstrong, Saunders & Wong, 1999; Lehto, O'Leary & Morrison, 2002; Ryan, 2003).

Several wine tourism studies have used profiling and segmenting concepts to emphasise several key characteristics of winery visitors. For example, income is one of the most obvious predictors of wine consumption, and is used by wineries to target certain visitor groups (Dodd & Bigotte, 1997). Another characteristic, visitors' wine lifestyle, emphasizes wine tourists' wine interest, wine cellaring behaviour, and wine club participation (Mitchell, Hall & McIntosh, 2000; Mitchell & Hall, 2001). Other studies have included the planning of the visit, size of winery, main reason for visit, and length of stay in the wine region to identify the serious wine tourists (Jago, Issaverdis & Graham, 2000). Charters and Ali-Knight (2002) segmented winery visitors by motivating factors and goals, based on visitors' knowledge of and interest in wine. This approach helped identify the wine lover, the connoisseur, the wine interested, and the wine novice. Other common characteristics include age and levels of education. Moreover, age has been explored further by means of age categories or generations (Mitchell & Hall, 2001; Mitchell, 2002; Carlsen, Getz & Willcock, 2006).

The numerous differences in the way studies identify winery visitors suggest that the implementation of segmentation and profiling techniques has significantly contributed in these developments. However, these approaches have been taken further to a limited extent, with little effort to identify which groups may offer most commercial potential for wineries. The main objective of this study is to further explore this dimension.

METHODOLOGY AND DATA ANALYSIS

A predominantly quantitative approach was chosen for this study; however, the questionnaire also provided a qualitative component in the form of open-ended questions and space for comments. A total of 110 wineries and vineyards open to the public in all wine regions of New Zealand were identified and invited to take part in this research. These businesses provided such facilities as a tasting room, restaurant, café, accommodation, or were part of a wine trail. Of all wineries approached, 43 (39%) agreed to distribute questionnaires to their visitors at a later stage.

Between December 2003 and April 2004 a total of 2,458 questionnaires were distributed. Of these 1,777 were mailed directly to the 43 wineries, and 681 were directly distributed among five of the participating businesses. The decision to mail the questionnaires during the summer and autumn months was in accord with Mitchell (1999), who suggested that winery visitors in New Zealand favour the months from January through March to visit wineries. Together, these approaches allowed for the total distribution of 2,458 questionnaires. From these, 622 responses were obtained, with 13 of these being unusable. The total number of usable responses was therefore 609, representing an overall response rate of 24.8%.

In most instances, cross tabulations were used to assess the level and significance of any relationships. Chi-square (χ^2) and Cramer's V statistics were used where appropriate.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The impact of age

Some areas of involvement with the wine product were first measured among three age groups and using the areas shown in Table 1. The first group of respondents was of ages 35 and below, the second between 36 and 55 years old, and the third over 55 years old. This study did not label visitors by generations as presented in other wine tourism studies (see for example, Mitchell, 2002; Carlsen, Getz & Willcock, 2006). However, some similarities in terms of age can be drawn between the three chosen age groups of this study and the generational categories mentioned. As illustrated below, a larger percentage of visitors of ages 56 and above were clearly more involved with wines in terms of consumption, monthly purchases of bottles and ownership of wine books.

Table 1.
Relationships between age groups and areas of wine involvement

Areas*	Age group*	n	χ^2	df	Significance
More glasses of wine consumed per week (11+)	3	547	30.200	4	p=0.000
More bottles purchased per month (11+)	3	553	43.268	4	p=0.000
More wine books owned (6+)	2	332	6.949	2	p=0.031

* Indicates group with highest level of involvement, where 1= ages 35 and below, 2= ages 36-55, and 3= age 56 and above.

When the three age groups were compared to three levels of expenditures incurred at the winery, a statistically significant difference was reported, with Pearson's $\chi^2_{(4, n=492)} = 18.292$, ($p=0.001$). A much higher percentage of individuals of ages 35 and below indicated making minimal expenditures, that is, between \$NZ 0 and \$NZ 13, while at the other end, those aged 56 and above had for the most part spent above \$NZ 13. As illustrated in Table 2, further analysis between age groups and items purchased during the winery visit indicated that respondents of ages 35 and below mainly favoured a glass of wine, a meal, and one or two bottles of wine. Visitors between the ages of 36 and 55 had also favoured similar items, with six of them additionally choosing accommodation as one of their purchases. In contrast, respondents of ages 56 and above mainly preferred a glass of wine, a meal, two bottles of wine, and a snack. This suggests that this latter visitor group was more involved with food at the winery, and appears to explain their higher expenditure, as compared to visitors below the age of 56.

When the potential relationship between age and income was investigated, Pearson's $\chi^2_{(4, n=520)} = 9.887$, ($p=0.042$) suggests a statistically significant relationship between these variables. A total of 54

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Table 2.
Winery consumption patterns of different age groups

Categories	Age 35 or less		Age 36 - 55		Age 56+		Overall	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
A glass of wine	55	23.9	94	40.9	81	35.2	230	37.8
A meal	45	21.5	88	42.1	76	36.4	209	34.3
2+ bottles of wine for my cellar	38	24.1	63	39.9	57	36.1	158	25.9
1 bottle of wine for my cellar	36	31.0	48	41.4	32	27.6	116	19.0
Snack	22	22.9	35	36.5	39	40.6	96	15.8
Souvenirs	8	29.6	15	55.6	4	14.8	27	4.4
Accommodation	2	22.2	6	66.7	1	11.1	9	1.5

Overall, comparisons between age groups and incomes suggest that visitors 35 years old or younger are able to afford the winery experience more than visitors older than 55 years. However, despite their higher earnings, income was not a decisive element of this group's expenditures at the winery. For example, different age groups of respondents were compared to three levels of expenditures incurred at the winery, namely between \$NZ 0 and \$NZ 13, between \$NZ 14 and \$NZ 30, and above \$NZ 31. A statistically significant difference was reported, with Pearson's $\chi^2_{(4, n=492)} = 18.292$, ($p=0.001$). Further, it was noticed that a much higher percentage of individuals of ages 35 and below (46.9%) indicated making minimal expenses, that is, between \$NZ 0 and \$NZ 13. In comparison, 75% of respondents older than 55 years of age spent at least \$NZ 14 during their visit, compared to 53% of visitors 35 years old and below, and to 67.6% of those aged between 36 and 55 years old. Hence, comparing different age groups to the expenditure they incurred at the winery, the findings indicate that the older the visitors, the higher their winery expenditure. From a business point of view, the group of visitors of age 56 and above appears to offer more commercial potential for wineries.

To investigate potential relationships between travel budget and age, a test was conducted comparing levels of travel budget against three age groups. These groups were composed of visitors 35 years old and below, those between 36 and 55 years old, and those 56 years old or older. The results indicate a statistically significant relationship between travel budget and age group, with Pearson's $\chi^2_{(2, n=585)} = 23.968$, ($p=0.000$). It was reported that 27.6% of respondents aged 35 and below travelled on a lower travel budget, while 37.2% travelled on a high budget. In contrast, only 13.5% of respondents aged 56 and above travelled on a low budget, while 59% travelled on a high budget. Hence, there appears to be a positive relationship between levels of travel budget and different age groups. These results further suggest that visitors 56 years old and older are more prepared to invest on their winery visit.

Genders

Involvement with wine between males and females was explored using the seven dimensions illustrated in Table 3. First, it was found that a larger percentage of males had been interested in wine for a longer period of years than had females. However, while using χ^2 suggests a statistically significant relationship between gender and years interested in wine, it could also be argued that the age of the participants may have been a factor influencing the outcome of these comparisons. Moreover, when investigating the age of winery visitors, it was noticed that females were clearly the younger of the two groups. A total of 111 females (36.2%) were below the age of 36, as compared to 65 (23.8%) of males, but 119 (43.6%) males were older than 55 years, and only 71 (23.1%) were females. Comparing gender versus age resulted in a significant Pearson's $\chi^2_{(2, n=580)} = 28.309$ ($p=0.000$). Hence, male visitors' age appears to be a factor determining their longer interest in wine as compared to their female counterparts.

Table 3.
Relationships between genders and areas of wine involvement

Areas*	n	χ^2	df	Significance
More years interested in wine (11+ years)	524	19.987	1	p=0.000
Higher price paid per bottle of wine (\$NZ 21+)	577	15.691	2	p=0.000
More glasses of wine consumed per week (11+)	556	12.576	2	p=0.002
More wineries visited last year (6+)	563	7.938	1	p=0.005
More wine books owned (6+)	339	7.394	1	p=0.007
More bottles purchased per month (11+)	562	7.584	2	p=0.023
More wine regions visited last year (3+)	507	4.153	1	p=0.042

* Areas where males had higher levels of involvement with wines than females. Note: Using the highest level of involvement of each measured area.

Males also indicated spending more when purchasing a bottle of wine as compared to their female counterparts. For example, 74 (27.3%) male spent more than 20 dollars per bottle of wine, compared to only 47 (15.4%) female respondents. In contrast, more females, 232 (75.8) indicated spending between 11 and 20 dollars per bottle as compared to 165 (60.9%) males. Using three measures of weekly wine consumption in glasses of wine it was found that 84 (31.6%) males indicated drinking eleven or more glasses of wine per week compared to only 57 (19.7%) of females. At the other end, 93 (35%) males consumed between one and five glasses per week, while 136 (46.9%) females did so. The result of χ^2 reveals a statistically significant relationship between gender and weekly wine consumption. In addition, a higher percentage of male respondents indicated visiting a larger number of wineries and wine regions in the last year than did females; males own more wine books and purchase more bottles of wine per month. However, no statistically significant difference was reported when comparing gender versus wine knowledge, with Pearson's $\chi^2_{(1, n=527)} = .912$ (p=0.197).

When yearly average incomes between males and females were compared, a significant Pearson's $\chi^2_{(2, n=520)} = 8.553$ (p=0.014) was noticed. A larger percentage of males, 176 (70.4%) indicated earning above \$60,000 than did females, with 165 (61.1%). Similarly, at the highest income level 97 (38.8%) males earned above \$NZ 100,000 as compared to 74 (27.4%) females. These results are not unexpected, but a reflection of income gaps between the genders found in New Zealand (Statistics New Zealand, 2004). Further analysis shows that 33.3% of females were represented within the lowest household income category, that is, \$NZ 60,000 and below, as opposed to 26.3% of males.

Regarding consumption at the winery between males and females, Table 4 illustrates that for the most part, males and females had similar purchasing patterns. However, a clearly higher percentage of females favoured a meal, a wine tasting selection, a bottle of wine to drink at the premises and souvenirs. Overall, despite earning significantly lower incomes, the female group would appear to offer more commercial potential than male visitors. However, when potential relationships were investigated between males, females, and their expenditures at the winery, the resulting Pearson's $\chi^2_{(2, n=504)} = 1.886$ (p=0.389) suggests that both groups have similar expenditure patterns. Hence, winery expenditures do not appear to be dependent on visitors' incomes or on their gender.

Domestic versus international visitors

First, when comparing the incomes indicated by domestic and international visitors, it appeared clear that the latter group earned significantly more than their domestic counterparts. For example, the results of testing potential relationships between visitors' and their incomes, with Pearson's $\chi^2_{(2, n=513)}$

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Table 4.
Winery consumption patterns of males and females

Item	Males		Females		Overall	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
A glass of wine	106	37.7	127	40.3	233	38.3
A meal	88	31.3	124	39.4	212	34.8
2+ bottles of wine for my cellar	78	27.8	84	26.7	162	26.6
1 bottle of wine for my cellar	61	21.7	58	18.4	119	19.5
Snack	46	16.4	52	16.5	99	16.3
Souvenirs	6	2.1	21	6.7	27	4.4
A wine tasting selection (e.g., a tasting tray)	7	2.5	17	5.4	24	3.9
A bottle of wine to drink at the premises	6	2.1	13	4.1	19	3.1
Accommodation	4	1.4	5	1.6	9	1.5

Note: Percentages were calculated using total number of males (281), females (315), and total number of respondents (609).

= 65.014, ($p=0.000$) confirmed those differences. Moreover, whereas 54.2% of international respondents indicated earning above NZ\$ 100,000, only 20.2% of domestic respondents indicated this figure. At the other end, 43% of domestic respondents indicated earning NZ\$ 60,000 or less, while only 19.8% international respondents did so.

While differences between domestic and international respondents in terms of their incomes are clear, the results of comparing these two groups and their winery expenditures indicate that a larger percentage of domestic visitors incurred higher expenditure than did international. For example, the largest group of domestic visitors, 120 (38%), spent over \$NZ 30 during their winery visit, while the largest group of international visitors, 83 (44.4%), spent between \$NZ 0 and \$NZ 13. These differences were statistically significant, with Pearson's $\chi^2_{(2, n=500)} = 21.793$, ($p=0.000$). A number of reasons may contribute to this outcome. For example, additional analysis found that a higher percentage of domestic visitors travelled in larger parties, with one or more friends and family members. This suggests that for this group the winery visit is an opportunity to socialise, and that the winery is just another restaurant rather than a special unique experience.

As shown in Table 5, the items they purchased most, a glass of wine and a meal, further support these views. Despite significant differences in their yearly incomes, that is, earning significantly less than their international counterparts, the findings demonstrate that the domestic segment has more commercial potential for wineries that provide food as well as wine sales.

Other groups

A final comparison involved visitors planning the winery experience and visiting spontaneously versus expenditures at the winery. A statistically significant relationship, with Pearson's $c^2_{(2, n=504)} = 10.983$, ($p=0.004$) was reported, suggesting a relationship between these variables. Furthermore, a larger percentage of respondents who had planned their visit (37.7%) indicated spending above \$NZ 30 at the winery, as opposed to 24.7% of those visiting spontaneously. In contrast, 39.5% of those travelling spontaneously indicated spending only between \$NZ 0 and \$NZ 13, compared to 28.5% of those planning their visit. Individuals who plan their winery visit appear to be more prepared to invest on their visit. However, when determining potential differences between planning the winery experience

Table 5.
Winery consumption patterns of domestic and international winery visitors

Item	Domestic		Overseas		Overall	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
A glass of wine	169	47.5	61	26.3	233	38.3
A meal	161	45.2	48	20.7	212	34.8
2+ bottles of wine for my cellar	113	31.7	49	21.1	162	26.6
1 bottle of wine for my cellar	60	16.9	57	24.6	119	19.5
Snack	60	16.9	39	16.8	99	16.3
Souvenirs	11	3.1	15	6.5	27	4.4
A wine tasting selection (e.g., a tasting tray)	14	3.9	10	4.3	24	3.9
A bottle of wine to drink at the premises	10	2.8	8	3.4	19	3.1
Accommodation	3	0.8	6	2.6	9	1.5

Note: Percentages were calculated using total number of domestic respondents (356), overseas respondents (232), and total number of respondents (609).

or visiting spontaneously and gender, age, or origin, the results of running χ^2 indicate no relationships between these variables.

LIMITATIONS

This study acknowledges several limitations. For example, because some of the participating wineries had a larger restaurant capacity, this may have contributed to a larger number of responses being obtained from these establishments. As a result, the percentage of responses obtained may have been disproportionately large, or unrepresentatively small, especially from the smaller wineries. Obtaining a high percentage of responses from the large wineries as compared to the responses from those smaller in size may have affected the representativeness of the respondents sampled. It must be noted, however, that the inability to identify which winery responses were received did not allow for determining this in an accurate manner. In addition, the anonymous nature of the questionnaire prevented identifying whether visitors' responses changed depending on the winery they had visited.

In order to obtain a representative sample of winery visitors, direct distribution of the questionnaires was carried out selecting individuals from different gender, age groups and size of party. Winery staff, however, may not have followed this same process, as the researcher was not present. Further, visitors completing the questionnaires might have been from a particular age group that had more time, or were more sympathetic to the purpose of this study, or with the researcher. These issues may have contributed to distorting the representativeness of the sample, especially if a particular group of visitors completed a significantly higher number of questionnaires than did other groups.

A final point regards the representativeness of the winery sample. For example, the original goal of this study was to obtain a representative sample of visitors by collecting data from wineries nationwide. However, of the 43 wineries participating in this study, 27 (63%) were located in the South Island of New Zealand, while only 16 (37%) in the North Island. Because at the time this study was conducted it was estimated that 191 (55.7%) of all wineries were open to the public in the North Island, and 152 (44.3%) in the South Island, the sample obtained is not representative of the geographic distribution of wineries in New Zealand, at least in terms of the north and south split.

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CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Wine tourism is growing as an alternative rural attraction in many wine regions of the world. In New Zealand, recent studies suggest that wine tourism is becoming more popular, with more wineries being open to the public, many of which combine the production of increasingly high quality wines with food, ambience and even accommodation to provide visitors with a unique experience in wineries' rural setting. While research on wine tourism has dramatically increased in the last decade, aspects related to this concept, including the commercial potential of different winery visitor groups, have only been explored to a limited extent in contemporary research. The objective of this study was to examine this dimension of wine tourism among New Zealand winery visitors.

The overall findings suggest that some winery visitor groups clearly appear to be more commercially important than others. This issue presents an alternative to the general view found in the wine tourism literature, namely, that winery visitors appear to be equally valuable for winery operators and the wine tourism industry. At the same time, the alternative view provided in this study also suggests that all customers may not be equally worth having.

While the results point to differences among various visitor groups, it is also acknowledged that current trends in New Zealand's wine and tourism industries may alter the demographic make up of winery visitor segments in years to come. Moreover, forecasts indicate both a significant increase in international arrivals to New Zealand, and more expenditure incurred among the domestic and international visitor groups. These developments may have several implications and provide a platform for different directions to be explored in future studies. For example, the relatively high percentage of international winery visitors (38.5%) in this as compared to studies previously conducted in New Zealand suggests that this group may be growing. Further, while in this exploratory study it became clear that domestic visitors offered more commercial potential, the fact that a large percentage of international winery visitors is younger in age and earns higher incomes may provide future opportunities for wineries. Individuals from this group may gain more wine knowledge and may become more involvement with wines as they become more mature. As a result, they may be willing to use more disposable income to finance their involvement with wine, including more consumption or more wine purchases. Because of its potential commercial significance, the international winery visitor group merits further investigation.

Differences were also noticed among three different age groups. It appeared clear that the more mature visitors offer more commercial potential for wineries. However, as is the case among international winery visitors, the younger visitor groups earn higher incomes, are more educated, and provide the future generation of wine tourists. The current and future potential of this group should be further explored.

Finally, while no significant differences were noted in the expenditures of males and females, there are various reasons for continuing to study the impact of gender on the winery experience. A higher percentage of males indicated higher wine knowledge and higher involvement with wines; however, more female visitors indicated travelling to wineries. The contribution of these two groups in regards to the winery visitation appears to be of critical importance.

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