**Title**
How Wine Shoppers Behave In-store and Implications for Marketing

**I want to submit an abstract for:**
Conference Presentation

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**Keywords**
Wine shopper behavior, in-store behavior, repertoire behavior, retail

**Research Question**
Are there consistent and generalisable patterns of in-store retail wine shopper behaviour and what are the implications for marketing effort.

**Methods**
1641 wine shoppers observed in-store across 12 retail outlets covering a range of store formats across three capital cities in Australia and 800 paired exit interviews

**Results**
Wine shopping is a relatively quick task (less than 6 mins). Shoppers largely buy from an existing repertoire of brands and complete the task unaided by shop assistants.

**Abstract**
This paper identifies consistent and generalisable patterns of in-store retail wine shopper behaviour and examines the implications for marketers. In particular it looks at the time it takes for shoppers to complete their shop, how they navigate the store, the average basket size, and the role that in-store marketing efforts, such as sales assistants and signage, play in helping them complete their task.

The data comes from 1641 wine shoppers observed in-store across 12 retail outlets covering convenience, destination, eat street and fine wine store formats across three capital cities in Australia. In addition, 800 of these wine shoppers were exit interviewed to gain attitudinal data to supplement what was observed.
A key finding is that wine shopping is a relatively quick task as opposed to the stereotype of “slow enjoyable browsing” as it is often portrayed. For 82% of wine shoppers, their shop was completed in-store in less than six minutes, with a mean average time of just 4.1 minutes. Cask buyers were the fastest shoppers but even those buying a case of wine and describing that trip as a “browse” took no more than 15 minutes, on average, to complete their trip. Such quick behavior emphasizes the importance of making it easy for the shopper to find what they want in-store and to be able to pay and exit quickly.

Eight in 10 of the wines bought that day were part of a wine shopper’s established repertoire, with 59% of units being classed as ones that were bought “regularly” and 23% “occasionally”. Only 18% of wine bought that day was being bought “for the first time” by that shopper. This finding highlights that, just as we see for many other buying contexts, wine shopping is a habitual behavior, where consumers have repertoires of brands they choose from and that evaluation is not as common as often portrayed by marketers. Having your brand easily and quickly identifiable in-store, where it sits amongst many hundreds of competitors, is clearly an important challenge and requirement.

Shopper behaviour for casks is quite different than for bottled wine. Cask choices are easier & quicker, reflecting the reduced range that needs to be navigated. There is also less stated desire to experiment with casks. Cask wine is viewed by shoppers as a beverage, where consistency in taste is a positive.

For the shopper, the fridge plays an important role, especially for the “eat street” and “convenience” retail format, in helping to speed up shopping for white wine. Fridges are easier to navigate than floor stock and are more likely to be used for immediate consumption purposes; in effect a “grab and go”. Interestingly, this critical retail space is planned by retailers in rather a haphazard way, with what is on offer varying more across retailers compared to what is on the floor or shelves.

A high 70% of wine shoppers purchased two or fewer bottles of wine that trip. Fewer than one in 10 bought a case or more. This varied by retail format, but still the “Destination” formats, which saw wine bought in the greatest quantity, had four in 10 shoppers buying just one or two bottles, while the “Eat Street” format had 86% of shoppers buying this amount. This call into question the significant trade-up efforts marketers make for case quantities. Moving a shopper from two bottles to a half dozen would seem a far more achievable call to action than trying to up-sell to a case when facing such a low average purchase quantity.

Wine shoppers are independent shoppers. Only 24% of shoppers had retail assistance observed in their shopping trip. In 44% of these cases the help was initiated by staff and in the remaining 56% it was initiated by the shopper. So, almost eight in 10 wine shoppers complete their wine shopping with no staff assistance. The impact of customer service therefore becomes secondary to good signage and clear store layout, given the wine shopping task is a largely solitary and unassisted one. Wine shopping is clearly a retail rather than customer service experience for the majority of shoppers.

Four in 10 wine shoppers said that they “already knew” where the wine they bought that day was located in the store and a further 38% said they “walked around until they found it”. “Destination” format stores had the highest incidence of requesting help (21%) reflecting their bigger floor space and hence greater challenge to locate a specific wine. This again highlights the importance of making physical availability easy for the shopper and avoiding unnecessary moving of stock in-store that will cause angst for the shopper as they seek their regular brand. A store positioning itself on customer service as a point of difference has a far bigger challenge than one that works on having an easy and quick retail format to navigate.

This paper contributes to the knowledge of how wine shoppers behave in-store and provides clear direction for retailers wishing to improve the customer's experience. It establishes that, as is seen in many other retail contexts, there are habitual and consistent behaviours amongst shoppers that marketers need to work with rather than against.