Developing a sparkling wine route in South Africa: benefits to the wine and tourism industry

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1. Introduction

South Africa is one of the world’s major wine producers. It produces 3.6% of the world’s wine and in 2006 was ranked as number seven in overall volume production (Wines of South Africa, 2009).

While South African wine is well known around the world the sparkling wine variety is less popular. Despite a large number of such wines being produced very few are being mentioned in international classifications. In a report that International Wine Review conducted on sparkling wines around the world there is only one South African mention, namely the Graham Beck 2005 Brut used by Barak and Michelle Obama to celebrate the election victory (Winkler, 2009).

The development of the wine route in South Africa has greatly influenced the popularity of its wines as well as providing extensive benefits to the regional tourism industry. As shown by Donaldson (2007) route tourism is very important to the economic activity and development of many South African regions.

2. Objective

The objective of the paper is to identify potential sparkling wine routes that can attract both seasoned wine enthusiasts as well as more casual wine tourists. Further the study looks at the potential revenues to the tourism suppliers as such routes are developed. The potential of the development of the selected sparkling wine tourism could be the development of relations between customers who can experience the different kind of wines and grapes and the small wineries who are interested in increasing their revenues from sales. (Hall, Sharples, Cambourne & Macionis, 2000)
3. Methodology

The research started from the assumption that the development of the sparkling wine tour has the potential to increase the receipts to the local tourism industry as well as to promote South African sparkling wines. In order to test this hypothesis a number of sparkling wine routes were proposed. The routes chosen had to meet a number of criteria. These criteria were:

1. There have to be at least four sparkling wine estates on each route
2. The routes have to be adjacent to other tourist attractions that could provide alternatives to the visiting tourists

After a number of routes were identified the next step was to calculate the potential revenues generated by the chosen routes. The top three routes with the highest amount of potential revenues were finally chosen.

4. Results

The three routes developed were:

Route 1 The Franschoek – Paarl Route (which includes Cabriere, Colmant Cap Classique and Champagne, Laborie Estate and Topiary Wine)

Route 2 The Stellenbosch- Constantia Route (including J.C. Le Roux, Villiera wines, Simonsig, Boschendal, Constantia)

Route 3 Worcester to Robertson route (including Graham Beck Wines, Weltevrede wine estate, Van Loveren wine estate, Du Toits Kloof wine estate)

The routes were chosen for the high quality of the sparkling wine produced as well as for the large variety of alternative tourism attractions. These are sporting activities such as golf, 4x4 trails and canoeing. Other attractions include: horseback riding, chocolate tours and the possibility to visit a number of museums regarding the history of Western Cape and of the wine making in the area.
The average costs for the proposed routes included transport costs, lunch and dining at the wine estates as well as various costs such as specialised tours of the surrounding areas. (see table 1).

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<th>Including Accommodation</th>
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<td>‘Casual Wine Tourists’</td>
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<td>ZAR 2,560.00</td>
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<td>‘Sparkling Wine Tourists’</td>
<td>ZAR 7,707.50</td>
<td>ZAR 3,360.00</td>
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Table 1 Average costs of the proposed sparkling wine routes per category of tourist

5. Conclusion

The establishment of sparkling wine routes can prove beneficial effect on the further development of local tourism industry as well as increasing the exposure of such wines on the foreign markets.

Further research needs to look at the maximum willingness to pay of tourists for such routes and whether the development of the routes will be translated into increase in sales in the targeted markets.

Bibliography


Wines of South Africa (WOSA) 2009. South Africa Wine Industry Statistics. [online]