



WINE TOURISM IN THE SOUTHERN DOWNS REGION

Wine tourism encompasses a wide range of experiences built around tourist visitation to wineries and wine regions. This includes wine tasting, enjoyment of wine and food, the exploration of regional environments and the experience of a range of cultural, nature based and lifestyle activities.

Released: August 2004

Region Description

The Southern Downs region encompasses the following regions; Clifton, Inglewood, Stanthorpe and Warwick. The Southern Downs region features the Granite Belt, Queensland's most established wine region. The Granite Belt is an officially designated wine producing area (Geographic Indicator, or GI), which encompasses the towns of Stanthorpe and Wallangarra and a number of surrounding villages, including Ballandean which has the largest concentration of wine producers in the state. References to the Southern Downs wine industry in this document relate to the activities within the Granite Belt GI.

Grape varieties grown in the Southern Downs region include Chardonnay, Chenin Blanc, Muscat Blanc, Muscat Gordo Blanco, Riesling, Sauvignon Blanc, Semillon, Tarninga, Traminer, Verdelho, Viognier, Waltham Cross, Black Muscat, Cabernet Franc, Cabernet Sauvignon, Gamay, Grenache, Malbec, Mataro, Merlot, Nebbiolo, Petit Verdot, Pinot Noir, Ruby Cabernet, Sanglovese, Shiraz, Tempranillo.¹

Regional Overview²

An on-site product audit was completed on three randomly selected wineries in the Southern Downs region. The results suggest that the Southern Downs is the most established of Queensland's wine districts; reflected in the information available prior to visiting the wineries and the ease of finding individual sites. There is a strong emphasis on food and drink in this region which complements the wine trail and the experience of visiting a range of sites, although the 'food' options are limited.

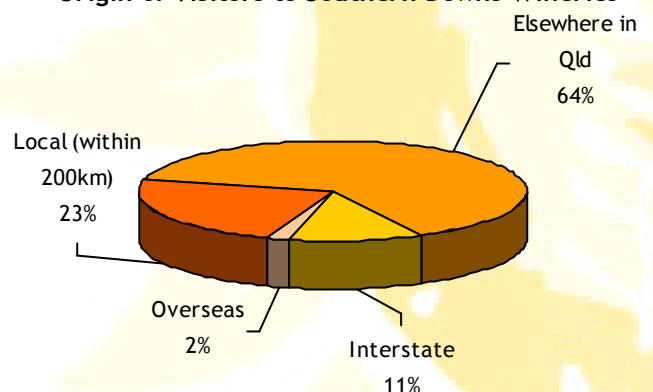
The wineries visited offered a range of experiences from the large tourist facility to the small intimate winery. Service levels are high although the product is comparable with other regions of Queensland. In other words, the newer regions offer a similar experience to this 'original' wine growing district. Perhaps due to the number of wineries in the region, some wineries offer only wine tasting with no dining facilities. Although the region focuses on wining and dining, there is a lack of good dining options for both daytime and evening. The overall experience is authentic and accessible.

Visitor Numbers & Origin³

A wine tourism infrastructure audit was conducted over the phone with the owners or general managers of thirty-three wineries in the Southern Downs region.

On average, wineries in the Southern Downs region receive 684 visitors per month. Sixty-four percent (64%) of visitors to wineries in the Southern Downs region originate from Queensland, but are more than 200kms from home. Twenty-three percent (23%) are classified as local (i.e. their place of residence is within 200km of the winery). A further 11% are from interstate and 2% are overseas visitors.

Origin of Visitors to Southern Downs Wineries



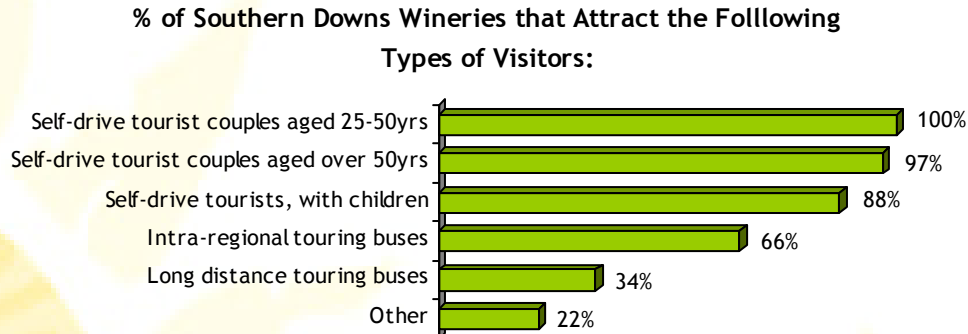
Base: All Wineries (n=33)

1. Queensland Wine Grape Crush and Price Report, 2003.
2. Queensland Wineries Research On-Site Product Audits, June 2004.
3. Wine Tourism Infrastructure Audit Report, July 2003.



Visitor Types¹

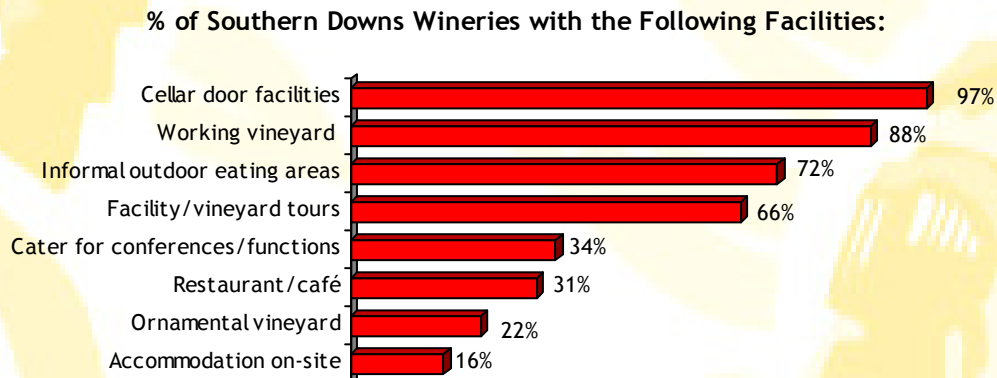
Almost all of the wineries surveyed in the Southern Downs region attract self-drive tourist couples aged 25-50 years and over 50 years. Other common visitor types include self-drive tourists with children and tourists travelling via intra-regional touring buses.



Base: All Wineries (n=33)

Facilities¹

The majority of wineries in the Southern Downs region have cellar door facilities, a working vineyard, an informal outdoor eating area and offer tours of their facility/vineyard. One third of wineries in the Southern Downs region cater for conferences/functions or have a restaurant/café. The average capacity for on-site restaurants and cafés in South Burnett/North of Gympie wineries is 60 patrons.



Base: All Wineries (n=33)

In addition to the five Southern Downs wineries who have accommodation on-site a further thirteen Southern Downs wineries are located less than 1km from accommodation.

Nineteen wineries in the Southern Downs region are open seven days a week.

Eleven wineries in the Southern Downs region cater for functions or conferences. The average capacity for functions is 70 guests² and the average capacity for conferences is 64 delegates.

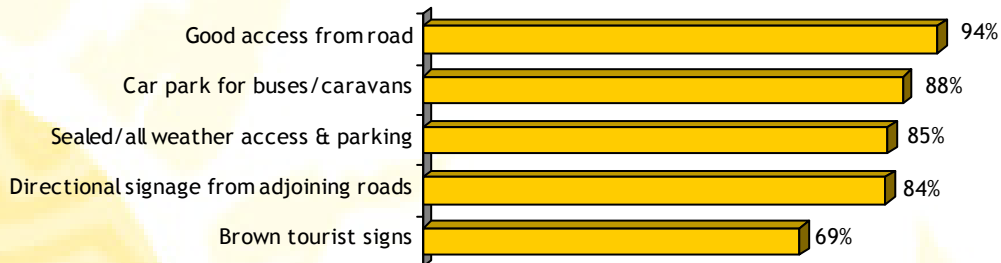
1. Wine Tourism Infrastructure Audit Report, July 2003.
 2. This figure is exclusive of one winery who indicated that their capacity for functions is 2,500, which was substantially higher than the other ten wineries.



Access and Parking¹

Winery access and parking facilities are good at most Southern Downs wineries. The majority of Southern Downs wineries report 'good access' to their property from the road, a car park large enough for buses and caravans to turn in and sealed/all weather access and parking.

% of Southern Downs Wineries with the Following:



Base: All Wineries (n=33)

Future Developments¹

Fourteen Southern Downs wineries plan to extend their tourist experience in the next 12-18 months, with seventeen wineries intending to add to the tourist experience in the next 3-5 years.

The most significant area for development in the short term (i.e. next 12-18 months) is the addition or upgrade of restaurant facilities. Other significant areas for development include conference/meeting facilities, upgrading on site interpretative signage and extending opening hours/days.

The most significant area for development in the next 3-5 years is the addition or upgrade of restaurant facilities. Other significant areas for development in the next 3-5 years include conference/meeting facilities and upgrading on site interpretative signage.

Number of Southern Downs Wineries Intending to Add to Tourist Experience

	Next 12-18 Months	Next 3-5 Years
# of wineries intending type of development (total # of wineries in region)		
Add or upgrade a restaurant/cafe	6 (33)	10 (33)
Add or upgrade accommodation	2 (33)	2 (33)
Add or upgrade conference/meeting facilities	4 (33)	3 (33)
Upgrade car parking facilities	1 (33)	3 (33)
Upgrade on site interpretative signage	4 (33)	3 (33)
Offer tours of your site and/or facilities	1 (33)	1 (33)
Extend opening hours/days	4 (33)	2 (33)
Other	7 (33)	8 (33)



Data Sources

2003 Queensland Wine Grape Crush and Price Report

This survey is part of a national study to accurately assess the tonnes, prices, levels of grapes purchased and grown by wineries throughout Australia. The survey also provides information on the estimated tonnes to be purchased and grown over each of the subsequent five years, together with an assessment of the tonnes that wine makers would prefer to receive.

The survey is separately carried out by each state. Each state collects the same data using identical survey forms thus making national aggregation possible. This is the third year Queensland has been involved in the survey.

Queensland Wineries Research On-Site Product Audits 2004 Report

The Queensland wineries on-site product audits were commissioned by Tourism Queensland's Sustainable Tourism Department. The primary aim of the research was to make an assessment of the 'point of difference' that is reflected in the overall 'look and feel' of Queensland's wineries, as well as to assess the product, interpretation and experience offered by Queensland wineries.

The research was conducted through a series of product audits at selected wineries across the seven wine regions of South East Queensland. Three different types of wineries from each region were chosen. These were a purpose built tourist winery, a boutique winery and a lifestyle winery. As audits were only completed on three wineries in each region the results may not be reflective of the whole region.

Researchers visited the wineries as part of a 'tourist' experience and completed a comprehensive checklist immediately after each visit. Each region was visited over one or two consecutive days and other regional attractions and experiences formed part of the overall evaluation.

Wine Tourism Infrastructure Audit 2003 Report

The Wine Tourism Infrastructure Audit was commissioned by Tourism Queensland's Sustainable Development Department and represents the first comprehensive study of operators in the South East Queensland wine tourism industry. The purpose of the audit was to provide a database of information as the foundation for future growth and promotion of the industry.

The audit is based on telephone interviews with an individual responsible for the management of the winery, for example the owner or general manager. Interviews were conducted with ninety-two (92) wineries across Queensland.

Further Information

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Wine Tourism

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