

This work is based upon work supported by the New York Wine and Grape Foundation



Tasting Room Operations

Projecting a Quality Image &
Staging an Experience

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Sponsored by the New York Wine
and Grape Foundation



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Projecting a Quality Image

Rationale

- NYWGF Total Quality Focus program
- Increasing need to satisfy the wine expert
- National and international legitimacy for NYS wines
- Professionalism



Projecting a Quality Image

Environment

Wine evaluation requires the senses of sight, smell and taste.

The tasting environment needs to support these three senses and not interfere with them.



Projecting a Quality Image

Equipment

Wine evaluation requires appropriate glassware, palate cleansers, note taking materials, and spittoons.

These items should be on hand at all times, even if most customers don't use them.



Projecting a Quality Image

Wine Preparation

For wines to be properly appreciated, they must be served at the appropriate temperature, in the proper order, and possibly with food.

All wines should be checked for faults by a wine server before pouring.



Projecting a Quality Image

Wine Service

Wine servers must be courteous and knowledgeable.

Servers will have the single greatest impact on your guest's experience.



Projecting a Quality Image

Responsible Serving

There are serious health risks associated with over-consumption of alcohol.

The drinks industry is increasingly being called upon to model and encourage responsible, moderate consumption.



Staging your Tasting Room Experience

through the *Experience Economy* lens

- esthetic
- escapist
- educational
- entertainment

The best experiences incorporate all four realms: the SWEET SPOT



Staging your Tasting Room Experience: **Esthetic**

*How can I make
the tasting room environment more*

INVITING

INTERESTING

COMFORTABLE

PROFESSIONAL

?????



Staging your Tasting Room Experience: **Esthetic**

- lighting
- orientation toward a view (water, vineyard, winery)
- music/sound
- smell
- color
- focal points (fireplace, couches, retail displays, artwork)
- employee demeanor (dress, manners, smiles)
- signage/traffic flow
- pets, animals



Staging your Tasting Room Experience: **Escapist**

*How can I
DRAW VISITORS IN?*

Get them INVOLVED IN AN ACTIVITY?



Staging your Tasting Room Experience: Escapist

- tasting options (flights, food add-on)
- winery or vineyard tours
- tasting lessons
- meet the winemaker, owner
- video/multimedia
- winemaker dinners, lunches
- blend your own wine
- engaging employees



Staging your Tasting Room Experience: **Educational**

What do I want my guests to LEARN?

*What INFORMATION and ACTIVITIES will
help them learn it?*



Staging your Tasting Room Experience: Educational

- tasting notes/sheets
- brochures/literature
- displays about the winery, vineyards, grapes, winemaking, awards
- knowledgeable staff



Staging your Tasting Room Experience: **Entertainment**

*What can I do to
GET VISITORS TO STAY?*

*How can I make it more
FUN and ENJOYABLE?*



Staging your Tasting Room Experience: Entertainment

- friendly and knowledgeable staff
- live music and other performances
- wine trail events
- special events
- places to sit



Staging your Tasting Room Experience: Theme

Stay consistent with your theme/mission

Eliminate anything that DETRACTS or
DEVIATES from the theme



Staging your Tasting Room Experience: Memorabilia

Guests want to keep a tangible artifact of a truly memorable experience.

What can I provide or sell that will help them REMEMBER?

What types of items will they be most likely to SHARE with others?



Staging your Tasting Room Experience: Memorabilia

- wine
- logo clothing
- logo wine accessories
- barrels
- signed wine bottles
- photo with the winemaker
- personal cuvee



Winery Case Studies

- Robert Mondavi Winery in Napa Valley
- Sullivan Vineyards in Napa Valley
- Chard Farm in Central Otago, N.Z.
- Castello di Verrazzano in Chianti Classico
- Mercier in Champagne



Robert Mondavi Winery

Mission: “We believe that great wines begin in the vineyard. For us, winegrowing is a collaboration with nature - a balance between our passion for excellence and our trust in the natural expression of soil, climate and vine. As stewards of the land, it is our responsibility to farm it carefully, harvest the fruit gently and guide our wines -- with as little intervention as possible through a natural winemaking process.”

Visiting the winery: “Educating the American public about wine, food and the arts has always been part of the philosophy behind Robert Mondavi Winery. The winery was one of the first to present educational tours and programs, culinary events, concerts and art exhibits and its visitor programs have become world-renowned.”



Robert Mondavi Winery

- Theme: prestige, California dreamin'
- Esthetic: building, vineyard, winery
- Educational: tours, informational displays, tv screens
- Escapist: wine & food tastings in special rooms
- Entertainment: art, music
- Memorabilia: Mondavi's book



Sullivan Vineyards

Mission: “Creativity and perfection in all realms of living is what the Sullivans strive for. We don't stop when we put the brush down, but continue throughout our lives, in winemaking, cooking, in friendships. It creates a mystical essence. That's what we are about.”

Visiting the winery: “Our Tasting Room is small and intimate...a true rarity in the Napa Valley. We take great pride in the hospitality and warmth that we provide each of our guests. We welcome each of you to come, taste our wines, ask questions, and be curious! Sullivan Vineyards requires an appointment to ensure that your experience is unique and comfortable.”



Sullivan Vineyards

- Theme: winery lifestyle, family
- Esthetic: barn/barrel room, artwork
- Educational: personal attention with an expert
- Escapist: off-the-beaten-path location, tasting in house with family
- Memorabilia: artwork by daughter



Chard Farm

Mission: “The long term goal being to craft the finest classic cool climate varietal wines of Pinot Noir, Riesling, Pinot Gris and Chardonnay.”

Visiting the winery: “Chard Farm is on the outskirts of Queenstown, on the way to Wanaka, and Cromwell. The entrance is 100 metres past the AJ Hackett Kawarau Bungy Bridge. The Winery is at the end of a long spectacular driveway.”



Chard Farm

- Theme: natural beauty
- Esthetic: on the edge of a gorge, next to original bungee jump
- Educational: tours
- Escapist: homestay cottage
- Memorabilia: photos



Castello di Verrazzano

Mission: “Work at the castle is aimed towards the production of high quality wines. The cultivation system aims rigorously at respecting the environment. The Chianti Classico di Verrazzano has the title DOCG which is the most important acknowledgement of quality that the Italian state attributes to wine.”

Visiting the winery: Guided visits only, include seated tasting of wines along with regional specialty foods.



Castello di Verrazzano

- Theme: agritourism, tradition
- Esthetic: castle, cellars, agricultural estate, traditional Italian kitchen for tasting
- Educational: guided tasting
- Escapist: meet the winemaker, owner, spend a day or an overnight on the farm
- Memorabilia: balsamico, olive oil, ham, capers



Champagne Mercier

Mission: “Needless to say, the Mercier spirit reflects, above all, a certain joie de vivre created by a spontaneous champagne which brings something extra to those memorable moments shared with friends. Who could put it better than Laurence Mercier-Bardin, great, great granddaughter of the founder: ‘A taste for Mercier is a taste for the pleasure of sharing a convivial, uncomplicated atmosphere. For lovers of Mercier, each bottle offers the kind of warmth and generosity only to be found in fresh, fruity, intense and spontaneous champagnes.’”

Visiting the winery: Guided tour by elevator and train through cellars, offered in multiple languages, with tasting at the end



Champagne Mercier

- Theme: joie de vivre, grandeur
- Esthetic: giant barrel, staff in suits, aura of wealth
- Educational: guided tours, informational displays
- Escapist: elevator and train ride through cellar, pairing lunches—Disney-esque
- Memorabilia: posters, aprons



Activity: Assessment of my tasting room

Directions:

- 1.) Under each “realm,” list the things you are already doing at your tasting room.
- 2.) List a few things in each “realm” that you could add or change to hit the “sweet spot”

