

BACCHUS ON TOUR

TASTING WINE AND SENSING PLACE

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ABSTRACT

This thesis analyses the meaning of tourism in relation to the globalisation of the wine industry and the significance of places, in particular, wine tours and tasting in South Australia. Tourism and travel are market sectors worth approximately 10% of world GNP in 2007/8 and from an economic and marketing perspective, tourism and wine tasting can *prima facie* be conceptualised as a form of consumption. However, as I argue in this thesis the leisure and appeal of a holiday, or a day out visiting wineries are more than simply an enjoyable form of relaxed socio-economic consumption. I argue that wine tasting and tourism are sensually based leisure practices and learning experiences. The analysis of wine tourism, festive events and wine tasting in South Australia is structured in relation to the tourist's experience of a wine place, the cultural invention of standards surrounding taste, and the tourist's movement through time and space during a wine tour. This methodological and theoretical approach acknowledges the significance of place in creating tourist experiences, as Casey observes: "The world comes bedecked in places; it is a place-world to begin with" (1996:43). Fieldwork included tasting events and coach and private tours to wine regions in the Barossa Valley, Adelaide Hills, McLaren Vale, and wineries, such as Banrock Wine and Wetlands Centre, 200 kilometres north of Adelaide, South Australia's capital. Fieldwork also included a period in New Zealand, studying the learning experiences of international tourists when working as cellar hands at a major wine processing plant.

I examine how tourist sites in South Australian wine regions are place-worlds, and draw upon Stoller (1989, 1997), and Feld and Basso's (1996) emphasis on a sensuous anthropology in analysing how wine tourism is an experiential form of encultured sensual practice. Central to the problematic of unravelling why and how tourists value and desire (Graeber 2001, Kluckhohn 1951) their leisure experiences in South Australia is the signification and media promotion of wineries and their products as naturalised environments, independent of their physical and symbolic creation by tourists, tour guides and the wine industry. I argue that marketing, brand building, tourism and wine tasting events are neo-totemic. From a marketing perspective totemic branding denotes and classifies what is valuable and thus desirable in relation to the corresponding cultural construction of social difference and similarity (Lien 1997: 240; Moeran 1996; Barthes 1967; 2000: 58). The problem is to conceptualise the pleasure of wine tasting and the creation of wine and leisure places as not only market driven economic activities, but as well, emplaced sensual experiences for tourists and culinary consumers.

DECLARATION

NAME: *John Claridge*

PROGRAM: *PhD (Anthropology)*

This work contains no material for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text.

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Possessed, ecstatic, he leads their happy cries;

The earth flows with milk, flows with wine,

Flows with nectar of bees;

The air is thick with a scent of Syrian myrrh.

Euripides, *The Bacchae* (1974: lines 144-147)

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