

SELECTION CHECKLIST - PARTNERING WITH A TOUR OPERATOR

The decision to partner with appropriate tour operators should be a part of your cellar door strategy and designed to meet objectives which deliver high quality, mutually beneficial outcomes for the cellar door, operators and visitors.

Interaction between parties at the cellar door should be harmonious and conducive to showing your product in the best light and, wherever possible, encouraging immediate or future wine sales. Following is a "checklist" of issues you may wish to consider when forming a relationship with high quality wine tourism partners. It also raises some "red flags" if you do not know the credentials or philosophy of operators bringing wine tourists to your door.

As is the case with any other commercial relationships you form, you should consider the comparative potential business benefits provided by each tour operator. Thinking visitor quality rather than quantity is a good start. If the nature of a tour operator's business is inappropriate to your cellar door philosophy, you have a right to say "no thank you!"

Commitment and cooperation to deliver quality experiences between operators and your cellar door will enhance business for you and your region and provide a better experience for your visitors. Remember: "What is good for the cellar door is good for wine tourism." The converse is not necessarily true. Exploring these issues will demonstrate quickly the style and commitment of the operator to ensure they match your cellar door business objectives.

Essential Requirements: *(Legislative provisions and procedures will vary from State to State)*

- Licensed/ registered tour vehicles
- Tour/ commercial driver licensing and accreditation
- Operator registration with STOs/ Tourism Associations
- Commercial insurances, including vehicle and public liability
- Other operating licences and permits (i.e. Liquor)
- Prepared to provide valid documentation for above

Information you should be aware of:

- Vehicle types, quality, facilities and drivers/ guides
- Number of passengers per vehicle type
- Comfortable and clean - view vehicle(s)
- Vehicle facilities (i.e. audio-video/ refrigerator/ toilet)
- Drivers/ guides dress code and identification

Business philosophy and cellar door relationship:

- Flexibility in client choice of wineries visited, or set itinerary
- Agreed procedure for casual visits (agreed group size)
- Prior advice for Cellar Door visits
- Make appointments and telephone if running late
- Prior identification of professional groups (i.e. buyers, journalists, etc)

Whilst visitors are tasting, drivers/guides:

- Wait in their vehicle
- Participate in tasting
- Remain in attendance at the cellar door to assist visitors and complement the cellar door experience
- Are prepared to assist with tasting (only by arrangement)
- Have knowledge about the cellar door (i.e. hours, access, policies, etc)
- Demonstrate active support for Responsible Service of Alcohol and have a process for dealing with non-compliant clients

Knowledge of drivers/ guides about wine/ wine tourism:

- Wine/ oenology/ viticulture (general) and wine region (history/ geography)
- Dining/ accommodation and tourist facilities
- Knowledge of and adherence to documented Wine Tourism Code of Conduct (where it exists)
- Translators provided as required
- Provision for safe transport of wine purchased on the day and knowledge of interstate/ international shipment options
- Expectation of Cellar Door commission on sales
- Other accreditation/ certification/ QA requirements/ awards
- Feedback between Cellar Door and tour operator