

Swan Valley Sideways: Economic Development Through Taste and Tourism in Western Australia.

By Tara Brabazon

Abstract

This article enacts the first cultural mapping of Perth's urban wine industry, showing the potential and challenges to future economic development. It is argued that local and state government initiatives have disconnected from entrepreneurial event management. Innovative links between music, food, wine and tourism have been created in the Swan Valley yet are unrecognized in governmental strategic plans and vision statements. To begin this new project that aligns top-down and bottom-up initiatives requires investment and infrastructure in tourism and transportation. To develop an understanding of tourism consumption and practice, the film *Sideways* is used as a trigger, model and mode of development. The often unexpected relationship between popular culture and wine marketing shown by *Sideways* is particularly appropriate for the Swan Valley in Western Australia. Instead of a film providing the basis of a marketing campaign, popular music is a key to future development of wine tourism. The Swan Valley offers an innovative location to consider wine tourism, wine media and the challenges of managing difference and specificity within the international creative industries literature.

Keywords

Wine tourism, wine media, creative industries, Perth, *Sideways*, popular music

Problems attend the development of Perth's creative industries and city imaging. A lack of vision, money and expertise are three barriers blocking the development of an overarching and horizontally integrated strategy between diverse economic and social sectors. However, another key weakness is the excessive policy attention to Perth's Central Business District. It is – as with many modern cities – a dead centre.



The impact of this dead centre is that the suburbs become more important to economic development, social cohesion and the building of identity. The majority of Perth's population hugs the coast and creates clusters of community from Mandurah to Mindarie Keys. The water is blue. The shopping is adequate for both the weekly grocery shop and the occasionally extravagant purchase. Most employees are drawn from local or nearby suburbs. The more that urban planners, report writers and taskforces stress the need to enliven the CBD, the more likely it is that residents open another bottle of wine, sizzle up a cutlet of salmon and enjoy the suburbs.

This article enacts a cultural mapping of Perth's urban wine industry, showing the potential and challenges to future economic development. It is argued that local and state government initiatives have disconnected from industry-based, entrepreneurial event management. Innovative links between music, food, wine and tourism have been created in the Swan Valley and are unrecognized in governmental strategic plans and vision statements. To begin this new project that connects top-down and bottom-up

initiatives requires investment and infrastructure in tourism and transportation. The film *Sideways* is used as a trigger, model and mode of development. The often unexpected relationship between popular culture and wine marketing shown by *Sideways* is particularly appropriate for the Swan Valley in Western Australia. Instead of a film creating the basis of growth in the wine industry, in Perth it is popular music that is providing the innovative engine for development. The Swan Valley is an evocative location to consider wine tourism, wine media and the challenges of managing difference and specificity within the international creative industries literature.

Sub/urban development

Wave after wave of theorists, planners and consultants label Perth as behind the times, pre-urban, dated and most significantly (cold shiver) suburban. For example, Charles Landry was brought in by Form, the Perth-based not for profit organization, for a two year consultancy. He presented one cultural mapping of the city.

Last weekend I criss-crossed over 350 kilometres of Perth from the Eastern suburbs to the Western in search of a speck of urbanity. I do not denigrate the delights of suburbia, but Perth has 98% of it. The suburban washes over metro Perth like an endless patina as the swathes of asphalt covered to get there dull the senses. How about 80% suburbia and 20% of the truly urban to start with? You see a touch in Subiaco, East Perth, Fremantle, Mount Lawley. But where else?¹

Charles Landry moved from east to west looking for urbanity. What he missed was a wine territory within half an hour of a capital city and, neighbouring to its west, one of the most pristine stretches of public beaches in the world. In looking for a particular form of urbanity, the distinctiveness and diversity of landscape was missed.

In Perth, recent summits and talkfests have attempted to create a new vision for Perth. LandCorp 2030 featured Richard Weller, Professor of Architecture at the University of Western Australia, who argued that, “Perth had to look around the world at other

¹ C. Landry, “City thinking can develop the full picture of Perth,” *The West Australian*, February 24, 2007

thriving cities, decide what type of metropolis it wanted to be, and follow a design to make it happen.”² While architects and planners are waiting for city modelling to take place, perhaps it already has. It may not feature the steel and chrome of Manchester’s lofts or the bohemian chic of North Beach in San Francisco. But the landscape – let alone the population - is speaking to planners, architects and designers. The problem is that they are not listening to the local dialect, attempting to impose a version of modernity over a city with distinct indigenous and migrant histories and different engagements with sport, leisure, food and the outdoor environment.

At times, the creative industries literature can be positively pathological against ‘the suburbs.’ The repercussion of such analytical attacks is that it perpetuates classism and inequality. Over the last decade, the poorest of citizens have moved to the extremities of cities. The affluent have clustered in the suburbs within a twenty minute car trip to the CBD and the inner city is composed of “students, singles, couples, dinks, gays, expats, corporates, divorcees and the most important of all, the professional and entrepreneurial classes ... the entertainment, information and media glitterati.”³ The affluent and educated affirm the value of urbanity, while the majority of the population occupies the middle and outer suburbs. Bernard Salt stated that “the problem I have is that city planning, and more often Australian culture, appears to be determined by those whose lives are based in the inner city, and not by the silent majority of average Australians who live in the suburban heartland. Perhaps it’s time to listen to what the latter have to say about the kind of lifestyle they want to lead in suburbia.”⁴ The problem confronting Perth planners in particular is that denizens like living in the suburbs and have no great need to travel to ‘the centre.’ Like a living antipodal version of Barthes’s description of Tokyo,⁵ the empty centre masks interest, difference,

² R. Weller, in J. Catanzaro, “Monorail, better roads a part of vision for Perth,” *The West Australian*, August 1, 2009, p. 15

³ B. Salt, “It’s time for the burbs to be heard,” *The Australia*, August 13, 2009, p. 27

⁴ *ibid.*, p. 28

⁵ Roland Barthes stated that, “The city I am talking about [Tokyo] offers this precious paradox: it does possess a center, but this center is empty,” *Empire of Signs*, (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982), p. 31

defiance, awkwardness and energy in its otherness and periphery. SunnyCheeks84 expressed her frustration with such judgements, but offered a clear message to the planners. Indeed – and continuing the Barthesian metaphor – when the periphery speaks, it is loud, but often in a language not understood by those in power.

Every week there is something in the newspaper making reference to Perth being "Dullsville" and it really annoys me. Not only because I am sick of hearing this phrase, but also because its just not true! The thing is with Perth, the life of the city isnt actually IN the city... its in the areas around it. In general, people just need to get out more, and actually try things that are out of their normal routines. There has been so much happening down here over the last few months, its just a case of finding out whats on and ACTUALLY DOING IT! For a start, there have been an enless amount of art and music fesivals, not only in Perth, but also in areas like Joondalup, Fremantle, Margeret River, Busselton and even Wave Rock. Aside from those, I have also enjoyed the outdoor cinemas in Kings Park, Burswood and Joondalup, friday night markets in Joondalup, canoeing out to Penguin Island, fishing at Two Rocks, 4WD in Lancelin, reef snorkelling at Beaumaris, sunday markets at Freo, the Tri nations beach cricket at Scarbourough, crabbing in Mandurah, the Hopman Cup, the Red Bull Air Race and the other day played "Super golf" (which is golf, but with a giant golfball). When there's "nothing on," I spend my weekends down at the beach, having BBQs with friends, or down at "The Boat" in Mindarie Quays, where you can enjoy fish n chips and a cold beer on the waters edge, while listening to live bands. My point is that there is ALWAYS something to do and you dont need to be rich to do it. There is more to a city than night clubs and 24/7 trading hours! Too many people want Perth to be like Sydney or Melbourne and I honestly dont know why! ... No, we are a better, cleaner and more relaxed city because we are NOT like them. But that DOESNT make Perth Dullsville!!!!⁶ (spelling and grammatical errors are retained from the original extract)

This paper offers a hypothesis or, more precisely, a premise to consider. If Perth – ‘Dullsville’⁷ or the most isolated capital city in the world⁸ – is to develop creative industries, then this development will be different and defiantly so. The more that

⁶ Sunnycheeks84, "Perth is not Dullsville," January 30, 2010, <http://au.messages.yahoo.com/news/localnews-wa/1791/>

⁷ "Why is Perth described as boring or dullsville?" *City Data*, December 8, 2009, <http://www.city-data.com/forum/australia-new-zealand/731926-why-perth-classed-boring-dullsville.html>

⁸ "Perth, Western Australia," Economic Expert.com, <http://www.economicexpert.com/a/Perth:Australia.htm>

Charles Landry,⁹ Richard Florida¹⁰ or Charles Leadbeater¹¹ come to the city to lecture and impose a top down model of development, the more likely residents will continue to enjoy the sparkling ocean, great bands playing on a Saturday afternoon in Joondalup, a football match in Mandurah or handbag house music in a Northbridge club. Most importantly, while trying to impose a modelling of urbanity onto Perth, one great advantage of the city is overlooked.

This paper stops the car and parks the vehicle rather than continuing Landry's drive across Perth's metropolis. It takes a particular industry and location and shows how – using a different model of creative industries outside of the well cited examples of Manchester, Sheffield, San Francisco or Seattle - Perth can provide some unexpected examples of development. If we as researchers and planners look carefully at what already exists and has emerged from the context and conditions, then a better social and economic environment can be developed that has the support of the population. A carefully considered tourist and transportation policy is required. To commence this study of Perth, I discuss another wine industry that built a tourist explosion. What is unusual is that this development was based on a film. The first section of this article explores *Sideways*, providing a framework for Perth's unusual and emerging relationship between the wine industry and popular culture, particularly music.

The Sideways Effect

It is difficult to predict which film, television programme or pop performer will generate cross-media, cross-platform influence, facilitating the horizontal development

⁹ C. Landry, *The creative city*, (London: Comedia, 2000)

¹⁰ R. Florida, *The Rise of the Creative Class*, (New York: Basic Books, 2002), R. Florida, *Cities and the Creative Class*, (New York: Routledge, 2005), R. Florida, *The Flight of the Creative Class*, (New York: Harper Collins, 2005), R. Florida, *Who's your City?*, (New York: Basic Books, 2008)

¹¹ C. Leadbeater, *Living on thin air*, (London: Penguin, 1999), C. Leadbeater and K Oakley, *The independents*, (London: Demos, 1999), C. Leadbeater, *Up The Down Escalator: Why The Global Pessimists Are Wrong*, (Viking, London, 2002), C. Leadbeater, "Welcome To The Knowledge Economy," in Ian Hargreaves and Ian Christie (eds), *Tomorrow's Politics: The Third Way and Beyond*, (London: Demos, 1998).

and integration with other creative industries like fashion, sport or tourism.¹² Not every film will initiate the success of *The Lord of the Rings*. The film *Australia* was a clear example where the attempt to align screen cultures and the tourist industry failed. Often, there are bolts not so much from the blue, but the multiplex or – more precisely – the DVD. The film *Sideways* was not only a surprise success, but led to a range of tourism operators capitalizing on wine tours of central California.¹³ It offered a slice of difference and separation from the more famous Napa Valley. Like Perth, Santa Ynez Valley tends to be displaced or marginalized in comparison to the more famous cities and regions. Kimberly Edds described the marketing and branding of this region.

Nestled between rich green hills swathed in yellow and purple wildflowers, the wine country of the Santa Ynez Valley has long played the forgotten stepsister to Northern California's Napa Valley and Sonoma. A 45-minute drive north of Santa Barbara, it was a spot locals prided themselves on but few others were aware of.¹⁴

To publicize that region, the Santa Barbara Conference and Visitors Bureau published 10,000 *Sideways* tourist maps. Within a month, this first printing was exhausted. Then 30,000 more were printed, with the map also being downloaded from the Bureau's website.¹⁵ A range of websites promoted the alignment in branding between *Sideways* and Santa Ynez. Indeed, Barbara.com commences with a popular cultural affirmation.

Welcome to Santa Barbara Wine Country, home of the movie *Sideways*. Currently there are over two hundred wineries, vineyards and tasting rooms in the county and the number grows each month.¹⁶

Napa Valley has been well served by the wine industry media. As one example, the writer Mick Winter has built the link between wineries, publishing and community organizations. *The Napa Valley Book* is a fine example of how a tourist guide can be

¹² S. Beeton, *Film-induced tourism*, (Clevedon: Channel View Publications, 2004) and D. Clarke, (ed.) *The Cinematic City*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1997)

¹³ G. Risling, "Tourism is going 'Sideways' in Southern California wine country," *The Seattle Times*, February 18, 2005, <http://community.seattletimes.nwsourc.com/archive/?date=20050218&slug=sideways20>

¹⁴ K. Edds, "In Santa Ynez Valley, A Toast to 'Sideways,'" *Washington Post*, February 27, 2005, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A53363-2005Feb25.html#>

¹⁵ "Get *Sideways* in Santa Barbara," <http://www.santabarbaraca.com/articles/index.cfm?action=View&ArticleID=23>

¹⁶ J. Dickson, Barbara.com, <http://www.santabarbara.com/winecountry/>

constructed and published with thoroughness, professionalism and fine writing.¹⁷ It is witty, careful, intelligent and stylish. A successful winery that is able to create a sustainable tourism industry requires an effective and creative development of wine industry media. The Napa Valley has high quality guide books to enact this function. Santa Ynez Valley has *Sideways*.

New Zealand's filmic and touristic success summoned hobbits rather than pinot noir. Certainly, the New Zealand wine industry has moved through the same process of trade liberalization and neoliberalism that has impacted on the other creative industries.¹⁸ But the lesson from their success is clear. Popular cultural tourism is increasingly common. From Concord, the site of Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women*, through to the Manchester of *24 Hour Party People*, popular cultural spaces and narratives inform and inflect the modern and the urban to create marketable tourist locations.¹⁹ The success of Wellington in refashioning itself into a creative hub was built on the long-term building of a New Zealand wine industry, fine dining and Te Papa. These successes then fed back into the branding of a modern and urban gateway into the filmic locations of Middle Earth.²⁰ Publications such as *Off the Menu* and Wellington's *Modern Dining Magazine*,²¹ reinforced this reputation. While Auckland is known for its Fashion Week and sports tourism, Creative New Zealand²² created a whole-of-government approach to creative industries development that aligns the specific industries and cities of Auckland and Wellington with their attendant regions and adventure tourism in the South Island.

¹⁷ M. Winter, *The Napa Valley Book*, (Napa: Westsong, 2007)

¹⁸ J. Barker, N. Lewis and W. Moran, "Reregulation and the development of the New Zealand Wine Industry," *Journal of Wine Research*, Vol. 12, No. 3, 2001, pp. 199-221. This article demonstrates the long-term growth and transformation into WINZ, Winegrowers of New Zealand.

¹⁹ Mark Shiel and Tony Fitzmaurice (eds.), *Screening the City*, (London: Verso, 2003)

²⁰ To review a full study of the changing city imaging of Wellington, please refer to T. Brabazon, "Brand Wellington," *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*, Vol. 5, No. 4, 2009, <http://www.palgrave-journals.com/pb/journal/v5/n4/abs/pb200922a.html>

²¹ Off the Menu also has a website, www.offthemenue.co.nz

²² Please refer to *Creative New Zealand*, www.creativenz.govt.nz, www.industrytaskforces.govt.nz, and www.thebigidea.co.nz, www.nzte.govt.nz.

This cultural and policy environment also offered an opportunity for scholars to consider the positioning of the arts and humanities in Creative Industries initiatives.²³ Alignments of film, music, fashion, food production, education and tourism increased the branding and visibility of the city of Wellington through the regional development of adjacent areas. Tickets for the 2006 Toast Martinborough event, a festival of food and wine, sold out in less than two hours. Although based in the Wairarapa, 65 percent of the festival-goers originated from Wellington and only 13 percent from the home region. The remaining visitors came from Auckland and other areas of the country. This is affluent tourism: half of all the surveyed participants earned an annual household income of over \$100,000. This connection between tourism, food and wine adds NZ\$500,000 to the Wairarapa economy.²⁴ The Napa Valley also has another example of such thoughtful economic and social interventions. The Mustard Festival²⁵ was introduced each February and March as a way to increase the tourists visiting restaurants and accommodation during the ‘slow’ months for the wine industry.²⁶

Such food tourism is a clear example of the horizontal integration of industries. Hall, Sharples, Mitchell, Macionis and Cambourne took this topic as a research focus, exploring how food can be developed, managed and marketed.²⁷ C.M. Hall and Liz Sharples explored the consequences of marketing experiences with food, developing a “tourism of taste.”²⁸ They realized that,

Food is one of the essential elements of the tourist experience. Yet it is such an integral part of the experience that it is only in recent years that it has become a

²³ I note Elizabeth Grierson’s prescient paper “The Arts and Creative Industries: new alliances in the Humanities” delivered at the Hawaii International Conference on Arts & Humanities in Hawaii from 12-15 January 2003, www.pesa.org.au/html/documents/2004-papers/Educationand%20Values%20Identity%20and%20development%20of%20Human%20per%20sons%20db04.doc

²⁴ These figures are derived from Tanya Katterns’ “Wine festival tickets sell out in two hours,” *The Dominion Post*, October 12, 2006, p. 3

²⁵ The Mustard Festival, www.mustardfestival.org

²⁶ M. Winter, *The Napa Valley Book*, (Napa: Westsong Publications, 2007), p. 18

²⁷ C.M. Hall, L. Sharples, R. Mitchell, N. Macionis, B. Cambourne (eds.), *Food Tourism around the World: Development, Management and Markets*, (Amsterdam: Butterworth Heinemann, 2003), Kindle Edition.

²⁸ C. M. Hall and L. Sharples, “The consumption of experiences or the experience of consumption? An introduction to the tourism of taste,” in *ibid.*

subject of study in its own right ... Food, just like tourism, was for many years a fringe academic discipline, and was frowned upon as an area of research by students of more 'serious' disciplines.²⁹

Food media has increased in its profile, with cookery programmes proliferating on radio and podcasts, television and other screen-based platforms. Travelling and sourcing ingredients have become part of the media narrative. Authentic experiences are marketed as part of the production and consumption of food.

For Perth, the lesson is clear from such strategies, alignments and examples. While there are many summits, taskforces and strategic collaborations about the future of Perth, too often the future of the entire city is collapsed into the future of the CBD. There is one industry that is providing an unexpected, important and dynamic case study of creative industries in action. Significantly, this unusual example of bottom up strategic partnerships is from an industry that rarely features in the international creative industries literature: wine. While *Sideways*' success started with the film and followed into tourism, Perth's wine industry – based in the Swan Valley – has provided the impetus for other, unexpected cultural and creative successes.

Urban wine

There are very few wine regions around the world that are within a thirty minute drive of a CBD. Perth is one of those cities. For example, the Barossa Valley is comprised of a series of country towns situated eighty kilometres north west of Adelaide. The Swan Valley is part of the metropolitan area and is twenty kilometres from the city centre. What makes this unusual and seemingly attractive geography of urban wine difficult to market is that there are a range of more famous vine growing and wine making towns and regions in the south west of the state. Margaret River wines are the most famous, but other areas include Pemberton, Denmark, Geographe, Peel, Pemberton, Porongurup and Mt. Barker. To align these regions and towns, a branding strategy and logo was

²⁹ *ibid.*, locations 87-91

designed and used to unify western and particularly south-western wine. A deep red coloured logo assumes the appearance of spilled wine in the shape of the continent of Australia, but features a mark over the south west region of W.A. The logo reads “Australia – west – dominion of wine.”³⁰

australia west
dominion of wine



Wine Industry Association of Western Australia. Used with Permission

This branding is unusual, but historically and geographically descriptive and resonant. Distinctiveness matters. Wine is “a saturated market.”³¹ Certainly this region is part of a nation known for winemaking. However the two other words – ‘west’ and ‘dominion’ – capture a history of difference, separation and colonization. The choice of ‘dominion’ seems to summon a sanitized colonial heritage rather than a critical historiography.³² It

³⁰ For a discussion of how this branding configuration was created, please refer to REB Design, *e'ssence*, Vol. 6, March 2005, <http://www.rebdesign.com.au/pdf/essence6.pdf>

³¹ P. Wagner, J. Olsen and L. Thach, *Wine marketing and sales: success strategies for a saturated market*, (San Francisco: The Wine Appreciation Guild, 2007)

³² This scholarly connotation to heritage logs the early and influential edited collection by J. Corner and S. Harvey, *Enterprise and heritage: Crosscurrents of national culture*, (London: Routledge, 1991). The bulk of this collection investigated the British context and in particular the consequences of Margaret Thatcher’s government. However there was a significant chapter investigating heritage and colonialism: Yasmin Ali’s “Echoes of empire: towards a politics of representation,” pp. 194-211. The impact of heritage from a geographical rather than historical perspective – and with a greater array of international examples, was K. Anderson and F. Gale (eds.) *Inventing places*, (Melbourne: Longman, 1992). These important books were part of the burgeoning development of cultural policy that not only investigated national economic development through media, but community arts as a way to rejuvenate localism. However, moving forward fifteen years, the reconfiguration of heritage away from a politically conservative rewriting of national history can be observed. Two examples of books that collate

also connotes a secondary status, a place on its way to independence but disconnected from it. Such a label conveys the ambivalent histories of the indigenous peoples, settler communities and migrant communities in Western Australia, particularly from Croatia and Italy. What is absent is recognition of an Indian Ocean or Asian-strategy. The labelling is colonial rather than postcolonial.

Sue Vidovich, CEO with the Wine Industry Association of Western Australia, affirmed that the logo is “enhancing unity within the West Australian wine industry and the promotion of Wine Brand WA are fundamental to the success and longevity of our industry. This brand not only gives our association an enormous footing with its marketing, it also gives it a much needed adrenaline rush.”³³ WIAWA is the key organization for the State’s wine producers, with a role in building trade links, quality control and lobbying.³⁴

Besides this logo, there are further changes being made to marketing and branding. The state government department responsible for the industry, Tourism Western Australia, is confronting challenges in creating sustainable economic models amidst a global downturn. Their report, *A Better Future for Tourism in WA*, released in May 2010, revealed the scale of these challenges. The level and rate of interstate visitors is low.³⁵ Western Australians are travelling overseas rather than within WA.³⁶ Considering these challenges, the staff in the industry critiqued Tourism WA for not developing infrastructure and fragmenting the marketing goals.³⁷ In response to these critiques, the developmental priorities from the state government formalized to include the Margaret

heritage, law and economic development are Kate Fitz Gibbon (ed.) *Who owns the past?* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2005) and Barbara Hoffman (ed.) *Art and cultural heritage*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006)

³³ S. Vidovich, REB Design, *e'ssence*, Vol. 6, March 2005, <http://www.rebdesign.com.au/pdf/essence6.pdf>

³⁴ The WIAWA website is <http://www.winewa.asn.au/10393.htm>

³⁵ *A Better Future for Tourism in WA*, Tourism Western Australia, May 2010, p. 4.

³⁶ *ibid.*, 5

³⁷ *ibid.*, p. 6

River Wine Region, Broome, eco-tourism in the Kimberley and Ningaloo, and Perth's waterfront with attention to the city's hotels.³⁸ The Swan Valley was excluded.

The disconnection between the state government, local government and tourist businesses is mentioned (indirectly) as an ongoing challenge in the industry's official documentation, noting that what is required is, "a strong industry that works in partnership with Government and relies less on Government funding."³⁹ Western Australia however does not have the history of such Quangos (Quasi non governmental organizations) such as the Regional Development Agencies in the United Kingdom. These mediate between government and industry and are ideally suited to assisting small and medium sized enterprises which dominate tourist organizations and businesses. While Regional Development Commissions exist, they have no specialist expertise in tourism development.⁴⁰ To understand this dissonance between state, city and regional government, an historical understanding of both Swan Valley geography and governance are required.

The Swan Valley was integral to the first white settlement of the Swan River Colony. The coastal strip adjacent to the newly founded Perth was dry and sandy. The arable agricultural land was in the Swan Valley. In 1829, the first year of colonial settlement, livestock was farmed in this region. The potential for viticulture was realized by the botanist Thomas Waters. He thought that the climate in the Swan Valley could produce similar wines to France or Italy. He brought root stock from South Africa and planted it at Olive Farm in South Guildford. This site is now known as Water's Edge Winery.⁴¹ While the early Swan Valley took on a culture of large estates, based on the British gentry, it was the Croatian farmers who arrived after the First World War that make the

³⁸ *ibid.*, p. 8

³⁹ *ibid.*, p. 9

⁴⁰ Tourism Western Australia Media Release, May 21, 2010, p. 2

⁴¹ Water's Edge Winery, <http://www.watersedgewinery.com.au/>

Sway Valley an area of vineyards rather than more traditional agricultural produce.⁴² Such an immigration history has been important to Australian wine making. The Barossa Valley would not have been successful without the German immigrants.⁴³ Italian migrants established the vast grape-growing and wine production region of the Riverland.⁴⁴ Migrant populations in Western Australia brought new labour practices and processes for pruning, picking, storage and drying. However a special pathway through Western Australian colonial history, based around Guildford, can be revealed in its buildings and streets. While Fremantle was the colonial port and Perth an administrative hub, Guildford was the market town.⁴⁵

The grape vine creates a very specific form of agricultural production. Distinct climate and geological conditions are necessary for the vines to grow and thrive. There is an historical geography to viticulture.⁴⁶ The focus on developing a regional branding strategy for Western Australian wines – part of Australia, part of a dominion, but western – was and is necessary. Because of the international success of Margaret River in particular, the wine region within the capital city (and in other regional areas) maintains secondary or displaced status.

While marginal in branding terms, the Swan Valley was one of the earliest grape-growing regions in Australia. Unlike the *Sideways*' protagonist and his fixation on Pinot Noir, the Swan Valley is known for Verdelho and Shiraz,⁴⁷ with a select range of

⁴² For example, please refer to the history of Windy Creek Estate, <http://www.windycreekestate.com.au/>

⁴³ Jan Schmorte, "Attitudes towards German immigration in South Australia in the post-second world war period, 1947-60," *The Australian Journal of Politics and History*, Vol. 51, 2005.

⁴⁴ S. King, and D. O'Connor, "Building blocks of settlement: Italians in the Riverland, South Australia," *Italian Historical Society Journal*, Vol. 11, No. 2, 2003, pp. 24-29. It is also important to note Richard Rosano's *Wine Heritage: the story of Italian-American Vintners*, (San Francisco: The Wine Appreciation Guild, 2000)

⁴⁵ Guildford Heritage Walks Trail, <http://www.swanvalley.com.au/NR/rdonlyres/CB7D544D-9DC2-4973-81A2-8D83D202C802/0/30913COSGuildfordHeritageWalkTrailsbrochure.pdf>

⁴⁶ T. Unwin, *An historical geography of viticulture and the wine trade*, (London: Routledge, 1991)

⁴⁷ *Vintage Blue: Western Australia*, http://www.vintageblue.com.au/products/wine_regions/#wa

regional vintage fortified wines.⁴⁸ Besides grape growing for wine production, table grapes and dried produce, the vineyards have diversified, transforming the land into multi-use production, including olives, stone fruit and slow food staples such as chocolate and nougat, along with accommodation and tour operators. There is a range of restaurants, cafes, breweries, distilleries⁴⁹ and a wildlife park. While never proclaiming or celebrating a horizontally integrated creative industries strategy, there is a developing “Partnership Project” between the City of Swan and the Swan Valley Tourism Council.⁵⁰ There is also adjacent commercial support from Midland Brick and Midland Redevelopment Authority.⁵¹ An emerging local strategy that aligns nature, wildlife and primary production is starting to coalesce and develop. The goal has been to find a branding strategy that binds together a region that is close to a capital city, an airport and is a site of primary production. The phrase “Swan Valley – Perth’s Valley of Taste”⁵² has been successful in creating this cultural alignment, providing a way to align a 32 kilometre strip of businesses into a “Food and Wine Trail”⁵³ that includes wineries, breweries, distilleries, restaurants, cafes, accommodation and road-side stalls. There is also a strategy to incorporate art and event tourism, with the Wadjuk community⁵⁴ offering indigenous tours through the valley.

⁴⁸ Swan Valley.Com, Wine Varieties,

<http://www.swanvalley.com.au/en/Food+and+Wine/Wine/Wine+Varieties.htm>

⁴⁹ The distilleries, while a minor part of the Swan Valley region are distinctive. The Great Northern Distillery specializes in Canefire Rum and the Wild Swan Distilling Company specializes in Chilli Vodka.

⁵⁰ M. Foley, *From the desk of the CEO*, December 5, 2008,

http://www.swan.wa.gov.au/docs/documents/4475/From_the_desk_of_the_CEO-December_5_2008_794337.pdf

⁵¹ *Swan Valley Wine Show 2009 – Results Catalogue, 2009*,

http://www.swanvalley.com.au/NR/rdonlyres/E3C37557-E4E1-42A8-B4F9-4B9ACAEA18D8/0/Swan_Valley_Wine_Show_Results_Catalogue.pdf

⁵² *Swan Valley – Perth’s Valley of Taste*, <http://www.swanvalley.com.au/en/default.htm>

⁵³ *Swan Valley Food and Wine Trail*,

<http://www.swanvalley.com.au/en/Food+and+Wine/Food/Swan+Valley+Food+and+Wine+Trail.htm>

⁵⁴ While noting the alternative spellings of the Wadjuk indigenous community, the mobilization of this spelling is deployed in “The Wadjuk: guardians of the link between land and sea,”

Indigenouswa.com, <http://www.indigenouswa.com/heritage.htm>. This spelling and regional affiliation is also utilized by the Department of Education, “About the Fremantle-Peel Region,” <http://www.det.wa.edu.au/education/abled/apac/districts/fremantle/about.html>

There are international models for this development. C. Michael Hall and Richard Mitchell constructed *Wine Marketing: A Practical Guide*⁵⁵. They confirm that wine industry marketing is incredibly diverse, not only in terms of the many types of wine businesses and growers, but the myriad meanings wine holds for consumers. They describe wine as “a complex, almost enigmatic product.”⁵⁶ Of most relevance to the Swan Valley, they stated that,

premium wines provide greater aesthetic outcomes (rather than sustenance or lubrication), they are a marker of social status and social capital and they tend to come from cooler climate regions (while bulk wines come almost exclusively (sic) from hot regions where growing conditions allow for higher yields.)⁵⁷

While weather is a determinant of quality, it is also important to recognize that ‘taste’ is not only constructed through climate, but a range of policy makers, activists and critics.⁵⁸ Obviously, the Swan Valley shares a Mediterranean climate with Perth. But while it may not claim to be home to the labels of ‘premium’ wine, there is a great advantage in the development of wine tours. The Swan Valley has many natural attributes that facilitates tourism. Most importantly, it is a site of primary production.

⁵⁵ C.M. Hall and R. Mitchell, *Wine marketing: a practical guide*, (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2008)

⁵⁶ *ibid.*, locations 93-96

⁵⁷ *ibid.*, locations 109-117

⁵⁸ T. Colman, *Wine Politics: how governments, environmentalists, mobsters, and critics influence the wine we drink*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008)



Sandalford Vines at the Swan Valley Winery. Photograph by Tara Brabazon

Significantly, like the south-west of the state, the weather is constant and temperate through much of the year. Such an environment facilitates cellar door sales and the horizontal integration with boat tours and on-site restaurants. Also a key advantage for tourism is located in the title of the region. The Swan Valley is a valley, with the Swan River fringing many vineyards. Such positioning also enables wine and beer cruises to travel along the Swan and visitors may disembark for wine-tasting and meals.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ Captain Cook Cruises run a series of Swan River Scenic Cruises, including trips from both Perth and Fremantle.



Sandalford Dock. Photographs by Tara Brabazon

Besides the boat cruises, there are also a range of bus tours that service the Valley. Three such companies are Swan Valley Pink Bus Tours, Out & About Wine Tours and Swan Valley Wine Tours & Cruises. They are award winning businesses. The Out & About Wine Tours won a Silver Medal at the 2006 WA Tourism Awards, a Gold Medal

at the 2007 Awards and the Tour Guide of the Year for 2006. The Swan Valley Wine Tours & Cruises won a Gold Medal in 2007 and The Hanson Swan Business Award for Tourism in 2007. They have an impact beyond a narrowly defined ‘wine tourism’ and are enhancing the city branding of Perth.

These services are necessary as public transportation is limited. Even with the successful creation of the north to south railway system, extending from the suburbs of Clarkson to Mandurah, it is difficult to travel from east to west by public transportation. Indeed the local tourism guides specify the difficulty of moving around the region without a car. While such a limitation may be a disadvantage for some tourist enterprises, for a wine industry it is a major barrier to growth and success. At present, the train link from the city centre has a station at Guildford, leaving the 150 wineries and restaurants, spread over a 32 kilometre ‘trail,’ remote and under-serviced. A paper written at the Perth-based Murdoch University by Coelho, D’Orazio, Durkin and Mobbs, addressed this concern.

This [lack of public transport] often leaves tourists that were told how to get to Guildford stranded and there are few other options than to drive. This is seen as one of the Valleys major pitfalls, as with a destination whose market relies so heavily on alcohol; there definitely needs to be a duty of care to its patrons.⁶⁰

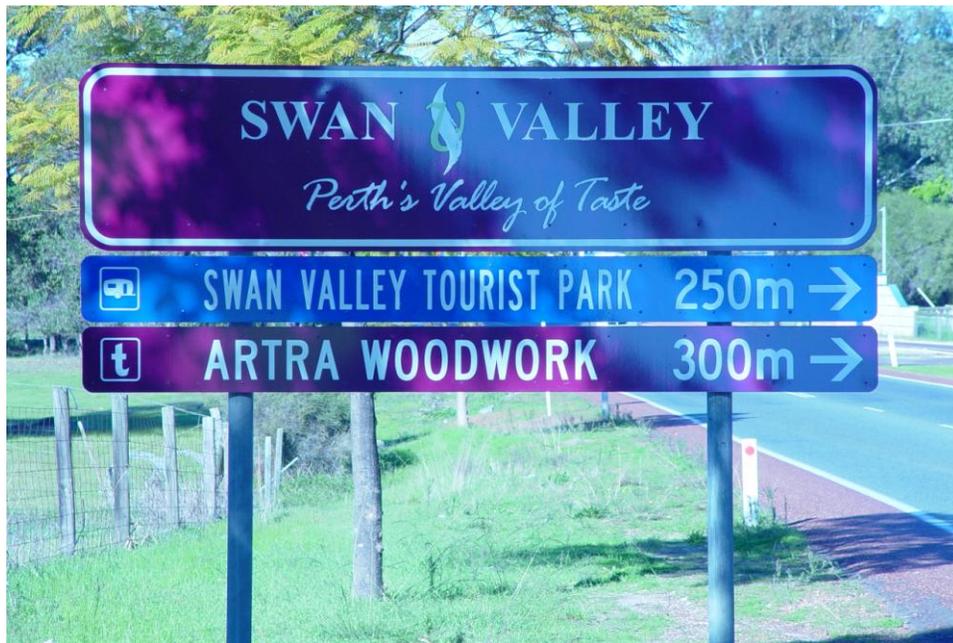
They log the differences to the Barossa Valley, where the wineries are located over a much smaller region, making cycling an option.⁶¹ The Napa Valley is mentioned with its “Green Flat Limousines,”⁶² that can be tailored for tourism but are also environmentally sustainable. The potential of hybrid vehicles and the provision of walking and cycling pathways in some of the Napa are also cited as options for the Swan.

⁶⁰ A. Coelho, J. D’Orazio, K. Durkin and M. Mobbs, “Transport Issues of the Swan Valley,” Murdoch University, 2008, <http://tourism.murdoch.edu.au/reports/SwanValleyTransport2008.pdf> , p. 3

⁶¹ *ibid.*, p. 10

⁶² *ibid.*, p. 10

Transportation is the key disadvantage in the region, hampering economic development. Obviously, this is an unusual problem in international terms, with a region within half an hour of a CBD being unserved by a streamlined, planned public transportation system. However, taking the necessity to drive into consideration, the slogan used to brand the region has potential, incorporation both wine and other modes of primary production is the “Valley of Taste.”



Perth's Valley of Taste, Photographs by Tara Brabazon

A range of small businesses, many involving cellar door sales of wine, are clustered as the “Swan Valley Food and Wine Trail.”⁶³ Aligning and branding these geographically-dispersed locations is starting to address the transportation concern with the Swan Valley Heritage Cycle Trail⁶⁴ and the Vineyard Walk Trail.⁶⁵

⁶³ *Swan Valley Perth's Valley of Taste: Guide and Map*, 2009, www.swanvalley.com.au

⁶⁴ *Swan Valley Heritage Cycle Trail*, http://www.toptrails.com.au/index.php/trails/trail/swan-valley-heritage-cycle-trail?s_kwcid=TC|9883|swan%20valley%20heritage%20cycle%20trail||S|b|5073871263&gclid=CO7G96GHuJ8CFcpb4wodNHnJzg

Currently, the boundaries of this wine and food trail are too wide. While bus tours predominate, the trail is (only) driveable. Instead of encompassing the entire valley, a productive and walkable hub is being created for the businesses around West Swan Road. The key part of the road features both a wide footpath and cycleway. Although accessible walkways along the West Swan Road are yet to be developed and further cooperation between businesses is necessary, there is a potential for branding and tourism to develop around this urban infrastructure.

Perhaps the most successful touristic development has been the emergence of festivals and events in the Swan Valley.⁶⁶ This is where popular culture, particularly music, is providing profound opportunities. Spring in the Valley is the centrepiece. Having existed in various forms over the last twenty years, it now includes thirty eight venues, combining tastings and entertainment. Held in the second weekend in October, it is one of the largest specialist food and wine festivals in Australia. A smaller festival is Taste of the Valley, held in April each year. It includes food, wine, music and art. A third, specialist gathering is the Seafood and Shiraz event during July, where the wineries combine produce to create a winter focus for the Valley. There are also many sporting events highlighted by the viewing of the Avon Descent, a long distant river event for motorboats and kayaking. This brings thousands of spectators to the region. There are also regular weekend markets and live music venues.⁶⁷

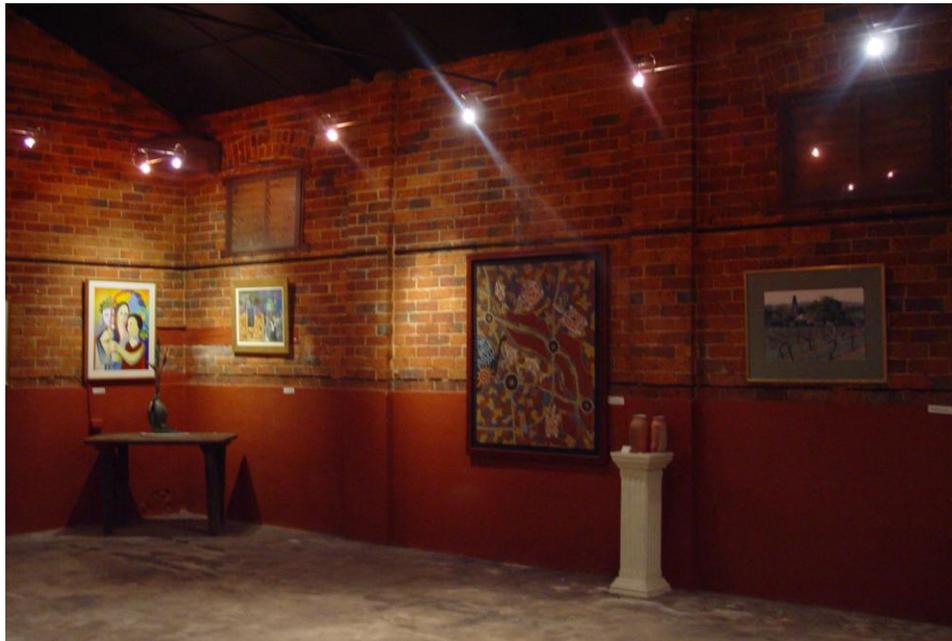
A range of accommodation has been made available from the most basic of farm stays, where conventional vineyards have value added to their business, through to caravan

⁶⁵ *Walking Trails in the Swan Valley*,
<http://www.swanvalley.com.au/en/Must+See+and+Do/Walking+Cycling+and+Driving+Trails/Walking+Trails.htm>

⁶⁶ The key book on food and wine festivals is C. Michael Hall and Liz Sharples's *Food and wine festivals and events around the world: development, management and markets*, (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2008)

⁶⁷ There are strong international examples linking arts and crafts to wine. In Aotearoa/New Zealand there is Nelson's World of Wearable Art festival, Marlborough's Seafood Festival and Mission Estate Winery's annual music festival in Napier.

parks, spa retreats, bed and breakfasts. There is also the Swan Valley Oasis Resort on West Swan Road and the Vines Resort on Verdelho Drive with a 36-hole golf course.⁶⁸ The connection between tourism, food, wine and sport⁶⁹ is arching to arts and craft, with Houghton Wines developing their own art gallery and museum. The Houghton winery was founded in 1836, with the first vintage for commercial purposes released in 1859. It is the third oldest winery in Australia. Its primary winemaking facilities are based in the Swan Valley, with a further winery in Nannup in the south west of Western Australia. Their “Spring in the Valley Art Collection” is part of the week-long festival that celebrates wine, food and art. But Houghton’s have instigated a yearly commemoration to mark this festival by unveiling a new piece of artwork given to the collection by an artist for free public display.



Houghton’s Art Gallery. Photographs by Tara Brabazon

⁶⁸ The Vines Resort, www.vines.com.au

⁶⁹ Although cancelled in the 2008/9 cricket season, Lilac Hill besides being the home of Lilac Hill Estate Wines also host a cricket match between a selected Australian 11 and touring sides. It is often an opener to a WACA test match.

The addition of a museum at Houghton winery increases the range of activities available, confirming the history of the region and also provides the basis for future productive developments that align art, culture and wine. New international initiatives and policies are aligning GLAMs – galleries, libraries, archives and museums. Significantly, even wineries are recognizing the potential of knowledge generating and knowledge preserving initiatives.



Houghton Museum. Photograph by Tara Brabazon

Besides the wineries, there are also independent art and craft facilities including Gomboc Gallery Sculpture Park, Maalinup Aboriginal Gallery, Taylor's Art and Coffee

House and Valley View Gallery. Most are based around either West Swan Road or Great Northern Highway. The Maalinup Aboriginal Gallery is significant because it not only houses and sells indigenous art, ceramics, woodware and painted glass, but is also owned and operated by indigenous people.⁷⁰

Productive relationships are being formed with the adjacent regions of Guildford and Midland. Guildford, as one of the first settlements in Western Australia, maintains national trust status.⁷¹ It is accessible through walking trails and also features pubs, restaurants and antique shops. For more modern commerce, Midland features conventional department stores. Therefore, the key is to connect the shopping of Midland with the heritage of Guildford with the food and wine of the Swan Valley. A tourist-styled bus service circuit, covering these three locations at weekends would be an imaginative solution to the serious transportation issue.

Fast wine, slow food

One of the strengths in food and wine industries can seem a weakness in terms of branding. One of the major retail sources of slow food in the Swan Valley is the Margaret River Chocolate company. Based in both the Swan Valley and Margaret River, the retail store offers free entry and tastings from 9am until 5pm every day of the year, except Christmas Day. This accessibility enables other businesses and tour operators to create their schedules in response. Based at 5123 West Swan Road in the Swan Valley and also at its headquarters in Harman's Mill Road, Metricup, the company sells the "world of chocolate."

The Margaret River Chocolate Company specializes in the high end of the chocolate market, presenting to customers a European-style of produce, listing ingredients and the couverture process. In keeping with the slow food movement, the value of chocolate to

⁷⁰ Maalinup Aboriginal Gallery, www.maalinup.com.au

⁷¹ "Guildford," *Australian Explorer*, <http://www.australianexplorer.com/guildford.htm>

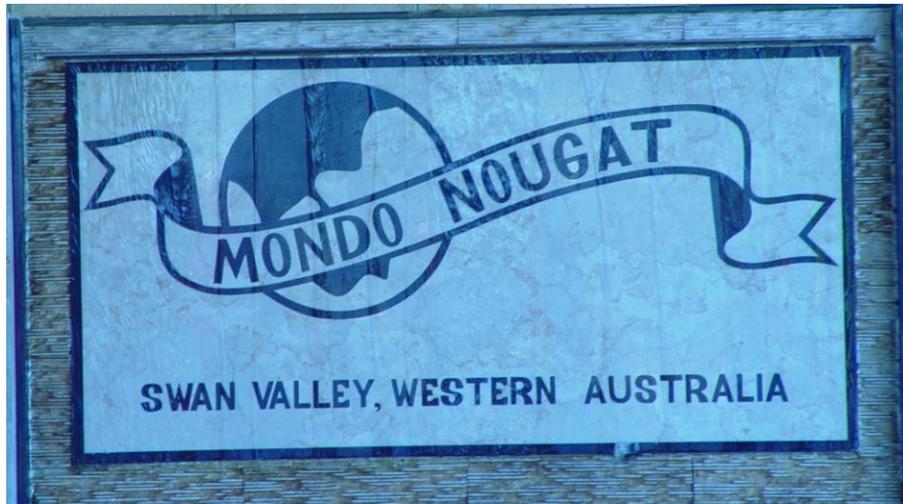
taste and nutrition is proclaimed, as a source of Vitamins A, B2, C, D and E as well as magnesium.





The Margaret River Chocolate Company – Swan Valley. Photographs by Tara Brabazon

Another key slow food staple is nougat. On Great Northern Highway, the Mondo Nougat Factory includes a coffee shop along with retail sales of nougat, gelati, biscotti and cakes.



However the weakness of such enterprises is clear. Although present in the Swan Valley, the branding spills into the south-west of the state. The specificity of an urban wine industry is lost. Therefore the key is to find an industry that creates innovative alignments between taste and urbanity.

Drinking and dancing

The inadequacies with public transport will remain a structural inhibitor of growth in this urban wine industry. Other industries in Western Australia's creative industries suite confront similar problems. Yet significantly these trans-industry difficulties can be solved by understanding what the Swan Valley can offer to popular music, sport, fashion, craft and a range of art-based practice. What the Swan Valley possesses – space, parking, large venues and closeness to the CBD – provides great solutions for other creative industries.

For example, a profound problem confronting Perth's popular music industry is a lack of venues. As the city has gentrified, clubs and pubs are closing and managing noise restrictions, while apartments and lofts are built. Instead of building designated venues for popular music, the State's Department of Culture and the Arts continues to fund interstate tours and – bizarrely in a Web 2.0 downloading age – compact disc production. In the May 2009 round of funding, The Preytells and Project Mayhem received A\$18,000 to record and release debut albums. Minister John Day stated that,

It is difficult for local bands with limited resources to record, release and market full-length albums and this is one of the areas where the Contemporary Music Grants are making a tangible difference.⁷²

It is difficult to record, release and market full-length albums as the industry is no longer based around full length physical albums. The government is funding a redundant platform and an historically-lapsed marketing plan. Business models in the music industry must incorporate live performance in an age of proliferating illegal downloading of MP3s. Because a 'whole of government' approach to creative industries and popular music was not instigated, there remains a separation of urban planning and economic development. Such a disconnection is particularly ironic considering that the current Minister for Culture and the Arts holds another portfolio: planning.

⁷² J. Day, "Government Media Office: Ministerial Media Statements," May 5, 2009, <http://www.mediastatements.wa.gov.au/Pages/WACabinetMinistersSearch.aspx?>

While the ‘top down’ integration of portfolios has not been successful and venues have continued to be closed and/or silenced, the Swan Valley has again provided a ‘bottom up’ creative industries solution to the lack of locations for live music. Using the capacity of event management, the Swan Valley-based wineries have created musical events. For example, Houghton Winery runs “Lounge in the Valley”⁷³ as part of the Spring in the Valley festival, annually held on an October weekend each year. In 2009, the event featured three Western Australian bands and performers. To include the Generation X audience, the Hoodoo Gurus lead the bill, backed by Bob Evans, a re-booted Jebediah, and DJ Roger Smart. Selling the tickets for \$99, the fee includes entertainment and markets featuring local produce, lunch and wine tasting. Another example of such an event is in February and March each year at Sandalford Winery. Titled A Day on the Green, international acts are brought to Western Australia, matched with some local performers. The 2010 featured performers such as Rob Thomas, lead singer of Matchbox 20, a Motown Event and Tom Jones. While in the United Kingdom, music festivals are self standing events such as Green Man and Glastonbury, the Perth-based model is incorporating bands and performers to accompany food, wine and event management.

Choice, strategies and suburbia

The Swan Valley’s entrepreneurship is solving structural problems in the creative industries. Yet such innovations are being ignored in the ‘serious’ planning documents. In August 2009, *The West Weekend Magazine* featured the headline “Future Perth,” asking “what would you change about our capital city if you had the choice? Some of WA’s creative thinkers reveal their radical ideas to improve Perth.”⁷⁴ Mayor Lisa Scaffidi wants “more exciting and unique projects which attract people to the city.” Professor Peter Newman, who has based a career on developing public transport and creating sustainable cities, argued, “if we’re just suburban I think we’ll be a very nice

⁷³ *Lounge in the Valley*, www.loungeinthevalley.com.au

⁷⁴ “Future Perth,” *West Weekend Magazine*, August 1, 2009, cover

place to retire to and we'll lose our young people.” David Ravine argued for replanting of native woodlands down to the Swan River foreshore. Lynda Dorrington argued for affordable housing, street trees and fruit and flower sellers. Ben Juniper wanted public art.⁷⁵ While there is intense interest and desire for intervention in the CBD and the neighbouring affluent suburbs of Leederville, Subiaco, Nedlands and Mount Lawley, the reality of Perth is that most people do not choose to live in these locations. At the very point that there are summits and strategies to discuss Perth in 2030, with a desire to create a night-time economy in the CBD, the NightRider bus service from the hub of the night-time economy, Northbridge, was cancelled from July 26, 2009. It was no longer possible to travel from Northbridge to Scarborough Beach and Northbridge to Fremantle via Canning Highway. Similarly, the Fremantle NightRider no longer services Northbridge. Therefore, while all the money, attention and expertise are focused on planning, the transportation infrastructure that enhanced the night-time economy has crumbled.

It is easy to abuse and undermine suburbia. It is more complex to understand the communities and cultures emerging from these spaces. The Swan Valley creates links between food, wine and music to create both an audience and event. It is tourism in practice, rather than planning. Like *Sideways*, popular culture becomes the foundation for development. There is much to celebrate and recognize. However there are two issues to address for future development. Firstly, the website – www.swanvalley.com.au – is a Web 1.0 portal with little interactivity or the capacity of mixed-media content through podcasts, vodcasts, blogs or e-commerce enabled opportunities. It is a solid presentation of material, but could be improved at little cost to generate maximal brand exposure. The second concern is more difficult to manage. As the tourist brochures proclaim: “regular train services operate to/from Guildford and Midland. Public transport into the Swan Valley is limited. It is recommended that transport arrangements are made prior to arrival.”⁷⁶ While such a lack of infrastructure

⁷⁵ M. Irving, “City of our dreams,” *West Weekend Magazine*, August 1, 2009, pp. 8-10

⁷⁶ *Swan Valley: Perth's Valley of Taste*, Swan Valley Tourism Council, 2009

is always problematic, when trying to promote a wine industry, it is a serious problem. With the success of the Mandurah train line, that is incredibly well utilized, there may be political will in the future for trains from the coastal suburbs to service the Swan Valley and extend through to the foothills beyond Midland.

The problems remain vast. In May 2010, *A Better Future for Tourism in WA Report* created a new business model. Neoliberal in imperative, it affirmed the need to develop and market major events and develop tourist infrastructure, but “must be achieved with no extra Treasury funding.”⁷⁷ Indeed, by the 2010-2014 budget projections, Eventscorp’s funding has decreased. All three areas of the budget – marketing, Eventscorp and investment & infrastructure – show a decline between the 2010/11 budget and the 2013/14 budget.⁷⁸ This real loss of state government support was “not a reflection on the quality or the commitment of Tourism WA’s employees ... nor are they are [a] reflection of Tourism WA’s commitment to regional tourism or international market.”⁷⁹ Instead, the Report confirmed that “Tourism WA has been trying to do too many things for too many people in too many places ... We need to focus on the big ticket items – marketing, events & major tourism developments – to drive significant growth of tourism in WA.”⁸⁰ In this document, the innovative links between music, food and wine in the Swan Valley remain unmentioned. Without building these relationships, the Experience Perth Tourism Development Priorities 2010-2015 still recognized the Swan Valley as a key attraction for city tourism. However they also revealed that the state government must negotiate with a range of institutions, including the City of Swan, the Town of Bassendean and the Shire of Chittering.⁸¹

The consequences of such infrastructural complexity is rarely revealed in the data or triangulated in the research. Jacinta Bristow-Baohm released a “Research Presentation”

⁷⁷ *A Better Future for Tourism in WA*, Tourism Western Australia, May 2010, p. 11

⁷⁸ *ibid.*, p. 13

⁷⁹ *ibid.*, p. 36

⁸⁰ *ibid.*, p. 37

⁸¹ *Experience Perth: Tourism Development Priorities 2010-2015*, March, 2010, p.6

on the Swan Valley in June 23, 2009, focussing on day visitors who were Western Australian residents over 18 years of age. However the representative nature of this research is questionable. Face-to-face recruitment at 48 Swan Valley locations then triggered telephone interviews with 201 people. The results showed that the primary attraction was the Chocolate Company, with three brewers following – Elmars, Feral and Duckstein. Lancaster Wines were fourth, with Houghton finishing eighth and Sandalford ninth.⁸² Yet there is an oddity in this list, a dissonance between the wine research and this small-scale tourist survey. Lancaster Wines did not even warrant a mention in Ray Jordan's *Wine: Western Australia's Best*.⁸³ However Lancaster's location explains this statistical anomaly: they are located across the street from the Chocolate Factory. In other words, the location-specific selection of telephone informants skewed the results. This small study should not be noted as representative or definitive, but what it confirms is that the branding between the Swan Valley and wine tourism has problems. The important node of future research from this study is that 90% of day trippers are repeat visitors.⁸⁴ This suggests that earlier tourists return, but that the marketing is failing to bring new people to the area. Also, in this survey, over half of the tourists only visited one or two locations. Therefore the area of development is adding one or two more places to the itinerary of day visitors.

In 2007, a film was released about Perth's music industry. It was titled *Something in the Water*. The documentary's talking heads all probed, questioned, complained and ridiculed the state of the city's music, culture and suburban environment. Yet somehow this odd location created and sustained a popular music industry. Through the negativity, there needed to be recognition that maybe – just maybe – the affluence, great weather, diverse landscape and large student population offers advantages rather than problems. A strange silence in the documentary was that – while conventional rock

⁸² J. Bristow-Baohm, *Swan Valley Better Business Blitz Research Presentation*, June 23, 2009, p.

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⁸³ R. Jordan, *Wine: Western Australia's Best*, (Perth: Western Australian Press, 2002)

⁸⁴ J. Bristow-Baohm, *Swan Valley Better Business Blitz Research Presentation*, June 23, 2009, p.

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venues are closing – the much demeaned suburbs are rescuing Perth’s music industry with festivals, concerts and events. The Swan Valley is much more than a Valley of Taste. It is a series of businesses that are aligning and enabling other creative industries such as music, tourism, sport, food and crafts. From the metaphoric wine bottle pours other opportunities. While *Sideways* increased the profile of a wine industry through film, perhaps the wine industry in Perth will create space and possibilities for the other creative industries, particularly music. First, there must be recognition of the value in – and the value adding – of a sub/urban wine industry.