

WFA Wine Industry Tourism Toolkit

Tour Operator Selection Checklist

The decision to partner with appropriate tour/transport operators can be an important part of your tourism product offering 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/vineyard/winery should be harmonious and conducive to showing your product in the best light, 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 tour / transport 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 not quantity is a good start. If the nature of a tour operators 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 Licencing and Accreditation
- Operator Registration with STO's/Tourism Associations
- Commercial Insurances, including vehicle & public liability
- Other Operating Licences & Permits eg. Liquor
- Prepared to provide valid documentation for above
- Knowledge of phylloxera prevention guidelines and willingness to participate in screening of visitors and sterilisation protocols if necessary.

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)
- Example Facilities: Audio-Video/Refrigerator/Toilet
- Drivers/Guides dress code and Identification
- Detail of specific types of experiences operators require to cater for different levels of consumer wine knowledge, and agreed costs for delivery of said experiences.
- Are they a T-Qual accredited tourism operator? While this accreditation isn't mandatory or even essential, operators who are T-Qual accredited offer an additional level of tourism industry credibility and quality assured tourism service.

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 (agreed group size)
- Make appointments and telephone if running late
- Prior identification of professional groups e.g. buyers, journalists etc

While visitors are tasting, drivers/guides

- Wait in their vehicle
- Participate in tasting
- Remain in attendance to assist visitors and complement the cellar door/vineyard/winery experience.
- Prepared to assist with tasting (only by arrangement)
- Knowledge about the cellar door eg. hours, access, policies etc
- Active support for the Responsible Service of Alcohol and process for dealing with non-compliant clients

Knowledge of guides/drivers about wine/wine tourism

- Wine/Oenology/Viticulture (general) and Wine Region (history/geography)
- Dining/accommodation and tourist facilities
- Knowledge of and adherence to Wine Tourism Code of Conduct
- Translators provided as required
- Provision for safe transport of wine purchased on the day and knowledge of interstate/international shipment options
- Any expectation of Cellar Door commission on sales
- Other Accreditation/Certification/QA/Awards
- Feedback between Cellar Door and Tour operator