



Viticulture, enology and marketing for cold-hardy grapes



Brand Research for Cold Hardy Wines

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Background and Rationale: The emergence of cold hardy wine grape cultivars (primarily *vitis riparia*) in the 1990s created a new and rapidly expanding industry of small vineyard and winery enterprises in states across New England, northern New York, and the Upper Midwest. While the North American ancestry of these cultivars confers exceptional climatic adaptation and disease resistance, other challenges to production, processing, and marketing have slowed their successful commercialization in regional and national markets. Marketing tools are required to educate consumers unfamiliar with the grapes and the wine styles they produce. Consequently, the long-term viability of these new businesses requires coordinated research and extension to optimize viticulture, enological (winemaking), business management, and marketing practices including an assessment of the state of the industries. This study is intended to uncover policy differences affecting wineries in different states and to research any positive or negative influences of a specific policy.

Methods: In February 2014 a wine branding study will take place in the Hotel Icon on the campus of Hong Kong Poly University. Wines from five regions in the world will be analyzed by a cross section of hotel patrons. Wine has been acquired from two wineries in the northern grapes project states. One red (Marquette) from Danzinger in Wisconsin and one white (Brianna) from Tassel Ridge Winery in Iowa have been obtained and are being shipped to Hong Kong. The study will be conducted in three phases: 1) blind tasting with no information on the wine; 2) tasters will know where the wine came from (region and winery) and 3) tasters will know the characteristics of the grape used for the wine as well as the region and winery producing the wine. The intent of the study is to understand the influence of region of origin, as well as the perception of the grapes used to make the wine. This study is being done with direct and indirect support of the School of Hotel and Tourism Management at the Hong Kong Poly University.

Expected results can be used by individual wineries to enhance their branding strategy. Results from the baseline survey reveal that wineries feel their own branding efforts are the major marketing focus for their business. The results from this study will help wineries develop or refine their branding strategy.