# 2013 Oregon Wine Reputation Study

Study Partners: Linfield College, Oregon Wine Board, Willamette Valley Wineries Association



## Background

- Reputation: aggregate assessment of overall appeal of a company, industry, region, or country
- Reputation of wine/wine regions impacts wine purchase decisions and regional economies, but there is a lack of research on regional reputation related to Oregon wine
- Study objectives
  - Assess regional reputation associated with Oregon wine
  - Increase understanding of factors associated with the purchase of Oregon wine



#### **Interview Phase**

- Purpose: Learn about reputation of the Oregon wine industry from the perspective of Oregon wine professionals (winery founders, owners, managers, winemakers)
- Nineteen interviews with representative mix of winery founders, owners, managers, and winemakers from all Oregon AVAs during summer/fall of 2012
- Results: 5 key factors of Oregon's regional reputation as perceived by industry insiders:
  - Hand crafted/artisan wines
  - Organic or sustainably made wines
  - Small family farms
  - Community/collaboration
  - Stewardship of the land

# Survey Phase

- Consumer survey investigated importance of the 5 key factors identified in the interviews
  - Also asked about familiarity with Oregon varietals, perceptions of California wine, and questions about demographics and buying behavior
- Parallel trade survey examined perceptions of trade professionals
  - Distributors, retailers, restaurateurs, restaurant managers, and sommeliers
- Invitees identified via email lists from OWB and WVWA



### **Survey Phase**

- Online surveys live Jan-Feb 2013: 1,020 consumer and 315 trade respondents; 4.2% and 14.4% response rates
- Respondents drawn from across the U.S.; 5% of consumer respondents reported international zip codes
- Consumer survey: 54% female; varied in age and income level; nearly 80% with bachelor's degree or above
- Trade survey
  - 35% wine retailers, 17% sommeliers, 15% wine distributors, 10% restaurant owners, 9% restaurant managers
  - Nearly 75% with 10+ years in wine- or restaurant-related field; 85% with responsibility for wine buying
  - 92% had visited an Oregon winery

# Survey Phase: Consumer Results

- "What are the first 2-3 words that come to mind when you hear the words 'Oregon Wine'?" 56%: "Pinot noir"
- Important factors in wine purchase: quality, taste, price, pairing, previous experience with a wine, and familiarity with wine region and label
- Willing to spend more than usual for a bottle of Oregon wine based on region and AVA/sub-AVA
- Amount of Oregon wine purchased on a regular basis increases with exposure to Oregon wine touch points:
  - Visiting an Oregon winery
  - Attending a tasting/winemaker dinner featuring Oregon wines
  - Receiving recommendations for Oregon wines from others
  - Drinking Oregon wine at a restaurant
  - Reading about Oregon wine

#### Survey Phase: Consumer Results

Characteristics Associated with Oregon and California Wine/Wineries

Characteristic	Oregon	California
	Wines/Wineries	Wines/Wineries
World class wines	779	790
Mass produced wines	73	797
A travel destination for wine tourism	774	865
Hand crafted/artisan wines	837	520
Organic or sustainably made wines	603	226
Tradition	297	636
Small family farms	830	283
High-quality wines	867	798
Expensive wines	486	737
Trend setting	375	389
Value for price	583	415
Uniqueness	666	236
Food + wine connection	549	534
Community/collaboration	497	172
Stewardship of the land	590	208
Quirkiness/independence	603	131
Easy to find when I buy wine	307	724

Total responses: 948. Highlighted boxes indicate sizeable differences in the number of endorsements for a characteristic (differing by at least 10% of the total responses to that characteristic). Twenty individuals provided "other" responses.

All five key factors of Oregon regional reputation identified in the interviews (hand crafted/artisan wines, organic or sustainably made wines, small family farms, community/ collaboration, and stewardship of the land)<sup>#</sup> + value for price, uniqueness, and quirkiness/ independence were endorsed as associated with Oregon.

California : "massproduced", "tradition", "expensive", "easy to find"

### Survey Phase: Trade Results

- "What are the first 2-3 words that come to mind when you hear the words 'Oregon Wine'?" 55%: "Pinot noir"
- Important factors for clients in wine purchases: quality, taste, price, pairing, and previous experience with a wine
- Affirmed importance of region and AVA/sub-AVA in selling/placing wine with clients

# Survey Phase: Trade Results

Characteristics Associated with Oregon and California Wine/Wineries

Characteristic	Oregon Wines/Wineries	California Wines/Wineries
World class wines	270	268
Mass produced wines	16	272
A travel destination for wine tourism	188	287
Hand crafted/artisan wines	290	197
Organic or sustainably made wines	254	115
Tradition	147	202
Small family farms	285	104
High-quality wines	287	248
Expensive wines	182	265
Trend setting	160	180
Value for price	181	136
Uniqueness	251	103
Food + wine connection	258	188
Community/collaboration	255	65
Stewardship of the land	259	76
Quirkiness/independence	253	76
Easy to find when I buy wine	115	262

Total responses: 294. Highlighted boxes indicate sizeable differences in the number of endorsements for a characteristic (differing by at least 10% of the total responses to that characteristic). Twenty individuals provided "other" responses.

Trade survey responses mirrored those of the consumers with three additions:

Oregon: high quality wines, and food + wine connection

California: travel destination for wine tourism

### Conclusions

- Oregon's regional reputation matters to consumers and trade professionals who have some familiarity with Oregon wine.
- Five key characteristics of Oregon wine/wineries (artisanal, sustainable, small family farms, community/collaboration, and stewardship) were identified by the industry and confirmed by consumers and the trade.
- These five factors positively distinguish Oregon from California, but a distinct disadvantage is that Oregon wines are not as easy to find.
- Quality, taste, price, and pairing; familiarity with wine, label, and region; and multiple points of exposure to Oregon wine are important factors in Oregon wine purchases

Questions? Contact Sharon Wagner, Chair of the Business Department, Linfield College, swagner@linfield.edu