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Wine Tourism Gets a Research Boost from GWC

Great Wine Capitals Announce 2024/2025 Research Grant Recipients

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Magalie Dubois, French researcher (left) and Dr. Jessica Mei Pung, post-doctoral researcher from Australia

The Great Wine Capitals Global Network (GWC) has announced the recipients of its 2024/2025 Research Grant, marking another year of supporting academic innovation in the world of wine tourism. Following the success of its inaugural year, the initiative continues to encourage projects that can transform and enhance the dynamic and evolving sector of wine tourism. This year's grant has been awarded to two notable scholars: Magalie Dubois and Dr. Jessica Mei Pung, both of whom bring forward innovative research ideas that hold the potential to significantly influence the future of the industry.

As a global alliance, GWC links 12 prominent wine regions, including Bordeaux, Napa Valley, and Mendoza, with the aim of sharing best practices and fostering collaboration. The GWC Research Grant supports projects that address the unique challenges and opportunities in wine tourism, aiming to improve visitor experience, boost revenues, and promote sustainable practices. By encouraging groundbreaking research, the grant program is helping to drive fresh approaches in an increasingly competitive and sophisticated industry.

Magalie Dubois: Redefining Pricing Strategies in Wine Tourism

Magalie Dubois, a researcher from CEREN at the Burgundy School of Business in Dijon, is one of this year's grant recipients. Her research focuses on testing a novel approach to pricing in wine tourism: the "Pay What You Want" (PWYW) model. This model shifts the traditional fixed-pricing structure, allowing visitors to determine how much they would like to pay for their wine tourism experience after it has concluded.

Dubois's project, titled The Effect of "Pay What You Want" on Wine Valuations, seeks to explore whether this alternative pricing method can boost customer satisfaction while simultaneously increasing winery revenues. The PWYW model has been tested in other sectors, with varying degrees of success, but its application in wine tourism remains largely unexplored.

By analyzing visitor behavior and winery revenue outcomes, Dubois's research will provide critical insights into how this flexible pricing strategy might perform in the context of wine tourism. Early findings in similar industries suggest that giving

customers control over what they pay can encourage them to spend more, as it increases their perception of fairness and value. In addition, wineries may benefit from a more personalized and transparent relationship with their guests, potentially enhancing visitor loyalty.

"I am honored to receive this grant and look forward to investigating how the 'Pay What You Want' model can transform the pricing strategies for wine tourism," Dubois said, expressing her enthusiasm for the project. The research could serve as a guide for wineries looking to refine their customer engagement and pricing models, potentially leading to more adaptable business practices across the industry.

Dr. Jessica Mei Pung: Expanding Wine Tourism Through Agritourism

Dr. Jessica Mei Pung, a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the University of South Australia's UniSA Business, is the second recipient of the 2024/2025 GWC Research Grant. Her research focuses on the intersection of wine tourism and agritourism, exploring how combining these two sectors could enhance and diversify wine tourism offerings.

Dr. Pung's project, titled The Potential of Agritourism for Extending Wine Tourism Experiences, uses case studies from two distinct wine regions—Adelaide, South Australia, and Verona, Italy—to investigate how agritourism strategies can be integrated into existing wine tourism practices. Agritourism, which allows visitors to engage with agricultural activities beyond wine tasting, has been gaining popularity as consumers seek more immersive and educational experiences.

Through in-depth interviews with wine tourism operators and on-site observations, Pung's research will identify best practices and success factors that could be applied globally. This work aims to create a typology of agritourism-enhanced wine tourism experiences, providing a framework for wineries to diversify their offerings and attract a wider range of visitors. The project also looks at how agritourism can promote sustainability, offering experiences that highlight local food production, landscape preservation, and farm-based activities, which are becoming increasingly important to

eco-conscious travelers.

"I am delighted to learn that I have secured one of the positions for the 2024/2025 GWC International Research Grant," Pung said, expressing her gratitude for the opportunity. "Thanks to the Great Wine Capitals Global Network for this opportunity." Her research could help redefine how wineries engage with their local agricultural landscapes, offering visitors a broader, more holistic experience that goes beyond traditional wine tasting.

A Path Forward for Innovation in Wine Tourism

Catherine Leparmentier, Managing Director of GWC, emphasized the importance of the Research Grant in driving forward innovation within the wine tourism sector. "The GWC Research Grant underscores the Network's ongoing commitment to advancing innovation in the global wine tourism sector," said Leparmentier. "These two projects hold the potential to significantly impact wine tourism practices, offering valuable insights that can benefit both operators and visitors across the Great Wine Capitals."

Both research projects align with broader trends in wine tourism, where consumers increasingly seek personalized, flexible, and immersive experiences. Dubois's investigation into pricing strategies offers a potential solution to the problem of rigid fee structures, while Pung's focus on agritourism taps into a growing demand for environmentally and socially responsible travel experiences.

The results of their research will be presented at the GWC Annual General Meeting in 2025, offering a platform for the recipients to share their findings with a global audience of wine industry leaders. Furthermore, the inaugural 2023/2024 grant recipients will be presenting their research during the GWC Annual Conference in Verona in October 2024, further demonstrating the Network's dedication to fostering academic research that can inform and inspire real-world business practices in wine tourism.

The Great Wine Capitals Global Network's continued commitment to supporting research is helping shape the future of wine tourism. As the industry grows more complex and competitive, initiatives like the GWC Research Grant offer valuable

opportunities for scholars to explore new ideas that can drive success and sustainability for wine regions worldwide. By fostering collaborations between academics and practitioners, GWC ensures that its member regions remain at the forefront of global wine tourism innovation. Both Dubois's and Pung's projects reflect a deep engagement with current industry challenges and have the potential to set new standards for wine tourism experiences.