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Wine Tourism Research Grants Awarded to Projects Focusing on Consumer Engagement and Global Market Trends

Studies in Europe, Asia, and the US aim to inform winery strategies and enhance visitor experiences across leading wine regions worldwide

Tuesday, September 16, 2025



Chia Chia Koay, left, and In Haeng Jung, right

The Great Wine Capitals Global Network has announced the recipients of its 2025–2026 International Research Grant, selecting two projects that aim to advance understanding in wine tourism strategy, consumer engagement, and destination development. The announcement was made in Bordeaux, France, following a competitive international selection process that evaluated both academic merit and practical relevance.

Ms. Chia Chia Koay from the University of Verona in Italy will lead one of the funded projects. Her research will focus on how wine tourism awards influence visitor experiences and the reputation of wineries. The study will use market surveys conducted in France, Italy, and the United Kingdom to assess tourists' preferences and their willingness to pay for different types of awards and experiential activities. The research will pay particular attention to wineries in Bordeaux and Verona. Ms. Koay expressed gratitude for the grant, stating that her work is intended to help wineries understand the strategic value of awards, improve tourism experiences, and foster

collaboration among regional marketing stakeholders.

The second grant recipient is Dr. InHaeng Jung from Sonoma State University in California. Dr. Jung's project will examine cultural intelligence and consumer segmentation in wine tourism, with a focus on emerging markets in China, South Korea, and India. Using Consumer Culture Theory, the research will explore how cultural and psychographic factors shape expectations around authenticity, sustainability, personalization, and symbolic consumption in wine tourism. Dr. Jung said she hopes her work will help wineries and wine regions design experiences that are meaningful and relevant for diverse global audiences. By moving beyond traditional demographic segmentation, her study aims to provide culturally informed strategies for wineries and tourism boards seeking to connect more effectively with international visitors.

Dr. Armando Maria Corsi, who coordinates the GWC International Research Grant program, highlighted the importance of these projects for the wine tourism sector. He noted that both proposals combine academic rigor with practical application and are expected to help the industry respond to changing visitor expectations and global market trends.

Both research projects are scheduled to be presented at the 2026 Annual Conference of the Great Wine Capitals Global Network. The conference will bring together wine tourism professionals, regional authorities, and academic partners from across the network's member cities.

The Great Wine Capitals Global Network was founded in Bordeaux in 1999 as an alliance of leading wine regions and their cities. The network promotes cooperation, innovation, and global visibility for its members through joint projects and shared values. Its current membership includes 11 renowned wine regions from both hemispheres: Adelaide (South Australia), Bilbao-Rioja (Spain), Bordeaux (France), Hawke's Bay (New Zealand), Lausanne (Switzerland), Mainz-Rheinhessen (Germany), Mendoza (Argentina), Porto (Portugal), San Francisco-Napa Valley (USA), Valparaiso-Casablanca Valley (Chile), and Verona (Italy).

In addition to supporting new research initiatives, the network looks forward to presentations from previous grant recipients at its upcoming annual conference in Bordeaux this November. These events continue to foster dialogue between academia and industry as wine regions adapt to evolving global markets and changing tourist expectations.