

Brand Meeting Notes – Tuesday, October 27th, 5:00 – 7:00, upstairs at 3 Rivers

Attending: CGW Board – James Mantone, President; Alan Busacca, Secretary; Rich Cushman, OR Rep; Marketing Committee – Rob McCormick, Heather Staten, David Barringer, Pat Graham, Alexis & Juliet Pouillon

Detailed notes from the discussion follow below the Branding Elements presented by Heather Staten and follow-up comments from James Mantone...

Branding Elements – differentiating attributes of the Columbia Gorge

Discovery – a less well known wine-region where the visitor becomes a pioneer, charting new territory, making new discoveries

Variety – unique, rapidly changing geography yields a “World of Wine in 40 Miles”

Scenic Beauty – jaw dropping views around every corner... some people call it paradise, we call it “home.”

Convenience – one EASY hour from Portland

Our wine is made by People – some would say “Characters” The gal behind the bar might just be the person who drives the tractor or fills the barrels – small, hands-on, intimate.

Quality of Fruit – exceptional fruit, bright, intensity – grown in an Alpine influenced climate.

Added by Group: What we are NOT:

- Not Boring
- Not Pretentious
- Not Corporate
- Not Impersonal
- Not Overpriced
- Not a visitor factory
- Not Inaccessible
- Not Cheap

Brand Comments from James:

- The Mountains: We are one of the only new world regions growing grapes in the mountains
- Dynamic: The weather, topography, diversity of grapes, people
- Rural: Not corporate, big city slick
- Discovery:

Some successful branding examples (Conveyed through all their marketing materials, messages, members):

Napa: The New World's Premier Wine Region

Sonoma: Pastoral elegance

Silverado Trail: The Real Napa

Paso Robles: Great Wines from the Wild West

Willamette: Great Pinot from Pastoral Oregon

Walla Walla: Washington's Premier Winegrowing Region

Woodinville: Washington's Premier Winemaking Region (Notice the interesting dynamic between the two)

Branding Discussion:

Rob: When people think of Columbia Gorge, What do they think of 1st?

David: There are 2 goals – where do we want to sell most of the wine – in the Gorge or out there?

James: 2 goals are tied together. Thought of as undiscovered or novelty,

Alan: From Geology perspective – likes World of Wine in 40 Miles, Strong and descriptive, no one else can say, Provides sense of discovery, beauty is synonymous.

Rob: Also use tagline – “America’s Most Unique Wine Region” – why are we unique?

Juliet: Can be negative connotations with word “unique”

James: Message target is Portland, secondary Seattle – coming to Gorge for Wine. Need to have message that draws people to Gorge for Wine vs. “Scenic Beauty.”

Heather: Disagrees – 75% of wine club members are first timers, beginners on a process; didn’t come for the wine, but discovered it & bought in to the experience.

David: World of Wine – works as an umbrella for 2 different audiences: beginners and experienced.

Alexis: We are a winegrowing region and we have to know where are the vineyards? Growing region is not as obvious. Should vineyards be mapped out? Should they all support?

James: Need to develop recognizable branding – need more than just a logo.

Rich: CGW are not pioneers in wine – but the visitors are. Discovery more than pioneers.

David: Visitors feel “In the Know” – like Willamette and Sonoma used to be.

Rob: What do people say they like about the region?

Juliet: It’s “So Quiet.”

Rich: “Beautiful, didn’t know was so close to Portland.”

James: “Didn’t know it was here”

David: “Undiscovered, easy from Seattle & Portland, easier than Walla Walla.”

Rob: Love small tasting rooms, intimacy, intimate.

James: Where isn’t like that?

Rob: Willamette Valley – more big, busy.

Alexis: “We have no crowds”

David: “Not Robitrons, not stuffy.”

James: At Make a Wish event in Portland – people thronged to Columbia Gorge wineries – said they were tired of Pinot Noir. Didn’t know we were making wine.

Juliet: Tired of Price point. People are tired of paying \$\$ for Pinot.

Heather: Branding should reinforce affordability

Juliet: But not become Value brand!

Alan: Brand identity – should be that we are “Different” with a vignette and supporting lines that enforce all other elements in a compelling way.

Juliet: To be devil’s advocate – “World of Wine” statement seems too Hallmark-y, is turned off by it.

Rob: How about Diversity?

Juliet: Diveristy, boutique – overused.

Autumn: Southern Oregon is also using “World of Wine” Have world of wine event in Fall. How long have they been using? When did we start using? 2002 is suggested.

Juliet: “WofW” seems too deliberately marketing.

Rob: Legitimate comments.

Alan: I can see that if I weren’t familiar with region – I might not get “world of wine” or why.

James: So – we pay a brand consultant?

David: Better to than miss it.

Alan: Message has to have a sense of place to understand.

David: Do we deliver on the World of wine statement?

Juliet: Deliver on “world of Grapes” not wines.

Heather: Does diversity drive people to region? They can taste 50 wines in their grocery store.

James: Disagree – get comments over & over that people can taste something other than Pinot Noir.

Juliet: We hear comments like: “OMG – I’ve never had a Roussane before!”

Autumn: So any Branding statements out of this?

Rob: We're different here. Why?

Alexis: Discovery

Rich: Beauty is important

James: Beauty can get washed out – had comment: “Gorge – yeah it’s even pretty compared to Napa!”

Heather: Need ad that’s Cheeky, Off-kilter.

Rob: Captures Surprise!

Heather: I know intriguing works.

Discussion of Heather’s outline – and comments of “who we aren’t” as presented above.

James: Goal is to drive desire & elevate demand for grapes.

Juliet: But guests say – “where are the vineyards?”

David: Need to map and make vineyard experiences available.

Alexis: How about weekend in summer – vineyard tours and tasting. Picnics, AVA tasting in vineyards in 2 days.

James: And bring vineyard designate wines to Celebration and Portland tasting.

Rob: Reinforce fruit comes from here.

David: Market the fruit – promote.

Rob: What’s different & better

David: What’s available? Need to know about our product.

James: Legal issues in Washington with serving wine.

Alexis: Could non-profit buy & serve wine in Washington?

James: Jim Holmes has been very vocal grape grower – spokesperson. We don’t have grapegrower that steps up to leverage value of AVA...

Alexis: CGW leaves growers out.

Alan: Organic purpose of Association is to market grapes and build reputation of region.

James: Vineyards could have a booth & bring 3 producers of vineyard designate wines.

Rich: Need to get distributors to tasting event. And target vineyard tasting toward wine trade. Do it post passport in June/July.

James: We need to court WWC & OWB to get included in wine trade tastings. For example: Road Trip went everywhere but here.

Rob: Also get their thoughts on company to help us brand.

Autumn: We should also ask WWC & OWB who they think we are. Plan is to work off Heather’s outlines & include who we “aren’t”