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Unit 7 Diploma Thesis Summary

Diversity in Winery Architecture and the Role of Winery Architecture in Wine Branding

Motivation for choosing the subject

Having spent most of my holidays in recent years visiting wine regions, one can say I am one keen wine tourist. When meticulously planning the list of wineries on my itinerary, the criteria to visit wineries that provide a memorable visitor experience in an architecturally interesting building has been just as important for me as to visit the wineries that make the wines I am most interested in tasting. Wine tourism is booming in many wine regions, and winemakers are re-shaping the way we experience their wines with the design of their wineries.

Objective

There has been a clear trend led mainly by Napa Valley, and then followed by regions like Northern Spain, Maremma or Mendoza, to invest in contemporary winery architecture. These buildings are state-of-the-art, fine-tuned to cater to all demanding technical aspects of high-quality winemaking, are eco-friendly, and are designed to enable wine tours and an exquisite visitor experience.

The objective of the paper is to analyse the two main factors that have led to this pick-up in astonishing contemporary designs, which I argue to be: 1) the boom in wine tourism and the need to seek more profitable distribution channels (high margin direct-to consumer sales) and 2.) the need to build a corporate identity around the brand in an increasingly competitive global market.

Methodology

I point out the diversity in winery architecture in my paper when comparing Old World vs New World architecture, and I highlight the innovative regions that are in the forefront of contemporary winery architecture - like Napa Valley, Mendoza, Northern Spain or Maremma - with some of the most famous examples of architecture and with some of my personal favourites. I compare designs that showcase the signature style of the architect vs designs that are more authentic to their environment.

Finally, from my travels in recent years, I choose three wineries to investigate in further detail, trying to analyse the motivations behind the investments in winery architecture, the commercial aspects of the investment, and the role of winery architecture in the winery's overall branding exercise. I base my answers on interviews I conducted with the wineries' architects, and the biographies of the owners.

The three wineries are:

- **Bodega Salentein in Uco Valley**, designed by Bormida y Yanzon and completed in 2000, which was built with the intention to put the Uco Valley on a wine tourist's map and draw visitors to a (back then) unknown wine region
- **Hall Winery in St Helena in Napa Valley**, designed by Signum Architecture was built to act as an epicenter to the winery's sales strategy. The family was also keen to create a brand and an experience with winery architecture that truly reflected their own personalities, most notably with the integration of contemporary art into the architectural design
- **Cantina Antinori in Bargino/Chinati**, designed by Archea Associati was built to reflect and reinforce what the long-standing Antinori brand already stood for in a contemporary shape

Conclusion

I conclude that attractive contemporary winery architecture is an innovative branding policy that fosters brand development with a holistic approach. Winery architecture addresses the hedonic and aesthetic needs of consumers by amplifying the wine experience, through product, landscape and other sensorial experiences that overall help in communicating the ultimate brand identity. Successful branding through winery architecture has proven to be commercially successful due to increasing visitor numbers and direct-to-consumer sales, and diversifying income through ancillary winery revenue streams.