

Executive Summary of the Diploma Paper by Katja Apelt

More Than Just Discount Plonk! Creation of a PR Campaign for Australian Wine in Germany

I. Why Australian Wine needs a boost in Germany

It is not long ago, that wines from Australia were big news in Germany. Wine drinkers loved the sunny intensity and exotic image of the Shiraz, Cabernets and Chardonnays from the other side of the world. Between 1999 and 2005 export numbers sextupled to 37 Million litres. But the times have changed. While Australia produces wines of permanently growing quality the German consumers more and more refuse to buy Australian. Nowadays Australia sells only two percent of their wines in Germany with a dramatically falling tendency. It seems as if not only the heavy, alcoholic drops from down under have tired the German palate. Also the fact that parts of the Australian overproduction have been sold to Germany as cheap bulk wine and were offered in discount supermarkets for a very low price created the image for Australia's liquid soul as cheap and easy-to-drink booze. The shippings to Germany dropped by almost 40 percent in volume and 20 percent in value causing bittersweet feelings at winemakers, who first time in years saw the average price of their wines rising to 2,06 Australian Dollars in 2008 after 1,65 Australian Dollars in 2007. Mean while Australia disappears not only from German discounter shelves and Australian wine makers and drink companies are turning their back to a market, which does not honour their product much and refuses to trade up. The Australian Wine and Brandy Corporation (AWBC) has put most of its activities on ice. A PR campaign can help to make Germans thirsty for the different styles of high quality wines from the various Australian wine regions again.

II. Analysing the Market

To build up an effective campaign the pros and cons of the market as well as the product need are being analysed and show, that Germans honour good quality more, drink more red wine and after a short trip to overseas seductions are now back with their local wines with a market share of 49 percent after 34,2 percent in 2004. Nevertheless with a love for Spanish and Languedoc wines they proof that intense sunny wines are still on their radar. Still they only pay an average 2,30 to 2,40 Euros per litre. On the other hand there is the wines from down under which have a lot to offer: great value for money even on the entry-level scale, varying wine styles from hot reds to fresh, light whites, innovative concepts for wine and its marketing and of course wines on the highest level of the quality range just to name a few categories.

III. The campaign

This PR concept addresses a divided target group of wine consumers on one and retailers on the other hand. The campaign is based on a top-down approach. A bottom-up strategy is not recommended, as the image of the bottom line wines has suffered intensely. The five campaign steps shall change the reputation of Australian wine from being

- cheap mass products **into** delivering wines from an honest tasting experience with a good value for money up to a super premium category
- one-dimensional alcohol driven drops **into** offering a broad variety of reliable quality wines
- made with dubious wine making technique **into** being produced in many different ways from innovative new methods to traditional styles and organic quality
- an exotic product from a far away unknown country **into** a familiar good, that even has its roots in Germany.

Step I uses wine drinkers knowledge about the top wine segment and puts the big ones from Oz in the line of the familiar ultra premium segment. Although many consumers will not be able to afford these wines, this step will create attention to the wines of lower categories. Especially because this message contradicts the prejudices against Australian wine as being cheap plonk.

Step II will familiarize Australian wines by showing that the whole culture of wine was brought to Australia and build up by people from Germany. Both countries have a long history together and even today a few wine making families remember their roots in German regions. This step will revive the boundaries between Australia and Germany and tear down the barrier of distance.

In **Step III** the diversity of Australian wine shall be pointed out. Here, the campaign will show the colourful and different sceneries of the Australian wine regions.

Step IV brings up that the Australians are using their technological knowledge in wine making to build up a responsible use of resources and organic wine production. Due to the changing weather conditions down under people are more sensitive in dealing with nature.

Step V shows that Australians are good buddies and so are their wines. Not only the premium and top quality, the regional specified and organic drops, also the bottles on the entry level deliver good quality and value for money. Also brands give an orientation when choosing a good wine. This step shall be a real charm offensive.