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Panel and Wine Tasting: Teaching with Terroir

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Presenter Information

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Teaching with Terroir: Caring for Place through Wine Tourism

John Hull, Donna Senese, Teshager Dagne, Jonathan Rouse, Sydney Johnsen, and Howard Soon

In the world of wine, terroir is widely used by academics, industry experts, and wine consumers, yet translation of the Gallic term denies universal agreement. For natural scientists, terroir is related to the ecology and physiology of the environment, which includes climate, soil type, and geomorphology that impact the growing conditions for grapes used in wine production. In social science, terroir also includes consideration of the economic, cultural, and political conditions that both create and perpetuate unique places for wine production and its consumption.

For tourism researchers, terroir is a term associated with tourism products from a distinct region that not only satisfy consumer expectations but also provide a competitive advantage in the marketplace. For legal scholars, the classification and regulation of the wine industry around the world is based on a legally defined and protected geographical indication used to identify where grapes for wine were grown and how the wine is produced. For wine producers, how a wine's character is expressed through all of these growing and production conditions is critical in understanding the distinct qualities of a particular terroir.

Using the wine tourism industry and its terroir in the Thompson Okanagan as a case study, this workshop will adopt an interdisciplinary approach to explore the legal, geographic, tourism, and industry considerations that define terroir through an experiential, hands-on approach to teaching. Short presentations by a team of experts will provide multiple perspectives on the importance of terroir and its role in "caring for place." A workshop 'tasting' with a wine expert will provide an opportunity to 'experience' the award-winning Okanagan terroir first hand. Finally, a panel discussion of new experiential study abroad opportunities for students will be explored as part of the new Sonnino Working Group focused on terroir and wine tourism.

Workshop Format

1. Short presentations on terroir from multiple perspectives
2. Workshop tasting with a wine sommelier to experience terroir first hand
3. Panel discussion on new directions in terroir, education, and wine tourism with the Sonnino Working Group