# Socioeconomic Sustainability of Farm Winery Tourism: A Case Study of the Annapolis and Gaspereau Valleys, Nova Scotia

by

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# ABSTRACT

Nova Scotia's wine region is making its mark on Canada's wine industry and is becoming an increasingly popular tourist destination, yet its impact on communities remains largely unexplored. This study examines how farm wineries in the Annapolis and Gaspereau Valleys, Nova Scotia, integrate sustainable wine tourism into their practices and how this contributes to fostering socioeconomic development for the local rural communities while providing a positive experience for guests. A qualitative analysis was conducted, involving an in-depth review of peer-reviewed and grey literature, online surveys, and structured online interviews among farm wineries in the Annapolis and Gaspereau Valleys to understand how their practices, policies, and initiatives support sustainable wine tourism and socioeconomic development for the local rural communities. Results suggest that farm wineries in the region are performing positively regarding sustainable tourism and engagement with local communities. Still, several economic, technical, and governmental challenges affect their ability to integrate sustainable practices. This research highlights the successes of farm wineries in the Annapolis and Gaspereau Valley and the opportunities for improvement related to socioeconomic sustainability. Farm wineries in rural Nova Scotia can apply these recommendations to strengthen sustainable wine tourism and socioeconomic development for the local rural community.

*Keywords:* farm winery, wine tourism, socioeconomic sustainability, community, Annapolis and Gaspereau Valley, Nova Scotia

# CHAPTER 1: Introduction

As a first-time traveller to Nova Scotia, you are eager to find an immersive culinary experience that celebrates food and drink, people, and stories of Atlantic Canada. It is a warm, sunny Saturday in June, and you decide what better way to do this than spending the day exploring Nova Scotia's wine region. Your tour guide picks you up from downtown Halifax, and you head up to the Valley to take on an entertaining and scenic tour of the region's most renowned wineries. You learn about the entire wine value chain, Nova Scotia's signature wine, Tidal Bay, and the unique, cool-climate growers have adapted to across the province. As you depart from the Valley and return to the busy city, you reflect on the exciting, educational, and delicious day you just had, already counting down until you can come back again.

As an established winery destination, Nova Scotia's wine country is dispersed across rural regions of the province, acting as a significant competitor across Canada's wine industry. While tourism in rural areas is known for its positive impact, residents and local communities are becoming increasingly over-reliant on the economic and social impact of tourism. Considering wine tourism as a form of rural tourism in Nova Scotia and its significant impact on rural communities, wineries could benefit themselves and the surrounding communities by fostering socioeconomic sustainability- two pillars of sustainability, social and economic, and refers to the "ability to ensure economic growth without undermining humans" interests and to meet their needs without harming nature" (Skvarciany et al., 2020: 2)- within the wine industry to ensure the utmost sustainable and positive impact on these communities.

## 1.1 Nova Scotia Wine Industry

Despite common misconceptions that Ontario or British Columbia were the first provinces to introduce vineyards, Nova Scotia is Canada's original wine region, dating back to 1611, when Louis Hébert, a French settler, planted the country's first vineyard in Bear River (Wines of Nova Scotia, 2024; Robinson, 2020: 169). However, it was not until 1980 that Nova Scotia saw its first commercial vintage by Roger Dial at Domaine de Grand Pre (Wines of Nova Scotia, 2024). Selecting Bear River as the first vineyard site was ideal for its microclimate and proximity to the Bay of Fundy (Wines of Nova Scotia, 2024). These tide fluctuations are recognized as the world's largest tides and create a "natural heat bank" for the vineyards in this area by mitigating extreme weather and temperature (Wines of Nova Scotia, 2024). The province's unique terroir supports growing vinifera and hybrid grape varieties (Wines of Nova Scotia, 2024). Nova Scotia's ability to adapt to diverse weather and climate ensures its farm wine industry can excel in producing exceptional wines across a range of varietals while differentiating its wine region from others (Wines of Nova Scotia, 2024).

This type of cool climate provides a baseline for Nova Scotia wine growers to produce balanced and structured sparkling wine with "notable brilliance and intensity" (Wines of Nova Scotia, 2024). In addition to its sparkling wines, Nova Scotia is recognized for its crisp and aromatic white wines, also supported by the cooler climate (Wines of Nova Scotia, 2024). However, the cooler climate does create a shorter growing season, posing challenges to producing red wines (Wines of Nova Scotia, 2024; Taste of Nova Scotia, 2020; Bunbury-Blanchette, 2024: 41; Shaw, 1999: 80). Still, Nova Scotia winemakers are better understanding the province's unique terroir, and more red wines are being created across the industry (Jantzi & McSweeney, 2019: 49). Nova Scotia wine growers also produce considerable rosé wines, rich

with colour, complexity, acidity, and freshness (Wines of Nova Scotia, 2024). Nova Scotia's signature wine, Tidal Bay, is an appellation wine and an "ode to Europe's wine regions" (Wines of Nova Scotia, 2024; Jantzi & McSweeney, 2019: 49). Tidal Bay wines are best known for their "acidic, crisp, and fresh flavours (Jantzi & McSweeney, 2019: 49) and must undergo an annual tasting panel evaluation and pass a strict set of rules before they can be labelled as Tidal Bay (Wines of Nova Scotia, 2024). In 2022, Tidal Bay celebrated its 10th anniversary, recognizing Nova Scotia's rich wine industry and its role in placing this wine region on the global map (Wines of Nova Scotia, 2024).

Today, Nova Scotia supports 68 grape growers, 25 licensed farm wineries- a winery "which makes wine from grapes and/or makes wine from other Nova Scotia agricultural produce" (MacDonald, 2007: 2), and over 1,200 acres of vineyards, never more than 20 kilometres away from the ocean (Wines of Nova Scotia, 2024; Taste of Nova Scotia, 2020). Seven regions comprise Nova Scotia's wine industry: Bear River Valley, Annapolis Valley (AV), Gaspereau Valley (GV), Avon River Valley, Lahave River Valley, Malagash Peninsula, and Marble Mountain (Wines of Nova Scotia, 2024). Across these regions, over 211,000 cases of wine are produced each year (Wines of Nova Scotia, 2024). The industry makes up approximately $245.2M of the province's economy (Wines of Nova Scotia, 2024). Of this, $163.1M constitutes business revenue, $32.2M tax revenue, $49.M in wages, $32.6M in indirect revenue, $26.9M in direct revenue, and employs over 1,100 full-time workers (Wines of Nova Scotia, 2024; Bunbury-Blanchette, 2024: 45). Additionally, local wine sales have increased by 23.5% between 2021 and 2023 (Bunbury-Blanchette, 2024: 45). Nova Scotia's distinctive wine character contributes to the province experiencing over 150,000 tourists per year to its wine regions (Bunbury-Blanchette, 2024: 45), generating $48,867,800 in tourism revenue (Wines of Nova

Scotia, 2024). Wine tourism's contribution to socioeconomic development in local and rural communities highlights the importance of ensuring "the interest towards sustainability in wine tourism and events" must be at the forefront as the sector continues to grow (Montella, 2017: 1).

## 1.2 Wine Tourism

Academics have widely accepted the definition of wine tourism as "visitation to vineyards, wineries, wine festivals and wine shows for grape wine tasting and/or experiencing the attributes of a grape wine region," as defined by Hall et al. (2000: 3) (Carlsen & Boksberger, 2013: 133). Three identified elements initially motivate visitors to wine regions and participate in wine tourism: "the presence of vineyards, the wine-making activity, and the wineries where the wine is produced and stored" (Roberts & Sparks, 2006: 47). Studies also suggest that a wine region's scenery and open spaces also influence and incentivize wine tourism (Roberts & Sparks, 2006: 47). Rarely are tourists solely interested in wine tastings throughout a wine tour but rather in an immersive experience. Roberts and Sparks (2006: 50) found that eight attributes impact tourists' complete wine tourism experience: authenticity of experience, value for money, service interactions, setting and surroundings, product offerings, information dissemination, personal growth- learning experience, and indulgence-lifestyle. Ensuring that wine tours encapsulate these attributes will create a more successful experience for visitors, in turn benefiting the local communities.

Food tourism is becoming an increasingly popular form of tourism, sharing the unique culinary stories and history of regions globally. While the term (or gastronomy) tourism does include drink, "wine tourism is often treated as a distinct form of tourism," as it fosters a connection between the wine product and the destination to "create a cultural experience" for

visitors (Robinson, 2021: 3). While this experience is especially desirable to tourists, many rural communities with rich wine regions like Nova Scotia, often depend on it for economic growth. For rural communities and regions that might otherwise struggle with "economic, social, cultural, environmental, and political changes," tourism offers an opportunity for financial development and prosperity (Robinson, 2021: 3). Rural tourism refers to "a type of tourism activity in which the visitor's experience is related to a wide range of products generally linked to nature-based activities, agriculture, rural lifestyle/culture, angling, and sightseeing," taking place in non-urban areas with low population density, landscape dominated by agriculture and/or forestry and involving traditional social structures and lifestyles (UNWTO, n.d.). Rural tourism often appeals to tourists because of its perceived "traditional landscapes and values" (Robinson, 2021: 3). For Nova Scotia's wine region, wineries pride themselves on "practicing sustainable agriculture, working to be increasingly diverse and inclusive, and are attracting new visitors and young people to live and build careers in rural Nova Scotia" (Wines of Nova Scotia, 2024). The intersectionality between rural and wine tourism in Nova Scotia makes for a particularly intriguing industry for visitors interested in a cultural and immersive experience.

### 1.3 Wine Tourism in Nova Scotia: The Annapolis and Gaspereau Valleys

Nova Scotia's terroir is unique in its cool climate, lower temperatures, and shorter growing season (Bunbury-Blanchette, 2024: 56). Though these growing regions experience fluctuations in seasonal temperatures, they are also influenced by elevation and proximity to the ocean, creating "a more temperate maritime climate" for growing (Bunbury-Blanchette, 2024: 42). Additionally, the regular variations in weather influence grape growing and terroir conditions (Bunbury-Blanchette, 2024: 42). The AV and GV are favoured for grape growing, as

they experience the longest growing season, warmest temperatures, low precipitation, and are sheltered from wind, fog, and other severe weather (Bunbury-Blanchette, 2024: 42; Shaw, 1999: 80). Despite the unusual growing conditions, Nova Scotia's wine region, specifically these two Valleys, has become an increasingly popular wine tourism destination.

The AV is Nova Scotia's largest grape-growing region and is considered Canada's third most important fruit-growing region (Valley Tourism, 2025). The AV spans approximately 126 kilometres and comprises three main counties: Annapolis, Digby, and Kings and West Hants (Valley Tourism, 2025). The AV and GV, located within Kings County, are the heart of Nova Scotia's increasingly popular wine tourism industry. The AV is Nova Scotia's largest grape-growing region, spanning approximately 130 kilometres from Annapolis Royal to Windsor (Robinson, 2020). This region is one of seven heavily promoted by Tourism Nova Scotia, attracting visitors and tourists from all over (Robinson, 2020: 138). For every tourism dollar spent, "another $3.20 is generated in the community" (Robinson, 2020: 138). In 2015, approximately 112,000 tourists travelled to wineries in Nova Scotia, "generating $19.2M in tourism revenue" (Robinson, 2020: 139).

The GV, sometimes referred to as the town of Gaspereau, is located in Kings County (Millwood, 1985: 3). Located south of Wolfville, this valley runs along the Gaspereau River, spanning approximately 14 kilometres (Millwood, 1985: 3; Nash & Stewart, 1990: 1). Given its size and location, GV is often considered a hidden, smaller valley within the AV (Nash & Stewart, 1990: 3). While locals can identify the difference, the location and boundaries make it challenging for tourists to differentiate the two. Despite being smaller, the GV is home to four farm wineries, has breathtaking views of the Bay of Fundy, and is becoming an increasingly popular tourist destination (Wines of Nova Scotia, 2024).

Various components make up wine tourism and foster a desirable industry for tourists. Within the AV and GV, these components comprise three broad categories: the winery grounds, tours that visit these wineries, and facilities and amenities in the surrounding community affected by wine tourism. In some cases, wineries in this region offer on-site facilities and amenities that tourists would otherwise seek out within the local community or nearby towns, like restaurants, inns, and souvenir or gift shops. Domaine De Grand Pré, for "the oldest farm winery site in Atlantic Canada," has their restaurant, *Le Caveau*, and *The Inn at Grand Pré Winery* on-site for guests to dine and stay (Domaine De Grand Pré, 2025). Like many other wineries, Grand Pré has a bottle shop selling their own wines, as well as souvenirs and products from local businesses across the region (Domaine De Grand Pré, 2025). These amenities offered on winery grounds foster the immersive experience tourists look for when they book a wine tour, emphasizing the eight attributes that make a winery appealing for guests to travel to (Roberts & Sparks, 2006: 50). As Nova Scotia's wine regions become increasingly popular tourist destinations, the demand for wine tour companies also increases. Grape Escapes Nova Scotia Wine Tours, Magic Winery Bus, Wine & Beer Tours of Nova Scotia, Wild Grape Tours, Vintage Vino Tours, Where It's At, and Wine and Vine Tours are a few of the many tour operators that offer wine tours in Nova Scotia.

## 1.4 Purpose of Study

This study aims to better understand wine tourism in Nova Scotia and highlight its significant role in fostering socioeconomic sustainability. Nova Scotia's unique climate and terroir make this study particularly interesting at a time when climate change will continue to exacerbate these conditions. Considering the interdisciplinarity of tourism, its global impact, and

the effects of climate change, the industry would benefit by placing sustainability at its forefront, even for smaller tourist regions like Nova Scotia's wine region. A review of the extant literature contextualizes tourism's role in the wine value chain- "a network of stakeholders involved in growing, processing, and selling the wine that consumers drink, i.e. from farm to table […] and includes all relationships within the process […] beginning with the supplier and end with the consumer" (Goncharuk, 2017: 11-12)- and how the industry contributes to socioeconomic sustainability in the region. This existing knowledge is compared to interviews with wine experts in the AV and GV. Research findings will visualize and provide recognition of the importance of supporting and growing Nova Scotia's wine industry.

## 1.5 Research Questions

Farm wineries in Nova Scotia are recognized for their sustainability initiatives and contribution to the province's economy. Wine value chains highlight the various stages of wine production, beginning with vineyard production and ending with consumption. Notably, tourism is not largely considered in this value chain despite its significant role in fostering socioeconomic sustainability for the region. Instead, it is considered under the umbrella term 'consumption,' which does not give justice to its significant role in shaping the wine industry. To better understand and recognize wine tourism in Nova Scotia, this paper aims to answer the following questions:

1. How do farm wineries in the Annapolis and Gaspereau Valleys, Nova Scotia, support sustainable wine tourism?
2. In what ways does wine tourism in the Annapolis and Gaspereau Valleys foster socioeconomic sustainability for the local community?

### 1.6 Limitations of Study

The study has the following inherent limitations:

1. It does not consider the wine tourism industry in the other five regions of Nova Scotia's wine industry and how they differentiate from those of the AV and GV.
2. It is based on data gathered from only six of 11 farm winery operators from the AV and GV.
3. This research focuses on the social and economic sustainability of wine tourism, referencing but not equally considering its environmental sustainability.

# CHAPTER 2: Literature Review

The following summarizes the academic literature and relevant government and industry reports to contextualize the socioeconomic impact of farm winery tourism on the local region. The purpose is to gain insight into the socioeconomic importance of farm winery tourism in two Nova Scotian Valleys- the AV and GV- and understand the barriers to sustainable wine tourism while recognizing the opportunities for enhancing sustainable wine tourism at farm wineries in this region. This review demonstrates the socioeconomic importance of sustainable wine tourism as it impacts local communities, encouraging the need for sustainable tourism at the forefront of farm wineries in the region.

### 2.1 Sustainability

Despite its popularity in academic and policy-oriented discourse, the term *sustainability* is widely misunderstood and used inconsistently. Its consistent misuse calls for a universal

definition that embodies the importance of an integrated approach toward sustainability (Giovannoni & Fabietti, 2013: 22). Sustainable development suggests that isolated initiatives alone are insufficient. Instead, an integrated approach focusing on social, economic, and environmental aspects is needed (Giovannoni & Fabietti, 2013: 22). Kuhlman & Farrington (2010: 3428) agree that these three dimensions of sustainability must coexist if sustainable development is to occur and be successful. By considering this and conducting other research, they define sustainable development as *"development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs"* (Kuhlman & Farrington, 2010: 3438; United Nations, n.d.; Giovannoni & Fabietti, 201: 25). For the purpose of this thesis, a combination of this definition and the three pillars of sustainability will be created to define sustainability as: *meeting the social, economic, and environmental needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*.

This paper predominantly focuses on sustainability's social and economic aspects. Many researchers argue that social and economic sustainability should be considered simultaneously as *socioeconomic sustainability* when exploring sustainable development (Skvarciany et al., 2020: 1). In order to define socioeconomic sustainability, these two pillars on their own must first be understood (Skvarciany et al., 2020: 2). Aligning with this paper's definition of sustainability, social sustainability is seen as bettering the living conditions of current generations without compromising those of the future future (Skvarciany et al., 2020: 2) (Boström, 2017: 5). Economic sustainability refers to an economy that supports and maintains economic growth while ensuring efficient use of natural resources so future generations are not compromised (Skvarciany et al., 2020: 2) (Goniadis, 2015: 26). When considering the two in tandem, socioeconomic sustainability refers to the "ability to ensure economic growth without

undermining humans' interests and to meet their needs without harming nature" (Skvarciany et al., 2020: 2). Furthermore, research suggests that social well-being, economic resilience, and good governance are the three key elements of socioeconomic sustainability (Skvarciany et al., 2020: 2). These definitions and explanations will be considered when analyzing the socioeconomic sustainability of wine tourism in the AV and GV, to work toward achieving an integrated approach toward the notion of sustainability, as discussed by Giovannoni & Fabietti (2013: 22).

## 2.2 Sustainable Wine Tourism as Rural Tourism

Rural tourism is considered a valuable asset for enhancing economic growth and social change in rural areas (Holland et al., 2014: 276; UN Tourism, n.d.). Rural tourism is practiced in rural areas which may or may not come into direct contact with farmers including “visiting and exploring the natural, cultural, archaeological and historical objectives of a region" (Singh et al., 2023: 84). Singh et al. researched rural tourism and its various facets needed for both sustainable development and short-term recovery (2023: 84). Singh et al., designed the *Success Factors of Sustainable Rural Tourism and Development* framework, highlighting how rural tourism can positively impact local rural communities by supporting their well-being and socioeconomic development (2023: 85). There are four contributing factors: (1) stakeholder engagement and support in capacity building; (2) community-led gradual and organic growth process; (3) valorisation of socio-cultural traditions and preservation of cultural heritage; and (4) leveraging digital technologies in marketing strategy (Singh et al., 2023: 85). According to Singh, these four combined aspects are needed to ensure sustainable rural tourism and development (2023: 85). While this may be true, An & Alarcón (2020: 3) argue that sustainable rural tourism

development must also prioritize balancing meeting the needs of locals and tourists. The wellness of host communities and tourists, local development, pressure from tourists during peak season, social impact and economic impact should be considered to balance the needs of locals and tourists (An & Alarcón, 2020: 3; Sanagustín Fons & Fierro, 2011: para 10-11). In the case of the AV and GV, where farm wineries are located in rural settings, both Singh's framework (2023: 85) and An & Alarcón research on balancing locals' and tourists' needs (2020: 3) are applicable within Nova Scotia's wine tourism industry.

Farm winery tourism as a form of rural tourism, creates an opportunity for these operations to support sustainable tourism and develop by leveraging and supporting not only local wine history in Nova Scotia, but also the local cultural heritage of rural regions across the province (Singh et al., 2023: 85). Many rural communities nearby also heavily rely on the wine industry and wine tourism as an essential economic contributor to the local economy (Poitras & Getz, 2009: 426). Prince Edward County (PEC), for example, has developed a thriving wine tourism industry for Ontario, showcasing the industry's significant impact on rural economic development (Holland et al., 2014: 276). In addition to this, Poitras and Getz (2009: 426-427) argue that in order to foster sustainable wine tourism, the following are needed: identification and management of (1) resources used; (2) specific wine tourism development; (3) and understanding the specific effects of wine-related tourism. Both the Singh et al (2023: 85) and Poitras and Getz (2009: 426-427) frameworks can be applied within the farm winery industry to ensure socioeconomic sustainability of wine tourism and tourism development practices.

## 2.3 Benefits of Sustainable Wine Tourism

When wine tourism is sustainable, there are numerous benefits to rural tourism, the wine industry, and local communities. Poitras and Getz (2009: 426) analyze the socioeconomic sustainability of wine tourism, specifically highlighting its many benefits for rural communities and their residents. Echoing two of Singh's critical success factors (2023: 85) it is argued that placing social sustainability at the forefront of the wine tourism industry requires a multi-stakeholder planning process to ensure community-orientation is prioritized (Poitras & Getz, 2009: 429; Murphy, 1985 1). Holland et al.'s (2014: 287) research on PEC's wine tourism sector stated that this wine region also evidences this notion, claiming that "distinct cluster of businesses" contribute in a cooperative and collaborative manner to the overall success of the industry.

Contrarily, research from a community perspective on wine tourism in Portugal suggests that it can also be leveraged for regional development by prioritizing the mobilization of the agriculture, wine industry, and tourism sectors (Andrade-Suárez & Caamaño-Franco, 2020: 1). Since this research explores wine tourism as a form of industrial tourism instead of rural tourism, it suggests that it is important to consider multi-sectors in wine tourism to contribute to the overall sustainability of the wine tourism industry. Recognizing wine tourism as another type of tourism, in this case industrial tourism, helps to understand the need for interdisciplinary planning strategies to ensure wine tourism is sustainable and successful, as illustrated within Singh et al's (2023: 85) critical success factors framework.

Equally important, researchers Alonso & Bressan (2013: 503) conducted a study to better understand how small rural family wineries contribute to social capital and socioeconomic development for rural communities. They suggest that social capital is necessary for the

functionality of modern economies, thus contributing to fostering community well-being (Alonso & Bressan: 503, 2013; Fukuyama, 2001: 7). Upon using word association to analyze interviews conducted with winery owners and managers worldwide, Alonso & Bressan (2013: 509-510) showed that the top three factors showcasing the most direct ways wineries are involved with their community and contribute to socioeconomic sustainable development were providing employment (29.4%), attending/sponsoring local events (20.0%), and preserving wine culture/tradition/heritage (15.3%). Employment opportunities comprised "physical work at vineyards, harvesting, bottling, transporting, and know-how of winemaking" (Alonso & Bressan, 2013: 510). Attending and sponsoring local events, like food and drink or wine festivals, has been linked to promoting gastronomic and other forms of tourism in rural communities, "potentially leading to stronger social capital and socioeconomic development" (Alonso & Bressan, 2013: 511; Alonso & Northcote, 2008: 148). Preserving wine culture, tradition, and heritage fosters social capital and socioeconomic sustainability, as wine industries represent unique values and share their region's rich history (Alonso & Bressan, 2013: 510; International Center for Agribusiness Research and Education, 2023: 10). Other less prominent contributors, while still notable, include making donations (5.9%), buying grapes from local micro-growers (4.7%) and promoting tourism in the area/country (4.7%) (Alonso & Bressan, 2013: 510). These examples showcase how implementing policies and practices within the wine industry can contribute to economic and social sustainability.

## 2.4 Barriers to Sustainable Wine Tourism

Despite previous examples of how sustainable wine tourism benefits the local community, several barriers make it difficult for wineries and the wine industry to implement

strategies that foster a sustainable industry and do not impose harm to the local communities (Sheridan et al., 2009: 301). Poitras and Getz argue that to gain community support, wineries must demonstrate their commitment to dealing proactively with the negative impacts of wine tourism on nearby residents and host communities (2009: 429). Some of the identified issues expressed by host communities include increased traffic, viticultural and winemaking processes complaints, competition with other local businesses, and perception of inappropriate types or scales of winery development (Poitras & Getz, 2009: 429; Sheridan et al., 2009: 292). There is a growing concern for sustainability within companies in the tourism sector, considering it is a sector that has considerable impacts on the economy and environment (Nave et al., 2021: 3). In a recent study on sustainable practices in the wine tourism sector, barriers to achieving sustainable wine tourism displayed a lack of human and material resources, collaborator involvement, top management involvement/commitment, the firm's interest/concern regarding matters related to environmental management, knowledge, training and understanding to incorporate sustainable practices, finance, and receptiveness to change (Nave et al., 2021: 3).

These barriers have been categorized into six groups: economic and financial, technical, cultural, legislative, governmental, and organizational (Nave et al., 2021: 6). Many companies and businesses, including wineries, are being pressured by a range of stakeholders to adopt more sustainable practices to address these barriers (Nave et al., 2021: 3; Tuni et al., 2019: 861-882). Several studies have stated that these pressures can arise internally and externally (Nave et al., 2021: 3). However, increased internal pressures from "firm managers, shareholders, collaborators and the consultative board" have indicated that the wine tourism sector will be more compelled to adopt sustainable practices (Nave et al., 2021: 8). Similarly, "external pressure from customers. competitors, government, distributors and suppliers" has also been

proven to encourage the adoption of more sustainable practices in the wine tourism sector (Nave et al., 2021: 8). While pushback from the community may seem daunting for winery operators, it can be used as a motivator for encouraging better sustainable practices.

## 2.5 Strategies for Enhancing Sustainable Wine Tourism at Farm Wineries.

There are several opportunities for wineries to enhance their sustainability efforts and contribute to nearby communities' socioeconomic development. As expressed by Nave et al. (2021: 3), while generally seen as a stressor, pressure from both external and internal sources foster a strong awareness of the need for integrating sustainable practices, policies, initiatives, and programs. Farm winery tourism industries rely heavily on local communities for support. External pressure from these communities offers an opportunity for winery operators to listen to and address the needs of community members and show their support for socioeconomic development in the region. A recent study in the Douro wine region in Portugal analyzed directions that can be taken to achieve sustainable development in wine tourism. It highlighted the importance of wine tourism industries focusing on long-term economic sustainability while promoting the region's wine history and cultural heritage (Trigo & Silva, 2022: 2). In addition to this, winery operators must ensure wine tourism balances ethical and resource conservation concerns while prioritizing the local community's needs and culture to pursue diversification of the rural economy (Trigo & Silva, 2022: 3; Poitras & Getz, 2009: 426). The external pressure from and connecting with local communities ensures "proper integration with the local socioeconomic and cultural environment" (Trigo & Silva, 2022: 3).

Additional ways to enhance sustainability within farm winery tourism include developing brand equity within wineries, addressing the inherent seasonality of wine tourism by

implementing more all-year-round activities, becoming involved in regional wine trails and as members of local visitor centres, and fostering connections and networks with tour operators (Trigo & Silva, 2022: 16. While Alonso & Bressan (2013: 511) stated that one of the benefits of sustainable wine tourism includes employment opportunities for the local communities, Trigo & Silva (2022: 16) explain that residents are generally more interested in this opportunity when permanent and full-time employment opportunities are offered. While these may be their findings, note that some people are interested in part-time, or seasonal jobs. Winery operators can also enhance their sustainability efforts by encouraging workplace collaboration, promoting job satisfaction and equality, as well as hiring local staff and employing younger generations (Trigo & Silva, 2022: 13).

To further promote local culture and the region's wine industry, winery operators can emphasize localness or regionalism by incorporating options like local food pairings with wine tastings (Trigo & Silva, 2022; Johnson et al., 2000). Wineries could also offer tours that incorporate educational activities and programs, such as winemaking seminars and wine cellar and vineyard tours, that will both satisfy wine tourists and share knowledge with them about the region's wine history and culture (Trigo & Silva, 2022: 18; Amarando et al., 2019: 1-2). While environmental concerns are equally as important in being addressed by farm wineries, wine tourism offers a unique opportunity to support the local communities and thus must consider community interests as well as sustainable land usage (Trigo & Silva, 2022: 16). Farm wineries are instrumental in reinforcing "local culture identity and encourage community pride with clear implications for socioeconomic sustainability"; thus, it is crucial to continue supporting them (Trigo & Silva, 2022: 18).

In conclusion, research conducted by Nave et al. (2021: 3) and Trigo & Silva (2022: 13-18) recommends winery operators implement and adhere to the following strategies to achieve more sustainable wine tourism: listen and take into consideration internal and external pressures regarding sustainable practices, policies, initiatives, and programs, focus on long-term economic sustainability, promote local wine culture, history and heritage, implement year-round activities and participate in regional wine trails, foster connections with networks and tour operators, generate permanent full-time jobs for local residents, promote localness and regionalism of products (i.e. food pairings, local merchandise), and offer tours with educational and immersive activities.

## 2.6 Case Study: Oliver, Okanagan Valley, British Columbia

While the literature has highlighted obstacles and issues identified from wine tourism in local rural communities, there are several studies on strategies for enhancing sustainable wine tourism and creating an opportunity for a more sustainable industry. Research on the town of Oliver's wine industry, located in the Okanagan Valley, British Columbia, included a SWOT analysis as a strategic planning tool for sustainable wine tourism in Oliver and the surrounding area (Poitras & Getz, 2009: 436). This analysis was compiled from stakeholder input and various research and was used to form the basis of recommendations in the results section (Poitras & Getz, 2009: 436). Some of the key strengths of the sustainable wine tourism industry in the region included further promotion of Indigenous tourism, influencing local development initiatives, reputation growth for quality wine, substantial private sector investments in wine tourism and facilities, and an increase in wine festivals (Poitras & Getz, 2009: 436). Weaknesses included the seasonality of tourist demand, lack of quality accommodation and dining services,

small population base and lack of resources, and laws restricting future winery and wine tourism development (Poitras & Getz, 2009: 436). While there are weaknesses posed, there are several key opportunities: the development of heritage resources, including the expansion of international tourism, the development of gastronomy and food-wine appeal, the development of year-round wine tourism through events and niche marketing, and the growth of partnerships and packaging with culture and recreational attractions (Poitras & Getz, 2009: 436). Despite the opportunities, acknowledging the threats is equally as important, including mass tourism destroying rural community livelihoods, the possibility of wine markets reducing the economic viability of the industry, increased traffic on rural roads, a lack of cooperation between the industry sector or communities, and that over development and commercialization of wineries could reduce the attractiveness of the local communities (Poitras & Getz, 2009: 436). Recommended strategies for enhancing sustainable wine tourism in Oliver and the surrounding area highlighted the following action areas: *integrating planning for the community, economic development, agriculture, wine, and tourism; environmental management; infrastructure development; community and cultural development; tourism development; tourism marketing; wine and wine marketing* (Poitras & Getz, 2009: 437). Within each action area, various goals and strategies have been identified to aid Oliver in becoming more sustainable and community-based in their wine tourism (Poitras & Getz, 2009: 437).

Understanding these action areas, goals, and strategies as mechanisms for enhancing sustainable wine tourism helped shape "the general three-pillar approach (adapted from Hall, 2000) to sustainable tourism and lists the main recommended goals for wine tourism in Oliver that were derived from the case study" (Poitras & Getz, 2009: 426). The three pillars included in this approach contain economic, social, and environmental goals for wine tourism (Poitras &

Getz, 2009: 427-429). While all three pillars contribute to the overall sustainability of wine tourism, this analysis will focus solely on the economic and social goals. Economic goals for wine tourism include improving infrastructure for tourism and residents, sustaining an economically viable wine industry, creating and sustaining viable supporting attractions and services, and attracting high-yield tourists while avoiding mass tourism (Poitras & Getz, 2009: 428). Social goals for wine tourism include benefitting local residents, broad engagement of stakeholders in tourism planning, resolving conflict openly, creating new employment and business opportunities for residents, protecting and creating cultural and heritage attractions, and ensuring high levels of visitor satisfaction (Poitras & Getz, 2009: 429). These goals simultaneously enhance socioeconomic sustainability at wineries and aid in mitigating identified barriers to sustainable wine tourism.

## 2.7 Summary

The research analyzed in this literature review contextualized the socioeconomic sustainability of farm wine tourism by first defining sustainability and socioeconomic sustainability. Wine tourism as a form of rural tourism aids in understanding the benefits of wine tourism and the challenges it poses to the surrounding local rural communities and their residents. Strategies for enhancing sustainable wine tourism at farm wineries were then identified to highlight the possible ways to navigate the barriers to achieving sustainable wine tourism. A case study on the town of Oliver, Okanagan Valley, British Columbia, provided context to Canada's wine industry, highlighting the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in a SWOT analysis of wine tourism in this region, as well as specific action areas with goals and strategies for wineries to implement. Such findings can be applied to the context of Nova

Scotia's wine tourism industry to better understand the benefits and barriers of sustainable wine tourism, as well as the strategies for enhancing wine tourism at farm wineries in the AV and GV.

# CHAPTER 3: Methods

Following an in-depth review of peer-reviewed and grey literature, online surveys and structured online interviews were conducted to gather the expertise of farm winery operators in the AV and GV and to understand how their practices and operations specifically support sustainable wine tourism and socioeconomic development for the local rural communities. This research is primarily informed by the highly influential work of Poitras & Getz (2009), including the design of survey and interview questions asked to participants. Survey questions aimed to gather general information regarding the logistics of farm winery operations. Interview questions were designed to gather specific information on each winery's relationship with the tourism industry and the surrounding communities. A qualitative data analysis was performed to examine common themes and alignment between the literature- specifically the work of Poitras & Getz (2009: 437-438)- as well as between each of the farm wineries' initiatives, practices, and policies related to sustainable wine tourism and socioeconomic development for the local rural region.

## 3.1 Population Sample

The population represented in this study were farm wineries in the AV and GV. In terms of wine tourism, these Valleys are especially popular and the most frequently visited in Nova Scotia. A total of 11 farm wineries are located in the AV and GV. The AV is home to seven of these farm wineries: 1356 Church Street Vineyard and Winery, Beausoleil Farmstead Winery (BF), Blomidon Estate Winery, Domaine de Grand Pré (DGP), Lightfoot & Wolfville (LW),

Mercator Vineyard (MV), and Planters Ridge. The GV is home to the remaining four wineries: Benjamin Bridge (BB), Gaspereau Vineyards, L'Acadie Vineyards, and Luckett Vineyards. The other wine regions in Nova Scotia (Bear River Valley, Lahave River Valley, Avon River Valley, Malagash Peninsula, and Marble Mountain) are home to fewer wineries and are less popular for wine tourism, reiterating the crucial role the AV and GV play in contributing to Nova Scotia's socioeconomic development.

## 3.2 Recruitment

Winery operators from each of the 11 farm wineries were emailed to inquire about survey and interview participation for this study. They were sought out for their expertise in their establishment's initiatives, practices, and policies and how they support wine tourism and socioeconomic development. Upon recruitment, six winery operators participated in the online anonymous survey, five of which agreed to follow-up interviews: BB, MV, BF, DGP, and LW. Emails inquiring about participation explicitly stated that their participation was voluntary and provided an attached document outlining the purpose and significance of the study, the survey and interview structure, and why these wineries were of particular interest. Consent was documented prior to interviews by providing a consent form (see Appendix A) for participants to sign after receiving an email response expressing interest in participating in the study. The consent form further outlined the research and detailed that while participants' names would not be disclosed, the study would state the name of each winery analyzed and indicate that interviews were conducted with the owner, general manager, or equivalent from each winery.

### 3.3 Survey and Interview Design

Preliminary surveys were designed and distributed using Qualtrics, and responses were gathered prior to conducting interviews. Survey questions (see Appendix B) pertained to general operations and logistics at farm wineries (e.g. number of employees, partnered tour operators, revenue streams, etc.). Interviews were conducted from February until mid-March, and took approximately 30 to 60 minutes, with 13 questions asked to each participant (see Appendix C). Structured interviews were chosen as the primary data collection technique to ensure interviewees were all asked the same questions, encouraging consistency, uniformity, and transparency in the data collection process. Additionally, structured interviews were favoured for this study to qualitatively analyze responses efficiently. The data used in this study was collected through online structured interviews using Microsoft Teams. A transcript recording feature on Microsoft Teams was used to allow for more efficient analysis.

### 3.4 Data Analysis

A qualitative analysis of survey and interview responses was performed to closely examine common themes, similarities, and differences among wineries and to understand the alignment between the literature and the practices, initiatives, and policies at farm wineries in the AV and GV. Survey findings revealed which tour operators farm wineries work with, if tourism is an important source of revenue, the percentage of sales made at each winery versus distribution channels, how many employees each farm winery has and how many are employed year-round and full-time, if farm wineries purchase grapes from other growers and at what percentage, and if employees receive training on conducting wine tours. Additionally, interview responses revealed more in-depth explanations of tour operations at farm wineries and their role

in supporting socioeconomic development for the local rural communities. Microsoft Excel was used to both quantify and thematize results to provide a detailed visualization, highlighting the similarities and differences in practices, initiatives, and policies at each farm winery. Chapter four discusses these findings in more depth, elaborating on how farm wineries in the AV and GV support wine tourism and socioeconomic development, where they fall short in these areas, and opportunities for improvement within their establishments related to tourism and sustainability.

Poitras & Getz's (2009: 425) research on host communities' perspective on wine tourism in the town of Oliver, British Columbia, was especially influential in guiding the survey and interview design for this research. Their research utilized multi-stakeholder perspectives to identify issues with the current wine tourism industry in Oliver to ultimately offer input on opportunities for stronger community engagement for more sustainable wine tourism (Poitras & Getz, 2009: 426). The issues identified from multi-stakeholder perspectives were divided into the following categories: economic, environmental, social, agriculture, wine, and tourism (Poitras & Getz, 2009: 434). They used a SWOT analysis to summarize the issues and combine the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats identified through stakeholder input to guide the recommended action areas and their goals and strategies for more sustainable wine tourism in Oliver (Poitras & Getz, 2009: 436-438). Action areas identified included *integrated planning for community, economic development, agriculture, wine and tourism, environmental management, infrastructure development, community and cultural development, tourism development, tourism marketing, and wine and winemaking* (Poitras & Getz, 2009: 437-438). The action areas and their goals and strategies, as they relate to the socioeconomic sustainability of farm winery tourism, were used as the basis for survey and interview questions for this research.

# CHAPTER 4: Results and Analysis

This chapter presents the findings from the survey and interviews conducted with farm winery operators in the AV and GV. Preliminary survey results were first discussed to contextualize the operations and logistics at each farm winery. Interview responses are then provided to answer how farm wineries in the AV and GV support sustainable wine tourism and foster socioeconomic development for the local communities.

## 4.1. Survey Results

The following data have been gathered through online preliminary surveys among six farm winery operators in the AV and GV. *Table 1* shows that all farm wineries in the AV and GV deem tourism as an important source of revenue for their winery. All respondents also claimed that they work with tour operators. The most common wine tourism partners were Grape

*Table 1. Farm Winery Operator's Responses to Tourism a Significant Source of Revenue*

| Is tourism an important source of revenue for your winery? | Does your winery work with tour operators? | If you answered yes to the previous question, please list the tour operators your winery works with. |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | Yes | Grape Escapes, Wild Grape Tours, Wine and Beer Tours NS, Where It's At, Wines and Vines, Vintage Vino |
| Yes | Yes | Grape Escapes, Ambassatours, Magic Wine Bus, Wild Grape Tours, Where It's At, Vintage Vino, Wine & Beer Tours NS |
| Yes | Yes | Magic Winery Bus<br>Ambassatours |
| Yes | Yes | Grape Escapes, Magic Winery Bus, Ambassatours |
| Yes | Yes | Grape Escapes, Where Its At, Wine & Vines, Wine & Beer Tours, Magic Winery Bus |
| Yes | Yes | Grape Escapes, Magic Winery Bus, Where It's At Tours, Vintage Vino, Wine & Beer Tours, Wine & Vine |

Escapes and Magic Winery Bus, with five out of six respondents citing partnerships with them. Wine and Beer Tours Nova Scotia was the second most common partner, with four out of six respondents working alongside them. Where Its At, Wines and Vines, Vintage Vino, and Ambassatours, were the third most common partner, with three out of six respondents identifying a partnership. Wild Grape Tours was the least common tour operator partner, with only two of six respondents working with them.

Respondents were then asked the percentage of their sales made at their winery versus distribution channels (i.e., Nova Scotia Liquor Control). One respondent answered 76% of sales were made at winery versus distribution channels, while others said 50% and 20%. However, 50% of respondents answered this question by saying "unknown". Similarly, when asked what percentage of farm winery tourists were from certain regions, four out of six respondents were not able to confidently answer this question or did not track the origin of their customers. Customer origins were categorized as: Halifax, other Nova Scotia, outside Nova Scotia but from Atlantic Canada, Ontario, Quebec, other Canadians, the United States, and International.

*Figure 1* shows the percentage of where tourists are from, from farm winery respondent #5, whose winery does keep track of their tourists The data shows that 60% of their tourists are from Nova Scotia, 20% of which are from Halifax and the remaining 40% from other Nova Scotia. Other Canadians (excluding those from Ontario, Quebec, and other Atlantic Canada) make up 12%, followed by other Atlantic Canada (excluding Nova Scotia), comprising 10% of total tourists. Further, 8% of tourists are from the United States, followed by 6% from international regions. The lowest percentage of tourists, each making up 2% of total tourists, were from Ontario and Quebec.

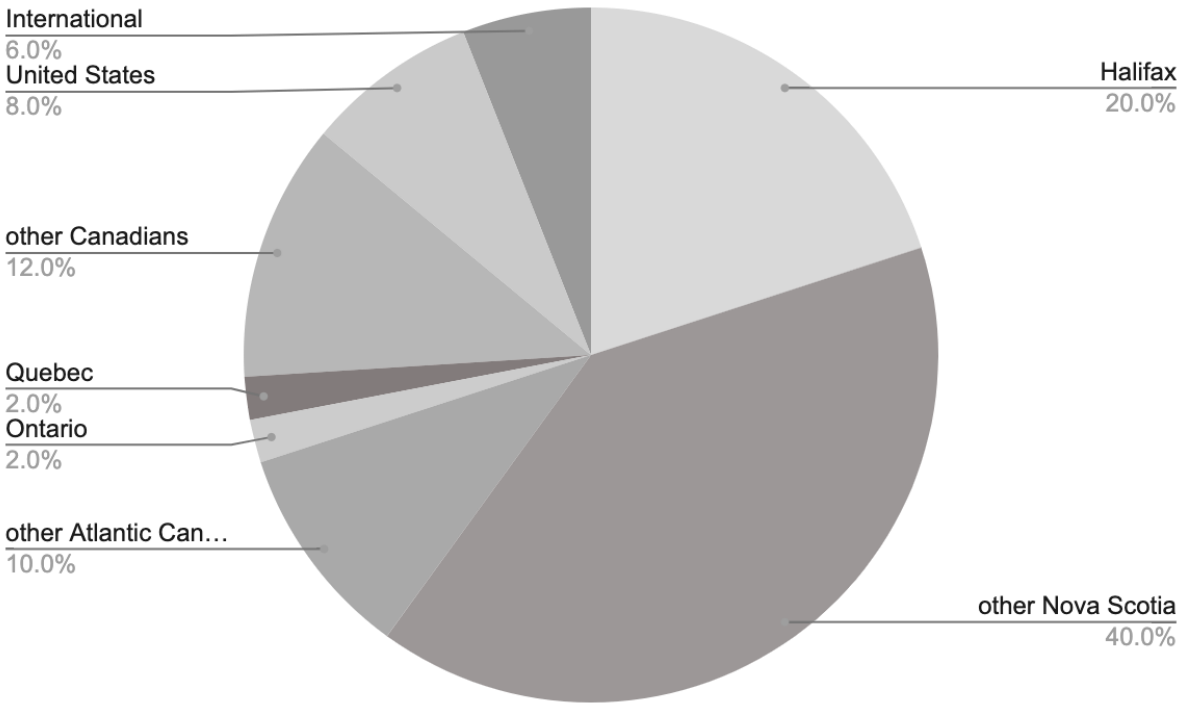


*Figure 1. Percentage of Tourists from Various Regions, from Farm Winery Respondent #5*

*Figure 2* shows the percentage of where tourists are from, from farm winery respondent #2. Note that respondent #2 provided data using different categories than those asked in this survey. They track how many tourists are from the local area, Halifax, other Nova Scotia, other Atlantic Canada, other Canadians, the United States, and International. This data suggests that a total of 85% of their tourists are from Nova Scotia, with 68% from the local area, 11% from Halifax, and the remaining 6% from other Nova Scotia regions. The remaining 15% of their tourists are dispersed throughout Atlantic Canada, excluding Nova Scotia (1%), the rest of Canada (6%), the United States (2%), and International regions (6%).

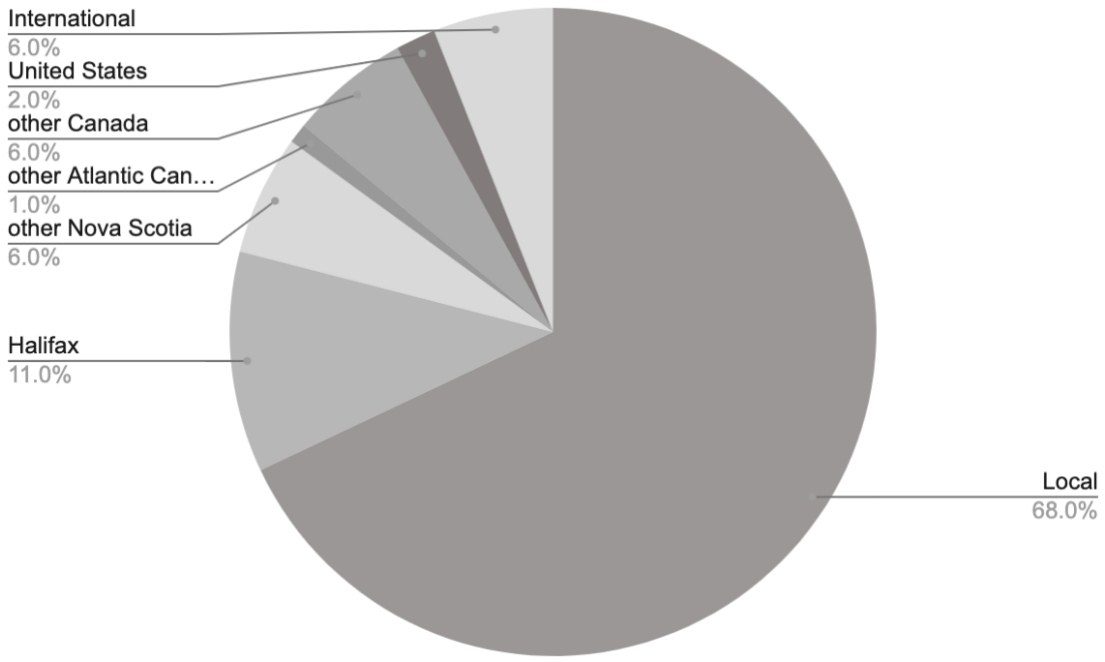


*Figure 2. Percentage of Tourists from Various Regions, from Farm Winery Respondent #2*

Respondents were then asked to answer how many total employees they have and how many were full-time, year-round employees. *Figure 3* shows the difference in total employees versus how many of which are full-time, year-round employees at each farm winery. It's important to note that the percentage of year-round, full-time employees to total employees is relative; for example, respondent #1 has 50% of their staff employed full-time and year-round but only has a total of four employees, while respondent #3 has only 12% of their staff employed full-time, year-round, but has a total of 25 employees. Respondent #2 has 66% of their staff employed full-time, year-round, respondent #4 has 42%, respondent #5 has 26%, and respondent #6 has 40%. Relatively speaking, respondent #2 has the highest percentage. While they have a total of 75 employees (the second highest), 50 of their employees are employed full-time, year-round. Further, respondent #3 is the lowest percentage. They have a total of 25 employees (the third lowest), but only have three full-time, year-round employees.

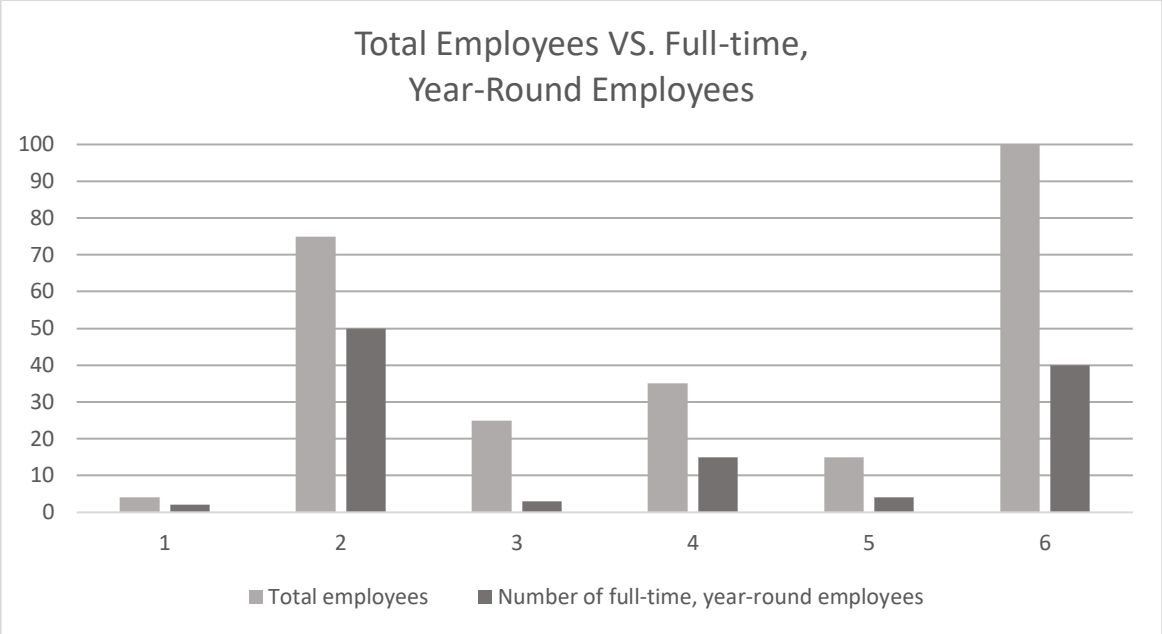


*Figure 3. Total Employees Versus Full-Time, Year-Round Employees*

*Table 2* shows whether respondents purchased grapes from other growers, and if so, what percentage of grapes purchased were from local growers. Five out of six farm winery respondents said that they do purchase grapes from other growers, and one respondent did not

*Table 2. Percentage of Grapes Purchased from Local Growers*

| Does your winery purchase grapes from other growers? | If you answered yes to the previous question, what percentage of grapes are purchased are from local growers? |
|---|---|
| Yes | 25% |
| Yes | 50% |
| Yes | less than 10% |
| Yes | 100% |
| | |
| Yes | 50% |

Answer either question. The range in percentage of local grapes purchased was quite wide. Respondent #4 said that 100% of their purchased grapes are from local growers. Respondents #1 and #5 both said that 50% of the grapes they purchased are from local growers. Respondent #6

stated that 25% of their grapes purchased are from local growers, while respondent #4 stated that less than 10% of their grapes purchased are from local growers. Lastly for the survey questions, respondents were asked if their employees receive training on conducting wine tours, to which they all replied yes.

## 4.2 Interview Results

The following data has been gathered through follow-up online structured interviews amongst five of the six farm winery operators that participated in the online preliminary surveys: BB, MV, BF, DGP, and LW. Results are presented by questions related to how farm wineries support sustainable wine tourism and questions related to farm wineries' direct engagement with and support of the local rural communities.

### 4.2.1 Wine Tourism

Table 3 displays participants' responses to questions related to their wine tourism practices. Respondents were first asked to describe what a typical wine tour looks like for guests at their winery. Generally, farm wineries start their tours by providing a high-level history of the region and their establishment. Guests then begin a tasting of a few different wines alongside listening to the backstory of the wines they are sampling and learning about different winemaking techniques. Often, there is time left at the end of the tour for winery operators to answer any additional questions or leave guests to explore the gift shop or vineyard further. It is important to note that frequently, there is a "unique arrangement depending on the tour operator" and what they both agree upon to be included in the tour (Lightfoot & Wolfville, online interview with author, 2025). Additionally, some wineries have restaurants

*Table 3. Farm Wineries' Interview Responses Regarding Wine Tourism at their Farm Winery*

| Questions | Winery Responses | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Benjamin Bridge** | **Mercator Vineyards** | **Beausoleil Farmstead** | **Domaine de Grand Pré** | **Lightfoot & Wolfville** |
| **Can you please describe to me what a typical wine tour looks like for guests at [winery name]** | Offer a variety of wine tours (entry level to exclusive experiences)<br>Tour operator: typically 30mins, high level explanation of region, Tidal Bay wine, tasting to give an overview of winery<br>Regenerative tours: wine tastings with experiential aspect | Discuss history of the estate<br>Arrive at tasting room<br>Participate in wine tasting with staff | Hour long tour<br>Welcomed by owners<br>Talk about origin story and their vision<br>Wine tasting flight, back story of wine guests taste<br>Answer questions from guests | For tour operators: Brief history of winery, tasting of 2-5 wines, time at the end for gift shop, etc.<br>Public tour: comprehensive look at overall winery (history, vineyards, practices), learn of about wine making techniques and a tasting | Unique arrangement depending on tour operator<br>Introduction to NS wine industry<br>Tasting and overview of each wine (sometimes paired lunch option: farm to table approach)<br>Portfolio tasting: private tour with vineyard stroll, tasting, option to add snacks |
| **How does [winery name] preserve wine culture/tradition /heritage?** | Speak to Nova Scotia wine history and their operation's history<br>Offer terrace tours where staff provide detailed history of region and winemaking<br>Discuss Tidal Bay<br>Focus on preserving wine while rewriting narratives around wine culture | They make traditional and sparkling wines using traditional methods<br>Old world traditions into new world style | Winery is rooted in sustainability (they are biodynamic artisanal winery)<br>Transparency around practices<br>Unique in that they are a winery and cidery<br>Focused on the concept of terroir and vintage (not making products with the same formula every year)<br>High quality | Land acknowledgements<br>Reference Acadian history<br>Educate guests on the history of DGP as the first winery<br>Educate guests on regional grapes (i.e. L'Acadie Blanc) | Lightfoot & Wolfville means "people and place": they strive to preserve local history of people and place in the AV<br>Partnership with the land: connect people with the place<br>Want wines to be made with the quality of the place |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | wine that's lower alcohol | | |
| **How does [winery name] promote or market tourism/tours?** | Year-round destination<br>Investing in infrastructure to accommodate guests over winter months<br>In house marketing team (social media, website, digital ads)<br>Billboards<br>Work with Tourism Nova Scotia | Social media and hashtags<br>Word of mouth<br>Website<br>Magazine and print publications | Word of mouth<br>Social media<br>Promoting short term rental accommodation on property | Social media: Facebook, Instagram, etc.<br>Google Ads<br>Wine Growers of Nova Scotia | Website<br>Social media and digital advertising (meta ads)<br>Traditional print advertising<br>"The Grapevine" (local community newspaper)<br>Promoting partnerships of working with local tour companies (Tourism Nova Scotia) |
| **How does [winery name] address the inherent seasonality of wine tourism?** | Open year-round<br>Improvised with indoor experiences<br>Focus funding on winter experience enhancements<br>Outdoor winter experiences | Extended shoulder seasons (start early April and finish late November)<br>Adapt to weather<br>Schedule regular tours with wine tour operators | Extend their shoulder season<br>When closed they are focused on production and winery enhancement<br>Looking to expand the number of tours that are coming in with tour operators | Remain open for the entire year<br>Create an indoor experience for guests during winter months<br>Embrace Swiss culture from the Schutz Family | Open year-round<br>Develop winter content (i.e. programs and menus)<br>Tailor to local audience<br>Weekly food and wine features in the winter |
| **Does [winery name] offer tours that include education/interactive activities for guests aside from wine tastings (e.g.,** | Offer a private wine club (B Club) where members have participated in harvesting Chardonnay<br>Volunteers come out and participate in full | Take guests out to the vineyards and educate about grapes and vines<br>Teach guests how to swirl the wine<br>Often leave it up to the guests to | Read the crowd on tour<br>Offer club membership that is looking to include more experiential opportunities down the road | If there is a winemaker or senior crew nearby they might incorporate more interactive aspects into the tour<br>They also | Portfolio tasting: visits vineyard or the barrel cellar<br>Host education groups<br>Offer 'Discover Biodynamics' tour: |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **participating in winemaking, interacting with wine-makers in the vineyards, etc.)** | day of harvest Sometimes do pruning demonstrations | decide what they want to learn/see on the tour | | breakdown the steps for winemaking and then proceed with tasting | biodynamic farming practices/ farm approach (includes visiting livestock pasture) |

on-site or offer food that may be incorporated into the tour. Furthermore, respondents specified that the design of a wine tour sometimes varies from a typical wine tour with a tour operator or a public tour to more advanced or experiential tours. For example, LW said they offer a "Portfolio Tasting" tour, a private tour that includes a vineyard stroll, tasting, and the option to add snacks to the wine tour (Lightfoot & Wolfville, online interview with author, 2025).

When participants were asked how their farm winery preserves wine culture, tradition, and heritage, their answers were more dissimilar. All farm wineries said they discuss winemaking history and/or local grape varieties on their tours. BB, DGP and LW also specified that they speak to Nova Scotia's wine history on their tours and the history of their own operations. For example, DGP, being the oldest farm winery in Nova Scotia, not only ensures they will talk about Nova Scotia's wine history on tours but also the heritage of their own establishment, paying homage to their winery's history and their family's Swiss culture (Domaine de Grand Pré, online interview with author, 2025). With Tidal Bay being Nova Scotia's signature wine, BB expressed that they also include discussing this wine on their tours (Benjamin Bridge, online interview with author, 2025), as it speaks to the culture of Nova Scotia's wine and its growing industry to become a more respected and sought-out wine region across Canada, and even globally. BB, MV, BF, and LW also discussed how they promote wine culture, heritage and tradition in a way that speaks to their establishment's values. BB states that they speak to their own history and the history of Nova Scotia's wine industry, while educating

guests on “traditional [winemaking] methods […] while trying to rewrite some of the narratives around wine and wine culture,” (Benjamin Bridge, online interview with author, 2025) considering the industry is historically Eurocentric. Similarly, when asked the same question, MV stated that they focus on “old world traditions [while] incorporating [winemaking] into the new world style” by blending different types of winemaking styles, as well as mixing new world grapes with old world grapes (Mercator Vineyards, online interview with author, 2025). Additionally, LW strives to preserve the local history of people and place in the AV, which speaks to the name of their establishment; “Lightfoot & Wolfville means people and place” (Lightfoot & Wolfville, online interview with author, 2025). On the other hand, BF is unique in that they are a winery and cidery, producing various kinds of vinous ciders. BF said that in relation to preserving wine culture, tradition, and heritage, they are focused on the concept of terroir and states that they focus on working with the land and climate and are “not making products with the same formula every year” (Beausoleil Farmstead, online interview with author, 2025).

Furthermore, farm wineries generally use similar tactics to promote and market tourism. All interviewees said they use social media and their website to promote tourism. BB specifically stated that they have an in-house marketing team that manages these platforms, creates content, and designs billboards around the province. MV and BF, smaller farm wineries in size and scale compared to the others, stated that word of mouth was an additional form of marketing used to promote their tourism. MV and LW added that traditional print media was a tactic used for tourism marketing. Furthermore, BB, DGP, and LW said they work alongside local and region organizations, like Tourism Nova Scotia and Wine Growers of Nova Scotia. Lastly, BB also stated that part of their tourism marketing includes investing in infrastructure to accommodate

guests over the winter months and promoting year-round destinations. Offering winter experiences increases their tourism marketing and paints BB as a year-round destination.

When asked how they address the inherent seasonality of wine tourism, all farm wineries said they either remain open year-round or extend their shoulder season. Similar to when asked about marketing tactics, both MV and BF- smaller in size and scale- were the only farm wineries that said they extend their shoulder season but do not remain open all year. Additionally, they both said that during this time, they continue to schedule regular tours with wine tour operators but are looking to extend the amount. When closed, BF said they "are focused on production and winery enhancement" for the upcoming season (Beausoleil Farmstead, online interview with author, 2025). During the off-season, BB, DGP, and LW stated that they focus on improving indoor experiences and offering winter experiences. DGP stated that they specifically focus on "embracing Swiss culture from the Stutz family" (Domaine de Grand Pré, online interview with author, 2025). Additionally, LW spoke about how they tailor to the local audience during the winter months by offering and promoting weekly food and wine features and developing winter programs.

Lastly, when asked if their farm winery includes educational/interactive activities for guests aside from wine tastings, three of five farm wineries mentioned that guests often interact with winemakers or staff in the vineyards. BB said that sometimes they conduct pruning demonstrations, and MV often takes guests out to the vineyards to educate them about grape vines and to teach guests how to swirl their wine. Similarly, DGP said that they break down the steps for winemaking before proceeding with a tasting. If there is a winemaker or senior crew member nearby, they might incorporate similar interactive aspects. Additionally, BB, BF, and LW said that they offer specialized tours or private club memberships that incorporate more of

this interactive aspect. For example, BB said that they offer ‘B Club,’ a private wine club where members participate in interactive activities like harvesting chardonnay or coming out to the vineyard to participate in a full day of harvesting. BF also said that they offer a club membership that will be looking to include more experiential opportunities in the future. LW offers a ‘Portfolio Tasting,’ which takes guests to the vineyard and barrel cellar. They also host education groups from post-secondary institutions or businesses, offering a ‘Discover Biodynamics’ tour, which exposes guests to their biodynamic farming practices and farming approach, including visiting the livestock pasture. Furthermore, both MV and BF mentioned how they read the room, often leaving it up to the guests to decide what they want to learn or see on tours.

### 4.2.2 Engagement with Local Rural Communities

*Table 4* displays interviewee responses to questions about how their farm winery directly engages with and supports the local rural communities. Initially, participants were asked broadly how their farm winery connects with and/or benefits the local community and supports local businesses. All stated that their farm winery makes community or charitable donations to local businesses and/or events. Both BB and BF stated that about “2% of [their] revenue” goes toward community donations (Benjamin Bridge, interview with author, 2025; Beausoleil Farmstead, online interview with author, 2025). Furthermore, BB and LW stated that they partner with and make themselves available to nearby post-secondary institutions for research, co-op placements, and more. BF and LW both said that their winery partners with organizations that resonate with them. Regarding this, BF specifically said that they have built a “policy around supporting agriculture-focused organizations,” because their smaller scale limits the extent of which they can sponsor different organizations (Beausoleil Farmstead, online interview with author, 2025).

*Table 4. Farm Wineries' Interview Responses Regarding Community Engagement and Support*

| Questions | Winery Responses | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Benjamin Bridge** | **Mercator Vineyards** | **Beausoleil Farmstead** | **Domaine de Grand Pré** | **Lightfoot & Wolfville** |
| **How does [winey name] connect with and/or benefit local communities and support local businesses (e.g. attending/sponsoring events, hosting events, donations, etc.)** | B-Corp certified<br>Designated employees for community engagement<br>Available to post-secondary institutions<br>Aim to donate 2% of revenue to the community<br>Women led organization (work with women's shelters)<br>Participate in events<br>Engage in conversation around economic growth and social justice<br>Volunteer program where employees are compensated for volunteer time | Donations to events (Nova Scotia Music Week)<br>Donations to local businesses<br>Donations to fundraisers<br>Gift shop stocked with local products<br>Works with local family for making honey | Sponsorships (policy around supporting agricultural focused organizations)<br>2% of revenue toward making community donations<br>Hire people as vineyard crew during the summer | Charitable donations | Host fundraising events<br>Partners with local organizations that resonate with them<br>Charitable donations<br>Work with post-secondary institutions (NSCC) |
| **Are you aware of any concerns related to winemaking operations or tours at [winery name] from the community? If so, how do you address this?** | Door-to-door communication to inform neighbours of events<br>Receive more third-party than direct feedback<br>Few complaints about disruptive equipment noise<br>Cut down on number of large events (i.e. weddings) | Concerns from local community regarding success of winery during Polar Vortex<br>Concerns regarding climate change and impact on winemaking<br>Prioritize good communication with neighbours | Have good communication with neighbours about what is occurring at winery | Recognize that their operation brings an increased level of traffic | Mindful of proximity to retirement community<br>Complaints about pests and birds<br>Limit noise<br>Obey Kings County bylaws<br>Shut winemaking operations off at certain time<br>Invested in sound reader |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | Concerns about spraying |
| **Does [winery name] promote localness or regionalism of products during tours (e.g. local food pairing with wine tastings, selling local merchandise, etc.)** | Food offered is grown on the property<br>Source other local food items and select merchandise from local community and Glooscap businesses | All products are local (e.g. honey)<br>Develop recipes for pairing local foods with wine | Looking to offer locally curated charcuterie this year,<br>Looking to offer more local merchandise in future | Carry local wine<br>Sell prints from local artists in Wolfville<br>Sell chocolate made in Dartmouth | Feature local preserve and pantry products<br>Partnership with local coffee roastery<br>Feature local soap companies |
| **Does [winery name] work alongside the local community for their tourism planning?** | Work with Tourism Nova Scotia<br>Have been members of the Wolfville Business Commission<br>Attend networking sessions<br>Collaborate with other wineries, breweries, and restaurants,<br>Lack in the municipality for tourism planning | Works with Wine growers Nova Scotia, Taste of Nova Scotia, Cheer pamphlets, and Star Tourism Program | Haven't embedded into that system yet<br>Owner was president of Grape Growers of Nova Scotia and has taken leadership role in grape growing community and participated in an exercise to understand how wineries can add potential revenue streams around advancing tourism | Involvement with Tourism Nova Scotia<br>Participate in familiarization tours where writers and travel bloggers visit winery (usually organized through Tours of Nova Scotia)<br>Part of the Restaurant Association (participate in events) | Taste Nova Scotia<br>The Town of Wolfville<br>Wine Growers Nova Scotia<br>Work alongside local partners/ different events and festivals<br>Partnerships with other wineries |

Similarly, BB, being a women-led organization, works alongside like-minded organizations like women's shelters (Benjamin Bridge, online interview with author, 2025). On the event side, both BB and LW said they participate in and host events. BF also said that during the summer

months, they hire vineyard crew to assist with viticulture practices. Additionally, MV spoke about how they have always had honeybees on the property and that they have a longstanding relationship with a nearby family that makes the honey, and in turn, MV sells it in their store. Lastly, BB has several other unique initiatives going on that engage their farm winery with the community. For example, they are the only winery in Nova Scotia that is B-Corp Certified, meaning their business meets "high standards of verified performance, accountability, and transparency on factors from employee benefits and charitable giving to supply chain practices and input materials" (B-Corp Certified, n.d.). They also have a designated group of employees for their community engagement and focus on engaging in conversation around economic growth and social justice. Lastly, they have a volunteer program where employees are encouraged to volunteer with the local community and, in turn, are compensated for their volunteer time.

Farm winery participants were then asked if they were aware of any concerns from the local community related to their winemaking operations or tours and, if so, how they address these concerns. All wineries expressed that they've experienced little to no complaints from the community, and MV even stated that the concerns they've heard from the community came from a positive place, like concerns surrounding the winery's success and ability to operate during the polar vortex, as well as the potential impacts of climate change on winemaking practices. BB stated that they receive more third-party feedback than direct and few complaints about disruptive equipment noise. Similarly, DGP stated that while they haven't directly heard of any concerns, they are aware that their operation increases traffic to the area. LW also experienced few concerns specifically regarding complaints about pests and birds, noise, and spraying. Still, four out of five farm wineries expressed different ways to limit concerns and address any

complaints. First, BB prioritizes a door-to-door method of communication to inform neighbours of any events occurring, in addition to decreasing the number of large events, like weddings, that are hosted on-site. MV and BF both said that they heavily prioritize good communication with neighbours about what is occurring at the winery. Lastly, LW stated that they are mindful of their proximity to the nearby retirement community, and with that, they ensure that they obey Kings County bylaws by shutting off winemaking operations at a certain time, and investing in a sound reader to ensure their practices are not disruptive.

Then, when asked about how farm wineries promote localness or regionalism of products during tours, all farm wineries stated that they sell local products and merchandise and/or offer local food pairings with wine. BB noted that while some food offered is grown on their own property, other local food items and merchandise are sourced through the local community and Glooscap businesses. MV also said that they products they offer are local including the honey that a nearby neighbour produces, and that they develop recipes for pairing this food with their wine. DGP said that in addition to carrying local wine, they sell prints from local Wolfville artists, and chocolates made in Dartmouth to promote localness and regionalism of products. Additionally, LW said they feature local preserves and pantry products in-house, partner with a local coffee roastery, and feature products from local companies in their gift shop. Furthermore, when asked the same question, BF said that they "haven't grown into that yet" and that they are looking to offer local food and merchandise options (Beausoleil Farmstead, interview with author, 2025).

Lastly, when asked if their farm winery works alongside the local community for their tourism planning, all farm wineries stated that they've collaborated with or worked alongside local and regional organizations, such as Tourism Nova Scotia, Wine Growers of Nova Scotia,

Taste of Nova Scotia, Star Tourism program, and the Restaurant Association. DGP also said that they offer ‘familiarization tours’, where writers and travel bloggers visit their winery, and often partner with Tourism Nova Scotia for this planning. BF also said that while they haven’t embedded this into their system yet, the owner of BF was president of Grape Growers Nova Scotia for some time, where they “launched a bit of an exercise with her Policy Committee on how grape growers add potential revenue streams around advancing tourism” (Beausoleil Farmstead, online interview with author, 2025). Additionally, both BB and LW stated that they work with the Wolfville township; BB has been a member of the Wolfville Business Commission and LW has worked directly with the Town of Wolfville. BB and LW also stated that they have partnerships with other wineries or attend networking and collaboration sessions with other wineries, breweries, and restaurants to help with tourism planning. Furthermore, LW collaborates with local partners and different events and festivals to incorporate tourism.

### 4.2.3 Final Remarks

*Table 5* displays any final remarks farm wineries wanted to make before closing the interview. The questions asked pertained to any other positive practices occurring at their winery that they wanted to mention, as well as any challenges faced that impact their wine tourism, engagement with the community, and overall operations. Regarding any additional programs, policies, initiatives, and practices in place these farm wineries that support sustainable wine tourism and/or socioeconomic development for the local community, four of five farm wineries had additional statements to add. First, BB stated that they have a formal allyship with Glooscap First Nations and even “have a collaboration wine that [they] released with them, where 50% of the proceeds go back to the community,” in addition to running events with this community and

*Table 5. Final Remarks from Farm Wineries*

| Questions | Winery Responses | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Benjamin Bridge** | **Mercator Vineyards** | **Beausoleil Farmstead** | **Domaine de Grand Pré** | **Lightfoot & Wolfville** |
| **Are there any other programs, policies, initiatives, or practices in place at [winery name] that support sustainable wine tourism and/or socioeconomic development for the local community that you would like to mention?** | Formal ally ship with Glooscap First Nation<br>Have a collaborative wine with Glooscap First Nation (50% of proceeds go back to community)<br>Listening to and including diverse voices in the conversation | Works with NSCC Support co-op program students | Bring in summer students<br>It is a family business<br>Even at a small scale you can have impact<br>Prioritize sustainable growth<br>Want to leave a legacy for future generation<br>Try to offer a new experience | Maintaining a year-round approach that allows staff to remain employed part-time<br>Moving toward having more full-time staff | N/A |
| **Does [winery name] experience any other barriers to achieving sustainable wine tourism that are related to economic/financial, technical, cultural, legislative, governmental, or organizational constraints?** | Trade issue: Provincial support program tension (negotiations between farm wine industry and the province)<br>Interprovincial trade barriers | A lot of restrictions in place by Kings County (regulations, hoops to jump through)<br>Paperwork and inspections | Financial barriers and regulations<br>Land use planning restrictions<br>People's alcohol consumption is not as high as it used to be<br>NSLC doesn't know where to shelve their vino ciders | Uncertainty surrounding the provincial government instituting like bottling legislation<br>Uncertainty around people's spending behaviours right now as things get more expensive | Commercializing bottling program<br>Interprovincial trade barriers |
| **Is there anything else you would like to add that I may not have asked about?** | Wine industry has been slow to react to diversity (very Eurocentric, predominately white, mostly men), they prioritize partnerships with culturally diverse groups (Glooscap, Black Nova Scotians) | Always lead with the guests in mind | N/A | UNESCO historic site designation at Grand Pre | N/A |

including their voices in the conversation (Benjamin Bridge, online interview with author, 2025). Additionally, MV stated their collaboration with NSCC and how they support co-op program students. Similarly, BF also stated that they bring in summer students from local post-secondary institutions, in addition to emphasizing that they are a family business and even though they operate at a small scale, they still make a significant impact by prioritizing sustainable growth, offering new experiences with their vinous-cider, and are leaving a legacy for future generations. DGP again discussed maintaining a year-round approach that allows staff to remain employed part-time during the winter and is moving toward having more full-time staff.

When asked about any additional challenges or barriers they experience that impact their winery's tourism relating to economic, technical, cultural, legislative, governmental, or organization constraints, BB, DGP and LW all mentioned the trade issues with the provincial Commercial Bottling Program. In addition, BB and LW also mentioned interprovincial trade barriers that limit their purchases across Canada. MV stated that there are many restrictions in place by Kings County, as well as paperwork and inspections that pose challenges. BF said that financial barriers and regulations, land use planning restrictions, and NSLC not knowing where to shelve their vinous ciders all pose challenges to their operation. They, along with DGP, also stated that there is uncertainty around people's spending behaviours right now, especially as things get more expensive. When asked if there was anything else they would like to add, BB said that the wine industry, historically, has been slow to react to diversity, which is why they prioritize partnerships with culturally diverse groups, such as Glooscap First Nations and Black Nova Scotians. MV added that they always lead with the guests in mind, and DGP noted that there is a UNESCO historic site designation at their winery.

# CHAPTER 5: Discussion

These results were compared to those of Poitras' & Getz's (2009: 437-438), specifically as they related to themes identified in action areas supporting goals and strategies for sustainable wine tourism. Their research utilized stakeholder input in the Oliver wine region of the Okanagan Valley, British Columbia, to create a SWOT analysis summarizing the strengths, weakness, opportunities, and threats (436). These results were aggregated and used to support action areas with goals and strategies for achieving sustainable wine tourism. *Table 6* has been adapted from Poitras & Getz's (2009: 437-438) framework to assess the goals and strategies related to wine tourism and socioeconomic development of the local rural communities that farm wineries in the AV and GV are utilizing. It highlights positive achievements that support each action area as well as opportunities for improvement. Given that this research focuses solely on the socioeconomic sustainability of farm winery tourism, two action areas related to environmental sustainability (environmental management and infrastructure development) are not discussed.

*Table 6. Action Areas and Goals and Strategies for Sustainable Wine Tourism and Socioeconomic Development in the AV and GV, adapted from Poitras & Getz (2009: 437-438)*

| **Action Areas** | **Goals and Strategies** | |
|---|---|---|
| | **Continue Achieving** | **Opportunity for Improvement** |
| Integrate planning for community economic development, agriculture, wine, and tourism | Incorporate tourism into the community plan<br><br>Foster a coordinated and progressive business environment to address concerns of business and the community<br><br>Work alongside Indigenous communities and other diverse cultural groups<br><br>Conflict prevention methods and procedures | Ensure all stakeholders participate in planning<br><br>Prioritize protecting agricultural lands and rural, small-town qualities |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Community and cultural development | Support for community and cultural initiatives will also benefit tourism<br><br>Preserve small-town atmosphere and lifestyle | Provide cultural interpretation for tourists |
| Tourism development | Formulate a detailed wine tourism strategy<br><br>Avoid over-supply and over-development of wineries; consider imposing limits and design standards<br><br>Develop high-end packages for small groups of dedicated wine tourists<br><br>Collaboration with main community and local organizations (i.e. Taste of Nova Scotia, Tourism Nova Scotia, and Wine Growers of Nova Scotia)<br><br>Development of new tourism facilities and activities should also benefit residents<br><br>Offering on-site accommodation when appropriate | |
| Tourism marketing | Attract high-yield wine tourists<br><br>Marketing should concentrate on rural, outdoor, cultural, and small-town experiences<br><br>Partnership with local organizations for marketing<br><br>Strongly promote tourism outside the peak summer season | Ongoing research is needed to support tourism marketing (e.g. segments attracted, satisfaction levels, spending patterns, where tourists come from, etc.) |
| Wine and wine marketing | Encourage adoption of sustainable grape growing and winemaking practices<br><br>The wine appellation should promote AV, GV, and Nova Scotia wine region<br><br>Maintain and improve the quality of local wines<br><br>Grapes and other fruits production have to be monitored | Ongoing research is needed to support tourism marketing (e.g. segments attracted, satisfaction levels, spending patterns, where tourists come from, etc.) |

Overall, farm wineries in the AV and GV are performing positively in most of the identified goals and strategies for achieving sustainable wine tourism and socioeconomic development for the local rural communities. For the action area, "*integrated planning for community economic development, agriculture, wine, and tourism*," there is good evidence from online interviews that farm wineries are doing well at incorporating tourism into the community plan, fostering a coordinated and progressive business environment to address concerns of business and the community, working alongside Indigenous communities and other diverse cultural groups, and carrying out conflict prevention methods and procedures. However, the biggest opportunities for improvement include ensuring all stakeholders participate in tourism planning and prioritizing protecting agricultural lands and rural, small-town qualities. Additionally, for "*community and cultural development*," while interviews consistently reveal strong support for community and cultural initiatives that benefit tourism and preserve small-town atmosphere and lifestyle, no farm wineries presently provide cultural interpretation for tourists. Furthermore, interviews suggest that farm wineries have strongly pursued all goals and strategies in the "*tourism development*" action area. Generally, they also perform very well in "*tourism management*," evidencing clear progress with supportive goals and strategies. Similarly, strong achievements in "*tourism marketing*" could be better supported with a strategy/goal of ongoing marketing research (e.g. segments attracted, satisfaction levels, spending patterns, where tourists are from, etc.). Lastly, interviews suggest farm wineries also meet all the goals and strategies for "*wine and wine marketing*", demonstrating their commitment to sustainable wine tourism.

# CHAPTER 6: Recommendations

After conducting an in-depth literature review, online surveys and structured interviews, and analyzing findings within the context of Poitras and Getz's (2009: 437-438) framework, it is evident that the sample of farm wineries in this study are supporting sustainable wine tourism and fostering socioeconomic sustainability for the local communities. Beyond the analysis using the Poitras & Getz (2009: 437-438) framework, the findings are consistent with conceptualizations of sustainability (Singh et al., 2023: 84-85; An & Alarcón, 2020: 3; Holland et al., 2014: 276; Alonso & Bressan: 509-511, 2013; Nave et al., 2021: 3; and Trigo & Silva, 2022: 13-18) such as offering year-round full-time employment, supporting diverse cultural groups, giving back to the community through donations and event participation, offering economic opportunities for local businesses, preserving wine culture, tradition, and heritage, creating opportunities that combat seasonality, working with local organizations and communities for tourism planning, marketing tourism, and transparency and good communities with neighbours.

Still, there are challenges that make it difficult for these small farm wineries to achieve sustainable wine tourism that maximizes positive socioeconomic benefits for the community while creating a positive experience for guests. Farm wineries expressed concern about the Provincial Commercial Bottling Program, interprovincial trade barriers, local restrictions and regulations, and uncertainty around people's spending behaviours. Additionally, evidence from interviews suggests that size and scale also affect farm wineries' capacity to implement all practices discussed during interviews along with the goals and strategies they identified. *Table 7* outlines several recommendations that farm wineries in the AV and GV could implement to enhance the sustainability of their wine tourism initiatives and foster greater socioeconomic

sustainability for the communities. These recommendations were derived from gaps analyzed from the surveys and interviews, as well as in the recommended goals and strategies for sustainable wine tourism using Poitras' and Getz's (2009: 437-438) framework.

*Table 7. Recommendations for Farm Wineries for Sustainable Wine Tourism and Socioeconomic Development for Rural Communities in the AV and GV*

| **Recommendations for farm wineries in the AV and GV to enhance sustainable wine tourism and socioeconomic sustainability for the local rural community** |
|---|
| - Continue collaboration with other wineries and the community around wine tourism and community engagement<br>- Track the origin of tourists<br>- Track the percentage of sales made in-house versus distribution channels<br>- Increase the percentage of full-time, year-round employees<br>- Continue partnerships with diverse cultural groups<br>- Continue developing conflict resolution methods<br>- Continue to balance protecting agricultural lands and rural, small-town qualities with positive tourism experiences<br>- Ensure all stakeholders participate in tourism planning<br>- Coordinate ongoing research to monitor wine tourism development and its impacts<br>- Provide cultural interpretation for tourists<br>- Collaborate more with downtown areas for tourism planning and development<br>- Ensure all new development of new tourism facilities and activities benefit residents and local community<br>- Avoid mass tourism and balance large tour operators with local tourists<br>- Foster ties with local organizations and community for tourism marketing<br>- Continue and foster ongoing research on tourism marketing (i.e. segments attracted, satisfaction levels, spending patterns) |

## 6.1 Conclusion

Overall, farm wineries in the AV and GV are taking several steps that clearly foster sustainable wine tourism, creating a positive experience for guests while having positive socioeconomic impacts on the local rural communities and its residents. Interviews suggest the eight attributes that impact a tourists' wine tourism experience- authenticity of experience, value for money, service interactions, setting and surroundings, product offerings, information dissemination, personal growth and learning experience, and indulgence-lifestyle (Roberts &

Sparks, 2006: 50)- are generally being met by farm wineries, in addition to other practices that advance their sustainability efforts. With Nova Scotia's wine region becoming increasingly popular and growing to offer year-round experiences, farm wineries across the province should prioritize sustainable wine tourism and focus their attention to better understanding how their operations impact the local communities. Though only five to six out of 11 farm wineries in the AV and GV participated in this study, their expertise and knowledge of Nova Scotia's wine region demonstrate that farm wineries in this region are taking appropriate measures to foster socioeconomic sustainability at their establishments. Several specific recommendations have been offered (*Table 7*) to advance these efforts.

Given the previously discussed limitations of this study, future research could replicate this study among the remaining five wine regions in Nova Scotia to analyze if farm wineries in these areas are also performing well in sustainable wine tourism and the positive socioeconomic development of their local communities. To further build on these findings, future research might analyze the environmental sustainability at these same farm wineries to see if they perform equally well under this pillar of sustainability. Additionally, future research could benefit from conducting surveys or interviews with other stakeholders in the wine industry, such as residents, tour operators, and local organizations. Lastly, it would be beneficial for future studies to conduct this research in other wine regions across Canada, such as the Niagara wine region in Ontario.

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# APPENDIX A

**Research Instrument: Interview**

Interview Consent Form

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***Socioeconomic Sustainability of Farm Winery Tourism: A Case Study of the Annapolis and Gaspereau Valleys, Nova Scotia***

**Primary Researcher**
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I am a student in the Honours Bachelor of Arts program, pursuing a double major in Environment, Sustainability & Society, and International Development Studies at Dalhousie University. My research, "Socioeconomic Sustainability of Farm Winery Tourism: A Case Study of the Annapolis and Gaspereau Valleys, Nova Scotia," aims to identify factors and aspects of wine tourism that can have positive, sustainable implications on surrounding local communities. My hope is that my research will contribute to the success of Nova Scotia's wine industry, highlighting the important role farm wineries play in the socioeconomic development of local, rural communities.

I would like to ask if you would be willing to participate in an online interview for this study. If you agree, you would be asked a series of questions concerning the practices, policies, initiatives, and programs at your place of employment, with an emphasis on wine tourism and the local community. With your permission, the interview would be recorded and transcribed. The online interviews would take about 45 minutes at a time convenient to you between February 3rd and 14th, 2025.

The results of this study will be presented in a final thesis and poster presentation required for completion of my degree and may also be used for conference publications, other presentations, and published in academic journals.

This study poses minimal potential risks. Your identity will not be disclosed in this research. Instead, your participation will be referred to as the winery you are employed with (i.e. "[winery name] offers… for guests on their tours"). However, with your permission, the interview would

be recorded and transcribed to be thematically analyzed and coded, to understand tourism efforts across different farm wineries in the region.

Your participation is completely voluntary. You may withdraw from the study at any time, for any reason, without explanation. If you wish to withdraw from the study, you may do so up to 2 weeks after the completion date of the online interview by contacting me by email. If you choose to withdraw from the study, all information you provided during the interview would be withdrawn from the study and destroyed. Microsoft Teams will be used to host the online interview. If you agree, the interview would be recorded and transcribed using built in applications on Microsoft Teams. Transcripts will be transferred to a document for analysis.

All data derived from the interview will be stored on a password-protected computer. All data associated with our interview not included in the products of research will be permanently deleted at the end of the project, approximately May 31st, 2025.

I have read and understand the information provided above, and hereby consent to participate in this research under the following conditions:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *I consent to the interview being audio recorded and transcribed.* | ☐ *Yes* | ☐ *No* |
| *I consent to being quoted in the products of the research as my place of employment (i.e. "[Winery name] offers… for guests on their tours").* | ☐ *Yes* | ☐ *No* |

Participant Name _____ Participant Signature _____

I, Madelyne Cluett, promise to adhere to the procedures described in this consent form.

Primary Researcher Signature _____ Date _____

*Thank you for your participation in this study!*

# APPENDIX B

**Research Instrument: Preliminary Survey Questions**

1. Please confirm that the following statement is true: “I am employed as a general manager or owner at a farm winery in the Annapolis or Gaspereau Valley in Nova Scotia”.
    - True
    - False
2. Does your winery work with tour operators?
    - Yes
    - No
    - I do not know
3. If you answered yes to the previous question, please list the tour operators your winery works with.
4. Is tourism an important source of revenue for your winery?
    - Yes
    - No
    - I do not know
5. What is the percentage of sales made at your winery versus distribution channels?
6. What percentage of your tourists are from Halifax?
7. What percentage of your tourists are from Nova Scotia?
8. What percentage of your tourists are outside Nova Scotia but from Atlantic Canada?
9. What percentage of your tourists are from Ontario?
10. What percentage of your tourists are from Quebec?
11. What percentage of your tourists are other Canadians?
12. What percentage of your tourists are International?
13. How many employees does your winery have?
14. How many of your employees are employed all year-round?
15. Does your winery purchase grapes from other growers?
    - Yes
    - No
    - I do not know
16. If you answered yes to the previous question, what percentage of grapes are purchased from local growers?
17. Do employees at your winery receive training on conducting wine tours?
    - Yes
    - No
    - I do not know

# APPENDIX C

**Research Instrument: Interview Questions**

1. Please describe to me what a typical wine tour looks like for guests at [winery name].
2. How does [winery name] connect with and/or benefit local communities and support local businesses and companies (i.e. attending/sponsoring events, hosting events, donations, etc.)?
3. How does [winery name] preserve wine culture/tradition/heritage?
4. How does [winery name] promote or market tourism/tours?
5. Are you aware of any concerns related to winemaking operators or tours at your [winery name] from the community?
    a. If so, how does [winery name] address this?
6. Has [winery name] received feedback from the local community that your operation negatively impacts them?
    a. If so, what are those concerns and how does [winery name] address this?
7. How does [winery name] address the inherent seasonality of wine tourism?
8. Does [winery name] promote localness or regionalism of products during wine tours?
    a. Do you offer pairings of wine tasting with local food?
    b. Do you sell local products (i.e. in gift shops, etc.)?
    c. Do you do anything else?
9. Does [winery name] offer tours that include education/interactive (aside from wine tastings) activities for guests? (i.e. participating in the wine-making process, interacting with wine-makers in the vineyards)
10. Does [winery name] work alongside the local community for their tourism planning? (ex. the town of Wolfville)
11. Are there any other programs, initiatives, policies, or practices in place at [winery name] that support sustainable wine tourism and/or socioeconomic development for the local community that you would like to mention?
12. Does [winery name] experience any other barriers to achieving sustainable wine tourism that are related to economic/financial, technical, cultural, legislative, governmental, or organizational constraints?
13. Is there anything else you would like to add that I may not have asked about?