

## The Australian Wine Tour Company Matthew Noble, Owner/ Manager

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The Australian Wine Tour Company (AWTC) is one of Victoria's small but dynamic tourism operators. It has significantly contributed to the growth of tourism in Victoria and the Yarra Valley during its eight year history. It's a past winner in the Tour & Transport category of the Victorian Tourism Awards.



Managing Director, Matt Noble, says his initial product concept was simple: ***“To create a great day tour that would educate and entertain, show off the fantastic wine and food of Victoria and, most importantly, offer it at an affordable price”.***

The success of the formula has seen an increase in the number of AWTC's day tour products from one to nine since its inception. Close contact with Yarra Valley operators has resulted in some innovative packaging of product with local and regional businesses, including Sebel Heritage, Chateau Yering, Global Ballooning and Melbourne Sports Tours.

Matt Noble is a networker par excellence. He has made use of industry contacts to grow his business into the biggest wine tour operator out of Melbourne during the past few years.

“We acknowledge that supporting the tourism industry and its many partners is a vital and mutually beneficial part of our business. Lasting partnerships have been nurtured between AWTC and many government organisations, educational institutions and tourism businesses”, says Matt

“Time and resource contributions are made to peak industry bodies and through participation in local and international trade shows. All activities undertaken by us not only contribute to the growth of our company, but increase tourism to Australia, Victoria and the Yarra Valley. “

At the local level, Matt has served as Deputy Chairman of the Yarra Valley's peak tourism and marketing organisation 'Destination Yarra Valley Dandenong Ranges'. On many occasions AWTC represented (free of charge) the region at various tourism trade shows and industry training events, when the organization did not have the capacity or resources to be present.

In recognition of his contribution and experience, Matt was appointed by the Minister for Tourism to the Victorian Food and Wine Tourism Council.

Matt had many years experience working with the backpacker industry and was instrumental in reforming the Backpacker Operators Association of Victoria (BOAV), of which he was Deputy Chair for five years.

AWTC is an active member of Tourism Alliance Victoria and has been a regular contributor to topics such as the new award wage structure for Victorian employees. During 2006, AWTC nominated its employee, Chris Porter, for Tourism Alliance's Lynette Bergin Fellowship. The application was successful and the study tour has enabled Chris and the company to better understand the needs of the Japanese and European market.

The company has strong connections with many of Tourism Victoria's departments, including long standing relationships with staff members of the International Marketing division, both in Melbourne and overseas.

AWTC also participates in Tourism Victoria led tradeshow, missions and market information seminars. The company is a very regular supporter of Tourism Victoria's and Tourism Australia's Visiting Journalist and Industry Familiarisation Programs, providing free-of-charge tours to the Yarra Valley.

### Key Lessons

- Participation in tourism industry structures extends your business networks and can pay real dividends.
- Put aside time in your working week to attend industry functions and professional-development sessions.
- You will be surprised how much your own experience can be of benefit to other tourism industry operators - networking should be a mutual exchange of ideas and information.
- Promotion of your town/ region/ state needs to be done hand-in-hand with your own business marketing - visitors usually seek experiences' rather than bricks and mortar facilities.

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