



FOSTERING  
INNOVATION



TOURISM  
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## Home on the 'Grange'

### [Penfolds Make-Your-Own Blend Tour](#)

Penfolds Barossa Cellar Door,

Nuriootpa

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Wine tasting is an integral part of the tourism experience in many parts of the country. The typical format is an attractive cellar door, a tasting counter and informative staff.

Penfold's Barossa Cellar Door in Nuriootpa has been doing it for a long time and has honed the presentation over many years. However, to differentiate themselves in an increasingly busy marketplace and to provide the ultimate in product engagement for the wine tourist, it has introduced the 'Make your Own Blend Tour' – the first of its type in Australia.

Penfolds cannot guarantee that you will emerge having produced something akin to their world-famous 'Grange', but it will probably be something quite drinkable that you can proudly produce at your next dinner party.

The 1.5 hour interactive experience begins with a tour of the famous Barossa winery and barrel halls, led by a wine educator. The oldest buildings were erected in 1911 and since the 1970s have become the focus of Penfold's wine making operations.

The major difference begins when the visitor is invited into the Winemaker's Laboratory and is seated at a work station to try their hand at blending their own wine from Grenache, Shiraz and Mourvedre.

They're the varieties that make-up Penfold's well known Bin 138 and are sourced from old vines to produce softer and sweeter tannins. Grenache tends to produce very fruity wine, Mourvedre adds some spice, while the Shiraz helps to round it off nicely.

Participants are given the percentages of each variety from previous year's blend and are allowed to smell the company's current blend to give them some idea of what they have to aspire to achieve. Things are then handed over to the budding winemakers, who each get three attempts to get it right. Because each of the varieties is so good to begin with, it's not difficult to create something passable. Once participants get over any nerves, the banter, laughter and a sense of competition generally starts to flow. There's probably no better way to gain a deeper appreciation of wine and an understanding of what effort goes into creating a winning drop.

Guests get to choose their proudest effort of the three attempts, which is then bottled, corked and labelled with a personalised Penfolds label, acknowledging them as the Assistant Wine Maker.

It's an excellent example of thinking outside the square and building on a standard presentation to provide a more memorable and interactive experience.



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It uses existing facilities and the extra staffing required to run the tours is more than compensated for by the \$55 cost of the tour. What's more, it's the ultimate in public relations and word of mouth endorsement because the likelihood of participants picking a Penfolds wine next time they are dining is very high – after all, they have been part of the wine making team and fellow diners would love to hear about it – wouldn't they ?

### **Key findings:**

*Interactivity and an innovative approach to an otherwise standard presentation converted a mainstream tourism experience into something very memorable.*

*Such an experience can create long lasting PR and word-of-mouth publicity, which translates into higher sales*