

The Wine Stone Inn

A Senior Project
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Intro:

The Wine Stone Inn is a new 12-room boutique hotel currently being built in Old Town Orcutt, California. The hotel is seeking a grand opening that will attract vintner business, agribusiness, and agricultural vendors for the hotel, and help promote local wineries and breweries in the Santa Maria Valley. Orcutt is a growing township, which is becoming very attractive to visitors because of the walking distance to restaurants, local pubs, wine venues, and other businesses that project growth in the future. Agribusiness makes up a small percentage of the corporate market and agritourism is a growing segment in this area. The author comes from an agricultural family. The author's family identified a small piece of their property in the Old Town of Orcutt, they saw the need for a small hotel and decided to invest in the business. This project will plan the hotel's opening day with a focus on the local agritourism amenities.

Background:

Boutique hotels are one of the fastest growing divisions of the lodging industry. This hotel division sets itself apart by offering the guests an experience that is immersed within the fabric of the local community, the quaint comfortability of like-home furnishings, and excellent service. The Wine Stone Inn's main objective is to co-promote with local wineries to increase the awareness of the Santa Maria Valley's agritourism, wine industry, and brewing capabilities. Agritourism gives producers an opportunity to generate additional income and an avenue for direct marketing to consumers. Additionally, tourism and agriculture can educate the public about their surrounding community. It can enhance the tourism industry by increasing the volume of visitors to an area and the length of their stay (Hoffman).

The Santa Maria Valley was discovered when farmers from small Swiss Italian villages migrated here during the early 1900's. The soil and climate made growing grounds ideal, and the local railroad stop in Guadalupe proved beneficial when shipping produce. The original cash crops were iceberg lettuce and broccoli as well as other vegetables, but soon local grape growers found our coastal climate provided flavorful wine grapes especially for pinot and chardonnay varieties. Many farms are also benefitting from strawberries which have proven to be a year-round cash crop. Old Town Orcutt, a small suburb of Santa Maria proper, has become the gathering place for small local restaurants, pubs, wine tasting rooms, clothing boutiques and other small businesses in a compact few blocks. Orcutt has many community programs to keep the town agreeable for walking, gathering and socializing. The only thing missing, is available lodging.

Methodology:

The first step taken to plan an opening day event for The Wine Stone Inn was meeting with the hotel manager and owners to discuss goals, themes, planned guests, and other initial ideas for the opening day. To successfully put on the event, researching and studying other similar successful events was ideal to starting to plan the opening day event.

Next, developing relationships with the local wineries to better business for each other. The Wine Stone Inn will have local wines poured at the grand opening and sold throughout the hotel, and in return wineries will promote The Wine Stone Inn on their websites, tasting rooms, and many other places the public will see. It is important to establish a timeline for the day, with event details, way ahead of time. That leaves time for changes or improvements if needed to run in smoothly matter.

Once the timeline is established, many accounts are needed to be created to get the hotel information out to the public. Some of those accounts are with the entire Santa Maria Valley community, and others are with local agriculture associations. A contact list will be created to send out personal invitations to VIP guests, vendors, and other businesses as well as an announcement to the public made by the Chamber of Commerce. The manager will also talk on Sunny Country 102.5 Radio Station to promote the Open House the week prior to the event. The caterer and supplies needed for the event will be provided by Far Western Tavern.

Results:

The Open House for the Wine Stone Inn was a huge success! The kick-off to the weekend started with the Ribbon Cutting Friday, November 1st, which brought in \$1,346 in sales as well as many new customers. The local news station, KCOY, publicized the event by a story that was on the 5 o'clock news as well as the internet. The Open House scheduled for Sunday, November 3rd, 2 days after the Ribbon Cutting, was also advertised.

The main event, The Wine Stone Inn Open House, brought in over 400 people within a 3-hour period. Some of those people included the Mayor Alice Patino, Congressman candidate Andy Caldwell, Betteravia Farms CEO Patrick Ferini, Far Western owners, and many more important Santa Maria citizens. Owners from Blast 825 were also there and paired up with the Wine Stone to host an industry night together in January 2020. Wine-based margaritas were offered for free as well as select beers and wines available for half price, and drink sales totaled in \$2,694! Also, three private parties were booked for the future in the Cellar Room. Over 300 hundred emails were harvested and a follow-up letter was sent to thank them for coming and provide them with more information regarding the hotel. There was a significant increase in followers on the Wine Stone Inn Facebook page as well as the Instagram page with more than 150 additional followers. Many of the attendees at the Open House tagged the hotel in their social media which helped boosted the knowledge of the presence of the hotel. With some generous help from the community, I was able to be under the authorized budget by \$300.

Conclusion:

All in all, The Wine Stone Inn Open House brought in a decent profit for the hotel as well as an eye-opener for lodging, socializing, and much more to the local Santa Maria community. The Open House could be the event that starts a timeline for a future anniversary party in five or ten years. With the unexpected high attendance, more employees serving drinks and giving tours would of benefitted the event. After putting on this event, results showed positive feedback from the community and has created a demand for the Wine Stone Inn.

Citations

- 1. Economic Development Commission. (n.d.). Retrieved May, 2019, from <https://santamaria.com/economic-development-commission>**

Provides guidance to the Chamber's development and implementation of an annual Economic Development Action Plan. The Commission receives updates on key economic indicators and activity; identifies opportunities for, and barriers to, economic growth in the community; and helps to identify key initiatives to be undertaken by the Chamber.

- 2. FoodMarket Maker. (n.d.). Retrieved May, 2019, from <https://foodmarketmaker.com/>**

MarketMaker provides simple yet powerful search tools to connect with others across the production and distribution chain.

- 3. ITECH Solutions. (n.d.). Retrieved May, 2019, from <https://www.oldtownorcutt.org/>**

Information about the town of Orcutt and its community. Information about local wine, dining, shopping, and much more. OTORA (Old Town Orcutt Revitalization Association) OOMA (Old Town Orcutt Merchant Association)

- 4. National Ag Law Center. (n.d.). Retrieved May, 2019, from <https://nationalaglawcenter.org/overview/agritourism/>**

Agritourism can be defined as a form of commercial enterprise that links agricultural production and/or processing with tourism in order to attract visitors onto a farm, ranch, or other agricultural business for the purposes of entertaining and/or educating the visitors and generating income for the farm, ranch, or business owner.

- 5. Santa Barbara County Wines. (n.d.). Retrieved May 15, 2019, from <https://www.sbcountywines.com/winegrowing-areas.html>**

Growing wine community in Santa Barbara County, climate and soil are benefits to the successful farming community.

6. Santa Maria Chamber of Commerce. (n.d.). Retrieved May, 2019, from <https://santamaria.com/hosting-a-ribbon-cutting>

How to host a ribbon cutting in Santa Maria; contacts, steps, and ideas to make a successful ribbon cutting.

7. Santa Maria Tourism Marketing District. (n.d.). Retrieved May, 2019, from <https://santamaria.com/santa-maria-tourism-marketing-district>

The Santa Maria Tourism Marketing District (TMD) provides dedicated funding for tourism promotion without new local taxes or direct government spending.

8. Santa Maria Valley. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://santamariavalley.com/>

Guides and events happening in the Santa Maria Valley. Also things to do on a “getaway” trip to Santa Maria/ Orcutt, Ca.

9. T. Hoffman, personal communication, May 2019.

Troi is the hotel manager and gave information about the hotel business, Orcutt community, and goals for the Wine Stone Inn’s opening day.