

DISSERTATION

EXPLORING THE CULINARY TOURISM EXPERIENCE:  
AN INVESTIGATION OF THE SUPPLY SECTOR FOR BREWERY AND RESTAURANT  
OWNERS

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Christina Minihan

Department of Human Dimensions of Natural Resources

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Doctoral Committee:

Advisor: Maureen Donnelly  
Co-Advisor: Joseph O'Leary

Soo Kang  
Alan Bright

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## ABSTRACT

### EXPLORING THE CULINARY TOURISM EXPERIENCE: AN INVESTIGATION OF THE SUPPLY SECTOR FOR BREWERY AND RESTAURANT OWNERS

Tourists travel all over the world to taste different types of cuisine and create memorable experiences through them. Although food can be the primary reason one travels; it plays a significant role in any tourist's daily routine. While the idea of culinary tourism has been around for decades, it has received limited research attention. The existing research primarily highlights the consumer aspects, with limited focus on the trade or supply realm. The purpose of this dissertation is to present an innovative study in the culinary tourism field that develops and tests a comprehensive culinary tourism experience model from the supply sector perspective.

This dissertation includes three studies presented as potential journal articles. Chapter 1 explores a review of the current literature on culinary tourism. This chapter contains the general frameworks and models that have been proposed to date when considering culinary tourism and the theory on experience. Chapters 2 and 3 include qualitative analyses that test a proposed culinary tourism experience model through in-depth interviews from breweries and restaurant owners in Fort Collins, Colorado. The model encompasses the following 14 components: (a) learning and knowledge, (b) physical setting, (c) quality, (d) quantity, (e) service quality, (f) variety, (g) backstage access, (h) local culture, (i) senses beyond taste, (j) entertainment, (k) sustainability, (l) target market, (m) differentiation, (n) social media, and technology. The elements were selected from the results that emerged from the literature review, along with a pre-test. These elements were examined with owners and managers in terms of how the restaurants

and breweries manage their operation and create a customer experience. Implications for future research and recommendations for improving this supply side approach to modeling the cuisine tourism experience are proposed.

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And last, but surely not least, this dissertation is dedicated to my loving family who has always been supportive. To all of our adventures traveling, eating delicious desserts and exploring God’s beautiful earth—here’s to an incredible journey together. I love you all very much.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Tourists travel all over the world to seek different types of cuisine and create memorable experiences through them (Bessiere, 1998; Hall & Sharples 2003; Long 2004). Many studies indicate that food has become an integral aspect of a tourist's experience (Kivela & Crofts 2006) and may be interpreted as a lens to understand a destination's local culture (Cohen & Avieli 2004; Richards, 2002; Long 2004). Food may be the primary reason one travels, however it certainly plays a significant role in any tourist's daily routine (Halls & Mitchell 2005; Quan & Wang 2004).

In a study dedicated to the global report of culinary tourism conducted by the World Tourism Organization, dining in restaurants accounted for the second largest tourist expenditure (Hall & Sharples, 2003). Wolf (2006) further exerts that "nearly 100% of tourists dine out while travelling, and food and beverage consistently rank first in visitor spending" (p. 19). More recently, the 2012 OECD research study indicates that "food comprises more than 30 percent of the average tourist's expenditures, of which, most is spent directly with local businesses" (p. 9).

The growing interest to explore a region's local cuisine has been attributed to the significant attention given to food by a variety of resources including television (e.g., the Food Network, the Travel Channel), magazines, books, social media and other sources. Despite this recent increase in attention, little research has been dedicated to culinary tourism and the concept of experience (Cohen & Avieli 2004; Halls & Sharples 2003; Quan & Wang 2004; Wolf, 2006). Wolf (2006) explains, for example, that culinary tourism is "emerging as the only aspect of the visitor's experience that still holds potential for further development in the global tourism industry" (p. 51).

Given competitive thinking about the significance of the role of experience in culinary tourism, it is becoming more critical for restaurant owners to give this concept more attention. Food is a key component in the overall travel experience, and it is particularly important for the suppliers in the culinary tourism industry to understand how they impact customer perception. A seminal piece by Pine and Gilmore (1999) reveals a platform of opportunities as it examines a customer's experience, which may also be applied to managers. As Smith and Xiao (2008) state, "despite the broad compass of culinary tourism research, a significant gap is research on supply chain theory and its applications to culinary tourism" (p. 4). Therefore, for the purposes of this dissertation, this study aims to fulfill an under investigated area of experience and the implications of that information on the future of the industry owners and managers on the trade side. A supply experience model is proposed based on a number of in-depth interviews to investigate the themes that arise when examining the overall customer experience for managers.

## **Literature Review**

### **Culinary Tourism: Defining Concepts**

A variety of definitions have been established in regard to culinary tourism. Long (1998) first developed the term, culinary tourism, as the art of experiencing cultures other than one's own through food, which encompasses a full spectrum of behaviors including presentation, preparation and consumption of food items. In a later publication, Long (2004) further discussed the process, including aspects such as physical, social, cultural, economic, spiritual and aesthetic places. Wolf (2002) explains culinary tourism as, "travel in order to search for and enjoy prepared food and drink and unique and memorable gastronomic experiences" (p. 1). Smith and Xiao (2008) define culinary tourism as "any tourism experience in which one learns about, appreciates, or consumes branded local culinary resources" (p. 289).

Ignatov and Smith (2006) recognize culinary tourism as “trips during which the purchase or consumption of regional foods (including beverages), or the observation and study of food production (from agriculture to cooking schools), represent a significant motivation or activity” (p. 238). A comprehensive definition of culinary tourism includes the “visitations to primary and secondary food producers, food festivals, restaurants, and special locations for which food tasting and / or experiencing the attributes of specialist food production is the primary motivation for travel” (Hall and Mitchell 2005, p. 20). Additionally, culinary tourism may be recognized using a variety of terms: (a) food, (b) gastronomic, (c) gourmet or (d) cuisine tourism (Hall & Mitchell, 2001).

While there are several existing culinary tourism definitions that offer a broad range of concepts, they neglect the base line information of what a tourist is in regards to the environment one is in and amount of time one spends at a destination. According to the World Tourism Organization (WTO), a tourist is “a person traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes.” Thus, a definition between Hall and Mitchell (2005) and the WTO is preferable as it encompasses both a comprehensive approach to culinary tourism and the basis of what a tourist is. For the purposes of this study, the following definition of culinary tourism is proposed: A tourist’s experience taking a trip outside their normal setting for either a primary or secondary intention to embrace the food spectrum and sample the local cuisine.

The theory of experience has more recently been applied to the culinary tourism concept. As stated in Mak, Lumbers and Eve (2012), “eating is a unique form of touristic activity that gratifies all five senses: vision, tactile, auditory, taste and olfaction (Kivela & Crofts, 2006), offering tourists a ‘sensory pleasure’ that can fulfill the ‘experiential’ part of the experience

(p. 1-2)” (Hjalager & Richards, 2002). Therefore, since culinary tourism is in fact based on experience, this article includes an examination of experience theory in further depth for the purposes of establishing the link to culinary tourism.

CT Definition Key Words: Experience, tourism- trip, primary/secondary, foodways, spectrum

## **Experience Theory in Tourism**

### **Definitions of tourist experiences.**

The idea of experience has been a significant concept throughout tourism research (Cohen 1979; Ryan 1997; Bruner 1991; Gretzel, Fesenmaier, & O’Leary 2006; Rojek & Urry 1997; Wang 1999; Pine & Gilmore, 1999; Moscardo, 2008; MacCannell 2002; Uriely, 2005; Ritchie & Hudson, 2009).

Several definitions of experience have been put forth in the leisure and tourism literature (Breejan 2007; Csikszentmihalyi, 1975; Holbrook & Hirschman 1982; Li 2000; Ritchie & Hudson, 2009; Turner & Bruner, 1986). Csikszentmihalyi (1975) first contributed to the idea of experience in the context of play / leisure and later created the term optimal experience. The notion of optimal experience (flow) describes the significance of experiences in delivering a strong sense of enjoyment and exhilaration that is treasured for an extended amount of time and thus becomes a staple point in the memory for what life should be (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). More recently, Li (2000) describes tourism experiences as an individual’s multi-functional leisure activity, including learning or entertainment. Moscardo (2009) proposes a tourist experience as a “continuous process made up of a set of events or activities occurring at a destination that often involve contact with tourism-related organizations and their personnel, and are driven by expectations of some sort of benefit” (p. 101).

### **Tourism experience core feature examples:**

Building on these definitions, Moscardo (2009; p. 100) summarizes core features found in the experience literature:

- “Experiences are made up of a series of events or activities (Smith, 2003);
- A key element of experiences are tourists' constructions of meaning from the information available in the experience setting (Uriely, 2005) and experiences have symbolic value to participants (Kim, 2001);
- Tourists express their memories of experiences through stories (Gretzel et al. 2006; Willson & McIntosh, 2007);
- Experiences have multiple phases that emerge over time (den Breejen, 2007);
- Experiences happen within physical places and the characteristics of these places and their management do influence experience (Uriely, 2005);
- Social interactions are an important component of experiences (Trauer & Ryan, 2005);
- Tourist experiences involve choice and have some expected benefit or value for the participants (Ateca-Amestoy, Serrano-del-Rosal & Vera-Toscana, 2008), and this value is often related to desired lifestyle and/or personal interests (Gross & Brown, 2006); and
- Tourist experiences depart in some way from everyday experiences (Uriely, 2005).”

### **Experience models and frameworks.**

While reviewing the tourist experience literature, various models/frameworks have been identified. Pine and Gilmore (1999), a seminal piece in the experience literature, offered a framework for understanding experiential consumptions that was of practical significance to the tourism industry. They provide a classification to explain the evolution of economic offerings, as well as dividing experiences into four types in relation to their positions (Appendix A.1.). These

four types include a framework based on two axes (passive/active and absorption/immersion): (a) entertainment (passive/absorption), (b) educational (active/absorption), (c) escapist (active/immersion), and (d) esthetic (passive/immersion).

Quan and Wang (2004) developed a conceptual model of the tourist experience by describing the experiential components while identifying food consumption as either a peak experience or supporting experience. Focusing on the experiential marketing in regards to hospitality and tourism operation, Yuan and Wu (2008) developed a theoretical framework of experiential marketing linking experiential value and customer satisfaction. This model included four constructs: (a) sense perception, (b) feel perception, (c) think perception, and (d) service quality.

While various models have been put forth, Ritchi & Hudson (2009) and Quan and Wang (2004) highlight key articles throughout the tourist experience literature. Ritchi & Hudson (2009) present seminal existing research pieces on experience through a framework that contains six major themes or categories identified as the research streams (Appendix A.3.). Stream one and six essentially offer an array of the evolution of experience. Streams two through four detect the behavior, methodologies and specific experiences. Stream five focuses on the management aspect, which is an important issue for the purpose of this literature review (See Appendix A.2. for the Ritchi & Hudson, 2009, Evolution of Experience).

Moscardo (2008) extends this thinking and presents the idea of the mindfulness theory and how it may serve as an integrating framework for understanding the tourist experience:

A tourist experience theory would also need to recognize the importance of features of the physical setting, social interactions, expectations, and information provision in determining the nature of the tourist experience. The concept of mindfulness offers all these factors (p. 112).

Given further examination of figures noted above, the following section discusses the linkage of culinary tourism and the theory of experience.

## **Linking Culinary Tourism and Experience**

While there have been numerous articles that discussed the idea of experience, there are few definitions of the culinary experience. For the purpose of this paper, the following definition for a culinary tourist experience will be used as a reconfigured idea expressed by Smith and Xiao (2008): Any tourism opportunity in which one studies, appreciates, or consumes local culinary resources. It may be an encounter through various culinary resources that is both purposeful and reflective with either one's own culture or another.

Although interest in food and tourism has been important for many years, it is only recently that it has received more attention and is becoming more recognized as an academic area of research (Hall & Sharples, 2003; Hjalager & Corigliano 2000; Hjalager & Richards, 2002, Long 2004). The overarching themes in culinary tourism research currently encompass destination marketing, which includes, promotion, image, food and attraction and motivations (Hjalager & Richards, 2002; Smith & Costello, 2009). Further, experience has been applied to various concepts, and more recently, culinary tourism. While the linkage between culinary tourism and experience has been evident, it is still underdeveloped. A core link between these two concepts has begun to emerge in a few studies.

Yun, Hennessey, and MacDonald (2011) indicate, "Several recent studies have asserted that an increasingly significant number of tourists are identifying food as a key aspect of the travel experience (Bessiere, 1998; Cohen and Avieli, 2004; Long, 2004; Quan and Wang, 2004)" (p. 2). Similarly, Kivela and Crotts (2006, 2009) stress that tourism research has identified parallels between holiday making and consumption and how gastronomy plays an important role for tourists in creating a quality visitor experience which impacts their intentions to return to the



destinations. In reference to experiential consumption, Hjalager and Richards (2002) recognize a convergence between travel and food experience.

An important piece of this linkage is found in Hall and Sharples (2003). Their book, *Food Tourism around the World*, devotes an entire chapter to the experience, (“The Consumption of Experiences or the Experience of Consumption? An Introduction to the Tourism Taste.”) This chapter illustrates how culinary tourism has become an integral feature of experience. Halls and Sharples (2003) discuss how “issues of taste, image, freshness, experience and quality are now recognized as important, not only because of the role of food in the local economy, but also because of what, why and how we eat says something about ourselves, why we travel and the society we live in” (p. 2).

A suitable example of the connection of culinary tourism experience found in this literature is displayed from a case in New South Wales (NSW), Australia. The previous Tourism Minister of NSW, Mr. Brian Langton, indicated that "NSW will embrace food and wine as an integral part of the visitor experience, and the focus of food and wine will broaden the destination appeal of NSW, and encourage more first time visitors to come back for seconds” (Langton, 1996, p. 2). As a result, a culinary tourism advisory committee was established to advance a Food and Wine in Tourism Plan (Hall & Macionis, 1998).

Another significant article examining the culinary experience is found in Kivela and Crofts (2009), which focuses explicitly on how gastronomy can influence a tourist’s experience. The study put forth several in-depth interviews from travelers to understand individuals’ experiences and feelings about a destination’s gastronomy through narratives. It explained their specific tales of culinary travel and experiences as meaningful symbols that influenced them on a deeper and more personal level. The feedback from the interviews revealed how “gastronomy

can add value to the tourist experience and is associated with quality tourism for travelers in search of new products and experiences that yield a high level of satisfaction” (p. 163). Additionally, the results acknowledged that several tourists would return to a particular destination just to experience its special gastronomy since culinary tourism serves as an important way the visitors experience a destination.

Long (2004) has suggested that tourism produces different types of experience and that one of the primary functions of the tourism industry is to stimulate food experiences. Long (2004) also discloses how tourism can connect personal experiences with both social and cultural attitudes regarding eating and food. The article emphasizes that restaurants “are prime sites of designed experiences, collaboratively produced. As businesses, restaurants adapt themselves to their market, including both their customers and their competition” (p.12). Additionally, the idea of the authentic experience, which asserts the authentic inquiry, is highlighted as being an essential component of culinary tourism. Likewise, Long stresses how “culinary tourism familiarizes the new and estranges the familiar, redrawing their relationship with each new experience (p.13).”

Comparably, Hjalager and Richards (2002) offer a chapter on “Gastronomy: An Essential Ingredient”, which contains a section dedicated specifically to creating gastronomic experiences. The linkage from Pine and Gilmore’s (1999) perspective on connecting experience to gastronomy is highlighted. This is explained by discussing how “as the basis of the economy shifts from delivering services to staging experiences, the quality of the basic elements of the product will increasingly be taken for granted by consumers, who will demand engaging absorbing experiences as part of the tourism and gastronomy product” (p.11). Hjalager and Richards (2002) also underline how gastronomy can be perceived as an essential source of

marketable images and experiences for the tourists. Hjalager and Corigliano (2004) propose a theory of how gastronomic paths can enhance the development of experiences from a specific region. Likewise, Wolf (2006) published the book, “*Culinary Tourism: The Hidden Harvest*,” which discusses ideas on how to promote drink and food as a main reason to visit a destination. Wolf provides a global perspective by revealing significant examples from multiple countries to show the value of the culinary tourism industry worldwide. He also discusses how culinary tourists are considered explorers because of the experiences they seek.

Another critical piece linking culinary tourism and experience is written by Quan and Wang (2004). This article examines food experience and tourism in detail and highlights two perspectives including the peak touristic experience and the daily experience. Food consumption can be the essential ingredient to establishing the peak experience or can just simply support the consumer experience, known as the extension of the daily dining experience. Quan and Wang (2004) further discuss how identifying these experiences in their context are important for the destination’s developers to be able to describe the tourist experience. For example, a destination developer may either choose to create an environment that is similar to the comfort of home for the daily dining individual, or incorporate a newly emerging aspect of tourism to make the tourist experience motivating or memorable to establish a peak tourist experience.

### **Recent culinary tourism and experience discussion.**

More recently, the connection of experience and culinary tourism has begun to expand in the literature. Two common themes have emerged to link these concepts: (a) experiencing local food as a tourist attraction and (b) the factors that influence a tourist’s experience.

The idea of experiencing local food as a tourist attraction is evident in several recent pieces. Chang, Kivela and Mak (2010) and Kim, Eves, and Scarles (2009) discuss how several

tourists integrate an essential part of their experience through the consumption of local dishes or other local foodways. Part of this experience includes accruing knowledge of the local food and having a better understanding of the culture. Son and Xu (2013) analyze the tourist experience in relation to local religious food as a tourist attraction. Six different categories of travel dining experiences were discussed including: “as a means for novelty seeking, as a means for sensory pleasure, as a peak tourist experience, as a symbol of authenticity, as a symbol of prestige and as a medium for cultural exploration” (p. 1). Additionally, Horng and Tsai (2012) developed a strategic framework for culinary tourism, which includes four dimensions (i.e., resources, capabilities, strategy, education). This framework is used to help destinations improve culinary experiences and to develop local culinary tourism. Another example is found in Hussain et al. (2012), which observes how gastronomy can directly affect and enhance a tourist experience. The research focuses on sustaining tourism through gastronomy in Maldives, an island nation in the Indian Ocean, which has faced substantial growth in luxury tourism. The results revealed that several resorts are concentrating on enhancing the visitor experience through local food that represents their island. Hall and Gossling (2013) devote a chapter to the idea of collaboration in culinary tourism with a key objective to develop an understanding of visitor behavior in regards to local food in order to help enrich the positive experience of culinary tourism.

The attributes that specifically influence a culinary tourist’s dining experience have also been discussed in the literature. Mak, Lumbers, and Eves (2012) reference several articles that have indicated how certain factors affect a tourist’s dining experience that, in turn, have an impact on the overall tourist experience (Chang, Kivela & Mak 2011; Cohen & Avieli 2003; Kivela & Crofts 2006; Quan & Wang, 2004). A seminal study focusing on this concept is found in Chang, Kivela and Mak (2011). Several themes influencing a typical culinary tourist’s dining

experience were determined from a sample of Chinese individuals traveling to Australia. The results indicated a classification of 15 attributes into six categories: (a) tourists' own food culture, (b) the contextual factor of the dining experience, (c) variety and diversity of the food offered, (d) perception of the destination, (e) service encounter, and (f) tour guide's performance. It is evident that the emerging themes only examine the consumer, however, therefore allowing an opportunity for more research in the supply sector.

### **Culinary tourism experience models.**

While examining the parallels between culinary tourism and experience, a few tourist driven models have been identified. In reference to Cohen (1979), Cohen and Avieli (2004) suggest that there are various modes / lifestyles of a tourist's experience, which may involve different approaches to food (Appendixes A.4.). While discussing these modes in position to food, Cohen and Avieli (2004) highlight the recreational, experiential, experimental, and existential modes.

The recreational tourist desires relaxation and enjoyment; in the realm of food and drink these tourists will illustrate neophobic (fearful) inclinations. Cohen and Avieli (2004) further describe recreational tourists in reference to food by illustrating how they "may look for familiar food of a higher quality, and in greater quantities than consumed in their daily life. Even those who manifest an explorative neophylic tendency will mainly seek new foods, which are enjoyable, rather than authentic or otherwise interesting" (p. 773). On the other hand, an experiential tourist is described as wanting to indirectly experience the authentic life of others. While linking the culinary aspect to the experiential tourist, Cohen and Avieli (2004) convey how:

In the culinary domain, they will show a marked interest in local dishes and food habits. They will visit local markets for unfamiliar vegetables, fruits, spices, and

condiments...They may taste local foods, out of curiosity rather than in quest of enjoyment. However, though such tourists will probably show stronger neophylic tendencies, they might be reluctant to expose themselves directly to the local cuisine and will opt to eat local food in the sheltered environment of tourism-oriented establishments (p. 774).

Lastly, Cohen and Avieli (2004) describe the experimental/existential tourists as individuals who

Will patronize local establishments and subsist on the local fare, whether as part of their experimenting with local life or because they have adopted it in preference to life in their place of origin. Permanent subsistence on local food, in a kind of culinary “switching worlds, can be expected mainly among existential tourists. This occurs primarily in situations where cuisine closely relates to a broader worldview selected as their elective center (Cohen 1979) (p. 189–191).

Similarly, Hjalager (2003) offers a comparable approach to Cohen’s 1994 modes of experience by developing a phenomenological model of culinary tourism experiences. Kivela and Crotts (2009) describe these modes in the culinary context (Appendixes A.4.). The existential traveler often desires culinary education through experience and food mixtures. Acquiring information about a destination’s local or regional cuisine satisfies the existential tourist’s desire to learn about the culture. Individuals that represent their lifestyle through food are classified as the experimental tourist. These tourists are typically recognized as being trendy in food and often find chic restaurants and new ingredients/recipes.

On the other hand, the recreational tourist fosters familiarity and appreciates their home cuisine. Seeking new food is not a priority for the tourist, and they will even often bring their own ingredients from home to maintain their accustomed food habits. Participation in food-related activities is limited, as this type of tourist would rather watch than partake in such food entertainment.

Lastly, the diversionary tourist desires total escape from his or her typical monotonous life. In relation to food, they would like to get out of the everyday routine of cooking for the

family, and when traveling they prefer food to come easy without much effort. This tourist seeks popular or chain restaurants that have a familiar menu and likes to embrace the opportunity to enjoy life with new friends while wining and dining.

While examining food as part of the tourist experience, Quan and Wang (2004) developed a typology of food that was noted earlier. It is based on food as a segment of the tourist experience. These typologies include a peak experience, secondary or supporting experience, or an extension of the daily routine. From this typology of food, Quan and Wang (2004) created a structural model identifying the role of different experiential components focusing on food consumption. Though this is focusing on the food consumption in detail, the structural model has a broader applicability towards other types of experiential factors in tourism.

### **Opportunity for Research**

While these articles offer a linkage between consumer experience and culinary tourism, this area is still limited and underdeveloped when it comes to understanding the culinary experience and the supply or trade side. The research that has taken place generally focuses on the consumer side. As Smith and Xiao (2008) state, “despite the broad compass of culinary tourism research, a significant gap is research on supply chain theory and its applications to culinary tourism” (p. 4). Furthermore, there has been very little research that has used case studies or applied empirical evidence. Additionally, Long (2004) claims, “Culinary tourism maps a lively cultural and intellectual terrain for future research” (p. 14). Likewise, Halls and Sharples (2003) reveal that culinary tourism “is such an integral part of the experience that it is only in recent years that it has become a subject of study in its own right... it is the very fact that it is

such an integral component of everyday life that food has for so long been missed as an area of serious research and analysis” (p.1).

An example of a piece that has examined the trade side is found in Smith and Xiao (2008) study on the supply chains of culinary tourism. This article exposes the relevance of culinary tourism and supply chain theory. It focuses on three culinary tourism areas including farmers markets, festivals and restaurants in Ontario, Canada. This study conveys that the need for improvement in supply chain management is highly evident and suggests further research in the supply side, reinforcing the limitations noted above. The models discussed that are found in the literature are mostly encompassing the consumer- side experience. Therefore, developing a trade side model is a current opportunity since little research has been done looking at this side of the spectrum.

### **Proposed Supply Culinary Tourism Experience Model**

#### **Identifying and Developing Concepts**

The experience, tourism experience and culinary tourism experience literature have all developed around proposed frameworks or structures that address the consumer experience. To target the supply or trade side of the culinary tourism experience, a framework is also useful to formulate and test. The following themes within this model were derived from a variety of sources found in the literature as well as pre-test field experience dealing with managers and owners of restaurants. Some of the following concepts were not present in the literature, but the majority of themes that emerged were analogues to the consumer literature.

**Learning / knowledge.** The concept of incorporating an element of learning and knowledge for the tourist is evident in a variety of studies. In Kivela and Crotts (2007), according to Hjalager (2003), “the existential gastronomy tourists seek food and beverage



combinations and eating experiences that foster (gastronomy) learning. For these tourists, food and beverage consumption does not only satisfy hunger and thirst but, important for them, such consumption means gaining in-depth knowledge about the local or regional cuisine, wine, and beverages and of the destination's culture" (p. 357). Smith and Costello (2009), include knowledgeable staff to be an attribute that was identified as important when delivering a product to a customer. Similarly, Ignatov and Smith (2006) discuss how culinary tourism includes learning "local knowledge" while understanding a country's distinctive culinary culture. Outside of culinary tourism studies, the ideal of incorporating learning into the initial training process is apparent in a variety of business sources. Thus, this idea of knowledge and learning is important and should be considered in the initial model to help optimize the customer's experience.

**Quality / physical setting / service.** Food quality, physical setting and service are often associated together in several pieces of research, as they are recognized as the most important attributes influencing a customer's dining experience (Namkung & Jang, 2010; Ryu, Lee & Kim, 2010; Wall & Berry, 2007). These factors are also significantly influential in a customer's decision to return to a restaurant (Soriano, 2002).

**Quality.** The concept of incorporating quality is mostly derived from the pre-test fieldwork with managers. Every owner explained the importance of quality in their dishes, and it is one of their main areas of focus in food preparation for their customers. Aside from fieldwork, several studies also indicate that food quality is the most vital component of a customer restaurant experience and feeds into their level of satisfaction (Ryu et al., 2010). From a supply standpoint, according to Smith and Xiao (2008), "culinary tourism is fundamentally about being able to access the right quantity and quality of ingredients from suppliers whose local credentials are verifiable and whose delivery is reliable" (p. 291). Therefore, insuring quality is of high

importance for the suppliers. The concept of quality is also significant from a tourist perspective. Quan and Wang (2004) explain how “tourists increasingly demand a higher standard in quality services, particularly for quality food and hospitality” (p. 297).

**Physical setting.** According to Ryu et al. (2009), a pleasing environment is the second (following quality) most important attribute to positively influence a customer’s perception of a restaurant. Empirical support of this concept is revealed through another study dedicated to the analysis of tourists by Smith and Costello (2009). This study identified an attractive environment, which included cleanliness and atmosphere, to be a feature that was considered highly important for a culinary tourist. Despite this importance, managers often neglect the physical setting in daily management, and this attribute is often considered less important for managers compared to other areas (Parish, Berry & Lam, 2010).

**Service.** The notion of physical setting is highly related to the service offered, as customers often expect a certain level of service experience based on the environment surrounding them (Sherma & Stafford, 2000). For example, nicer atmospheres are commonly correlated with friendlier and more credible services. Smith and Costello (2009) support this idea, by disclosing how friendly service was identified as highly important for tourists in a given setting.

In the realm of management, the literature suggests that owners should consider the employees’ level of preparation and their emotional wellbeing as they often affect the experience of a customer (Parish et al. 2010). Parish et al. (2010), describe this process from Wiley (1999), “the employee-customer interaction forms the basis for the hypothesis that what employees experience in the workplace is correlated with the experiences they create for customers (Oliver 1997; Schneider et al. 2005)” (p. 220). This reflects the importance of providing a pleasant work

environment for employees and also providing enough training on service for staff to be confident in their performance.

**Variety.** Variety in dishes has been known to be an essential element for a tourist to appreciate a local cuisine (Chang et al. 2010). Quan and Wang (2004) discussed this concept from a supply aspect by explaining how culinary entities should transform local diverse food into a touristic attraction. While little literature has discussed this concept, it is an aspect that was revealed to be important for several restaurant owners and breweries during the pre-test.

**Quantity.** Quantity for food / beer was added to the model primarily based on the pre-test, specifically from the interviews with the restaurant and brewery owners. Several owners discussed how this is an important concept to consider when assessing how customers may perceive value.

**Senses beyond taste.** The role of senses is discussed frequently throughout tourism research literature. As discussed in Sims (2009), “A growing body of work is beginning to pay testament to the role that sensations of taste, touch, sound and smell can play within the holiday (Boniface, 2003; Davidson, Bondi, & Smith, 2005; Eastham, 2003; Mitchell & Hall, 2003; Urry, 1995)” (p. 321).

In an important piece, Urry (1990) introduces the concept of a “tourists gaze” discussing the visual effect and how it is often perceived as extremely important for tourists (MacCannell, 2001). Several studies have suggested that the touristic experience involves more than just the visual aspect, and that it is actually multi-sensory (Dann & Jacobsen, 2002; Franklin & Crang, 2001; Pan & Ryan, 2009). According to the International Culinary Tourism Association (2005), culinary tourism is the only form of tourism experience that involves all five senses.

Countless successful companies have capitalized on this notion by selling engaging multi-sensory experiences as an avenue to differentiate themselves from others (Luttinger & Dicum, 2006). Pine and Gilmore (1998) illustrate this process by describing a dining experience that incorporates the senses, “The mist at the Rainforest Café appeals serially to all five senses. It is first apparent as a sound: Sss-sss- zzz. Then you see the mist rising from the rocks and feel it soft and cool against your skin. Finally, you smell its tropical essence, and you taste (or imagine that you do) its freshness” (p. 104).

Not only have many companies integrated the idea of a multi-sensory experience into their business plans, it is also significant in reference to the customer experience, specifically in regards to the sense of smell. Pan and Ryan (2009), explain, “out of the five senses, smell is said to be the most closely tied to memory (Wilkie, 1994) and nowadays, people are starting to see the world through their noses” (p. 628). In regards to restaurants, there is a strong correlation between smell and a pleasing dining experience (Dan & Jacobsen, 2003). Smith and Costello (2009) identified pleasant smells as one of the most important attributes for customers. From this research, the importance of senses for the tourists and the impact they can have when creating a dining experience for customers is evident.

**Differentiation.** The idea of differentiation has been long discussed throughout the business literature and is often applied to managers and owners as a way to receive competitive advantage (Barney, 1991; Dickson & James, 1987). According to Harrington and Ottenbacher (2010), differentiation refers to a “business strategy that creates a real or imagined perception that affirms products or services are unique and different from the competition” (p. 17). The four criteria to produce differentiation in reference to the resource-based perspective include: (a) customer value, (b) rarity, (c) difficulty to imitate, and (d) few substitutions (Barney, 1991).

When thinking about the way owners operate their businesses, achieving this differentiation is critical for success of companies (Wood, 2000). Therefore, it is important for restaurant and brewery owners to consider how they attain differentiation within their operation to develop a competitive edge.

**Local culture.** The linkage between culinary tourism and local culture is found in the literature from a variety of fields. First and foremost, as discussed earlier, one of the key definitions or elements of culinary tourism developed by Lucy Long, is described as experiencing one's culture through food (Long, 1998), revealing the importance of this linkage. Richards (2012) expands on this thought by discussing how a culinary tourist desires an experience that incorporates local and authentic foods associated to the areas he or she visits.

From a supply perspective, this notion is important when thinking how to best promote a local culture and how the food is presented for tourists. For example, Chang et al. (2011) state how "destination marketers often strive to showcase their culture in front of tourists to create an appealing package and would possibly adapt cultural manifestations to suit the taste of the tourists" (in Chhabra, Healy, & Sills, 2003, p. 309).

**Backstage access.** The idea of backstage access is apparent in the grey area of literature found in magazines, television food networks, websites, and other resources that discuss culinary cooking classes at a given destination. This also refers to tours that are apparent at a variety of breweries. Identifying this concept as an element of importance could be important for owners and managers when thinking about their customers' experiences. From a theoretical standpoint, MacCannell (1976) examines the front / back stage access in regards to creating an authentic experience for customers. The article discusses this element from a local perspective in a community context. The results revealed that locals often preserved the back stage for

themselves, and many communities will not allow tourists to access beyond the front area. For the purposes of this research, backstage access refers to the ability to allow customers to access the interworking preparation area.

**Fun/entertainment.** The literature pertaining to fun and entertainment is often found in the culinary context when thinking about food and wine festivals. These concepts are significant when thinking about a tourist's experience. As Kruger, Rootenberg, and Ellis (2012) explain, "hosting events and festivals is the best way of providing the wine tourism experience" (p. 435). It may be useful for suppliers to consider this when creating a fun and entertaining environment for their customers. For example, hosting a brewery festival to promote a region's specialty brews creates a fun and entertaining event for the local community.

**Sustainability.** Sustainability has changed the landscape in which many owners and managers operate and think about their businesses. This concept is found in a number of articles (Boniface, 2003; Davidson, Bondi, & Smith, 2005; Eastham, 2003; Hall & Gossling, 2013). However, in reference to culinary tourism and sustainability, little research has been done.

A few culinary tourism articles have identified the linkage between sustainability in regards to local food and culinary tourism. Hall and Gossling (2013) explain,

Writers have identified the market potential for 'gastronomic tourism', arguing that it potentially has strong sustainability credentials if grounded in local foods (Hjalanger and Richards 2002; Hall 2003; du Rand and Heath 2006; Nummedal and Hall 2006). These findings suggest that both the production and consumption of food are important aspects in the development of sustainable tourism and sustainable culinary systems (p. 8). (See also Sims 2009 for discussion of this issue).

An important piece that specifically examines culinary tourism in reference to sustainability is discussed in Hall and Gossling (2013). This study reflects the importance of considering sustainable culinary systems in regards to local foods, tourism and hospitality. It

focuses on both the significance of providing local products as well as discussing setting in regards to sustainability.

While little research has been completed, the notion of sustainability should be a part of the model as it could create several managerial implications related to customer experience.

**Social media and technology.** There currently exists little literature on the linkage of social media, technology and culinary tourism. However, in regards to technology, one recent piece explains the potential for iPads to enhance the customer experience. Yun 2012 explains, “Comparing to printed menu, digital menu could be a sufficient way to enhance restaurants brand identities and help diners to build positive attitudes toward the restaurants, which will increase their brand loyalty for better benefits” (p. 101).

This attribute was primarily developed in the pre-test. All owners revealed some impact they received directly correlated to these areas. Therefore, moving forward, this concept will be adopted to further detect how it can affect owners in a positive or negative way.

### **Purpose of Study and Unique Contribution to the Field**

This literature review points out the lack of attention to the supply-side experience model (Smith & Xiao 2008). It is implicit that the interest in culinary tourism has been apparent for decades, but not been explored in depth (Bessiere, 1998; Hall & Gössling, 2013, Long, 2004; Mak et al., 2012). The majority of the existing research highlights the demand experience, missing opportunities in the supply / trade realm. There currently exists no model that has tested all elements. The purpose of this dissertation was to present a pioneer study in the culinary tourism field, and to introduce and test of a Supply Culinary Tourism Experience Model. One outcome of developing and testing the model will be to improve the understanding of culinary tourism opportunities for training and managerial implications. This study will address two

important research needs and outcomes. Aside from contributing to the relatively small amount of literature in the culinary tourism field and introducing an experience model, these practical insights to owners will help enhance the management of the overall culinary tourism experience.



CHAPTER 2  
METHODS

**Data Collection**

To further understand the culinary tourism experience as it applies to the supply sector of both restaurants and breweries, a qualitative study was developed in August 2011. Taking information from the literature review, and the concepts that were identified from the culinary field, a pre-test was designed. This study surveyed six restaurant owners and six brewery owners to assess their initial thoughts on creating a culinary experience for their customers (Figure 2.1). All interviews were administered in person at the location of the restaurant or brewery.

*The following open-ended questions guided the interviews and helped gain better insight to the development of the model:*

- Approximately what proportion of business comes from locals vs. tourists?
- Do you think the environment you have created affects a visitor’s overall experience?
- If so, what do you do specifically to help create this experience?
- Do you do anything different for locals vs. tourists?

Figure 2.1 Summary of pre-test questions.

From this exploratory pre-test with the owners, an expanded survey was developed. The questions that emerged came from the literature and the manager / owner interviews in the pre-test. The themes that emerged to create a Culinary Tourism Supply Experience Model are displayed in Table 2.1. (Moscardo, Minihan, & O’Leary, Forthcoming).

Table 2.1. Culinary tourism supply experience model: Key experience themes and examples for different food / beer tourism experiences.

Themes	Examples
Learning / knowledge	“We encourage servers to convey certain information during dining service and give knowledge.” “Everything evolves around teaching the customers about what we do and who we are.”
Physical setting	“The age of the building is over 100 years old and the exposed brick gives a warm laid back feeling.”

Beer / Food quality	<p>“Everything is made fresh. We buy the best products we can.”</p> <p>“Quality is absolutely primary. We have our standard mantra for the productions, as it has to be quality or we won’t ship it.”</p>
Beer / Food quantity	<p>“We have generous portions on everything.”</p>
Beer / Food variety	<p>“I really like variety. I try and change the menu as much as I can.”</p> <p>“Variety is huge for us as we have a lot of food options and beer options.”</p> <p>“We have different beers that go through all the seasons, which include a watermelon beer in the summer and a heavier one in the winter.”</p>
Service quality	<p>“We make sure the staff is friendly, smiling and engaging with the guests. That goes a long way for people to enjoy their evening.”</p> <p>“The important thing is when the guests come into the door they are feeling welcome. We discuss it’s like coming into our home.”</p>
Local culture	<p>“Because we brew and sell our beer only locally, we feel very much a part of the local culture.”</p>
Senses beyond taste	<p>“We want our guests to look at it and go ‘wow’ that’s really nice or I can’t eat that. It looks too perfect.”</p> <p>“70-80% of what we perceive as taste is actually aroma. We concentrate on our sensory program and training our folks in the liquid center to have those five tastes when sampling our beer and the aromas.”</p> <p>“It’s not just about taste, it’s about clarity, smell, malt feel. All these different elements help us evaluate the beer to make sure it’s where it should be.”</p>
Backstage access	<p>“We have 12 guided tours a day which take customers inside the brew house where the sour beers are actively souring.”</p>
Fun/Entertainment	<p>“There is an entertainment side of the restaurant that includes a pool and ping-pong table.”</p>
Sustainability	<p>“We strive to be sustainable. We reuse water when possible in the brewing process. The way we serve our beer is sustainable, either in glass pints, reusable growlers to go, or reusable kegs. We create very little in the way of waste.”</p>
Social media / Technology	<p>“We have a “Social Station” in the Liquid Center which is available for guests to check in on facebook, tweet about their experience, or browse our website.”</p>
Differentiate	<p>“We are different from other breweries because we are the first brewery to open in this town. At the time we differentiated ourselves by focusing on in-house beer</p>

	sales instead of distribution.”
Target market	“Our target is just as much of the community as we can get in here, but I’d say primarily what we attract is a wide age range from college students on dates to older people on anniversaries.”

In order to gain insight into the general structure of the model, 12 in-depth interviews were held with six brewery owners and six upscale casual restaurant owners. The themes in the model helped drive a set of open-ended questions to use in these interviews (Figure 2.2).

*The following open-ended questions guided the interviews and help gain better insight to the general structure of the model. Each question was altered to the type of business (brewery or restaurant owner):*

- How do you provide a learning experience for your customers? Do you train your staff to provide guidance and knowledge about your restaurant / food / wine / beer for your customers?
- What are the elements of the setting you provide that are important or relevant? Does it work?
- What do you do specifically to help optimize the food quality and quantity in your restaurant for your customers?
- Do you offer a variety of foods for your customers?
- While assessing food quantity, do you provide generous portions or small? Why?
- Do you offer backstage access for your customers (for example, meeting the chef)?
- Do you help promote a local cultural experience? How?
- What do you do specifically to enhance the senses beyond taste (design, color of food, aromas, etc.)?
- Do you provide training for service quality? What specific things do you do during this training?
- What do you do specifically to create a fun/entertaining environment?
- What does sustainability mean to you in how you operate your restaurant? Are you including it in how you create the experience and get customers to think about your business?
- How does social media influence you? Do you choose to participate in it often?

Figure 2.2 Summary of interview questions.

The results from the pre-test identified an important issue relating to the difference between local customers and tourists. In many cases, owners did not identify an inherent difference. Therefore, for the purposes of the model, all visitors / customers are included.

## **Data Analysis**

This data for this study were coded using content analysis; there were initial categories and codes that guided the study while others were allowed to emerge (Merriam, 1998). These initial codes were developed from research literature on culinary tourism (Shepardson et al., 2007). Thus, the concepts in Figure 2.1 formed the initial codes. These codes were used in a pre-test to gain insights into the general structure of a culinary tourism model. Based on the results from this formulation, other codes began to emerge inductively, which led to the development of the Culinary Tourism Supply Experience Model in Table 2.1 (Moscardo, Minihan & O’Leary, Forthcoming). From this model, a conventional analysis was then applied to use a set of open-ended questions found in Figure 2.2. Next, through a cross-case analysis, common themes that developed across all individuals were noted and conclusions were drawn pertaining to culinary tourism experience based on these themes. Alias names were applied in reporting results to protect participant identities.

## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH FINDINGS

#### **Brewery Findings**

The qualitative analyses revealed several emerging themes based on the questions asked of brewery owners, relating to the model in Table 2.2. These themes will be highlighted below and separated by each question. Each section will have specific examples gathered from the data. The quotes chosen are from individuals that best represent all participants' perspectives.

#### **Learning and Knowledge**

Integrating learning and knowledge is essential for the breweries to ensure a better experience for their customers. This mainly includes staff meeting with the brew master to understand the aromas, style, and expectations of each beer. All of the brewery owners expressed the importance of training their staff to provide knowledge to their customers. While examining knowledge, a couple of emerging themes became apparent after completing the interviews. These themes include training / promoting knowledge and flexibility.

**Training and promoting knowledge.** For most of the breweries, training on brewing methods is an ongoing process and often takes place at least once a month to introduce new beers to the employees. The breweries conveyed how critical beer knowledge is to them by testing the new employees after the initial training process. The tests are sometimes very intensive and can be in the form of either oral or written exams.

We go through the brewing process with the brewers. Obviously they aren't going to know as much as the brewers, but they are required to know what all the beers taste like; the main hops and flavors coming in the beer and the style. You go through two weeks of training and at the end of the training we have a GED test almost 50 pages long. They have to name and describe all the wine prices, scotches, malts and beers. Then they are required to get a 90 percent on the test. We look for people who will stay with us for the amount of training we put in, as we spend \$5,000-\$6,000 per server for training.

Additionally, it is evident that training staff helps to ensure they can distinguish among the different beer types (e.g., lager, ale, etc.), as well as being able to transfer this knowledge to the guest.

Education is a big part of what we want in our taproom. We want our co-workers to spend the time talking to our customers about what they are drinking, how it's made, what we're making and why. We also give them the beer cards to help further understand what we are doing. So that is a big part of our experience, as we want to share our brewing expertise via drinking our beer in the taproom.

**Brewery story.** While many breweries recognize the benefits of telling their stories to customers, there are still a few that have not adopted this idea, therefore allowing room for improvement. In a similar manner, educating staff to not only understand the story of the brewery, but also share it with the customers has become a creative way to promote learning. Owners have recognized that sharing the brewery's story can facilitate a deeper connection to the brewery for customers.

A key component is the brand story behind the beer, why it was developed and what's special about it. In terms of the customer, the first time I had one of the wheat beers and heard this great story about it, I had an emotional connection with the beer, which is great. We encourage employees to talk about their story with the beer and their connection.

Several breweries have adopted the use of beer cards to explain the beers for the customers in detail. They also recognize the interaction with guests can be fruitful by providing them information about the beers.

Along with knowledge gained through training, promoting community beer awareness became apparent. For example, several owners have their staff go to other breweries to sample beer in order to compare and contrast them with their own brews. In fact, a stipend is typically granted to employees to taste other beers.

This enables them to have a better understanding of what is available in town and to learn more about the community.

We encourage also for everyone to go out and try different breweries. So we give everyone a stipend each week for people to go out and try not only our stuff but also other stuff so they can learn more about beer and our community too.

**Flexibility / staff empowerment.** While every brewery emphasizes the importance of educating staff and promoting knowledge, each owner has recognized the value of flexibility and trust they give to their employees when conveying knowledge. For example, after the training process, the managers often encourage the staff to provide information when asked or when they feel it is appropriate.

We are totally flexible and we'll provide the staff as much information as they want, but they put their own take on it when they deliver it. We want them to give their own style.

This statement is an accurate reflection of the owners as they appreciate the advantage of giving their staff some amount of freedom. By allowing staff to have some power, it often becomes an advantage for the brewery as a whole. For example, managers freely enable staff to give away beers or other merchandise when a customer appears unhappy. This is performed without getting permission from upper management, which ultimately helps staff feel more accomplished and satisfied. The implications of this flexible approach can greatly benefit the breweries. For instance, it allows the customers to get turned on to the beer so they can spread the word, come back and buy them in bars and restaurants. The underlining goal then shifts from selling the beer to creating an enjoyable experience.

### **Physical Setting**

Breweries recognize that customers do not usually visit breweries quickly and leave. Rather the visit becomes a memorable experience that they can enjoy their time. Some breweries have mentioned how ambiance can set the mood, which would in turn affect attitude. Therefore,

they realize the elements of the setting provided are important and relevant for their customers. The components that have worked well for the owners include attractiveness, cleanliness of facilities, space and friendliness of staff.

**Attractiveness.** Overall attractiveness plays an important role for breweries when thinking about their customers. Both the character and age of the brewery's building become an automatically attractive benefit for customers. For example, the building, which houses one brewery is over 100 years old, and the exposed brick gives the backdrop a warm, laid back feeling.

Another way breweries enhance the appearance of the building is by hanging flowers on the porch in the summer. Breweries enhance appearance of outdoor areas through the use of landscaping to create a welcoming first impression for visitors and an outdoor space for customers to enjoy.

**Cleanliness of facility.** When observing the physical setting, breweries have also acknowledged how cleanliness and providing a comfortable area is critical for the customer experience.

We want our guests to feel comfortable, but there are other ways to achieve this; if the atmosphere is appealing to you then you feel like you belong. If you feel as if the place is dirty you may not enjoy the service even if it is great beer or good food. All these factors matter. We try to have a nice feel when you walk in so it's not a sterile environment. Instead it is more of a homey and welcoming environment.

If a brewery is dirty, it may keep guests on edge the entire time and become a distraction from the service and even the quality of beer. Similarly, a dirty bathroom or unclean dishes can reflect poorly on the cleanliness of the beer or food offered.

**Space.** The space in which the brewery operates can serve as an advantage for the physical setting for the customer. While most breweries in town are limited on space, it enables



the owners to become creative and think of ways to engage the audience in an appealing way. For instance, at one brewery though they have a small space to work with, they grow hops on the patio around the sitting area for customers to look at and read the description for each hop as they enjoy their beer. The owner explains other ways in which he utilizes his space:

What we have is the space we have. One of the guys came up with the idea that we would have another area beyond the bar. We put it in and it gives it a warm feeling. It is small but we added a Ping-Pong table. Gives you another place to go.

In a similar way, the small space for several breweries has an advantage to create a more intimate setting for the bartender to interact more easily with the customer. By creating a space that promotes interaction, customers feel more comfortable and more like a guest.

**Friendliness of staff.** In order to provide an inviting and welcoming setting, staff must exhibit a high degree of friendliness. With these amiable interactions in mind, it enables a customer to feel comfortable and translates well into a sense of belongingness in the restaurant. Most owners expressed the importance of this quality.

I think atmosphere, staff friendliness, attitude are huge. You want to feel like you belong in the atmosphere. As far as other atmosphere in general making sure the staff is friendly and smiling and engaging with the guests, I think that goes a long way for people to enjoy their evening.

This begins when the guest first walks into the brewery. For instance, when a guest encounters a busy day, or has a hard time finding a parking spot, the first impression when they walk in is pivotal. It is therefore evident that having a positive interaction with the staff can completely turn around their day.

### **Local Culture / Entertainment**

When asked how each brewery promotes the local culture, each owner seemed to be very engaged with the community and responded positively. The ideal of promoting a local culture was revealed through the entertainment the breweries provided. Therefore, for the

purposes of this section, local culture and entertainment are combined. Local events / donations, local stakeholder meetings, art, live music, and games are evident when thinking about how breweries entertain their guests and promote local culture.

**Local culture - inherited view.** Interestingly, because breweries make and sell their beer locally, they often felt like they are promoting a local culture. When the discussion was about local culture, the way in which they responded was in the context of inheriting that culture.

Because we brew and sell our beer only locally, we feel very much a part of the local culture. We live and work here. We took out our car parking lot and made it into bicycle parking for everyone to use because we saw there was a need. We love the community and do everything we can to make it a great place.

There is an evident level of satisfaction that the breweries have in being part of the local culture and they are often proud to promote it.

**Local events / donations.** Breweries also enjoy giving back to the community through donations, for charity, or local establishments. Often times, these donations were given through local events. For example, one brewery is a great example of how events are used to support the local bike community.

Two things come to mind immediately when thinking about local culture: beer drinking and bikes. Bicycles are part of our experience every summer to encourage participants to drink beer to support our cycling community.

Every year, this brewery puts an annual event together, which is a fundraiser where locals ride bikes and dress up in fun costumes. They also show summer bike-in movies, with proceeds going to the local cycling community. Other ways breweries give donations is by supplying free kegs of beer to community events.

**Local stakeholder meetings.** Similarly, breweries also enjoy hosting local meetings for stakeholders in the area to come together for discussions and presentations. For example, one

owner offers several meeting rooms for the Convention and Visitors Bureau and other organizations to use when desired.

**Art.** One of the ways in which most breweries enjoy entertaining guests is by, hanging artwork on their walls. This allows the breweries to showcase local artists and contributes to a sense of community. One brewery ensures the quality of the paintings displayed pair well with the quality of the beer. Most breweries often alternate the artwork, which enables the customers to come back more often, and either look at their own work or the work or new works of others displayed on the walls. Some owners even encourage, customers to vote for their favorite art pieces:

We tapped into first night art walk. We have art in the other room just so local artists hang their art. Whoever wins the popular vote gets to keep their art up for the month because there are no galleries around here. We don't charge anything. They seem to appreciate it.

**Live music.** Live music is another one of the most common forms of entertainment at the breweries. Furthermore, promoting local bands is another way they get the community engaged. Several breweries bring in local musicians weekly to serenade the guests and enrich their experience. As a result of the positive feedback they receive from their customers, most breweries are continually motivated to bring in new artists and keep the music scene alive for their guests. While live music is a common trend among breweries, one brewery in particular thought it was a distraction and only appealing to certain audiences.

We actually don't do much live music because it's a distraction and your only appealing to a certain audience when you do live music. People won't go to some places because they do so much live music. And breweries do a lot of live music. We don't have to pull you in because we are playing music; you are going to come anyways. Entertainment for us is less entertainment.

Another brewery is also an exception that does not include music as entertainment. Since this brewery is limited by space, entertainment takes the form of interaction between guests and

staff in addition to the quality of the beer. This indicates certain breweries aspire to provide certain experiences.

**Games.** Some breweries use games as entertainment. These include corn hole tournaments and trivia in addition to unique games at each brewery. For example, one brewery started using a yard game called Rolle Bolle, a popular form of entertainment in Belgium, which promotes easy enjoyment and fits into the brewery's culture. A different brewery has a variety of games including foosball and ping-pong. Still a third, offers shuffleboards for guest use, and a fourth has a pool table, karaoke and ping-pong.

**Television.** One may assume televisions would be popular in breweries, but in fact they are not. Only one brewery surveyed has a television. Most feel this way because it can become an interruption.

Part of what we provide is no television, which can be a distraction and take away from the experience of the beer and the great community of people around you.

## **Beer Quality**

For all breweries, beer quality seemed to be valued the most, and, as a result, is one of the main focuses of the businesses. In fact, most breweries pride themselves on having a quality beer. For example, a representative from one brewery explains how this brewery has been under the same ownership for 17 years. Additionally, it has received several Great American Beer Festival awards to compliment the beer quality. Another brewery also expressed how the owners met in beer school, where beer quality was of utmost importance. As a result, quality is reflected in the daily operation. When discussing beer quality, two main components were revealed.

**Up to standard.** First, the beer needs to be scientifically up to standard. Most breweries have a checklist of key ingredients to ensure the best flavor and to fill all of the requirements specific to each brewery. Some of the items on these lists include control of timing, temperature,

and quantity. Often times the breweries have strict standards they try to meet daily when creating the beer.

While brewing beer we have tight control on timing, temperature and quantity. We use different yeasts depending on the beer we're making. It can really change the profile of the beer process.

**Beer tastings.** Another component is the ability for staff to taste the beer throughout the preparation. Regularly, when new batches are finished, brewers will bring the beer out for employees to taste and to see if it is the quality it should be.

Quality is very important to us. And we allow people to have the ability to taste throughout the process. If its bad we pull the beer - never put bad beer out even if it's good but not in line.

It is evident if the beer is not in line with their expectations; they throw it away immediately without hesitation. Most brewers view the process as cooking and experimenting, so they expect to toss beer that does not meet expectations.

### **Beer Quantity**

When thinking about quantity for breweries, the concept usually refers to the amount of beer a customer consumes. While beer quantity is valued highly for brewers, it is not perceived as significant by consumers. This is due to the typical microbrewery customer who almost always prefers a quality beer instead of focusing on the quantity. The main element derived from quantity when speaking with owners was intoxication management.

**Intoxication management.** Despite this not being the main area of focus for the brewers, the owners do teach their staff to know when to cut off their customers if needed. For example, the initial training covers ways in which staff can identify intoxication in a customer and know how to manage the situation at hand. Another way breweries manage the quantity is by having some systems in place for selling certain beers. For example, to control how much they serve of

the higher alcohol content beverages, staff pours the beer into a smaller glass. This action takes place because these types of beers are meant to be enjoyed slowly, and not consumed quickly.

All of our coworkers are trained and don't have specific limits on how much people can drink but are trained to recognize when someone shouldn't be drinking anymore. They are very assertive of saying no to customers who drink too much and will call the police if someone is not cooperative. If it's a higher alcoholic beer we only serve it in a small glass because someone doesn't need to drink 16 ounces of that. It kind of defeats the purpose so we limit that the serving size in that respect.

## **Beer Variety**

Offering a large variety of beers seemed to be an important focus for some breweries.

The main element that emerged in this area is experimenting with new flavors.

**Experimenting with new flavors.** Most breweries experiment with new flavors in small batches and create seasonal beers, as well as other unique flavors. Often, owners have expressed that customers respond well to beer changes. For example, trying different heavier beers in the winter and lighter beers in the summer pleases the customers and motivates them to come in more frequently. As a result, it encourages the brewers to continually craft different creations.

Beer wise we have ten to twelve year – round; at least four to six specialty beers on tap as well. We will run them for two to four weeks that go with the seasons as well. For example, summer time we offer wheat beers, peach, and watermelon beer. Then in wintertime, we'll do the heavier beers. More hoppier, heavier IPA's and brown ales. Holidays we have Pumpkin Ale, and Christmas Ale's. As far as beer wise we do a good job of having a lot of specialty beer items.

Though variety is important for the majority of brewers, a few are limited to some extent because they only have a certain number of taps with which to work. Despite these limitations, the brew masters still enjoy experimenting with small batches through a five-barrel system. For example, one brewery has 14 taps and thus can produce a limited amount of beers and flavors. This allows the brewers to produce a gluten free beer and switch up new flavors at different times.

In another light, a few breweries would rather be recognized as carrying specialized beer rather than offering a large variety of flavors. For these brewers, staying in their main line of focus is necessary to promote their niche beer. They believe offering a lot of other flavors could serve as a possible distraction.

We focus mainly on the darker ales. We do Queen sometimes and then four seasonal beers. We don't do anything outside of Belgium beers. Our main line is Queen.

### **Backstage Access / Tours**

The main avenue for breweries when considering backstage access is through brewery tours.

**Brewery tours.** One may assume all the breweries have a set schedule of tour times and dates, but this is not always the case. In fact, only two of the breweries interviewed have formal tour times available. Others are flexible and typically by appointment only. In some cases, the breweries are limited by space, which does not allow room for tours. One owner reflects the collective opinion of several breweries by stating:

We are so small we do not have formal, scheduled tours. We do however give tours when asked as long as we are not too busy. We do not allow customers in during brew times for safety reasons, but we open our overhead door that looks out into the beer garden so that customers can see the workings of the brew house.

While many of the smaller brewers discussed this, they also mentioned how they would potentially like to bring more formality to tours. Similarly, while everyone has a different tour scheme, all breweries were open to allowing guests to occasionally take a look at the brew room.

Outside of tours, some breweries are open to hosting a few individuals who are interested in the brew process and invite them to brew with the brew masters. The idea of teaching individuals who have a desire to become potential brewers is exciting for them.

The brew masters are really good when people come from other states. They let them brew with them. We definitely accommodate people looking to start a pub in a different state so they have a better understanding how it works.

### **Senses Beyond Taste**

In general, all the breweries seemed to endorse senses beyond taste, particularly through the aroma and the visual sense.

**Aroma.** The aroma of the beer was often the first area each owner would discuss. In fact, one brewery expressed how 70-80% of what customers perceive as taste is actually aroma. Because of this, most brewers concentrate on the scents of the beer. Most of the scents they embrace are pleasant for the nose, which may include lemon, orange peel, grapefruit, and earthy grass tones. Breweries also recognize that some smells can cause customers to become repulsed. As a result, staff will warn guests before they order certain beers from a unique batch.

Aromas in beer are really huge. You can really turn people off from a tasty beer but bad aroma. We try to warn people with certain beers that may have different aromas and flavors which customers may not expect. We do odd mixtures at times so when we use sour flavorings we warn them.

With this concept in mind, the head of the beer goes hand in hand with the smell as the majority of the aroma is found there. For this reason, the presentation of the beer that has foam on the top is important for the breweries.

**Visual.** To promote other senses, breweries also embrace the visual sense. Color and clarity is often a way customers take in the presentation of the beer. Hence, it is important for the brewers to prepare it the way they think is best prior to serving it. Another way they make the visual sense come alive is by using their own special glasses and coasters for their beers, which showcases their logos.

Presentation for the taproom is important, we use our signature coasters and glasses. Even for the tasters we use our special glasses so they can put their hands around it and get the full flavor.



It is evident that this personalization is important when looking at the visual aspect for all breweries. In fact, each of the breweries use its own logo and personalized glasses.

## **Sustainability**

While sustainability is becoming a significant trend in today's society, breweries can still come a long way in improving in this area. The positive aspect of discussing sustainability with the owners is discovering how each recognizes the importance of this topic. All breweries revealed putting forth efforts to improve the ways in which they approach sustainability for their operation. Initially, several owners asked for clarity of what sustainability meant to them and their vision. As a result, a definition of sustainability was presented to them. The "all-round sustainable tourism" definition similar to Sims (2009) was explained as "focusing upon achieving all-round social, economic and environmental benefits on the understanding that the best form of tourism would be one which achieves and gains on all dimensions and for all groups" (p. 323).

After this was explained, they went into detail about their efforts towards this movement. Three elements were revealed which include cost limitations, local products, and other sustainable efforts.

**Cost limitations.** The most frequently stated comment from the majority of breweries is the aspiration to adopt more sustainable practices. However, their ability to accomplish this was either limited due to cost restraints or space limitations. For example, one of the most desirable sustainable features each brewery would like to acquire is solar panels. Yet, since they are often fairly high in cost, breweries tend to shy away from purchasing them. Purchasing local ingredients for the beer has a similar effect. Breweries buy hops and other ingredients from a

large distributor outside of Colorado since the prices are substantially cheaper than local farms. For most operations, considering cost is often more important than providing only local items. A few owners mentioned they try endorsing sustainable efforts if it makes sense economically and if it is possible. The smaller breweries especially consider that in their decision-making process, but also recognize if they had the means to provide more sustainable initiatives they would take more action.

It would be great to do more, but it has to make sense. Big breweries can tell you all kinds of stuff. If I had the money to do it, it would be a whole other ball game. You do not go green unless it makes sense. Even green places are not fully green.

This statement is an accurate representation of several of the smaller breweries when considering sustainable development. Despite these limitations, several sustainable initiatives have taken place.

**Local products.** While the breweries do not tend to purchase local hops, they do try to incorporate purchasing the smaller ingredients locally. For example, when making flavored beers, they would try to purchase local items including local roast for a coffee flavor, local tea for a green tea beer, local chocolate for a chocolate stout or local honey to add a nice honey flavor.

People support me. I want to support them. I am not going to buy Folger's Coffee and dump it in the beer.

In a similar manner, breweries promote local food through the concept of food trucks, which are becoming more appealing for customers. These food trucks park at various breweries and provide customers with local food items directly from their trucks. This allows breweries to not only expose their customers to local food, but also helps the breweries that do not serve food.

**Other sustainable efforts.** Conserving water by either reusing it or recapturing it through a heat exchanger is in place for several brewers. Additionally, breweries often donate

leftover grains from the brew process to local farmers for use in cattle or poultry operations.

Another sustainable action breweries utilize is re-using beetle kill wood. Several breweries have used this for tables, chairs or doors. While most of these efforts are on a small scale, breweries have often acknowledged they would like to do as much as they can to lessen the impact on the environment.

One brewery, in particular, stands out as being the most sustainable brewery in the town.

They have made extraordinary efforts to develop a sustainable operation:

For our brewery, sustainability means operating in a way that is good for the planet, people and profitability. We are constantly balancing and re-assessing these needs as we make business decisions. In the Liquid Center specifically we are supporters of local food trucks, electric vehicle drivers (we have two charging stations at the front of the building for public use), encourage waste reduction, re-use of materials and recycling. You will see chairs and tables made out of bicycle parts and tables repurposed from brewing equipment and beetle kill pine.

As a result of these positive practices, other breweries often compared their operation to this brewery with respect to sustainability issues. While several owners respect these actions, cost still limits them. However, holistically, the use of these sustainable practices has influenced them to reassess the way they run their operation and make decisions.

## **Target Market**

Collectively, the breweries liked to assume everyone who could drink beer was their target market. Often a pause was given when asked this question, which indicates that many are not exactly sure what the target market is. The majority would simply respond the target is for beer lovers, the local community and tourists. While the answers were often vague, a few other targets were revealed.

**Observed targets.** Breweries have observed that most craft beer drinkers are men in their late 20s and 30s. However, recently, they are noticing more college students who have

grown an appreciation for craft beer and are starting to choose that over a macro-brew. Another interesting observation about their customers is most people who enjoy craft beer also have an appreciation for wine. This is because with wine, like micro-beers, one tends to focus on quality over quantity.

The interesting things about a craft beer drinker, is a lot of them like wine and are wine drinkers. It makes sense because with wine you're not looking to get drunk you're looking for better flavors or something unique about the wine. It's the same way with craft beer; you can appreciate the difference between beers.

**Unique targets.** While each brewery is trying to target the majority, a few breweries have sought out a unique target unlike the others. One brewery is trying to attract families by opening their taproom on Sundays to underage customers. Games are often provided outside for the children's entertainment. Another brewery is currently building a reputation as the brewery that works with local chefs. This brewery collaborates with chefs to create beer dinners and believes this is a niche market.

We tend to go after people that love beer. But we'd really like to go after chefs. We've done really well with beer dinners. And chefs have really picked up our beer and I think this would be a good market for us to go after. I'd like to see people who are really into that.

## **Differentiation**

Differentiation is another area that appears to be ambiguous for the breweries.

Interconnectivity and specific unique differences were emerging themes that developed.

**Interconnectivity.** Surprisingly, every brewery mentioned they do not necessarily perceive other brewers as competition or feel the need to completely differentiate themselves. They tend to work together as a community and recognize how each experience contributes to enrich overall experiences for both tourists and residents. For example, breweries have

mentioned their approach to form relationships in town and how this is advantageous in terms of creating a memorable experience for visitors of the town.

The breweries are fantastic. We do not compete even at the second level. It is all centered around relationship, the rising tide approach. It is to everyone's advantage to make a great experience for visitors from out of town.

All the breweries interviewed revealed how important working together has been and how they enjoy helping each other. Some breweries even carry other local breweries' beers on tap. Many breweries will even recommend other breweries to their customers and discuss how delicious their beers are. In a similar manner, breweries frequently stated how they do not look at other competitors as competitors as they all sell beer. They recognize that several other breweries have the same focus and do not feel a need to completely differentiate themselves from their competition. While breweries enjoy the idea of interconnectivity within the town and working together, several breweries were able to identify unique ways in which they like to stand out.

**Developing a distinct identity.** One owner prefers not to be recognized as the typical "Colorado Brewery" with the bikes, trees, hiking and fishing. Rather, they would like to be perceived as funny, pure shenanigans, and are more aggressive with their attitude. They also consider themselves as very hybrid as they have 40 taps, which includes several other local breweries in town. There are currently no other breweries in town other than one brewery that practices this concept. Additionally, this business is one out of three in the entire state that has adopted the concept of having a full beer bar and a brewery in one. It includes all the variety of beers on tap as well as an attached restaurant.

One brewery strives to have more session beers, which are beers that have lower alcohol content. This allows them to concentrate more on the malts and flavors. They also like to lessen the amount of IPAs they produce, as they like to stay away from the hoppy beers and keep it

more simple and flavorful. One manager indicates that his brewery differentiates his business by the tours offered. Often these tours are extensive and longer than the majority of breweries, as they last about 90 minutes and include sampling along the way.

Another brewery is unique as it was the very first brewery to open in the community. At the time, this brewery differentiated itself by selling in-house beer instead of distribution without a restaurant. Since several other breweries have come about, the same concept has been adopted. However, this brewery is different in that it offers education to its customers, by operating an adjacent home brew supply store. This brewery also prides itself on high quality, interesting beers and a relaxed atmosphere. Lastly, beers are often rotated and the brewery has brewed almost 100 unique recipes since their opening.

One owner in particular prides itself with consistency. Ten staple beers are on tap and are always consistent so the customers know it will be the same experience each time. They want their customers to come in and not be thrown off by different flavors and varieties. Therefore, constantly working on consistency is a priority for them.

### **Social Media Presence**

In today's society, maintaining a social media presence has become highly relevant for breweries, as it is an opportunity to engage their supporters. Breweries have started to recognize the importance of having some level of online presence, since social media is currently thriving. The elements that emerged in this area include the impact of social media and expectation, marketing, management, and authenticity.

**The impact of social media and expectation.** The power of social media was voiced by many breweries:

Social media is everything! I've managed that myself. We've been open for seven months and we have had over 5000 likes. If you follow how anything works on Facebook, that's huge!

This reflects the large audience social media can capture. There is almost an expectation of an online existence for any brewery.

Social media has changed the landscape of how companies interact with those who choose to engage with their brand. Beer lovers expect a two-way conversation with us because of these new media approaches.

**Marketing.** Several breweries use social media as a key marketing initiative and rely heavily on it for this purpose. This is due to the fact that all ages often use these resources to learn about information, promotions and updates going on in the community. Owners mentioned how they like to share updates with people that are plugged into different social icons and how it helps spread information very quickly to new audiences. For example, one brewery uses Facebook as the only way to advertise most events they host in town. Another owner expressed how Facebook is their primary marketing tool:

We do a lot of Facebooking. It's the number one marketing tool at the moment. We get as much possible out on Facebook as we can to tap into downtown events.

For the majority of breweries, using Facebook has become an instrument to allow their fans to check in and see what specials are occurring, as well as engaging them in an entertaining way by posting entertaining content. Breweries have exploited this idea through numerous methods. For example, one brewery offers a Social Station in the taproom to allow their guests to use Twitter or Facebook and share their brewery experience. Guests are encouraged to use their smartphones to do a customer survey for feedback. The most popular use of social media for the breweries is Facebook. Often, breweries will encourage their customers to "like" their Facebook page to receive updates and become more connected to their brewery. Twitter, Instagram and other social icons were mentioned, but not as often utilized.

**Time management.** Often, owners have recognized how managing social media can become a full time job. Now that there are countless ways to connect fans to the social scene, monitoring, updating and posting information on these sites can become very cumbersome. In fact, for most breweries, there is more of a demand to hire individuals to handle specific social tasks.

You have to manage social media, but I don't have time to do it and deal with all these things. People post whatever they want. They encourage you to be involved in it, great. My wife is going to help and start managing our online stuff. It sucks - it's another job; I don't want to do another thing on top of everything else.

**Authenticity.** While social media can serve as an advantage for the breweries, owners still see the value of providing an authentic face-to-face experience.

With the increasing focus on interactions mediated through screens, I believe it is critical to provide authentic face-to-face experiences as often as possible with our great beers and brand. I do not see any issues with social media, but when we have the opportunity to engage with beer lovers face-to-face, we seize that as a special gift for connecting.

It is clear that having an opportunity to engage guests in person is still very valuable for the majority of breweries.

**Technology.** Incorporating technology such as the use of iPads into the brewery experience is a new idea for most breweries. Often times this concept is dismissed, as most breweries do not want to get equipment wet. However, with regard to developing non-tangible products, apps have been adopted in a couple of breweries.

We are getting an app developed right now and we have a loyalty program we are going to integrate into that. We are getting the app made more for the entertainment.

While not all breweries discussed the possibility of an application, this idea stood out in the interview process as it was unique and creates an opportunity for growth.



## RESTAURANT FINDINGS

The qualitative analysis revealed several emerging themes relating to the model for restaurant owners. These themes will be highlighted below and separated by each question. Each section will have specific examples gathered from the data. The majority of quotes chosen are from individuals that best represent all participants' perspectives.

### **Learning and Knowledge**

Training staff to provide guidance and knowledge about the restaurant to customers is apparent for all owners. Emerging themes relevant to this area included testing, food / wine knowledge, the restaurant story, staff empowerment, and service quality.

**Testing.** The importance of conveying knowledge to customers and ensuring staff retains this information is evident by the testing restaurants provide and the amount invested in the training. Two owners reflect on how the staff's comprehension from the exams can have a direct influence on customer experiences:

We figure it costs between \$800-\$1200 to train a server. And that's not just the four days we train, it's the server making a mistake on not knowing the food right, guests not coming back because they didn't deliver something of the experience. So, it's very expensive for us to train people so we try and pick the right people and then we start with the training piece. Training for us is very important.

We have a big training packet. Our management team has put it together over the years. One of our managers just put a new one together and he had looked at a few other training programs to help him. It's pretty comprehensive. We test and staff has to pass. They are intense and they're meant to be intense because they tell that prospective waitperson to get their act together. You'll make good money, but you have to pass the test so you can get the knowledge. From an independent perspective, we have to be that way because in order to do well, you can be loopy goopy, because you have 20 people on wait staff and if you allow them to drift the experience completely diminishes.

It is evident that the amount of time restaurants invest into training is not only for the sake of training, but also the impact it can have as a whole in the business. Because of this, some

restaurants test their employees every day, others seldom. It is evident these exams allow owners to recognize the staff's ability to convey their knowledge.

**Food and wine knowledge.** Training on food knowledge helps staff become more aware of what the guests would like to experience when they come into the restaurant. Having the trainers memorize what is in each dish is often very important for owners. Several owners incorporate tastings for the staff so they fully can explain the meal in detail. One owner reported how tastings were given on a frequent basis:

Anything we make new, everyone tries it so they know what it is and can describe it. Everyone knows what dishes are gluten free, eggs free, or whatever the circumstances are.

Owners also promote knowledge by bringing in outside experts to help staff understand the wine and beer. For instance, several of the brewers or wine vendors will come in during some training and explain the wines/beers in detail.

Last Friday we did a wine training and a group of representatives came in and spent 45 min and staff tasted 6 or 7 types of wine. And then on Monday, we had a three-hour training for our new servers and we did a lot of stuff about everything, but a segment of that was on wine too-not just taste, but regions, bottle shape and a lot of info like that.

Having a better grasp of what is in each dish and how the wines and beers taste helps the waiters/waitresses to suggest certain dishes that pair well with alcoholic beverages. In a similar manner, allowing the staff to have a solid understanding of the food and wine often translates into a more confident server for the owners.

**The restaurant story.** The value of providing history or sharing a story to guests has been recognized in a few restaurants. Owners have observed that guests have shown more interest in learning about how the business became established. Not only is this information intriguing for the guests, but also allows a level of relatability to arise.

From the history perspective, what is most interesting to the guest is how it got to where it got, how long has it been here, who started it, and little intricacies of the history of it. The reason that's important is it creates an element of relatability with somebody. Maybe their parents started a business, so you are trying to create that connection on a different level outside of food.

Some owners have recognized the importance of conveying this information and, therefore, often include it in the initial training process. A few restaurants also have printed their story on the back of the menus or on their website for guests to read. While it is sometimes included in the training, not all restaurants reveal the story in an explicit manner. For example, only half of the restaurants interviewed incorporate it into their customer experience.

**Flexibility / staff empowerment.** In many cases, while there is certain information that must be shared with the customer, most owners do not have a structured script that each employee must memorize. Instead, there is an amount of freedom and flexibility given to staff on how they wish to convey information. Often restaurants will have information ready at the employees' disposal, and they can then deliver it in a way that fits them best.

There are certain things we explain to the server to convey information. Lets say I hire you because I like your personality, but I'm not going to tell you how to do things, but I am going to tell you how things should happen to help their experience... There's not anything necessarily bad about some corporate places, but they have a structured script where it is robotic where every person has to say the same thing. We like to provide info, but we don't want to just pound you with info. So we want to make sure they have information at their disposal to deliver and well do pre-shift meetings before every shift where we'll talk about things that we want to have happen every day. Like these are our lunch specials - everybody gets to try it so you can describe it in your words.

This technique allows employees to let their personalities flourish and relate to the customers in the way they perceive is best. For example, one employee at a restaurant would strategically educate guests with the desserts by asking if he could set the tray on their table for a moment while he talked with another table. By doing this, the guests were automatically sold to buying a dessert and learning more about each dish as it was right before their eyes. As a result,

allowing the staff to facilitate an educational experience for guests in a creative way serves as an advantage for the owners. Another reason owners have explained why staff empowerment is valuable, is because not everyone is interested in hearing how exactly everything is prepared, or going into the intricacies of a dish, but rather they are there to just fulfill their appetites. Others like to hear the details, and that additional information creates a better experience for them. Therefore, allowing the staff to read into the guests and understand what they are looking for or wanting to learn about is helpful.

**Service quality.** In regards to service, there has been an evident transformation in the way owners perceive this topic. Hospitality is more apparent in the restaurant industry, and understanding it is becoming important for the staff. For example, one owner is shifting from the term customer to guest, a change that is being frequently adopted by several restaurants. While training, trainers will often give an example of welcoming customers who walk in as guests into your home; making sure they feel comfortable, calling them by their name, and basically doing anything one can to make them feel at ease are strategies restaurants often use to achieve this goal.

It is important to understand hospitality; that is a big word used in this business. If you invite someone to your house, you would talk to them and make them feel comfortable. That's this business; you have to convey that to the guests. This guest approach and hospitality emphasis allows guests to have a better dining experience as a whole.

Hospitality adds a level of friendliness and allows guests to feel more welcome and relaxed. While this notion has become more prominent in the majority of restaurants, not all restaurants indicated how this is explained in detail during training.

Another way owners ensure service quality is by the staff they hire. While scouting out employees, owners will often ensure their personality aligns well with the company culture and

also is a good fit with how they intermingle with guests. Hiring staff members that are approachable, friendly, and engaging with the guests helps create a fun atmosphere and provides a more enjoyable experience. While staff members are trained, emphasizing the importance of positive interactions with guests is key for many restaurants.

We make sure the staff is friendly, smiling and engaging with the guests. I think that goes a long way for people to enjoy their evening. You've got a server that is smiling and answering questions about what they like about beer or a certain food so things like that make for a fun atmosphere and a fun time.

Another restaurant owner states:

If we hire the right people and they are trained and confident, they are fun people and they have fun with guests. If you back up a little bit, all of our wait staff are in blue jeans and it gives them a more relaxed feel. Before we had black on black and you walk in and it seems formal and people tighten up; the word these days is you have to be approachable.

### **Physical Setting**

When describing the physical setting of restaurants, the elements that were considered important or relevant for the owners include mood predictors and cleanliness. As a whole, both of these elements have played a key role in satisfying the guest's evaluation of a restaurant.

**Mood setting / ambience.** Some of the unique features applied to a few restaurants help intentionally generate a specific mood for their clients. It seems apparent that the ambience can set the mood, which in turn affects the guest's satisfaction with the meal. As one owner states, "the physical presence of the place transfers into the confidence of the guest." Another owner offers an illustration on how this is specifically achieved through their environment:

The age of the building over 100 years old, the exposed brick gives a warm laid back feeling, Obviously, the patios are a big part of the experience here six months of the year, so that's a big part of the guest experience, the ambience on the patio and people watching downtown. And in the summers we do a lot of hanging flowers to make it look nicer, and set that mood, which feels like you are on your porch eating.

Several other owners recognized how their brick also adds character and how it can offer a welcoming and warm laid-back sense. This theme can be further demonstrated through a manager's desire to create an inviting atmosphere through some of the pieces included in the décor:

We have included extra large booths and fireplace to create an inviting atmosphere and uses barn doors to close rooms and provide a more intimate atmosphere for their guests.

Other restaurants have incorporated certain colors to generate a specific emotion. For example, one owner uses the warm colors of blue and brown in the restaurant's artwork to make the customers feel relaxed. In many cases, being cognizant of the flooring used also often translates into a better attitude for the guest. Another owner discovered how the old wood floor generated loud noise for guests. The owner also recalled a circumstance where flooring had a tremendous impact on the customers:

If we were to put wood floors in here it would completely change the mood of the restaurant and attitude as we tend to have a older crowd in the evening they may not like it because it could get louder. So we have to be very careful of how we do things.

I would say the one thing we don't always do a great job is on the surfaces as far as absorbing noise. So here we took carpet out. There are a lot of hard surfaces here and it can get really noisy. We even have had somebody who did break their hips.

**Cleanliness.** Cleanliness is one of the most important elements for all restaurants.

Ensuring tabletops and dishes are spotless, and other appliances are clean, is critical. This is because cleanliness can have a large impact on the customer in either a positive or negative way.

One owner provided an illustration in regards to cleanliness and restrooms:

The bathroom is often a big predictor. We've had someone work with us for 20 years in the bathroom. They are super clean, which is big for especially for women. If I walk in and a guy's restroom is dirty, I think what's the kitchen look like.

Restaurant owners often recognized if their restaurant appears dirty or not well kept up, it may disgust guests and they may lose clients. Therefore, ensuring all areas are well maintained is

often a priority for these owners. Part of this also includes ensuring space is not packed too tightly and does not feel claustrophobic. For example, one owner learned the importance of this by describing:

We originally had a wine bottle décor, but our customers were about to dwindle. So, our decision was to make a change. We came in and ripped them all down and exposed the brick. The place is completely different. There were many customers that liked the bottles, but there were a whole bunch who didn't because it felt claustrophobic. As a result of the change, our sales jumped 25%.

This example validates how using the space well by being creative and changing their interior design periodically is important for restaurants. Other ways restaurants have utilized their space well include cleaning any clutter that is in spaces it should not be. One restaurant explains:

Chinese restaurants can be notorious for clutter and not being organized. When you walk in, there are often business cards posted all over and pictures of people and papers everywhere. This is a reminder for our restaurant to continually maintain an organized clutter free atmosphere.

## **Food Quality**

For all restaurants, quality is held as the most important focus for the owners. Sustaining high quality food is critical for the guests and, therefore, valued heavily by the owners. The emerging themes restaurants use to ensure quality include purchasing fresh ingredients and delivering consistency in cooking. One restaurant represents the majority of owners interviewed.

Quality is really important from the ingredients our chef brings in, to how he shops for those ingredients, to using fresh not frozen, making everything from scratch, the way we prepare it, to the end result. So quality is really, really important.

**Fresh ingredients.** For several restaurants, quality is defined as where they purchase the product and its freshness. As stated in the sustainability section below, restaurants often will purchase local products to receive as many fresh ingredients as possible. Purchasing the best product, whether it is fish / meat, eggs, or vegetables, and ensuring it is in the freshest condition

is often a daily routine for the chefs. Establishing a culture of delivery is often a way chefs ensure freshness. For example, returning products that are delivered from their distributors that are not acceptable, or are not at their finest, shows the distribution company or local farmer that the restaurants expect the best and will not accept less.

The quality is receiving the product in the backdoor. So, if we are ordering vegetables that can't come locally that are coming from Mexico or distributors, you have to make sure the tomatoes are fairly right not moldy, and the fish we get is flying out daily. You get in a mode where you have to refuse things if they aren't acceptable.

**Consistency.** Making dishes from scratch also ensures freshness, as well as consistency, for the chefs. Many chefs will use actual measurements to make sure the dishes taste accurate, which allows for little disappointment for the guests. While many chefs have memorized their recipes, some still follow the exact recipe step by step. Additionally, tasting is often done afterwards to ensure the best quality.

Quality is very important to me. Everything is made the same way every time I know the recipes backwards, forwards and in my sleep, but I still pull the book out every time. I don't just guess on a tablespoon of this and that; I actually measure and I do a lot of taste testing that its up to my standards.

## **Food Quantity**

With respect to the issue of quantity, assessing value appeared to be the main theme. From this, offering different portion size and experimenting with these sizes were evident.

**Assessing value.** Overall, all restaurants acknowledged the importance of creating value for their customers. Often times, quantity is a way in which restaurants achieve value. One restaurant commented:

Having the customers feel like the perceived value of food is fair for the price they pay is essential.

For many restaurants, quantity dictates price and discovering what customers desire to pay is part of this. While creating value is evident for all owners, a few differ in the way they



approach portion sizes. For example, one restaurant offers gigantic portions of desserts and many guests end up taking leftovers home:

Oooo they're huge! We go through more to go boxes. We're paying \$7-8 dollars for deserts, they better be a good dessert. I cut everything because when other people cut they have a hard time cutting things evenly. So I just cut everything so they are evenly portioned.

Another restaurant shares the same approach, as they also offer large portions. They believe their customers should eat well and get enough food for the price they pay. On the other hand, some restaurants prefer to stay with average, or smaller, portions. For example, one owner currently focuses more on enhancing quality than quantity.

Several restaurants fluctuate on quantity. This is mainly due to the balance of providing customers what they want, while also making a good profit.

It's a catch 22 for restaurants as we are all struggling with how to give customers what they want while also portioning out the dish for what we need to make money. The expectations for what the guests want to spend may demand a certain quantity.

Restaurants have approached this issue by continually experimenting with large, small, and one-size-fits-all portions. For example, one owner has considered cutting down on the large dessert portions to help reduce splitting among guests. Doing so may generate more profit, as customers are more likely to purchase their own separate dishes.

### **Food Variety**

Restaurant owners often approach variety primarily through menu change. In fact, every owner interviewed explained how menu change is the key avenue in which they provide their guests with variety.

**Menu change.** While managing menu change, the majority of owners will keep the core items customers enjoy the most and eliminate dishes that are not ordered as frequently. For

example, several restaurants use the same bestselling dishes that have been incorporated into the menu for years:

What's amazing is as much variety we try to make, the top 5 dishes we made has been the same in 25 years. The number one dish is eggplant Parmesan. Doesn't matter how creative we get those same top 5 are the same that were here 35 years ago.

Owners often take time when deciding on eliminating certain items, as they must consider how customers will respond. If owners do decide to take off items that many of their customers enjoy, they try adding a dish that is even better.

When we take things off we are hopefully not making too many people mad and providing something that will replace their favorite item.

For all owners, menu changes are often done during various seasons. For example, one restaurant offers items that are heavier during the winter, such as hearty beef soup, versus the lighter salad summer items. Many restaurants often change their drink menus during the seasons as well. Seasonal cocktails are added and new beers are chosen by adjusting from heavier to lighter ales. New menu items also arise through daily specials. This allows chefs to get creative, and observing the customers' responses allows them to decide what to add as permanent menu items.

**Beer dinners.** Lastly, an emerging area that has become a way for a couple of restaurants to incorporate variety is through connecting with local brewers in town to deliver brewery dinners. This takes place once every few months. Brew masters will visit the restaurants and help create dishes with the chefs that combine well with their beers. When formal brewery dinners are not served, many of these restaurants still integrate certain local beers into some of their recipes.

We do beer dinners like we do the wine dinners here and our chef is a huge beer connoisseur. Right now for our beer can chicken, we use local breweries specialty beers. We use one brewery's wheat beer in Beer Cheese Soup so our chef is in contact with the brewery guys all the time. He loves the local breweries and they are one of our favorite breweries to do our beer dinners with.

## **Backstage Access**

Backstage access seems to be the concept from the model that is least established in the restaurants. There are only a couple of restaurants that are interested in developing this concept. Almost every restaurant exhibits a small amount of interest in opening their kitchen to guests. Due to space limitations, they only welcome a few people at a time and usually only if a guest requests access. For some restaurants, this is out of the question since their kitchens are very small, and it can be perceived as invasive for the chef.

Don't do anything like that. Mainly because the actual kitchen is 20 by 20 - just have no room in our kitchen for any extra people at high business times. We don't even allow servers in there.

None of the restaurants offer any formal backstage access with the exception of three businesses.

## **Senses Beyond Taste**

In general, every restaurant demonstrates various techniques to achieve customer appreciation of senses beyond taste. All owners explained how they desire their dishes to not only taste great, but also be pleasing to the eye, as the visual sense is what you experience first.

**Visual sense.** The appearance of the dish is the main way this is achieved for all restaurants. An area's demographic structure has an influence on the way owners approach plate decorating. Many recognize the town to be a very simple community and the people tend to respond to that lifestyle the best. Therefore, their dishes must reflect that and not become too extravagant.

We just try to be what the community will respond to, which is the meat and potatoes, and good steak, generous portions, hot food, good flavors and our edible garnishes that are pretty simple.

While simplicity has become the driving force in the community, the visual sense is still important for several owners. For many, this is due to the exposure of the Food Network, which pushes a pleasing visual piece. Because of this, several chefs will include a small decoration using garnishes. Some restaurants approach this area more seriously than others due to the different expectations customers have for them.

For example, one restaurant is one of the most formal restaurants in town, and customers automatically assume they will take extra care in garnishing and presenting the dishes. Therefore, the owner believes appearance is key here; preferring guests to think the dishes are almost too perfect to eat:

We want a person to look at it and go, wow that's really nice or I can't eat that it looks too perfect. So we do things like that. We come up with new dishes and how we want them to look. A lot of the restaurants use the same dish for everything but we don't. We have six different styles of dishes It makes it look more appetizing when you put it down and it gives you that variety. So the appearance is much about what we do.

In a similar manner, another restaurant takes pride in presentation and applies plate decorating to all dishes. In fact, they even offer specific training for their new staff on this topic.

## **Entertainment**

Overall, several owners mentioned they don't think entertainment is as important to their customers compared to other factors such as quality of food and general service. Only music was identified within the interviews as way to improve guest satisfaction.

**Live music.** While not all restaurants showed interest in playing live music, several viewed this as one of their primary forms of entertainment and are happy to offer it for their guests. For instance, one owner is proud to be known as the leader of bringing live music into the restaurant community:

We were the first people in the community that has dealt with music. We have been the leader of that so that is valued here. That's the entertaining part of our restaurant. Our

musical talent plays Wednesday through Saturday so there is certainly the ability to enjoy music. You can also be on the patio listening, so you have different entertainment choices.

It is evident this restaurant has allowed music to become an integral part of its customer experience. Furthermore, the music they provide is often a hit with the guests. Other owners have adopted this form of entertainment, but not quite to the extent as the establishment described above. Offering live music periodically is characteristic of the majority of restaurants.

One thing that comes to mind in regards to entertainment is the live music on Friday and Saturday nights. We have really good one-man bands that play for three hours. They do all sing along classic rock.

## **Local Culture**

**Local culture: Inherited.** Almost all owners expressed how local culture is automatically promoted simply by being a local inherited restaurant in the community.

We don't promote a local culture, we sort of inherited one. We have been well known in the community and surrounding areas. We are part of the local scene. We didn't promote to get that it just happened- It's just inherited.

Being well recognized in the community for these owners and acknowledging this recognition has become a fruitful way for restaurants to share the local culture. Because of this, these restaurants have become local favorites, and they offer a creative environment for locals to interact with one another and for regulars to get to know each other. Similarly, several owners perceive themselves as a local icon due to the history of their restaurants. Some of the restaurants have stayed in business for decades and while a few changes have been made, customers will still come back since it is in the same location and there is still an emotional connection.

This restaurant was a restaurant for 35 years and I was a head chef there for 25 years so we have this unique connection to the past even though we're a restaurant that's newer. Some people will come in that had been in before for their first anniversary in 1975. It happens all the time - they'll come in because it's from their past and because it's in the same location.

**Local art.** Another way owners stimulate local culture is through local art. Several restaurants indicated their desire to showcase the work of local artists on their walls. For example, all the art on the walls at one establishment was painted by one of their own talented local waitresses. In a similar manner, another restaurant hangs up art that is done by different children from a local elementary school. One owner uses prints from a local photographer that are often found in the local newspaper each day. Another owner brings in local artists every six weeks and showcases their various pieces throughout the restaurant.

### **Sustainability**

All owners integrated sustainable practices into their daily operation and are involved at some level. When asked if incorporating sustainability into their operation was important to their customers, all respondents declared this to be evident.

I think it's on everybody's mind and anymore, sustainability is very important in all aspects of what we do. Customers recognize it now more than ever.

Oooo yes, especially in the last couple years. Back in the 80's it wasn't important, but now the idea that we can buy as much local as we can is more important.

This understanding of their clients is part of their drive to adopt sustainable acts into their daily routine. Part of this is due to the local demographic expectation, which is in tune with the sustainability piece. This community includes a generation of students that has a passion for pushing for more sustainable practices as well as several other businesses that have started to integrate sustainability. Many owners have mentioned that this topic is on almost everyone's mind in the community and must be addressed and adopted in some way.

**Purchasing local ingredients.** One way owners achieve sustainable efforts is by purchasing local ingredients. In fact, every participant was involved in buying local ingredients at some level. Currently, the farm to table movement has become more prominent in the

restaurant scene, and a few owners capitalize on this concept. For several owners, the relationships they have formed with the local farmers have motivated them to continue to support these enterprises and give back to the community.

We are certainly involved in the buy local. It's certain things. All our chickens are from Colorado, eggs. During the summer from April- October, we have farmers that grow most of our lettuces, turnips, broccoli, spinach, and arugula. Everything we can use as far as our vegetable and produce they are all locally and organically grown and we know exactly who they are - we have been dealing with them for almost four years now and have a very important relationship with them. So those are the kinds of issues we deal with and hopefully the guests can see the difference.

In many cases, restaurants are limited in purchasing local products due to costs. For example, it is sometimes cheaper to purchase products in larger quantities from large distributors that are not always local.

**Other sustainable initiatives.** Almost all restaurants incorporate recycling and composting. Composting was found to be a frequent practice by all restaurants. In fact, some restaurants actually give their compost to farmers to re-use as soil.

We compost almost everything. We give our compost to a local individual who takes them to a big churner. As a result, all the soils in the planters, downtown, are from all of our food we gave to make into soil.

A couple of restaurants have adopted some different initiatives that set them apart from the others interviewed. For example, one restaurant has a garden on their roof. They have six small swimming pools that contain fresh herbs, squashes and peppers that they incorporate into their daily specials to add fresh ingredients. Another restaurant generates several of their supplies from other used resources. For example, all resource woods for their tabletops are from a refurbished stage at a local junior high. Additionally, their diffusers from the ceiling are collected from an old grocery store.

While these particular restaurants exhibited a dedication to sustainable actions, one restaurant stood out in regards to its unique perspective on this manner. One owner believes the notion of sustainability is more of a trend and not necessary.

I do not think it has to be something you print on your menu and brag about, get ugly brown to-go boxes so you can say you used recycleble cardboard and pay twice as much for it. We're a business trying to make money so we can be in business and provide jobs for 35 people. That's my goal and if along the way I can throw all the glass in one thing and all the carboard in another and ride my bike to work that's all great, but were all trying to make money and provide jobs. So to me its a bunch of hype.

This perspective reveals that there is room to educate more owners on the small steps they can take to become sustainable and the positive results that come along with it.

**Cost constraints.** When considering how restaurants reach sustainability, several have discussed how they must balance cost with the initiatives they use. While owners recognize that some of the sustainable practices can save costs, they must also take into consideration the areas that are not as inexpensive.

One owner commented "If it makes sense to us and it is not expensive, we will do that". Often times this was pertaining to purchasing local foods in bulk as opposed to buying them from a large vendor at cost. Being sensible to the amount invested, as well as becoming aware of what they spend, is part of their sustainable decisions. In these cases, there is still an attempt to purchase other local ingredients such as local coffee, agave nectar, honey, and salsa. "For the most part, while cost can be an issue, owners still attempt to provide ingredients locally. While purchasing local may add costs to us, it translates into a happier customer." As a result, there's often a good balance for purchasing locally to keep customers happy and also remaining economically reasonable.



**Promoting sustainable efforts.** In regards to promoting sustainable initiatives, a few restaurants ensured their efforts were being marketed, however, several recognized how they should further market themselves.

Two restaurants are great examples of the pride that can stem from providing local ingredients to guests:

We have a section on our menu specifically for Colorado. It's called Colorado Proud. We use just local farms and state wide Colorado things. This could be from a Colorado buffalo farm or local produce through Colorado so we incorporate that into the section

We try to let every guest know we are using local farms. That transfer of info needs to be translated through wait staff, Facebook and our VIP list. We would say: just to let you know we are using revival gardens radishes and this distillery.

Restaurants also discussed how while they may incorporate some sustainable initiatives, they do not always promote it like they should.

We don't promote sustainability probably as much as we should. And that comes up a lot. Our marketer brings it up and wonders if we should bring that up more. So I would say we recognize it, but surely don't promote it probably enough.

Many restaurants indicated how they should start to leave space on their menu to push their sustainable efforts. Interestingly, while all owners explained their efforts, several had not done any marketing discussing their sustainable contributions. While this subject is well recognized as being important, opportunities for improvement still remain.

### **Target Market**

The target market differs slightly for only a couple restaurants. Only two restaurants were able to identify their specific target market. For example, one owner targets directly to people who appreciate sports, and another targets to individuals who are looking for a formal setting and who love music. Despite these subtle differences, since the majority of these restaurants are

semi-formal, there exist several similarities. These commonalities often stem from the community's demographics.

**Local demographic.** When asked what each of the target markets are, the majority of interviewees responded they would like to think they cater to everyone. For some, their target market is clear, yet, for others it is more of a struggle to try to accommodate everyone. For example, for many of the restaurants, there is an evident shift from families and elderly individuals in the afternoon and early evening, to a younger crowd during the night.

We cater to a local older market that doesn't want change. But after 7:00 pm, we cater to a completely different audience, which is 25 to 40, and they want creative stuff, the funky sauté dishes, and all that kind of great stuff. So we have to manage for a large demographic audience. We try to cater to them all but its tough.

Thus, there becomes a constant pressure to meet the needs of guests who represent a diverse age range. Managing this diverse market has become a challenge for many owners. Maintaining a casual feel is another area that restaurants can relate to due to the local demographic. Focusing on clientele that specifically come into the restaurant for special occasions is not economically feasible in this community.

We want to attract a wide variety of demographic. You have to be able to attract everybody and can't just pigeon yourself to one segment that comes in no more than once a year or a couple times a month.

Another owner relates by discussing how restaurants must pay special attention to the type of individual that lives in the area. The owner describes how on a typical Friday night, the majority of people walking around the area are not dressed up, but rather, and is casual and laid back. Therefore, the goal becomes how to make the casually dressed individual feel comfortable in what appears to be a semi-formal setting.

We want our restaurant to have a casual feel. We don't want to compete with more high end dining, but rather be more every day, to reflect the laid back type of town we are in.

Because of this casual demographic, restaurants feel more inclined to cater to these people. Even some of the higher end restaurants interviewed indicated how, while they offer a fancier setting, they still welcome all people from formal to casual. Several restaurants interviewed have even considered redesigning their atmosphere to fit this market better. While many restaurants recognize the community to be casual, a couple of owners strive to still offer an atmosphere for the special occasions as well as the everyday dinner. These restaurants encourage the casual customer to come in for a meal during lunch break, but also to come back to celebrate a special occasion.

The local demographic has impacted the restaurants in regards to the market they serve. Several owners have recognized the community to be unique since they tend to appreciate and support local business more than corporate chain restaurants. Fortunately, being the number one destination for more restaurants per capita has become a benefit for restaurants. Because of this, several owners have mentioned one of their main target markets is the local resident. Owners expressed their appreciation for, and desire to satisfy, the local community.

### **Differentiation**

Discovering how each restaurant differentiates themselves from their competitors is interesting. Several owners had a moment of silence when asked how they achieve differentiation. This indicates that this aspect has not become a priority for many owners and can still be developed. While owners paused when asked this question, there were still ways in which they recognized their differences.

**Locally owned.** For many owners, being locally owned and operated is one way in which they distinguish themselves. Often, they will embrace the opportunity to market themselves as locally owned as a result of the trend of the ‘go local’ movements in the community. By using

this as a marketing incentive, visitors appear to be more inclined to support their local restaurant. One owner has noticed a direct impact from this as the restaurant has had several investors as a result of being run by local residents:

I think we just look at it as being locally owned. We have a pool of about 25 investors so there's a lot of local ownership to it. It's not a chain; it's not a franchise. We aren't part of a corporate group, we're just a stand-alone restaurant with local ownership.

**Location.** Not only do owners capitalize on the idea of being locally owned, but they also embrace other techniques to remain distinct. Several restaurants acknowledge their advantage of being located in an area that is popular and frequently visited by both tourists and locals. For example, many of the individuals interviewed have enterprises that are located in the heart of downtown, which is a thriving setting for the community and an important tourist destination.

First, we differentiate ourselves by our facility and location. It's about as good as it gets. Secondly, I think we differentiate ourselves by being an independent that is run like a corporate restaurant.

**Design.** Each restaurant examined mentioned how their unique features in design contribute to making their restaurant unique and allow them to display their distinct personality. All restaurants revealed ways in which they achieved this. For example, one restaurant uses several decorations to honor the local university's previous football coach. There are several helmets that are used as embellishments that have been signed by the football team for the coach, as well as several photographs of the players on the team that went onto the NFL. However, they emphasize that they try to not look like the typical sports restaurant/bar:

We went to different sport bars and coach bars to see what they do just to emphasize the sports aspect as well as the bar. As a result, you don't see a bunch of junk here like you would usually see at a sports bar. So, we are trying not to be just the local University, it's in honor of our coach and taking business to make good business in honor of him. And people who want to watch a sport while in the bar. So there's always some mainstream sport being played in here as much as possible. Usually the volume isn't way up unless there's a Bronco game on or something. But it's usually what you see- it's just nicely done and not over the top sports. It all comes together to be what we wanted it to be for us.

Another restaurant uses its design to differentiate itself as well by emphasizing its upscale and unique decor.

The design is pretty urban. We've designed it with that in mind. We didn't want to be a franchise restaurant, and a restaurant that is a cookie cutter type of deal. So it's a blessing and curse at times because people think we are very fancy and won't come in, but on the overall scheme of life we designed something that we believe is right for the community and we think we've kept it well. It's a niche. It is considered the formal restaurant in the state. At this point, we are who we are and to try and change that would be not a good business decision to me.

It is clear this owner values the restaurant's design as it emphasizes formality, which separates it from the majority of restaurants in town.

**Challenges.** While some of these differences occur, several owners explain how it can be difficult in this market to completely attain differentiation.

Differentiation is tough in this market, lots of restaurants in town. We can come up with a couple of signature dishes, cocktails, and a significant feel to the place. But, in the end, we are all kind of doing the same kind of things and are trying to appeal to the broadest perspective you can.

Several restaurants interviewed understood that the majority of local owners all have the same goal of customer satisfaction. Additionally, because of the immense amount of local competitors, they realize that there are various local restaurants for customers to choose from.

We try and raise the bar so we can somehow separate ourselves from our competition. But, it has currently become harder to do so. So for us, the biggest barrier is finding that niche to separate ourselves from our competition.

As a result, gaining differentiation becomes secondary for many. Overall, it is apparent that some restaurants are still unclear on how they differentiate themselves.

### **Social Media Presence**

Social media encompasses two primary areas of focus for restaurants. First, many are in tune with online social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Pinterest. Secondly, several owners manage online user reviews, which include Yelp, Trip Advisor, Open Table, and

Urban Spoon. Social media has a tremendous impact on all restaurants in both positive and negative ways, influencing dining experiences every day.

**Marketing asset.** Several restaurants use social media to their benefit. For example, many owners use Facebook and Twitter as avenues to post specials and updates in order to attract guests.

Social media seems to keep customers in touch with what we have going on more than just our website alone. For instance, there have been lots of hits on Facebook alone. It is a good way to let people know what's happening here.

Owners have observed this directly, as they have talked to guests that have visited as a result of viewing posts on social networks or user reviews. While this may influence the customers and the restaurants in a positive way, social media also presents some limitations for the owners.

**Relational constraints.** For some restaurants, social media restricts a certain level of social interaction and prevents further development of relationships.

When you do not have a face or the ability to talk to someone, use different tones and express sincerity, you cannot do that on a piece of paper like you can when you're talking to somebody.

The same owner explains the risk of customers expressing their dissatisfaction instantaneously through social media, rather than going to the owner directly for resolution. This demonstrates how social media has been transformed by the convenience of mobile media. Unfortunately, because of this, owners do not resolve complaints in person as often as they would like, which limits their ability to satisfy their guests.

**Time consumption.** Additionally, managers have recognized they must devote a significant amount of time to tend to social media and respond to user reviews. The pressure of

maintaining an online presence is never-ending for many, and it has become a daily routine for several owners.

Every day, I look at Open Table, Trip Advisor, Urban Spoon, and Yelp as it can have a huge impact. Because a customer can have a couple cocktails, have a bad experience, go home and fire up at the convenience of sitting at their home with nobody monitoring what they're doing. It is just hard. Therefore, we monitor every day. I look at it sometimes twice a day.

Because of the significant amount of time involved, some owners choose not to participate in the social media scene at all. Several owners struggle with how to respond to negative and demeaning comments. Many of the comments that are left on user reviews are not always accurate and frustrating for owners. In fact, responding to these comments becomes more of a stress and a point of contention, as figuring out the best way to respond can be puzzling.

### **Technology**

Incorporating technology into the restaurant experience is a novel concept for most restaurants. Only a couple of restaurants have mentioned possibly incorporating iPads into the restaurant experience. There were also no restaurants interviewed that discussed the idea of using apps to enhance the customer experience.

## CHAPTER 4

### CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The purpose of this dissertation was to develop and test a supply side model that explores the culinary tourism experience. The outcome of developing and testing a Supply Culinary Tourism Experience Model has helped improve the understanding of the culinary tourism trade and opportunities for training and managerial improvement. From the results that emerged from the literature review, the model that was formulated generated 10 initial main themes. These are listed in Table 4.1 and described using quotes from a manager / owner perspective.

Four individual elements were added after fieldwork to better represent a developing experience guide, which include: (a) sustainability, (b) differentiation, (c) target marketing, and (d) social media / technology. It is clear after the interviews that the new additions help better represent the structure of the trade side and the focus on experience. For training purposes, keeping these elements can help enrich management of staff and enhance the overall experience. The implications of the findings are discussed below and include recommendations and managerial implications.

The significance of each theme in regards to experience that was revealed in the interview process is shown in Table 4.1. The X's indicate the way each owner identifies the significance of each element. This not only underscores the selection of the theme from the literature, but also gives a better understanding of the importance or significance of the themes when generating the customer's experience. The elements that were consistently linked in both the restaurant and brewery experience included: (a) learning and knowledge, (b) food / beer quality, (c) food / beer variety, (d) service quality, and (e) senses beyond taste. Emerging themes that were highlighted in all interviews included sustainability and social media / technology.



Table 4.1. Significance of Key Experience Themes for Different Types of Culinary Tourism Experience

Themes	Examples	Restaurant	Brewery
Learning / knowledge	<p>“We encourage servers to convey certain information during dining service and give knowledge.”</p> <p>“Everything evolves around teaching the customers about what we do and who we are.”</p>	XXX	XXX
Physical setting	<p>“The age of the building is over 100 years old and the exposed brick gives a warm laid back feeling.”</p>	XX	XX
Beer / food quality	<p>“Everything is made fresh. We buy the best products we can.”</p> <p>“Quality is absolutely primary we have our standard montra for the productions as it has to be quality or we wont ship it.”</p>	XXX	XXX
Beer / food quantity	<p>“We have generous portions on everything.”</p>	XX	XX
Beer / food variety	<p>“I really like variety I try and change the menu as much as I can.”</p> <p>“Variety is huge for us as we have a lot of food options and beer options.”</p> <p>“We have different beers that go through all the seasons, which include a watermelon beer in the summer and a heavier one in the winter.”</p>	XXX	XXX
Service quality	<p>“We make sure the staff is friendly, smiling and engaging with the guests. That goes a long way for people to enjoy their evening.”</p> <p>“The important thing is when the guest come into the door they are feeling welcome. We discuss it’s like coming into our home.”</p>	XXX	XXX

Local culture	“Because we brew and sell our beer only locally we feel very much a part of the local culture.”	XX	XX
Senses beyond taste	“We want our guests to look at it and go wow that’s really nice or I can’t eat that it looks to perfect.” “70-80% of what we perceive as taste is actually aroma. We concentrate on our sensory program and training our folks in the liquid center to have those five tastes when sampling our beer and the aromas.” “It’s not just about taste, it’s about clarity, smell, malt feel. All these different elements help us evaluate the beer to make sure it’s where it should be.”	XXX	XXX
Backstage access	“We have 12 guided tours a day which take customers inside the brew house where the sour beers are actively souring.”	X	XX
Fun / Entertainment	“There is an entertainment side of the restaurant that includes a pool and ping- pong table.”	X	XXX
Sustainability	“We strive to be sustainable. We reuse water when possible in the brewing process. The way we serve our beer is sustainable, either in glass pints, reusable growlers to go, or reusable kegs.	XXX	XXX
Social media / Technology	“We have a “Social Station” in the Liquid Center which is available for guests to check in on Facebook, Tweet about their experience, or browse our website.”	XXX	XXX
Differentiation	“We are different from other breweries because we are the first brewery to open in this town. At the time we differentiated ourselves by	XX	XX

	focusing on in-house beer sales instead of distribution.”		
Target market	“Our target is just as much of the community as we can get in here, but I’d say primarily what we attract is a wide age range from college students on dates to older people on anniversaries.”	XX	XX

An alternative way to present this would be to organize it as a comparison that highlights the specific similarities and differences between the results from the breweries and restaurants (Table 4.2.).

Table 4.2. A Comparison of Key Experience Themes for Different Types of Culinary Tourism Experiences

Restaurants	Breweries
1. Learning and Knowledge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Testing</li> <li>b. Food and wine knowledge</li> <li>c. Restaurant story</li> <li>d. Flexibility / staff empowerment</li> <li>e. Service quality</li> </ul>	1. Learning and Knowledge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Training and promoting knowledge</li> <li>b. Flexibility / staff empowerment</li> <li>c. Brewery story</li> </ul>
2. Physical Setting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Mood setting (ambience)</li> <li>b. Cleanliness</li> </ul>	2. Physical Setting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Attractiveness</li> <li>b. Cleanliness of facilities</li> <li>c. Space</li> <li>d. Friendliness of staff</li> </ul>
3. Entertainment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Live music</li> </ul> 4. Local Culture <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Local culture: Inherited</li> <li>b. Local art</li> </ul>	3. Local Culture / Entertainment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Local culture: Inherited</li> <li>b. Local events / donations</li> <li>c. Local stakeholder meetings</li> <li>d. Local art / live music</li> <li>e. Games</li> <li>f. Television</li> </ul>
5. Food Quality <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Fresh ingredients</li> <li>b. Consistency</li> </ul>	4. Beer Quality <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Up to standard</li> <li>b. Beer tastings</li> </ul>
6. Food Quantity	5. Beer Quantity

a. Assessing value (portion control)	a. Intoxication management
7. Food Variety a. Menu change b. Beer dinners	6. Beer Variety a. Experimenting with new flavors
8. Backstage access	7. Backstage access a. Brewery tours
9. Senses beyond taste a. Visual sense	8. Senses beyond taste a. Aroma b. Visual
10. Sustainability a. Purchasing local ingredients b. Other sustainable initiatives c. Cost constraints d. Promoting sustainable efforts	9. Sustainability a. Cost limitation b. Local products c. Other sustainable efforts
11. Target market a. Local demographic	10. Target market a. Observed targets b. Unique targets
12. Differentiation a. Locally owned b. Location c. Design d. Challenges	11. Differentiation a. Interconnectivity b. Developing a distinct identity
13. Social media presence/ Technology a. Market assets b. Relational constraints c. Time consumption	12. Social media presence / Technology a. Impact and expectation b. Marketing c. Time management d. Authenticity e. Technology

A variety of similar approaches were employed for both brewery and restaurant owners in regards to achieving a successful experience for their customers. For all owners, quality was revealed to be the most important element. This term was used both in the context of food / beer quality as well as service quality. For many restaurants and breweries, quality was assessed on a continual basis and integrated in each owner's daily routine.

Additionally, it is clear that social media and technology has transformed the way owners approach management as it can affect every aspect of the guest experience. Every owner recognized the challenge of managing the time needed to invest in this area as well as the marketing benefits it can generate. All interviewees indicated that they are continually experimenting with how social media can be the most conducive to the guest's experience. For example, several owners are in the process of developing technology applications for their guests. In regards to sustainability, the owners discussed ways in which they are proactive in accommodating sustainable efforts. They also understood how important this concept is for their guests and often served as a motive to explain these efforts to their customers to help enrich their experience.

The learning and knowledge theme was also often mentioned in detail in all of the interviews indicating how culinary tourism is embedded in the educational atmosphere. Owners of both restaurants and breweries disclosed how a specific amount of time was devoted to knowledge training and implementing opportunities in which a learning environment was achieved.

The primary differences between the brewery and restaurant experience themes included backstage access and entertainment. For example, the majority of breweries offered backstage access and emphasized entertainment while restaurants were limited in these areas and occasionally offered live music. For the breweries, backstage access was often achieved by the tours they offered for their guests as a way to engage and stimulate an entertaining experience for them. Furthermore, the breweries continually developed conduits to entertain guests which included participating and hosting local events as well as bringing in local artists.

Another way to look at the results presented in this table would be to further examine the various ingredients included within each element and compare them between the breweries and restaurants. This would enhance our understanding of experience because it points to the differences of how the owners deliver experiences and potentially manage for these experiences. It is also possible to examine within an enterprise. These elements and the ingredients associated with the elements could foster and improve understanding of how their interconnectivity within an enterprise can create an optimal experience.

### **Research Opportunities**

This study is the first effort to organize a comprehensive culinary tourism experience model from the supply - side sector perspective. It allows several opportunities for future research. While this research only sampled upscale casual restaurants and breweries, other segments could be examined which may include fast food, casual, and fine dining. Furthermore, other settings could be assessed evaluating large versus small facilities and the impact they each have on the customer experience. The pre-test analysis revealed that restaurant owners do not often distinguish between tourists and locals when creating their experiences. The outcome of this study showed various differences when assessing a tourist versus a local resident. These differences were explicit when assessing social media. For example, a tourist uses social applications and user reviews differently than locals. Studies that separate out tourists' versus locals' evaluations of cuisine experiences could be beneficial for owners to better recognize how to manage different experiences for each sector.

Both owners and managers perspectives on how each of the elements interacts with one another is an important topic for future research. Various packaging and balancing derived from the results of this study would inspire the overall experience package.

Since this dissertation focuses primarily on the trade aspect represented by owners and managers, doing a hybrid analysis of both the consumer and supply-side would further strengthen the experience model. It would also confirm the observations made by the owners to either validate or shift their customer perceptions.

Finally, while moving forward in research on the supply sector, researchers may want to consider possible constraints. The fact that the supply-side has not been studied is surprising, however, it is evident that recruiting owners to consent to interviews can be difficult considering the time they invest into their businesses. Therefore, building a rapport with owners and managers and developing relationships prior to a study may be beneficial and allow for more in-depth interviews.

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APPENDIX

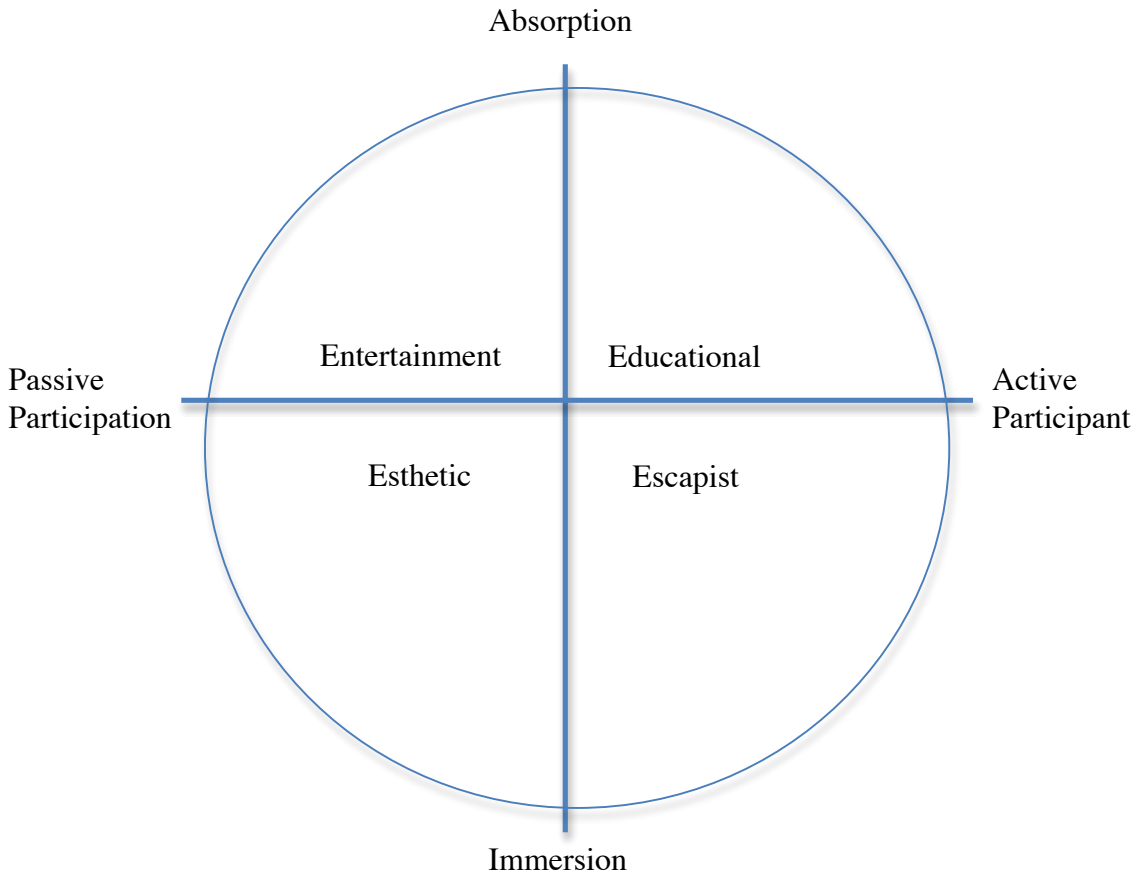


Figure A.1. The Experience Realms  
*Note.* Adapted from Pine and Gilmore (1999, p. 30)

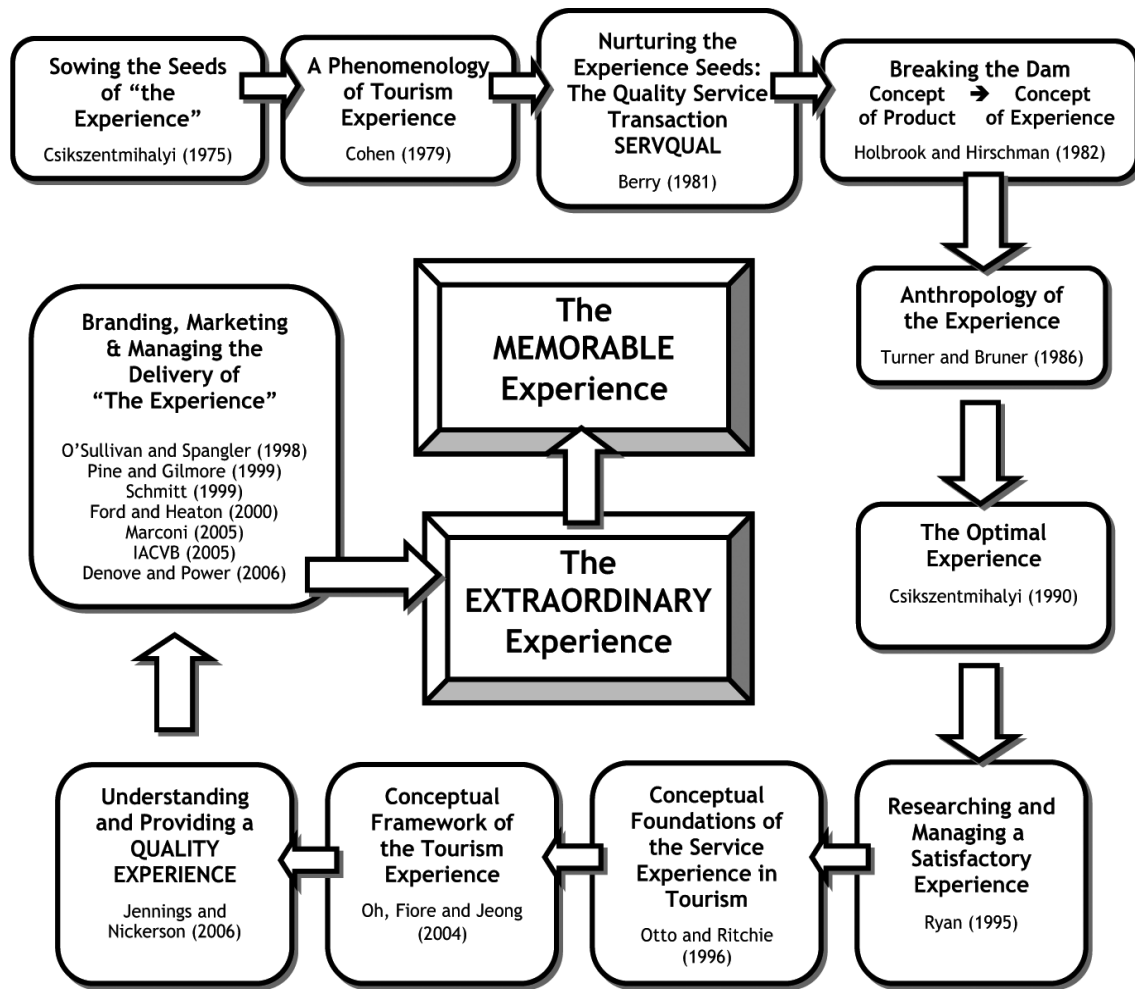


Figure A.2. The Evolution of the Extraordinary/Memorable Travel / Tourism Experience  
*Note:* Adapted from Ritchie and Hudson (2009).



Table A. 3. Ritchie & Hudson's (2009) Experience Streams

Tourist Experience Streams		
Stream	Articles	Key Elements
Stream 1: Understanding the Essence of the Consumer/ Tourist Experience	Csikszentmihalyi (1975), (1990)	Introduced consumer/ tourist experience in the context of leisure/play and coined the term, "optimal experience". Applied his ideologies to marketing and behavior by examining consumer behavior in the context of existential or experiential rewards.
	Dilthey (1976)	Discusses the distinction between mere experience and an experience. Expresses how experience can be influential regarding an individual's expression or communication with others.
	Turner & Bruner (1986)	Identifies various concepts of experience by expanding on Dilthey's differentiation between mere experience & experience, as well as recognizing the stages of the temporal or processual structures.
	Abrahams (1986)	Looks at the difference between ordinary and extraordinary experience as well as identifying two kinds of experience; developed either from daily routine, with no arrangements or from planning.
	Holbrook & Hirschman (1982), Morris & Holbrook (1984)	Influential in the marketing segment to shift from products to experience by highlighting consumer

	behavior as being fundamentally experiential. Coined the term, 'experiential view' which encompasses the feelings and fantasies in the consumption behavior.
Arnold & Price (1993)	One of the earliest to identify experience as an essential element as opposed to focusing primarily on the product.
Cohen (1979)	Developed the phenomenological typology of the tourist experience (see table 1).
Ugner & Kernan (1983)	Presents five subjective components of intrinsic satisfaction focusing on leisure, which comprises of: perceived freedom, involvement, arousal, mastery, and spontaneity.
Hirshman (1984)	Establishes the following three basic stages of experience seeking including: cognitive, sensation, and novelty.
Otto & Ritchie (1996)	Classifies six fundamental dimensions of tourism experience claiming that a tourist seeking a quality experience should consider providing visitors with all six components including: a Hedonic Dimension, an Interactive or Social Dimension, a Novelty Seeking or Escape Dimension, a Comfort Dimension, a Safety Dimension, and a Stimulating or Challenge Seeking Dimension.

Mannell & Iso-Ahola (1987)	Puts forth three perspectives (definitional perspective, immediate conscious approach, and post-hoc satisfaction) from a tourists experience and leisure.
Ryan (1997)	One of the first in the realm of tourism to examine experience primarily from a tourism standpoint. A key element that Ryan explores is how holidays may create an opportunity for a life changing experience.
Aho (2001)	Detects the core characteristics/elements of experiences in tourism including emotional, learning, practical and transformational experiences. Developed a model of the tourism experience, which identifies the seven stages of the experience process containing: orientation, attachment, visiting, evaluation, storing, reflection, and enrichment.
Cary (2004)	Focuses on the serendipitous moment, which similarly resembles Csikszentmihalyi's Flow Concept.
Bruner (1991)	An important piece which counters the perspective that the tourist experience must be intense and real.
Wang (1999)	Provides a framework focusing on three types of authenticity (objective, existential, and constructive authenticity) relating to the experience of the tourist.

MacCannell (2002)	Discussed the authenticity in tourist experience as well as identifying the Ego Factor in Tourism by examining the commodification of experience and cultural forms.
Mano & Oliver (1993)	A post-consumption experience study examining evaluation, storing, reflection and enrichment.
Ryan (2000)	Reviews a post-consumption experience by examining the learning that took place from previous travel experiences to seek other more pleasing experiences.
Trauer & Ryan (2005)	Applied the Intimacy Theory to detect the destination image and experience of place in tourism. These types of intimacy include: physical, encompassing actual contact; verbal, interchange of words in communication; spiritual, sharing values and beliefs; and intellectual, sharing reflection and knowledge.
O'Dell & Billing (2005)	Looked at a series papers on the Experience-Scapes. A concept, which are landscapes of experience; "They are spaces in which diverse groups (with potentially competing, as well as overlapping interests and ideologies), move about and come in contact with one another. Examples of experience-scapes covered in this reference include an industrial-

	<p>Ooi's (2005)</p> <p>Rojek &amp; Urry (1997)</p>	<p>scape, a regional-scape, an architecture-scape, and a nostalgia-scape (p.116).”</p> <p>Detects the limits of managerial design and planning in regards to the tourism experience. Evaluates these limitations based on 3 characteristics: “Experiences arise out of people’s social and cultural backgrounds. Since these different backgrounds lead to diverse interpretations of a single tourism product—how can a single product interest and excite all customers? (2) Experiences are multifaceted. They arise from activities and the physical environment, as well as the social meaning embedded in the activities. As such, people have different experiences even if they are doing the same thing in the same place; (3) Experiences are existential. They are embodied in people in that they are personally felt and can only be experienced by people (p. 116).”</p> <p>Connects the ‘realist’ search to tourism in a varied and complex perspective of the tourist experience.</p>
<p>Stream 2: Understanding the tourist and their experience seeking, decision making behavior</p>	<p>Pizam &amp; Mansfeld (1999)</p>	<p>This work presents the concept of experience examined as a supplementary issue, or as a variable influencing choice.</p>

	Vogt et al (1993)	Detects the decision-making role of travel information as well the image of experience.
	Nerhagen (2003)	Discovered past experience may influence travel choice behavior.
	Heywood (1987)	Revealed that different experiences may vary among social size and composition of group members.
Stream 3: Methodologies for understanding experience research	Arnould & Price (1993)	Mixed method study evaluating participants experience before and after a trip.
	Nickerson et al. (2004)	Applied three methodological approaches: diary, open-ended, mail-back survey, and in-depth interviews to compare the significance behind visitor's experiences.
	Lee et al. (1994)	Used SITRM (self-initiated tape recording method) for a quantitative questionnaire looking at the participant's immediate experiences in natural situations. Also, coordinated in-depth interviews to access leisure experience.
	Jackson et al. (1996)	Applied the critical incident technique to evaluate a tourist's positive and negative experience. The study revealed the tourists were more likely to relate the positive experience to themselves and more likely to attribute the source of their negative experiences to external factors.

	Fairweather & Swafield (2001)	Explored how various groups choose between different experiences in the same geographical location by using photographs of landscapes.
	Chen (2004)	Used the Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique (ZMET) to evaluate a tourist's family vacation experience. This technique was helpful in receiving deeper insights as opposed to primarily normal verbal discussion.
	Small (1999)	Highlights the limitations of innovation in tourism research methods as well as the applying theory to method.
	Hayllar & Griffin (2005)	Used a phenomenological approach to study the tourists experience in Australia concluding that the nature of the tourist experience is characterized by two themes including intimacy and authenticity.
	Ryan (2000)	Identified phenomenography as a field, which is associated with an unstructured qualitative data that is used for policy making.
Stream 4: Understanding specific kinds of tourism experience	Chhetri (2004)	Identified the visitor experience in the natural landscape.
	Cameron & Gatewood (1998)	Evaluated why tourists visits certain museums and sites.
	Vitterso et al. (2004)	Recognized the Norwegian tourist attraction experiences.

	Snepenger et al (2004)	Detects how a community comprising of a large tourism economy defined the normative meaning of experience.
Stream 5: Research related to managerial concerns	Pine & Gilmore (1999)	The most important piece observing the management application of the experience concept. Recognizes that experience is the foundation of the overall management strategy. The premise of the book is to comprehend how to turn every interaction into experience.
	Ford & Heaton (2000)	Evaluates the quality of the overall guest experience using a management approach named 'guestology'. This concept is defined as "the difference between the quality that the guest expects and the quality the guest gets' is utilized (p. 18)."
	IACVB (2005)	Focuses on the visitor experience and managing a destination brand by recognizing the consumers desire authentic experiences. Provides a framework for managing the quality of the tourist experience.
Stream 6: The ongoing evolution of the travel/ tourism experience	See figure 1	

*Note.* Adapted from Ritchie & Hudson's (2009) Experience Streams



Table A. 4. Modes / Lifestyles of Experience

Linking Experience and Culinary Tourism		
Modes / Lifestyles	Cohen & Avieli	Kivela & Crotts
Recreational	Recreational tourists... “will generally not expose themselves to the strangeness of the host environment, and will use predominantly the facilities provided. In the sphere of food and drink, such tourists will tend to show pre- dominantly neophobic tendencies. However, they may look for familiar food of a higher quality, and in greater quantities than consumed in their daily life. Even those who manifest an explorative neophylic tendency will mainly seek new foods, which are enjoyable, rather than authentic or otherwise interesting.”	Recreationalist gastronomy tourists are “the more conservative type that is, although they appreciate and actively seek holidays, they want the familiarity of their home cuisine. Often, they bring ingredients with them so that they will not have to do without. For recreationalist gastronomy tourists, food is not that important when they are on holiday, and food-related entertainment while on holiday is often limited to activities that afford watching without participation.”
Diversionsary	-----	Diversionsary gastronomy tourists are “the kinds of tourists who want to escape from everyday life and its mundanity (Finkelstein, 1989), which includes day-to- day shopping and cooking for the family. When these tourists are on holiday, food must come easily, without too much effort, and there must be plenty of it, so they prefer popular and chain restaurant operations. They prefer and actively seek menu items that are familiar. For diversionsary gastronomy tourists, eating and drinking are excellent ways of getting together with friends and new acquaintances and enjoying life.”
Experiential	Experiential tourists... “will show a marked interest in local dishes and food habits. They will visit local markets for unfamiliar vegetables, fruits, spices, and condiments and ask about their names and uses or follow the preparation process at street stalls. They may taste local foods, out of curiosity rather than in quest of enjoyment. However, though such tourists will probably show stronger neophylic tendencies, they might be reluctant to expose themselves directly to the local cuisine and will opt to eat local food in the sheltered environment	-----

	of tourism-oriented establishments.”	
Experimental	Experimental/ Existential tourists “will patronize local establishments and subsist on the local fare, whether as part of their experimenting with local life or because they have adopted it in preference to life in their place of origin. Permanent subsistence on local food, in a kind of culinary	Experimental gastronomy tourists “symbolize their lifestyle through food usually trendy and “in” foods. These tourists actively seek the destination’s smartest designer cafes and restaurants that serve innovative menus and offer equally chic service. Experimental gastronomy tourists keep up to date about trendy and fashionable foods, ingredients, and recipes.”
Existential	“switching worlds’, can be expected mainly among existential tourists. This occurs primarily in situations where cuisine closely relates to a broader “worldview” selected as their “elective center” For example the adoption of a vegetarian cuisine upon conversion to Hinduism.”	Existential gastronomy tourists “seek food combinations and eating experiences that foster (culinary) learning. For these tourists, food consumption and drinking not only satisfy hunger and thirst but also offer an opportunity to gain in-depth knowledge about the local or regional cuisine and the destination’s culture.”

*Note.* Adapted from Cohen & Avieli (2004) & Kivela & Crofts (2009).

Table A.5. Key Articles in Culinary Tourism / Experience

Culinary Tourism Experience Research			
Source Issues/Themes	Theory	Methodology	Core
<p>Wolf (2002)</p> <p>Halls, Sharples &amp; Mitchell (2003) Specifically: The consumption of experiences, or the experiences of consumption</p> <p>Hjalager &amp; Richards (2002) A typology of gastronomy tourism.</p>		<i>N/A</i>	<p>Investigates how culinary tourism is in the context to agricultural tourism and focuses on the enjoyment of food and drink.</p> <p>Provides a framework of the geographical differences.</p> <p>Primary/ Secondary Interest</p>
<p>Quan &amp; Wang (2004) Towards a structural model of the tourist experience: an illustration from food experiences in tourism</p>	Experience	<i>N/A</i>	<p>Developed a conceptual model of several experiential components including eating as well as identifying food consumption as either a peak experience or supporting experience.</p>