

# Walla Walla

The Brand

December 12, 2011

# THE PROCESS

- Review/audit of existing Walla Walla brand
- Anecdotal knowledge/information
- Review of available research
- Interviews with tourism stakeholders
- Historical attributes
- Product attributes
- Brand attributes
- Weighted attributes
- Brand description

# STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

- Why do people come to Walla Walla?
- In your opinion, how do they find out about Walla Walla?
- What experiences do they have here that make them want to return?
- Where do *your* visitors come from?
- What is the primary reason *your* customers/clients/patrons visit Walla Walla?
- Who are they?
- What advantages does Walla Walla have over its competitors?
- Why does Walla Walla fail to attract visitors?

# STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

- What images/icons do you feel best represent Walla Walla to your visitors?
- What do you think your current customer's perception is of Walla Walla?
- What should it be?
- Do you see any significant trends emerging that will impact tourism in Walla Walla?

# STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

*Why do people come to Walla Walla?*

- A unique and strong sense of place
- The downtown
- It's authentic, cool/quaint, genuine, not contrived
- Visitors are welcomed and invited to become part of the town
- Performing arts, cultural experiences, restaurants/dining
- The chance to EXPERIENCE wine
- An escape from the I-5 corridor, the rain, and from a busy/hectic life
- A sense of history - generational
- A lot of individual experiences that collectively are huge

# STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

*How do people find out about Walla Walla?*

- Word of mouth
- Wine press, accolades and recognition
- The Internet
- Walla Walla advertising
- Editorial articles about the wine and the town
- Popular destination for weddings

# STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

*What experiences do they have here that make them want to return?*

- Can still talk to the owners, chefs, winemakers
- Walking in downtown, one of 1800 “Main Streets” and one of only 13 in WA
- The favorable weather
- Knowledge gained of food, wines, pairings, etc.
- Size: Walla Walla never grows much and is still quaint, charming
- The arts: performing, visual and culinary
- Depth/layers of the destination
- Friendliness and safe feel of the town
- Friendly people, genuine community – not pretentious

# STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

*Where do your visitors come from?*

- Mainly Seattle and Portland
- Boise
- Spokane
- More people coming from close (i.e. Tri Cities)
- Seeing more people from the eastern United States

# STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

*What is the primary reason your customers/clients/patrons visit Walla Walla?*

- For the wine
- Arts/cultural experiences
- They want a complete and unique experience

# STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

*Who are they?*

- Same demographic as wine industry, built with them in mind
- Professionals
- 40-65 years old, generally
- Contemporary
- Upscale/affluent
- Educated
- Disposable income
- Refined tastes

# STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

*What advantages does Walla Walla have over its competitors?*

- Portlandians and Seattleites are fans
- Winery county vs. Wine country
- Wines are old enough to have micro-climates
- Wineries and wine incubators
- Whitman College
- A sense of pride and ownership, strong collaboration and a can-do attitude
- Longest-running symphony west of the Mississippi
- Very dense and compact, not spread out over great distances
- Tourism is welcomed here
- Main Street

# STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

*Why does Walla Walla fail to attract visitors?*

- Stigma of Washington = rain
- Location, access including air service
- Distance and weather (both real and perceived)
- Lack of overall awareness of what to do
- Lack of lodging (quantity and variety)
- Singular emphasis on wine industry
- Statewide lack of cooperation
- Winter attractions
- Business hours downtown

# STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

*What images/icons do you feel best represent Walla Walla to your visitors?*

- Main Street/downtown
- Whitman College clock tower
- Marcus Whitman Hotel
- Vineyards & wineries (L'Ecole No. 41)
- Blue Mountains
- Windmills
- Wildlife
- Rolling Palouse and wheat fields
- Agriculture (onions, wheat, peas)

# STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

*What do you think your current customer's perception is of Walla Walla?*

- Wine & onions
- Once they are here, they are surprised
- Small town
- They like the changes, growth
- Like hip, progressive, quaint
- Trees, atmosphere, parks

# STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

*What should it be?*

- Performing & public art
- Best wine area in the United States
- Much more than wheat, onions and the prison
- Walla Walla is not a one-trick pony (wine)
- Walla Walla is today what Napa Valley was 30 years ago
- Safe, low crime
- The college is a jewel
- Living legends of the wine industry are here
- A place where you can decompress and experience the benefits of a small town
- We are a quality destination

# STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

*Do you see any significant trends emerging that will impact tourism in Walla Walla?*

- The community was here for a long time—the wine business was fortunate to find it
- Micro-farming in Walla Walla vs. production farming in Columbia and Yakima Valleys
- More wineries, more hobby farms
- More people moving here, more second home buyers
- Culture and wine will continue to grow
- Revitalization of the river through town
- Shorter bookings, particularly with small groups
- Culinary piece will continue to grow
- Historical piece will continue to grow

## HISTORICAL ATTRIBUTES

- Near the end of the last ice age, about 15,000 years ago, the ice dam holding Lake Missoula broke and flooded the lands of the Columbia River Basin, all the way from Eastern Washington to the Willamette Valley. For 2,000 years, the cycle of refreezing and flooding occurred about every 50 years.
- Left behind were the rolling hills of the Palouse and the agriculturally rich Walla Walla Valley. The topsoil is more than 20 feet deep in most places, resulting in one of the most productive agricultural areas in America. Long the domain of dry wheat, the Walla Walla Valley now produces a diverse range of crops, including the Walla Walla Sweet Onion.
- More recently, some of the fourth and fifth generation farmers have turned toward the growing of grapes and the production of high quality wine. Walla Walla is now one of the finest wine producing areas in the world. Grapes survive the relatively mild winter and thrive in the long hot days and cool nights of summer.
- Walla Walla was the name used by the Native Americans who lived in this area and literally means “many waters.”

## HISTORICAL ATTRIBUTES

- In the mid-1800s, Walla Walla emerged as the boomtown of the Pacific Northwest. Walla Walla's many historic homes deliver a fascinating history of the once-extraordinary wealth of the area.
- This rich history is the major difference between Walla Walla and anywhere else in the Northwest. Historians refer to it as the cradle of inland Northwest history. Walla Walla was a primary trading center of the tribes that lived along the Columbia River. Lewis and Clark passed through Walla Walla in 1805 and 1806, and pronounced its residents the friendliest they had encountered. In 1843, Marcus Whitman led the first large wagon train to Oregon and the Great Westward Migration was on.
- Walla Walla has the largest group of pre-Civil War buildings in the State.
- The first winery (Leonetti) was bonded in 1977 and released its first bottle of wine in 1978. In 1981, the second winery was bonded (Woodward Canyon) and in 1983, the third (L'Ecole 41). In 1984, Walla Walla was recognized as an American Viticultural Area. In 2001, there were a total of 13 wineries. In 2008, that number reached 100. By 2011, there were a total of 145 wineries.

## PRODUCT ATTRIBUTES

- About 15,000 years ago, recurring floods in the Columbia River Basin left behind the Walla Walla Valley. With topsoil more than 20 feet deep, the area became one of the most productive agricultural areas in America.
- Some fourth and fifth generation farmers have turned from wheat to the growing of grapes and the production of high quality wine. Walla Walla is now one of the finest wine producing areas in the world. Grapes survive the relatively mild winters and thrive in the long hot days and cool nights of summer.
- Walla Walla lies at the foot of the Blue Mountains among the beautiful rolling hills of the Palouse. Panoramic vistas offer an array of outdoor recreation.
- The charming historic downtown, refined culinary arts, multiple venues for the performing arts, Fort Walla Walla Museum, great golf, Whitman College, wonderful biking – all form the backdrop for some of the greatest wine produced in the world.
- Walla Walla offers a diverse range of accommodations—from the historic Marcus Whitman Hotel (circa 1928) to intimate B&Bs—including every level of lodging from full-service to limited-service to economy.

# PRODUCT ATTRIBUTES

- Walla Walla is home to three colleges, including Whitman College, Walla Walla Community College, and Walla Walla University. It's also home to three hospitals.
- The historic downtown has been beautifully restored to the majestic grace that characterized it in the late 1800s, and is a true piece of Americana. Walla Walla's many historic homes deliver a fascinating history of the once-extraordinary wealth of the area.
- The rich history of Walla Walla creates the difference between this place and almost anywhere else in the Northwest. Lewis and Clark passed through in 1805 and 1806, and pronounced the residents of Walla Walla the friendliest they had encountered. Much of this history is captured for the public at the Fort Walla Walla Museum and the Whitman Mission.
- The first winery (Leonetti) was bonded in 1977 and released its first bottle of wine in 1978. In 1981, the second winery was bonded (Woodward Canyon) and in 1983, the third (L'Ecole 41). In 1984, Walla Walla was recognized as an American Viticultural Area.

## PRODUCT ATTRIBUTES

- In 2001, there were a total of 13 wineries. In 2008, that number reached 100. By 2011, there were a total of 145 wineries.
- Much larger growing areas in the Columbia River Valley include Red Mountain, the Tri Cities, and Yakima. Much of that production finds its way to the wineries of Walla Walla under the watchful eyes of extraordinary winemakers.
- Washington has become the second largest wine producing state in the nation. In a typical vintage, three-fourths of the top rated wines in Washington are from Walla Walla wineries.
- Walla Walla is one of the few places in the world where you can actually experience wine. You can walk the historic downtown with many great food venues and 26 tasting rooms. There are concentrations of wineries in pockets just minutes away.
- Downtown is the center of activity in Walla Walla. It is one of only 13 designated “Main Street” downtowns in Washington.
- Live music brings downtown to life on many weeknights and most weekend nights.

## PRODUCT ATTRIBUTES

- Compared to the west side of Oregon and Washington, Walla Walla offers a much sunnier, drier, and warmer climate.
- Walla Walla is an escape from many things: from the weather, from traffic and congestion, and from the hectic day-to-day life west of the Cascades.
- The performing arts take place in many venues, including Whitman College, Walla Walla Community College, Fort Walla Walla and the newly renovated Power House Theatre, which now produces everything from Shakespeare to Broadway-caliber plays. You can enjoy incredible lectures at the colleges from world leaders.
- People are genuinely friendly here. They greet you with a smile. They want to know who you are. They want to share their incredible community. There is still a small town feel to Walla Walla.
- Walla Walla is easy to get to from anywhere in the Pacific Northwest. A short drive from Spokane and the Tri Cities. About four hours from Seattle, Portland, Boise and Bend. Additionally, daily flights from Seattle make connecting from anywhere in the U.S. simple. Or, fly into the Tri Cities from San Francisco with just an hour drive east to Walla Walla.

## BRAND ATTRIBUTES

- People come to Walla Walla for the unique sense of place.
- Visitors have always been welcome. Lewis and Clark pronounced the area home to the friendliest people they encountered in the early 1800s, a sentiment repeated 200 years later when Rand McNally and USA Today named Walla Walla the Friendliest Small Town in America.
- There is something deeply fulfilling about visiting Walla Walla. Something that takes you back to your roots.
- There is something here that connects you to your heritage. It gives you a glimpse of a way of life almost non-existent anywhere else.
- In Walla Walla, you have the chance to truly experience wine country. For wine lovers from around the world, that's a distinct alternative. Kind of like the Napa Valley three decades ago.
- It's not just the chance to taste wine at beautiful wineries. It's more about the experience. Here, you can still talk to the winemaker, can still enjoy barrel tastings, and still learn the art of enology and viticulture from legends in the industry.

## BRAND ATTRIBUTES

- Visitors want to come back. They want to experience this unique ambience time and time again.
- There is nothing pretentious or contrived about Walla Walla. Everything is authentic, and the pace of life here leads to a real experience.
- The people are friendly. Genuinely so. They smile when they meet you. They're actually interested in what you think about their little slice of heaven.
- You can still walk and shop downtown. Locals mingle with tourists in the shops, restaurants, boutiques and tasting rooms. It's like a throwback to a day gone by, but with a sophisticated twist.
- It's sunnier, drier, and warmer here. That means that the grapes grow better. And that people are more active outdoors.
- At the recently built Wine Valley Golf Club, you can play a course already ranked #2 in Washington, behind only Chambers Bay which will host the 2015 U.S. Open. A course destined for the Top 100 in the nation.

## BRAND ATTRIBUTES

- Here, you escape a faster pace of life – and the dreary weather of the I-5 corridor. It's generally sunny and warm with blue skies and seasons that actually change.
- It represents a quality of life that exists in only a few places in the world. Places like the Rhone Valley, Tuscany and Rioja.
- Wine in Walla Walla is of extraordinary quality. It represents one of the best values in the entire world of wine.
- It's a historical town in a historical region, but has the unmistakable vibe of a small college town.
- It offers simple pleasures with a twist of sophistication. You'll meet great people, eat great food, and have great experiences.
- Best of all, you can take part of what you find here home with you and enjoy it over and over again.
- Walla Walla is away from everything, yet easy to get to. An easy four-hour drive from Seattle, Portland, Boise and Bend. Even shorter from Spokane, Yakima and the Tri-Cities. Or connect via air through Seattle.

# WEIGHTED TOURISM ATTRIBUTES

ATTRIBUTE	WEIGHT
Wine and winery visits	9
Culinary	7
Small town charm	6
Weather	5
Scenic beauty	3
Performing arts	3
Historic downtown	2
Outdoor recreation	2
Whitman College	2
History	2
America's Friendliest Small Town	2

# THE BRAND

This is a place of connections. Between the land and some of the finest wine in the world. Between the charms of a small town and the sophistication of the arts. Between panoramic vistas and outdoor recreation. Between people and their heritage.

Here, it's sunny and warm, with blue skies and seasons that actually change. The long hot summer days give way to cool nights. The air is clean and smells fresh and earthy. It's real. Grapes grow better. People grow closer.

Here, you have the rare opportunity to actually experience wine country. To slow down, relax, and truly taste the wine – maybe for the first time in your life. It's a region that is unique in its own ways and unmatched in the world. A place where you can still talk to the chefs and winemakers. Where you come to understand the hard work of farming and the great joy of tasting the wine and food that comes from it. Where you discover the next great winery, and take a piece of it home with you.

Here, you enjoy a unique sense of place. Locals mingle with visitors in the shops, tasting rooms, restaurants and boutiques of a thriving, historic downtown. The experience is authentic. The people genuine. They greet you with a smile, eager to share their community. The arts flourish, from incredible food and live music to riveting theatre. There's the unmistakable energy of a small college town. The culinary scene is nationally acclaimed. Outdoor recreation abounds.

## THE BRAND

There is something deeply fulfilling about visiting Walla Walla. A renowned wine region that sits in a unique cradle of Northwest history, where most of the vineyards are still owned by the pioneering families that started them. Simple pleasures with a twist of sophistication. Nothing contrived. Nothing pretentious. A place known for welcoming visitors long before Lewis & Clark described its residents as the most friendly of their entire journey. That same spirit is alive today and closer than you think.

Walla Walla is more than just a getaway. It's a place that gets it. Gets what it means to slow down and enjoy the simple pleasures in life. Gets what it means to connect with one another. To connect to a way of life that stirs the soul and feeds the senses. This is the Friendliest Small Town in America. A place you'll want to return to time and time again. And like a great bottle of wine, it is best when shared.

# Walla Walla

The Brand

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