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Visitors Chilling Out in the High Country

The traditional beach holiday may be losing its appeal for some, as increasing numbers are interested in learning more about escaping the coastal heat.

Cool temperatures on the Granite Belt are a feature on Queensland's daily weather reports. The area's local tourist body believes that if their recent statistics are a barometer, this may be translating into increased tourism activity in the Queensland wine capital.

Granite Belt Wine Country's Director of Marketing Michele Cozzi said comparing 2006 data with 2007 has produced some very pleasing results:

- Visitor Information Centre numbers have risen by 9.3% for the year, with fairly even growth each month compared to the same period in 2006.
- Website traffic has increased 60% in the past year.

Mrs Cozzi said "Those who live here enjoy the Granite Belt four distinct seasons; now it appears that the secret of our cool summers is beginning to draw visitors as well. Apart from our cool starlit nights and cool climate wines, we love the fresh seasonal food. Visitors can enjoy all of this with the convenience of being able to pre-book accommodation on-line.

"The website traffic is particularly encouraging as we moved to a new online accommodation booking system just a few months ago. Obviously the travelling public wants to be on the net and this is supplemented by the personal information service on arrival at the visitor centre," she added.

Average summer temperatures on the Granite Belt range from 14.6 to 28.8 degrees Celsius. Listen to a local and always pack a jacket, because the evenings can be very cool.

To learn more about the Queensland wine capital visit www.granitebeltwinecountry.com.au or phone 1800 SO COOL. *Expect to be surprised!*

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1. The history of the Queensland wine industry dates back to the 1860s - and like all good wines it has developed with age.
2. 35% of Queensland's 1500 hectares of wine grapes are in the state's premier wine region - the Granite Belt.
3. 64% of Granite Belt plantings are of Shiraz, Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay and Merlot with an increasing number of plantings of alternative grape varieties proving popular. Verdelho, Viognier, Tempranillo and Durif are rising stars.
4. The Granite Belt is home to approximately 50 wine cellar doors, the state's most awarded winemakers, plus the Queensland College of Wine Tourism - the first of its type in the world.