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Queensland's New Director of Wine meets the Strange Bird

On Wednesday 12 December 2007 the new Director of Wine at the Queensland Department of Tourism, Regional Development & Industry, Mr Bob Durance, visited the Queensland Wine Capital.

While in Stanthorpe Mr Durance attended an industry function, at which the so-called Strange Bird was introduced to local tourism operators. For the industry it was also a chance to meet the new Director of Wine. Mr Durance was officially welcomed to the region by Granite Belt Wine & Tourism President Mrs Bobbi Cragg.

“Strange Bird” is the name given to the new Granite Belt Alternative Wine Trail. The trail includes 21 wineries which produce some 16 varieties of grapes outside the classics such as chardonnay and Shiraz.

The trail was originally launched in Brisbane in November but last night's event was the opportunity to show other local tourist operators how it could benefit the region. Interest has already been significant with media take up including a visit from a writer for The Lonely Planet.

Mr Durance said when he first saw the trail brochure he said, “Strange Bird - what's that?” He said the art of getting noticed is the first step in successful marketing so the fact he stopped to consider it had achieved that. He congratulated the Granite Belt on a fantastic and creative initiative in the development of the trail.

Mrs Cragg said that almost 100 people packed the new 1915 Piano Bar at Stanthorpe's Commercial Hotel for the event. “There was a great buzz of excitement in the room that this is a bird which is really going to take us places. A fitting journey for Queensland's Premier Wine region!”

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.