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Brock viticulture institute receives \$960,000 for one-of-a-kind wine consumer research lab

Imagine being able to shop at a winery or the LCBO while listening to classical music and savouring the aromas of chardonnay and pinot grigio, all without leaving your seat.

A nearly \$1-million funding grant will help Brock University's Cool Climate Oenology and Viticulture Institute establish the world's first mediated-reality wine laboratory that will combine sights, smells and sounds to help researchers study the science of consumer choice in the wine industry.

Brock's oenology and viticulture researchers are on the forefront of this leading-edge technology thanks to a \$960,000 grant from the Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI) announced Thursday, Oct. 12.

The Augmented Reality, Virtual Reality and Sensory Reality Consumer Laboratory, to be known as R³CL, will be able to create a variety of environments in which people purchase and consume wines.

These environments could include wineries, liquor stores or even dining rooms. Interwoven with the scenes will be music, smells and other sensory information.

Researchers will study how a range of factors impact the research participants' choices of where and under what conditions they purchase and drink wines.

This greater understanding of consumer behaviour will help the industry to best market their wines to potential customers, says CCOVI Director Debbie Inglis.

"The concept of coupling consumer behaviour with technical tools of augmented and virtual reality is not only going to put Canadian researchers on the forefront of this research, but it's also an international first," she says.

The exercise is not just academic but economic, explains Inglis, noting that the majority of wines sold in Canada come from other countries.

“We want to flip that, or at least gain a majority of market share that’s Canadian,” she says.

“This first-of-its-kind wine consumer laboratory will be an influential research platform to support and propel the Canadian grape and wine industry,” says CFI President and CEO Roseann O’Reilly Runte. “It will provide unique insight into wine consumer behaviour and be an asset for developing new, successful wines.”

Runte believes it will also raise CCOVI’s reputation “as a global centre of wine research excellence.”

In addition to acquiring the technology for the mediated-reality wine consumer lab, the grant will be used to purchase state-of-the-art equipment for several CCOVI research programs.

Brock University’s interim Vice-President, Research Joffre Mercier says the award “recognizes the outstanding research performed in our Cool Climate Oenology and Viticulture Institute, the only institute of its kind in Canada that links the vineyard to the wine and all the way through to the consumer choice.

“The award also recognizes the outstanding economic impact of CCOVI’s work on the grape and wine industry in Ontario. I am very proud of the exceptional work of our researchers and of their dedication and commitment to our industrial and community partners,” Mercier says.

CCOVI, an internationally recognized research institute on cool climate viticulture, oenology, wine business and wine culture, offers an array of programs and services to support the Canadian grape and wine industry.

An [economic impact study](#) last year found CCOVI contributed more than \$91 million and the equivalent of 307 jobs to Ontario’s economy in 2014-15.

For more information, read the story in [The Brock News](#)

For more information or for assistance arranging interviews:

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