Wine101x claims two national awards

A GROUNDBREAKING COURSE offered by the University of Adelaide has recently taken out the Government, Education and Non-profit category of the 2015 South Australian Interactive Media Excellence awards as well as the Best Wine Educator award from Wine Communicators of Australia.

The massive online open course (MOOC) called World of Wine: From Grape to Glass was developed by Kerry Wilkinson, Paul Grbin, Cassandra Collins and David Jeffery, from The University of Adelaide’s School of Agriculture, Food and Wine in conjunction with the AdelaideX team.

Produced through the sweltering summer of 2015 in a tiny studio with no air conditioning, the team put in months of effort to plan and execute the free six-week online course, dubbed Wine101x, which was delivered worldwide via the edX platform.

Using the internet’s global reach, Wilkinson and her team were able to share their expertise and passion for wine to more than 18,000 participants from more than 160 countries.

Aimed at educating beginners through to passionate wine enthusiasts, the course covered the principles and practices that underpin grape and wine production, and their impacts on wine style and sensory properties with an Australian focus. “We developed a course at a level that didn’t require any prior knowledge of grapegrowing or winemaking,” Wilkinson said. “We wanted to take participants on a journey from the vineyard to the winery, and then to the kitchen or restaurant table, thereby giving them greater confidence in their ability to select and discuss wines.”

The course encompassed short video lectures from all of the University of Adelaide team members, as well as video interviews with industry professionals, interactive activities such as a virtual winemaking app, discussion forums and several assessment tasks to evaluate learning.

From the satisfaction of the online interactions and based on participant feedback for the course, the team said the effort had been worth it.

“Participants were overwhelmingly positive about their experiences with the course, and especially appreciated the multimedia content, interactive activities and knowledge of the instructors,” Jeffery said.

By popular demand, Wine101x was released again in June 2015 in self-paced mode, and has achieved more than 30,000 total enrolments.

“Part of this accomplishment is clearly attributable to support from the wine industry, not only through the individuals who played roles in the course content, but also by promoting the MOOC and generally supporting our teaching and research endeavours,” said Jeffery.

After the success of their multi-award winning first course, Jeffery said the team have been encouraged to start thinking about the next phase, Wine201x.

“There was a good deal of interest from learners around wine tasting, so maybe the next course will contain online wine appreciation classes and themed virtual tastings,” he said.

In the meantime, cellar door staff, marketers, accountants, vintage casuals, customers and anyone else interested in learning about grapes and wines can experience the online course, Wine101x, for at least the next few months.

At the outset the team anticipated that educating global consumers about Australian wines and regions would lead to greater awareness of what Australia has to offer, so hopefully the success of this MOOC continues to help realise that vision.