EVENT DEBRIEF · AUSTRALIA

Brisbane learnings and the road to Sydney & Melbourne

Feedback from the Good Food & Wine Show Brisbane and the tastings at the Brisbane Latvian House and in Canberra

Interreg
Co-funded by the European Union
Central Baltic Programme
BALT-FIN-CIDER



OVERVIEW

Brisbane was a strong consumer success

~23,000

visitors at the show (estimate)

3,000–5,000

guests served at our stand

3

tasting events: GFWS Brisbane, Brisbane Latvian House, Canberra

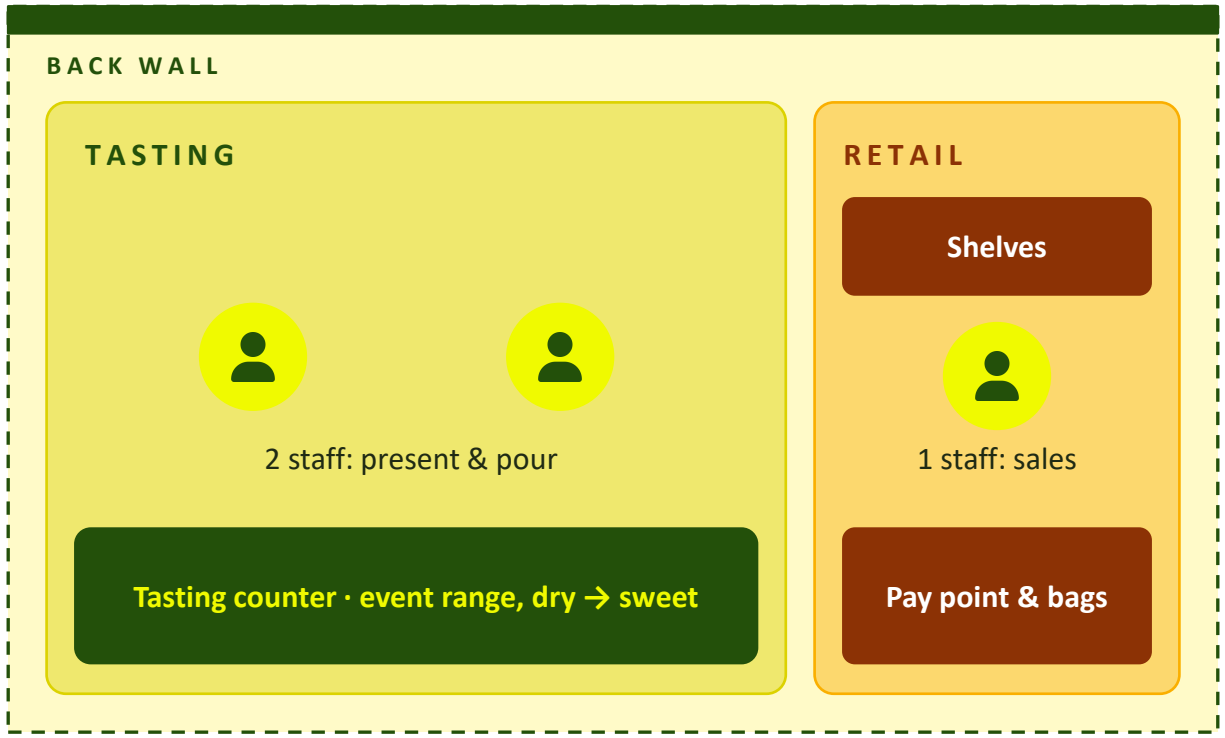


An overwhelmingly positive response: most visitors met Baltic cider for the first time, were surprised by its quality and diversity — and almost everyone found one they enjoyed.

Five areas to work on before Sydney & Melbourne

1. Stand & sales
2. Range & quality
3. Trade buyers
4. Online store
5. Priorities

Separate tasting from selling



Illustrative zoning for a 3 × 5 m stand with three open sides (front and both ends)

Dedicated tasting counter

Only the ciders we are actually pouring, clearly presented.

Separate retail section

Shelves with bottles and mixed packs ready for purchase.

Three people at all times

Two presenting and pouring, one dedicated to retail sales.

In Brisbane, selling bottles while running tastings slowed us down considerably.

Clearer display, better packaging

Show what we are actually pouring

Info cards or a narrow counter display: name, style, sweetness and tasting notes, dry → sweet. The catalogue made people ask for ciders we weren't pouring.

More and better packaging

The black bags were popular but ran out on day two. Add paper bags, six-pack carriers, gift packs — and branded glasses for sale.

Reward bigger baskets

A small promotional gift for customers who spend over a set amount.

Share stand changes early

We learned at setup that the stand grew from 3 × 3 m to 3 × 5 m with three open sides. Only one of our two posters fit.



Protect the premium story with a quality procedure

Range

Well balanced across cider styles. Before the next event, review it against what Brisbane customers actually enjoyed and bought.

Quality

A few ciders had noticeable faults — some arguably not suitable to serve. That undercuts everything we say about Baltic cider quality.

Proposed procedure

1

Agree the rules first

Set the criteria and process before the event, so nobody has to make uncomfortable calls on the spot.

2

Panel tasting

Several people taste a suspect product and agree. A producer can assess it and explain the faults.

3

Organisers decide

The organisers take final responsibility for removing a product that is not up to standard.

Goal: remove products that clearly aren't up to standard without making it personal between producers. We all represent the Baltic Cider brand.

Turn consumer interest into distribution

CONSUMERS

Excellent

response at every event

TRADE BUYERS

Very little

engagement in Brisbane

Our main objective in Australia: secure distribution and long-term sales channels.

Before Sydney & Melbourne

1. Identify

Distributors, bottle shops, hospitality buyers and other trade partners.

2. Invite

Send invitations to each event well in advance.

3. Meet & taste

Arrange meetings and tastings; provide samples where appropriate.

4. Bring them to the stand

A serious, coordinated effort to get trade visitors on site.



Online sales need urgent attention

What we saw

Real demand

Visitors scanned our QR codes, opened the website, took materials and asked about home delivery.

Inconsistent sales data

Admin sections show very different sales figures and order histories.

A customer who couldn't buy

In Canberra we met a customer who had tried for over a month to order several cases. Checkout failed on the delivery address; her email got no reply.

What we need now

- A complete and accurate sales report
- An explanation of the discrepancies
- Confirmation that the online store and delivery work end to end

Otherwise we may be spending money generating demand that customers can't turn into purchases.



Our own Baltic Cider e-shop

Shopify store

Sales data, checkouts, customer insight, email marketing

Fulfilment warehouse in Australia

Third-party storage, packing and dispatch

Customers & trade

Home delivery and a base for wholesale orders

Why

- Direct access to sales data, abandoned checkouts and customer behaviour
- Built-in email marketing tools
- A foundation for wholesale orders and a dedicated digital marketing strategy
- More control, transparency and flexibility in the long term

~€50

per month in platform fees, depending on setup

€2–3k

initial marketing budget to test targeted campaigns

Next step: compare costs and performance against our current arrangement.

Quick wins and bigger priorities

Quick wins

Relatively straightforward

- Better stand organisation
- Clearer product information
- More efficient sales
- Adequate packaging
- A more carefully selected range

Bigger priorities

Where to focus first

- Consistent product quality
- Fixing online sales and fulfilment
- A proactive approach to distributors

< €300

(< AUD 500)

Estimated cost of our self-built stand (pictured), tools included. It looked good, is easy to build, can be prepared in advance and can double as pallets for shipping cider.



NEXT: SYDNEY & MELBOURNE

A strong product and story with real potential

Now the commercial side has to work as well as the tastings. Prepare early — especially for trade and distribution.

