By writing for consumer and trade publications, you can maximize your markets—and reap twice as many benefits. Use this savvy strategy to take your travel, wine and food writing to destinations you’ve only dreamed of.

By Roger Morris
Food, Wine & Travel Writing

Across an icy field of gnarled vines at Château Lagrange in France’s Bordeaux wine region. I was there on assignment to write an in-depth piece for Wine Enthusiast, the major consumer drinks magazine, on “A Day in the Life of a Chateau,” which became an eight-page spread in the May 2010 issue.

But while in Bordeaux on this short trip, I also arranged to spend a rainy day with Audrey Bourolleau, the official in charge of the newly formed Côtes de Bordeaux winemaking region, interviewing winemakers in the less-glamorous eastern environs. Although I didn’t yet have an assignment, I thought the new information might be of interest to those in the trade. When I returned, I pitched Sommelier Journal, a publication serving the wine-service business, and the editor agreed. That article will run later this year.

Once I started looking for opportunities to cross-pollinate both markets, I found them everywhere. While on assignment for the popular lifestyles publication Robb Report to cover the opening of a Frank Gehry hotel in Spain, I obtained an additional assignment to write about what was new with Rioja wines for the trade publication Beverage Media. And an invitation to tour Tuscany with the Antinori sisters, the 26th generation of that family-owned wine business, resulted in three consumer articles (for a newspaper wine column, a lifestyles publication and a luxury goods magazine) and two trade pieces (one a business case study of Rioja, another detailing the family’s wine estates). The Antinoris appeared in all five articles, but the material and slant were treated differently for each.

This dual approach to freelancing can work in any niche—from health to the arts to automotives—but it works particularly well when it comes to food, wine and travel. While some of the benefits of servicing both markets are obvious, others may be less so. The no-brainer is that more articles sold means more payments received. But beyond that, the more efficient ways we can find to repurpose the same research or traveling assignment with minimal additional work, the more income we can make to offset expenses. And it’s not difficult to do: PR companies and regional wine and travel organizations are delighted by potential opportunities to get more exposure, and will move versatile freelancers to the top of their list of “writers to contact”—and they may even help fund your research and travel (it’s standard practice by many magazine freelancers in this realm to accept as long as you don’t ever promise anything in return). Writing for both consumer and trade publications also broadens your network of sources, editors and opportunities; often one story will lead almost effortlessly to another. And while magazine editors tend to frown on your writing similar pieces for their direct competitors, they generally don’t mind you writing something for a different audience.

So how can you position yourself to maximize the markets for your work? Read on to find out.

The Lay of the Land

Let’s first look at the differences and similarities when it comes to writing for consumer and trade publications.

Topics: In reading about travel, wine and food, consumers are looking for experiences they can duplicate, or entertaining stories about familiar regions, favorite products and the people involved. Provide them with an insider’s perspective—recipes from regional chefs, fascinating anecdotes about people who make wine or hunt truffles,
and insights into how the culture of a region affects the food and wine.

Readers in the trade, on the other hand, are looking for information that can help them save money, make money, do things better, and better serve their customers. So, you might relate to consumer wine drinkers how wines from the emerging Portuguese region of Alentejo taste, which grapes are used and whether they are good values, while writing for people in the wine trade about this new source of product they might find themselves selling or, conversely, competing with on the shelves.

Research: Trade publications are interested in proof, so hard information is of great importance to them. What are the statistics? What are the trends? Can you give an example or, better yet, a case study? What do the experts say? Consumer editors are less concerned about data. Instead, they’re looking for the next new thing that will pique the interests of their readers. For example, an editor for a regional magazine once assigned me to report on a hot new local restaurant called Talula’s Table, while the editor of Santé wanted me to deliver a case study showing what its readership of restaurant owners and chefs could learn from this two-table eatery that was booked a year in advance.

Sources: Sometimes the sources for trade and consumer pieces are the same, but often not. The best trade sources are usually business consultants and the heads of organizations, while the sources for most consumer articles are people who actually produce goods and services. The concierge and wine steward would be great sources of information on how a traveler can make the most of a stay at a new luxury hotel, while the general manager could provide more helpful trade statistics and cite experiences for a case study. You’ll also be able to draw on your personal experiences when writing for consumers like you, but your conversations with fellow travelers are most often irrelevant to the trade.

Style: I recently had an editor of a major wine and food publication tell me he was interested only in articles in which the writer was actively doing something and relating the details of that experience—in short, first-person food and wine travelogues. Conversely, although there are exceptions in which the writer is the authority, most trade work is written in the third person, quoting authorities and citing statistics and relevant examples. As such, these pieces are often easier to organize (“10 Ways to Turn Bottle Sales Into Case Sales”), but they often involve more legwork up front, interviewing authorities and interweaving their quotes with supporting information.

Credentials: As with any other markets, editors for both trade and consumer media are going to ask what you’ve written and where it’s been published. Emphasize your experience within the category in question, if you’ve got it. When I started writing for the luxury magazine Caviar Affair, the editor was more interested in my clips for Robb Report than those from The Drinks Business. (But if you don’t have any experience yet, don’t despair—more on that in a moment.)

Markets: I’ve found there’s not much difference in how well consumer and trade publications pay (though some corporate magazines do pay particularly well) or in working with their editors. Both may ask you to submit ideas for next year’s calendar of featured issue themes.

The Journey & The Destination

The primary question is, of course, how do you get started down this dual path if you’re a new writer, or make the crossover to the other side if you’re an experienced one? Use these nine simple steps to success.

1. Start local and small. We all want to write for The New Yorker or Travel + Leisure, but we should spend 90 percent of our time, especially when we’re getting started, pitching local media—newspapers as well as lifestyles, business and tourist bureau publications and sites. You might also consider starting your own travel, food or wine blog—done well, it can both attract an audience and demonstrate your research and writing capabilities.

2. Create a broad network of sources and potential outlets. A wine importer you meet at a Bordeaux trade event is of no use to you if you’re thinking only about a consumer article on the 2010 vintage, but you’ll be looking for his phone number the minute you get a trade assignment on Bordeaux pricing. Media events, whether press conferences introducing new wines to the U.S. or huge trade shows like Vinitaly, are crawling with both sources and editors. You’ll find other writers there, too, and while you should never ask them directly to...
CONSUMER PUBLICATIONS

1. **The Canadian Organic Grower**
   cog.ca/our-services/magazine/
cog-magazine
E-MAIL: janet@cog.ca. ESTABLISHED: 1975. CIRCULATION: 4,000/quarterly. LOOKING FOR: Essays, how-to, garden, farm, market, new product, opinion and technical articles for “organic gardeners, farmers and consumers in Canada. At times, we include news about the organic community, recipes and stories about successful marketing strategies.” HOW TO SUBMIT: Query via e-mail, or mail to: 1205 Route 915, New Horton, NB E4H 1W1, Canada. GUIDELINES: cog.ca/our-services/magazine/guide-for-magazine-contributors.

2. **Clean Eating**
cleaneatingmag.com
E-MAIL: editorial@cleaneatingmag.com. ESTABLISHED: 2007. CIRCULATION: 325,000/bimonthly. LOOKING FOR: Recipes and stories straight from Mother Nature. HOW TO SUBMIT: Send query (with SAE and $5 for postage) to: Robert Kennedy Publishing, 400 Matheson Blvd. West, Mississauga, ON L5R 3M1, Canada.

3. **Gourmet Traveller WINE**
gourmettraveller.com.au/wine_and_drink.htm
CIRCULATION: 22,000/bimonthly. LOOKING FOR: General interest, how-to, interview, new product, travel. “Gourmet Traveller WINE is for wine lovers: It’s for those who love to travel, to eat out and to entertain at home, and for those who want to know more about the wine in their glass.” HOW TO SUBMIT: Send query to: ACP Magazines, 54-58 Park St., GPO Box 4088, Sydney, NSW 2000, Australia.

4. **Southern Living**
southernliving.com/food/kitchen-assistant
E-MAIL: sl_online@timeinc.com. ESTABLISHED: 1966. CIRCULATION: 2,500,000/month. LOOKING FOR: Short articles focusing on Southern recipes. “Above all, it must be Southern. We need comments on life in this region—written from the standpoint of a person who is intimately familiar with this part of the world.” HOW TO SUBMIT: Send query to: Southern Progress Corp., 2100 Lakeshore Dr., Birmingham, AL 35209.

5. **Wine Enthusiast Magazine**
winemag.com
E-MAIL: tmoriarty@wineenthusiast.net. ESTABLISHED: 1988. CIRCULATION: 80,000/month. LOOKING FOR: Essays, humor, new product, personal experience covering the lifestyle of wine. “Our readers are upscale and educated, but not necessarily super-sophisticated about wine itself. Our informal, irreverent approach appeals to savvy oenophiles and newbies alike.” HOW TO SUBMIT: Query via e-mail.

TRADE PUBLICATIONS

1. **The Beverage Journal**
mlba.org
E-MAIL: editor@mlba.org. ESTABLISHED: 1988. CIRCULATION: 4,200/month. LOOKING FOR: Essays, general interest, historical, how to make a drink, interview, new product, personal experience, photo feature. “Devoted to the beer, wine and spirits industry in Michigan.” HOW TO SUBMIT: Query via e-mail, or mail to: MI Licensed Beverage Association, P.O. Box 4067, East Lansing, MI 48826.

2. **Food Product Design Magazine**
foodproductdesign.com
E-MAIL: weeksfpd@aol.com. ESTABLISHED: 1991. CIRCULATION: 30,000/month. LOOKING FOR: Technical nonfiction articles. “The magazine written for food technologists by food technologists covering the food processing industry. No food service/restaurant, consumer or recipe development.” HOW TO SUBMIT: Query via e-mail, or mail to: Weeks Publishing, 3400 Dundee Rd., Ste. 100, Northbrook, IL 60062.

3. **Fresh Cut Magazine**
freshcut.com
E-MAIL: news@freshcut.com. ESTABLISHED: 1993. CIRCULATION: 16,000/month. LOOKING FOR: Historical, new product, opinion and technical “articles that focus on what different fresh-cut processors are doing.” HOW TO SUBMIT: Query via e-mail, or mail to: Great American Publishing, P.O. Box 128, 75 Applewood Dr., Ste. A, Sparta, MI 49345.

4. **Natural Food Network Magazine**
naturalfoodnet.com
E-MAIL: news@naturalfoodnet.com. ESTABLISHED: 2003. CIRCULATION: 15,000/bimonthly. LOOKING FOR: Articles covering the natural and certified organic food industry (domestic and international). “[We] encourage writers to work closely with editors using online story pitch and assignment software. This collaborative software permits writers to see what is being pitched (anonymously) and to track their own assignments, download materials like story guidelines and monitor deadlines.” HOW TO SUBMIT: Query via e-mail.

5. **Practical Winery & Vineyard Journal**
practicalwinery.com
E-MAIL: tina@practicalwinery.com. ESTABLISHED: 1979. CIRCULATION: 4,000/bimonthly. LOOKING FOR: Nonfiction how-to, technical. “Each issue has a specific topic/focus for winemakers and grape growers.” HOW TO SUBMIT: Query via e-mail, or mail to: 58-D Paul Dr., San Rafael, CA 94903.

—Adria Haley
Roger Morris (beentheretastedthat.blogspot.com) writes about wine, food and travel for several national and regional publications, including Robb Report, Wine Enthusiast and Intermezzo.

share their contacts, if you network well you just might find out which of the magazines they work for are looking for new writers.

3. CONTINUOUSLY BRAINSTORM ARTICLE IDEAS FOR BOTH THE TRADE AND CONSUMERS. Whenever a topic interests you, when you’re going on a media tour or any time you get an assignment, ask yourself: How many angles can I work out of this? I once had a single trip to Australia yield seven published articles.

4. BARGAIN WISELY. When I wanted to write about the wine industry for an English trade publication, the editor I corresponded with liked one of my ideas but had run through his freelance budget for the year. I swapped him an article in exchange for a subscription to his publication. It may have been a gamble, but I’ve since had six paid assignments from the editor, and am now truly an international wine trade writer.

5. GO CORPORATE. Many companies or organizations serving your niche will have their own publications, and they’re often quite receptive to having writers in the field contribute. They’ll often provide you with a hefty fee and reimburse travel expenses. At the beginning of the recent economic downturn, for example, one high-end consumer goods company asked me to write a piece for its internal/external magazine on why buying luxury products still made sense.

6. BEFRIEND PUBLIC RELATIONS CONTACTS. Most wine, food and travel PR agencies—and in-house PR people—routinely work with trade publications that service their primary customers (travel agencies, wine retailers, restaurateurs) as well as the publications that service the consumers who buy their products or services. Ask them to brainstorm with you on which publications might be a good fit for potential articles about their clients—and don’t be shy about asking for contacts. One PR executive introduced me to the then-editor of Epicurious.com, leading to several assignments. Another put me in touch with Beverage Media, which has been one of my steadiest outlets.

7. BROADEN YOUR INTERVIEWS. Organizations representing travel destinations are happy to tell you about the variety of wonderful tourist activities in their area, but they can also speak about trends and year-to-year statistics. In every interview you conduct, ask questions beyond what you might need for the specific assignment you’re working on; you never know what you might learn. When interviewing regional sources, try asking this omnibus question: “What is the talk of Napa Valley (or the Lower East Side, or Porto)?” Local gossip is almost always good fodder for both consumer and trade pieces. Similarly, a little probing of wine officials I was visiting in France, Italy and Spain for a consumer article revealed they were getting major European Union marketing funds to sell wine in the U.S.—which made a timely trade magazine piece.

8. CONTINUOUSLY SEEK OUT NEW MARKETS. Haunt newsstands, airport lounges and the waiting rooms of people you’re interviewing to find new publications that might be of interest. Consult resources like Writer’s Market and Cision, which are great for contact info. And don’t forget to utilize research librarians at your local branch.

9. SELL YOUR WORDS WITH PICTURES. Editors for all but the most glamorous magazines love it if you have photos, especially for first-person articles. And if it means the difference between making a sale and not making a sale, I’ll throw them in for free. But you won’t always have to. Back at that vineyard in Bordeaux in the freezing dawn, my assignment was just for writing, but I’d decided to take a camera. The editors used 16 of my pics—and paid me more for those than I got for the article! WD

Roger Morris (beentheretastedthat.blogspot.com) writes about wine, food and travel for several national and regional publications, including Robb Report, Wine Enthusiast and Intermezzo.
CONSUMER PUBLICATIONS

1. Caribbean Beat
meppublishers.com/online/caribbean-beat
E-MAIL: caribbean-beat@meppublishers.com. ESTABLISHED: 1992. CIRCULATION: 70,000. LOOKING FOR: Nonfiction, poetry, fiction. "The point of view should be that of a well-informed insider writing about the things the Caribbean does best. … Features [must] be strongly written, well researched, with a light and readable style … with vivid description, humour, anecdote or human interest." HOW TO SUBMIT: Send query to: 6 Prospect Ave., Maraval, Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago.

2. Kentucky Living Magazine
kentuckyliving.com/magazine
E-MAIL: e-mail@kentuckyliving.com. ESTABLISHED: 1948. CIRCULATION: 500,000/month. LOOKING FOR: "Uniquely Kentucky angle is a must. Prefers Kentucky-related profiles (people, places or events), business and social trends, history, biography, recreation, travel, leisure or lifestyle articles or book excerpts; articles on contemporary subjects of general public-interest and general consumer-related features." HOW TO SUBMIT: Query via e-mail, or mail to: P.O. Box 32170, Louisville, KY 40232. GUIDELINES: kentuckyliving.com/pdf/09_KyLivWritersGuidelines.pdf.

3. National Parks
npca.org/magazine
E-MAIL: npmag@npca.org. ESTABLISHED: 1919. CIRCULATION: 340,000. LOOKING FOR: Articles "directed to a largely unscientific but well-educated audience … should have an original slant or news hook and cover a limited subject." HOW TO SUBMIT: Send query to: 777 6th St. NW, Ste. 700, Washington, DC 20001. GUIDELINES: npca.org/magazine/writers_guidelines.html.

4. Travel + Leisure
tavelandleisure.com
ESTABLISHED: 1937. CIRCULATION: 925,000/month. LOOKING FOR: "A compelling reason to assign an article: a specific angle, news that makes the subject fresh, a writer's enthusiasm for and familiarity with the topic. Service information is important to every destination article: when to go, how to get there, where to stay, where to eat, what to see." HOW TO SUBMIT: Send query to: 1120 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10036. GUIDELINES: tavelandleisure.com/contact.

TRADE PUBLICATIONS

1. Business Travel Executive
askbte.com
E-MAIL: jfering@askbte.com. ESTABLISHED: 1989. CIRCULATION: 5,000/month. LOOKING FOR: How-to, technical "articles designed to help corporate purchasers of travel negotiate contracts, enforce policy, select automated services, track business travelers and account for their safety and expenditures." HOW TO SUBMIT: Query via e-mail.

2. Cruise Industry News
cruiseindustrynews.com
E-MAIL: oivind@cruiseindustrynews.com. ESTABLISHED: 1991. CIRCULATION: 10,000/quarterly. LOOKING FOR: Interview, new product, photo feature. "We write about the business of cruise shipping for the industry. That is, cruise lines, shipyards, financial analysts, etc. No travel stories." HOW TO SUBMIT: Send query (with clips) to: 441 Lexington Ave., Ste. 809, New York, NY 10017.

3. Leisure Group Travel
premiertourismmarketing.com
E-MAIL: johnk@premiertourismmarketing.com. ESTABLISHED: 1994. CIRCULATION: 15,000/bimonthly. LOOKING FOR: Articles "covering destinations and editorial relevant to the group travel market." HOW TO SUBMIT: Query via e-mail, or mail to: 4901 Forest Ave., Downers Grove, IL 60515. GUIDELINES: ptmgroups.com/about-ptm/editorial-info.

4. Midwest Meetings
midwestmeetings.com
E-MAIL: editor@midwestmeetings.com. ESTABLISHED: 1996. CIRCULATION: 28,500/quarterly. LOOKING FOR: Essays, general interest, historical, how-to, humor, interview, travel. "If you were a meeting/event planner, what information would help you to perform your job better? We like lots of quotes from industry experts, insider tips, etc." HOW TO SUBMIT: Query via e-mail, or mail to: Hennen Publishing, 302 6th St. W., Brookings, SD 57006.

5. Mountain Resort Magazine
mountainresortmag.com
E-MAIL: editor@mountainresortmag.com. ESTABLISHED: 2003. CIRCULATION: 4,200/bimonthly. LOOKING FOR: Historical, how-to, humor, interview, new product, technical. "Our angle is experience from the front lines. [We're] interested in actual resort employees' voices than consumer writing credits. … Please include any relevant on-hill experience. Be young, be funny." HOW TO SUBMIT: Query via e-mail.

—Adria Haley