

Australia and wine: a lesson in inclusivity and hospitality

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*Australia stands as an example of **cultural evolution** thanks to **wine**, which has become a symbol of **inclusivity** and **modernity**. Wineries offer extraordinary **wine tourism** experiences, featuring impeccable **hospitality** and a perfect blend of wine and food. However, it is essential to preserve the **democracy of wine**, avoiding excessive exclusivity, to remain open to all consumers.*

It had been exactly **thirty-four years** since I last visited Australia. An incredibly long time. Yet, I found a country fundamentally unchanged from the one I left in the early **1990s**. **Distant** from everything, not only geographically.

But while I found this remoteness unbearable as a young man in my late twenties, today I see it as reassuring, almost enviable.

I remember that during my three years in Australia, I experienced events like the **Gulf War** only through the letters sent to me from family and friends in Italy, as it barely made headlines in local media. At the time, I thought this **detachment** was absurd, but during my recent Australian trip, tuning in to **radio** newscasts or watching TV during long camper drives, I felt almost comforted. News reports featured crocodile attacks on fishermen in the rivers of **Darwin** or teenagers bullying a passerby in the streets of **Queensland**.

While crossing the **Murray River** between **New South Wales** and **Victoria**, a close friend messaged me asking how Australian media was covering the arrest of Cecilia Sala in **Iran**. I replied simply, “They’re not. It’s not news here, just as many international events that flood our media go unnoticed here.”

This **isolation**—paradoxical given the long-standing **globalization**-driven **interactions**—offers an interesting and valuable perspective on wine in a country less “contaminated” by today’s consumption dynamics, especially prevalent in Europe and North America.

The first point to highlight is that **wine** in Australia is still decidedly **cool**, with no signs of fatigue in its image. On the contrary, it is far **trendier** than thirty years ago, engaging **multiple generations**, from the older to the younger ones.

One revealing experience was a **dinner show** inspired by life in the **Australian outback**, a powerful symbol of **Australian identity**, where Australians (perhaps forcibly) see themselves connected to Aboriginal culture. During the evening, **wine** was the beverage of choice, while beer served as a mere fallback.

Statistics may show beer still dominates in Australia, but whereas beer once symbolized the nation (think of the **Foster's** brand's prominence), today **wine** is the **cult** beverage.

Wine represents **Australia's culture**, reflecting who they are and aspire to be. Beer might say, "**Take it easy, mate,**" while wine asserts, "**We're Aussies, mate; we know how to live.**"

Wine marks a significant **cultural upgrade**, driving the rise of numerous small businesses that are now pivotal to **tourism** and **gastronomy** across nearly all Australian states.

Years ago, Australia abandoned the vision of becoming the world's largest wine producer (do you remember their **Vision 2025** from thirty years back?). They're less **optimistic** about **exports**, focusing instead on domestic competitiveness—being a prophet in their own land.

The results validate this **strategy**, ensuring economic sustainability for many **small and medium wineries**.

It's well-known that **wine tourism** is the economic backbone of Australian viticulture. It's also true that Australian wineries' **attractiveness** surpasses what's achievable in countries like Italy, given the myriad competing attractions there.

Yet, dismissing Australian **wine tourism success** as mere luck due to vast natural landscapes—endless eucalyptus forests—would be unfair. Many wineries excel in providing **extraordinary hospitality**, both in infrastructure and human resources.

Australian wineries, whether luxurious or simple, are **cool places**, where guests feel genuinely **welcomed** and free to explore diverse experiences. The ability to pair **wine** and **food** adds undeniable value.

We have much to learn from Australian wineries, and despite

differences, Italy must strive to make a **qualitative leap** in wine tourism.

Were there no negatives on this latest **Australia Wine Tour**? There are signs of the **snobbery virus** creeping into some wineries. The pursuit of exclusivity is fine if only a few embrace it, but it becomes problematic if everyone competes in the same **league**.

There is an urgent need for a **broad and democratic wine offering**, not just in price (a lesser concern) but especially in communication, openness, and inclusivity.

Australia has always been a **democratic** and **inclusive** country, sometimes overly “easy-going” for us old European snobs.

But now, more than ever, we need wine-producing nations that speak to everyone without creating **exclusive reservations**—or, in this case, Aboriginal enclaves.

Key points

- Wine in Australia symbolizes **inclusivity** and **modernity**.
- Australian wineries excel in **high-quality wine tourism**.
- Hospitality in Australia sets a global **standard**.
- Wine has surpassed beer as Australia's **cultural icon**.
- The **democracy of wine** must be preserved to ensure **inclusivity**.

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- [Australia wine tour: five key lessons from Canberra Valley and King Valley for the future of Italian wine tourism](#)
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