

# Wine tourism and direct sales: small strategies to convert visitors into customers

scritto da Lavinia Furlani | 10 Aprile 2026



*Converting wine tourists into buyers requires specific strategies that bridge the gap between curiosity and purchase. By analyzing real-world practices from Italian wineries, this article explores how small gestures, like an immediate welcome drink or culinary storytelling, create emotional connections. These tactics transform a simple visit into a memorable, shared experience that naturally encourages direct sales.*

Identifying the exact moment a tourist shifts from a curious guest to a potential buyer is a vital skill for any winery. I have long been convinced of this, but it became strikingly

clear during a recent training cycle conducted for a consortium. **Wine Meridian works daily alongside Italian wineries to gather authentic testimonies and share them as collective heritage.**

During these sessions, wineries shared practical strategies born from direct experience with visitors without any filters. What emerged is a lucid and surprisingly simple framework for improving hospitality. **The simple act of offering a welcome drink as soon as a guest arrives has an immediate and powerful impact on the visit's tone.**

Many wineries delay this gesture until the formal tasting to avoid "wasting" wine, but early hospitality breaks the ice and builds empathy. It transforms the visitor from a listening tourist into a welcomed guest. **In those first few minutes, the emotional predisposition to purchase is established through a relaxed and convivial atmosphere.**

Another effective technique involves "seeding" sales through culinary storytelling, such as discussing local recipes and traditional pairings during the tour. Talking about Barolo risotto or local game dishes generates a specific need in the guest's mind for the right wine. **The sale often happens during the gastronomic narration before the group even reaches the tasting room.**

This approach highlights how skills that seem distant from the core wine business can actually become powerful sales accelerators. Some wineries focus on presenting wine as a tool for sharing moments rather than just a product. **By selling the idea of a Friday night dinner with friends, the wine becomes an emotional experience.**

Finally, displaying older vintages helps resolve common buyer concerns regarding a wine's shelf life and aging potential. Seeing bottles that have aged gracefully for years reassures customers and eliminates the anxiety of having to consume the

wine immediately. **This visual proof of longevity encourages visitors to invest in larger quantities without fear of the wine spoiling.**

---

## **Key points**

- 1. The welcome drink immediately creates empathy and breaks the ice,** preparing the visitor for a future purchase.
- 2. Gastronomic storytelling during the tour creates a perceived need for specific wines to pair with traditional local dishes.**
- 3. Shift the narrative from the physical product to the emotional experience** of sharing moments with friends and family.
- 4. Displaying older vintages reassures customers about aging potential,** removing the pressure to consume the wine quickly.