

How to best manage walk-in wine tourists: tips for wineries

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Many wineries attract spontaneous visitors, creating an opportunity to build customer loyalty. This article provides practical strategies for welcoming walk-in wine tourists, ensuring they enjoy a memorable experience. From flexible tasting options to leveraging informational materials, being prepared for unexpected visits can transform them into a valuable advantage for any winery.

There are wine regions that naturally attract **passersby**, with visitors stopping by unannounced, drawn by the charm of a winery discovered along the way or recommended by a local restaurant.

In these situations, wineries should not be caught off guard or, worse, feel **bothered** by these unexpected visits. Instead, they should recognize this sudden flow as a valuable opportunity.

If a wine tourist arrives unexpectedly and senses **discomfort** or uncertainty from the winery staff, the experience starts off on the wrong foot. It is essential to be prepared to turn this situation into an opportunity. Instead of showing hesitation, the first response should be: "Did you arrive without a reservation? No problem, we have the perfect solution for you!"

What is this solution?

First and foremost, it is important to be **transparent**. Gently explaining that visits are typically by reservation is not a sign of inflexibility but of professionalism. This helps visitors adjust their expectations and understand that they are receiving a special, albeit unplanned, welcome.

Secondly, if the schedule is full and a full experience cannot be offered, the winery should never outright refuse the visit. Instead, enthusiastically propose a **shorter**, more flexible tasting, perhaps in a cozy area of the winery where the guest can relax and enjoy a glass of wine. Even if continuous guidance is not possible, the tasting can still be pleasant. The connection with the wine and the winery's atmosphere will do the rest.

In these situations, **informational** materials become valuable allies. Well-designed brochures that illustrate the wines and the winery's philosophy can provide visitors with insights while they taste. A well-prepared price list, for instance, also facilitates upselling: offering a platter of local products to pair with the wine or suggesting additional glasses to extend the experience in an informal yet professional manner.

Being **prepared** for the unexpected while maintaining a smile is a skill that makes a difference. While reservation systems are essential for organizing visits efficiently, it is equally important to put yourself in the shoes of spontaneous visitors. Their arrival is a positive sign, after all, and a glass of wine should never be refused!

Key points

1. **Greet walk-in visitors warmly** and offer a flexible tasting experience if a full tour isn't possible.
2. **Communicate professionally that visits are usually by reservation** while ensuring guests feel welcomed.
3. **Provide brochures and price lists to engage visitors** and encourage upselling opportunities.
4. **Create a cozy space** where spontaneous guests can enjoy a glass of wine comfortably.
5. **Always maintain a positive attitude**—spontaneous visits can turn into loyal customers.