

Few Italian wineries know how to sell at home

scritto da Lavinia Furlani | 20 Ottobre 2026



Italian wine tourism draws 15 million visitors and 3 billion euros in spending, yet many wineries find the step from storytelling to selling difficult. The article explains that telling and selling are separate skills, that selling naturally extends authentic hospitality, and that targeted training can turn visits into lasting commercial relationships.

Anyone who has visited an Italian winery at least once in their life knows the magical feeling that fills the air: something no brochure can truly convey and that visitors carry with them even after they are back in the car. **And yet, while the visitor is still there, still immersed in that atmosphere, something curious happens.**

The story comes to an end, the tasting finishes, and the transition to purchase remains suspended. Sometimes out of embarrassment. Sometimes out of habit. **Sometimes because nobody has ever worked on that step as a specific skill, to be built, trained and measured.**

Try asking this question of someone who works in hospitality at an Italian winery: "What is the goal of a visit?" In most cases the answer comes quickly and goes more or less like this: to let people live an authentic experience, to convey the family's history, to help them understand the territory. **All correct answers. But all incomplete answers.**

Because the goal of a visit is also for the visitor to leave with something in hand. Not just a memory, but a bottle, a subscription, a booking for next time. Something concrete that turns that hour and a half into a relationship that continues.

While visiting wineries, I have seen a lot of poetry and passionate staff, **but when it is time to make things concrete, people freeze.** I do not want to criticize the work done, but to draw attention to a pattern that repeats itself, with a view to improvement.

Italian wine tourism is today recognized as one of the most desired in the world. The data confirms it: 15 million winery visitors in 2024, 3 billion euros in spending generated, an average receipt growing in the more structured companies. The international market asks for Italy, and does not stop doing so. And yet, in a percentage that is hard to quantify but impossible to ignore, all this demand often fails to translate into a commercial relationship.

The visit works. The story works. Then comes the moment when the visitor could buy and something gets stuck. Not because there is no willingness to sell, but because nobody has ever worked on that transition as a specific skill. **Because it is taken for granted that if the story is beautiful, the sale**

will follow on its own. It is not so.

There is a distinction worth making clearly: knowing how to tell a story and knowing how to sell are two different skills. The first concerns the ability to convey an identity, build an emotion, create a bond. The second concerns the ability to read the moment, to ask the right question at the right time, to turn a “how lovely” into an “I’ll take it”. Italian wineries have worked a lot on the first. Very little on the second.

The paradox is that the very authenticity that makes Italian hospitality special can become, in certain cases, a brake. When the experience is genuine, not performative, built on a true relationship between the winery and its guest, the moment of sale risks seeming like an intrusion. As if proposing a purchase betrayed something of the purity just experienced.

Selling is not the opposite of authenticity: it is its natural consequence, when one works well. Asking a guest to come back, to take a bottle home, to sign up to a mailing list, does not betray the experience but extends it.

The answer is called training. A training that starts from where each person is, not from where we would like them to be. Those who already know how to tell a story well need different tools from those who come from a more technical path and have not yet found the rhythm of hospitality. **Training must put at its center the skills to be built, not the content to be transmitted.**

Finally, selling must be treated for what it is: a professional skill that is learned, trained and measured. Not an innate talent that you either have or do not have. Not something to be ashamed of. An integral and legitimate part of the work of those who do hospitality in a winery.

Italian wine tourism has all the conditions to be one of the

strongest in the world, but in many cases it still lacks the ability to turn all this into a conscious economic result. Closing that gap takes work.

It takes humility in recognizing that passion is not enough. And it takes the willingness to invest in the people who build that experience every day, one visit at a time. **Because in the end, even the best wine in the world needs someone who also knows how to sell it.**

Key points

1. **Telling and selling are two distinct skills**, and Italian wineries have developed mostly the first.
2. **Visits should end with a concrete outcome**: a bottle, a subscription or a booking.
3. **Selling extends authenticity** and turns a pleasant visit into a lasting relationship.
4. **Training should start from each person's current skills** and focus on competencies to build.
5. **Selling is a professional skill** that can be learned, practiced and measured.