

Innovation and tradition in the heart of Montepulciano: wine tourism according to La Ciarliana

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Wine tourism is not just about tasting wines; it's an immersion into the **culture** and **tradition** of a land rich in **history**. Sara Passeri, an emblematic figure of La Ciarliana, guides us through the evolution and successes of their family-run **business** in the heart of one of Italy's most renowned territories.

How has the perception of wine tourism changed in recent years?

Today, wine tourism represents a **business model** and has

evolved from a mere occasion of purchase to a search for authentic experiences. Visitors now seek to experience the **winery** in all its facets, far beyond just wine tasting.

It is a commercial activity, and to have a recipe that works and delivers good results, wine tourism must be customized to the size and reality of each **winery**.

How has La Ciarliana distinguished itself in a territory with such a strong winemaking tradition?

We analyzed our competitors and focused on what they still did not offer. This included educational and playful experiences, such as thematic tastings and wine games, which have aroused great interest and appreciation.

We go beyond the canonical tasting of two, three, or four wines and offer the possibility to taste the entire production – five **labels** – accompanied by interactive activities: the lovers' tasting, blind tasting, creating your own wine, or analysis by a **sommelier**.

What have been the main challenges in starting and managing the wine tourism business?

Fortunately, we have not encountered significant obstacles. Our spontaneity and passion for truly telling the story of **wine** have facilitated a warm and authentic welcome, an element greatly appreciated by visitors.

I recently returned from a trip to the **United States** where I could see firsthand the disconnect between **restaurateurs** and **hoteliers** and their **customers**. Here at La Ciarliana, we pamper our customers who leave our **winery** satisfied. In this sense, we have an edge: we Italians are authentic; for us, welcoming means embracing, including the customers who come to visit us, welcoming them as if they were friends arriving at our home.

What skills do you consider essential for success in wine tourism?

In addition to knowledge of **languages** and wine production techniques, the ability to communicate effectively and touch the hearts of the guests are all fundamental elements. Passion shines through and becomes an unmistakable strength.

How do you manage periods of variable visitor flow throughout the year?

We use periods of lower attendance for internal training and preparation for the next beautiful season. Additionally, we have managed to make wine tourism a year-round activity by offering experiences that attract different types of clients even in the winter period.

Sara Passeri from La Ciarliana illustrates a path of success in wine tourism, where authenticity and innovation merge to create unforgettable experiences. Their story is a shining example of how winemaking **companies** can evolve and thrive, respecting tradition but also embracing the new.