

Let's stop pampering (only) wine tourists. It's time to start selling!

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Italian wineries must shift their focus from mere hospitality to active selling. This article argues that every visit is a missed opportunity if it doesn't result in a sale. It urges winery staff to embrace their role as salespeople, creating a complete experience designed to convert curious visitors into happy customers.

For years, we have filled our mouths with words like “experience,” “hospitality,” and “territory.” All true, all beautiful. But today, I’m taking it a step further. I want to talk about something that, in the world of wine, is still scary: **selling**.

Welcoming a wine tourist is important, but **if you don't sell a bottle when you have a customer in front of you, you're missing a unique opportunity.** How many times in life does someone spontaneously knock on your door? In the case of wine tourism, this happens every day. And us? Sometimes we just smile, tell our story, pour, say goodbye... and the wine stays there.

We need to stop feeling guilty about selling. Selling is not a fault. It is a noble act. It is a behavior, not an innate talent. It is a skill that can be learned, like a foreign language. Yet, in Italian wineries, talking about sales still seems to be a taboo. People hide behind excuses like "it's not my role," "I'm not cut out for it," "I'm good at telling stories, but not at asking people to buy."

I get it. But I also tell you that **it is no longer time for excuses.** Every role in a winery has to do with sales. Because every smile, every word, can lead a wine tourist to say: "Yes, I want that wine. I'll take a case home."

The customer is already ready to buy. You are the one who needs to be ready to sell. There's a simple truth we often forget: those who arrive at the winery already want to buy. They are predisposed. They are curious. They are engaged. But the need must be brought to the surface. Or rather: it must be created.

How is it created? Through relationships, with the right proposal, by listening. With small details that make a difference. A magnet with a photo taken during the tasting can become an irresistible gadget. An extra cheese board can turn a visit into a memorable moment. And then, of course, comes the wine shop. But it shouldn't be a forgotten corner at the end of the tour. **It must be the final act of an experience built to sell.**

Selling in the winery doesn't start in the wine shop. It

starts in the parking lot, the moment the customer sets foot in your company. Every phase of the experience is a piece of the mosaic. And the mosaic must lead to the moment when the customer is happy to open their wallet because they feel they have received value.

You don't need strokes of genius; you need small changes, one at a time. Bottle after bottle. As an old salesman who taught me a lot used to say: **"Bottles are sold one at a time."** Even in 2025.

You're not a salesperson? Good, become a salesperson. **Selling is not the opposite of hospitality. It is its natural completion.** Because making people feel good is the beginning. But having them go home with a piece of your story (in the form of wine, gadgets, a memory) is the finish line.

That's why today, dear "hospitality managers," I call you by another name: **salespeople.** With pride. Because there is nothing more beautiful than seeing a happy wine tourist, with a smile and bottles in hand.

Key points

- **Wineries are losing a key opportunity** by not focusing on sales.
- **Selling is a learnable skill**, not a fault, and is essential for business.
- **Wine tourists arrive with a predisposition to buy**; the winery must act on it.
- **The sales process begins upon arrival**, not just in the wine shop.
- **Hospitality and selling are two sides of the same coin**, completing the customer experience.

