

The wine expert: the worst type of visitor to enter your winery

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While wine should be an accessible experience, some so-called experts make it feel elitist. Many Hospitality Managers report that certain professionals turn winery visits into competitions rather than moments of sharing. This article explores the impact of these behaviors on wine tourism and how the industry can foster a more inclusive and welcoming environment.

One aspect on which all wine tourism professionals agree is that wine is not just a beverage: it is **culture**, tradition, history, and, above all, an experience. A product accessible to everyone, capable of evoking emotions, going far beyond its technical aspects.

However, there are still those in the wine sector who want **to keep wine as an exclusive and snobbish product.**

During our latest WTH Academy Advanced training program, aimed at Italy's Hospitality Managers, we asked our participants which category of visitors challenges them the most. **The response was unanimous: professionals in the wine world.**

Of course, we are not talking about all experts, but about a specific category that seems to perceive their knowledge not as a heritage to share, but as a tool to demonstrate superiority.

Some operators have shared unpleasant experiences. One participant, in particular, testified that many "experts" tend to interrupt explanations, almost as if to prove they know more than the person presenting the wine: "They complete sentences during explanations and often get the conclusion wrong," she told us. But that's not all. Some question the winery's oenological choices—despite not being oenologists themselves—or judge a wine by its color before even tasting it. Others mock concepts or comment sarcastically, undermining the professionalism of those who have dedicated time and passion to that moment.

This kind of attitude highlights a very serious issue in the wine world.

Being a wine expert does not give one the right to correct or, worse, humiliate those leading the winery visits. It is often forgotten that the Hospitality Manager is not there to be examined but to share a story, welcome guests, and create an experience. Of course, discussion is welcome, but not as a test of superiority.

And this leads to a broader reflection. How many times have we heard that wine is perceived as elitist and difficult to understand? That there is a sense of distance between the average consumer and the viticultural world? Perhaps part of

this distance is caused precisely by attitudes that push people away instead of bringing them closer. We like to think of wine as something popular and accessible, but when a Hospitality Manager feels judged or ridiculed, how can we expect an inexperienced consumer to feel comfortable?

Collaboration, sharing, and support should be the values guiding us. But how can we work as a team if some among us are the first to create divisions?

Perhaps it is time to change our approach and start seeing wine knowledge as a bridge to connect with others, rather than a barrier that separates us.

Key points

1. **Some wine experts disrupt visits** by showing off knowledge instead of sharing it.
2. **Hospitality Managers struggle with visitors who judge** instead of appreciating the experience.
3. **These behaviors reinforce the elitist perception of wine**, alienating new consumers.
4. **Respect and collaboration are key to making wine tourism more inclusive.**
5. **Wine knowledge should build bridges**, not create barriers.