

Wine tourism: between success and monotony: answers to wineries' feedbacks

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Standardized winery visits risk making wine tourism predictable and unmemorable. This article explores industry feedback, revealing the growing need for personalization, storytelling, and unique visitor experiences. While some defend the classic tour format, the challenge is to differentiate and engage an evolving audience. The key to success? Creativity, authenticity, and emotional connection with visitors.

The **traditional** approach based on standardized visits is showing its limitations: to shape the future of the sector, we must engage in self-criticism that stimulates change.

My latest editorial, titled *Are all winery visits the same? When monotony looms*, introduced the topic of potential **boredom** in winery tours and sparked a lively discussion on social media.

This, in itself, is already a **success**: it means the topic touches a sensitive nerve in our industry.

Many comments were direct, sometimes polemical, and perhaps even a bit personal. But my interest is not in fueling **conflict**; rather, I prefer to focus on the core issue: the wine tourism experience offered by wineries.

What the comments reveal: a challenge for improvement

One comment stated: "I worked for a winery that welcomes 15,000 visitors a year, and no one has ever been **bored**!" Another added: "The experience should be about the **wine**, nothing else is needed."

These are legitimate viewpoints, but I'd like to clarify: I never claimed that every winery experience is monotonous or that there aren't places capable of truly **surprising** their visitors. On the contrary, these exceptions serve as virtuous examples.

However, we cannot ignore the fact that many wine tourists have found winery visits too similar to each other, with wineries failing to effectively showcase their **uniqueness**. Beyond surveys and statistics, this perception emerges clearly from the feedback collected from both wine tourists and **Hospitality** Managers during our visits to over 750 wineries in Italy and abroad.

So, the question is: can we really afford to ignore this **perception**? Are we sure that relying solely on wine is enough to captivate an increasingly demanding and diverse

audience?

Why stories matter more than wine to consumers

A fundamental aspect that is often overlooked is that the average consumer is not always able to distinguish an **excellent** wine from a merely decent one. So why do they remember a winery, or even choose to return? Because of how that wine, and its **story**, was told to them.

A passionate, **authentic**, and engaging narrative not only makes the experience unique but also helps visitors build an emotional **connection** with the wine and the territory. And this, in the end, is what makes the difference between a visit that leaves a lasting impression and one that is quickly **forgotten**.

Standardization: a real risk

The heart of the discussion is not to **demonize** the classic approach (vineyard tour, cellar visit, tasting) but rather to reflect on how this structure, while valid, can become **repetitive** when applied without personalization.

It's not about turning wineries into theme **parks**, but rather about asking:

- How can we enhance our **territory** and its uniqueness?
- How can we convey something that goes beyond what visitors **expect**?

Being different does not necessarily mean offering a **spectacle** or distorting the role of wine, but rather putting forward an idea, a story, or a small detail that makes all the difference.

The challenges of a '*mors tua vita mea*' Ssector

Another comment stated: "In this industry, it's **survival** of the fittest." It's true—there is often little **collaboration**. But this is precisely why we must open up to dialogue, recognizing that when the sector grows, we all **benefit**.

Stepping out of the **comfort** zone is not easy. It requires time, **creativity**, and often **investment**. But the point is not just to say "all visits are the same" and stop there; rather, we must push the sector to reflect on how to improve.

Our intent, with this and other articles, is never to **criticize** for the sake of it but to stimulate growth among the thousands of producers who read us. Wine tourism is not just about opening doors and pouring a "good" **wine** for visitors. Doing it well requires much more: **vision**, creativity, the ability to **communicate**, and telling a story that makes visitors feel like part of something unique.

We are not here to **praise** our contribution to the world of wine tourism, but one thing is clear to us: giving ourselves too many **compliments**, without asking questions and engaging in genuine, constructive self-criticism, leads to no tangible results.

Key points

1. **Standardized wine tours are becoming repetitive**, requiring more personalization and engagement.
2. **Visitors remember wineries for their storytelling**, not just the wine.
3. **Authenticity and emotional connection** enhance the wine tourism experience.

4. Industry feedback highlights the need for differentiation and creativity.
5. Evolving wine tourism requires investment in innovation and visitor engagement.