

Wine tourism struggles to enhance its human resources: precarious contracts and lack of growth opportunities

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Despite the growing importance of wine tourism, the people behind it remain undervalued. A national survey reveals alarming issues: precarious jobs, seasonal work, and poor training investment. To fully realize its potential, the sector must invest in its human resources, offering stability, career paths, and recognition to those who welcome and represent the brand.

Wine tourism has long been considered a major opportunity for the wine industry, but **its hidden weak spot is its human capital**. According to the national survey conducted by Wine

Tourism Hub, the professional landscape for Hospitality Managers in Italy shows several shortcomings.

Despite growing awareness of the importance of this role, it remains stuck in a grey zone: **seen as either a serious career or a secondary, unstable role** within the winery's business.

Precarious conditions for a pivotal role

Being a Hospitality Manager means much more than welcoming guests and pouring wine. **It's a multifaceted profession requiring broad skills**, from experience planning to post-visit customer engagement. Still, 54.2% of respondents said recruiting qualified staff is their biggest challenge – reflecting how undervalued the role is.

High flexibility, low security

There's a constant demand for flexibility, in hours and weekend availability, yet **often without matching pay or proper contracts**. Seasonality worsens the picture, making long-term employment hard to sustain. Low wages and poor career prospects (cited by 32.7%) push many away from considering wine tourism as a viable path.

Moreover, as wine tourism is still perceived as **a side activity**, investment in training and employment remains limited. Only 10.2% of wineries prioritize staff education, **despite it being critical for improving the visitor experience**.

Seasonality: a double-edged sword

One of the greatest obstacles to developing wine tourism as a career is its seasonal nature. Peaks in summer and harvest time are followed by lulls, making it difficult to retain staff. **De-seasonalizing is essential to ensure steady visitor flow and stable employment**.

However, it's not just about off-season visits. **Quiet periods should be used for staff training, infrastructure upgrades, and long-term planning**, helping professionalize the sector and redefine its image.

The future starts with people

Wine tourism can no longer be seen as “just an add-on” to winemaking. **To truly unlock its potential, the sector must invest in people**, through stable contracts, growth paths, and skill development.

The first impression of a winery lies with its people, those who welcome, guide, and inspire. If the role isn't yet perceived as a solid career, it's time to change. Because **no sector aiming for excellence can succeed without putting its people first**.

Key points

- **Wine tourism jobs lack recognition** and career sustainability.
- **54.2% of wineries struggle to find qualified staff.**
- **Flexibility demands aren't met** with fair contracts or wages.
- **Seasonality undermines employment stability** and professionalism.
- **Training investment is minimal**, affecting experience quality.