

Why wineries must learn to talk to tour operators

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Many wineries struggle to break into wine tourism because they focus solely on wine, not on offering structured experiences. This article explains why tour operators seek reliable partners, not just good products, and how wineries must rethink themselves as destinations to build lasting, profitable relationships in the travel sector.

There's one recurring mistake we see in wineries entering the world of wine tourism: believing wine quality alone is enough to attract visitors.

It's a widespread illusion, understandable, yes, but one that often leads to frustration and missed opportunities.

We're still too attached to the product, to telling our personal story, to describing the terroir.

Yet, when talking to a tour operator, the conversation shifts entirely. Their world follows different rules, and if we don't learn them, we risk staying on the sidelines of a growing market.

The main issue is that in tourism, wine is not the product, the experience is.

And this is a fundamental difference.

A tour operator is not an importer. Not a sommelier. Not an enthusiast visiting to learn about a specific vintage.

Their goal is different: to create itineraries that are attractive, easy to book, manageable, and able to offer their clients an authentic, well-organized experience.

So when a winery shows up full of passion to talk about the nuances of its wines, the tour operator often isn't very interested.

Not because they don't love wine, but because they're looking for something broader: a destination that can be easily included in travel packages, that offers structured experiences, and welcomes tourists professionally.

This is why many wineries, even with excellent wines, fail to break into the wine tourism circuit.

And others – with less prestigious wines – succeed: because they've understood that tourism follows different rules than direct sales.

Another common mistake is assuming that after establishing a first contact with a tour operator, the rest will happen automatically.

It won't.

Participating in an event like Wine Tour Bridge, the first digital B2B platform connecting wineries and tour operators, is only the beginning.

It's an open door, a chance to be seen, but not a guarantee.

From the first edition of Wine Tour Bridge, we received great feedback from tour operators.

They found the offers interesting, some contacted wineries, and others will include them in future programs. But one thing is clear: **the wineries that got results were those that kept the connection alive, responded quickly, and tailored their proposals to the needs of the tour operators.**

Expecting to close a deal after a single meeting is naive.

Wine tourism is based on relationships built over time, with consistent follow-up and a level of flexibility that, unfortunately, few wineries practice.

To truly enter the tourism circuit, wineries must stop talking only about wine and start thinking like tourist destinations.

This means structuring clear, bookable packages with defined prices and schedules; ensuring appropriate hospitality for groups and international tourists; offering experiences beyond tastings—like lunches at the winery and interactive activities—and managing logistics efficiently to be easily included in tour packages. Above all, it means building long-term relationships, with no expectation of immediate results, but with the steady goal of becoming a reliable partner for tour operators.

Key points

- **Tour operators sell experiences, not wine.**
- **Quality wine alone doesn't attract tourists.**
- **Success comes from structured, bookable offers.**
- **Relationships with tour operators take time.**
- **Wineries must act like tourist destinations.**

