

Is it better to focus on export or on wine tourism? What matters is selling well and knowing your business

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The debate between export and wine tourism reveals a false dichotomy in the wine industry. Neither path represents failure or success—what matters is selling strategically with full awareness of your business model. While export requires substantial resources and international expertise, wine tourism offers small producers a viable, dignified alternative for sustainable growth and authentic storytelling.

In a recent editorial, I talked about that feeling, far too widespread, of feeling like a “failure” when you stay at the winery to sell wine to tourists. Because, in many people’s

mindset, the true affirmation of one's career in wine still lies in export, while managing wine tourism and direct sales is often seen as a backup plan, an option for those who "didn't make it" in international markets.

It's a message that emerged during our Summer Tour: strong, direct, but capable of making people think. And, fortunately, also capable of generating real debate. Among the many comments received, there was one that made us smile, think and also reflect deeply. It goes like this:

"Something doesn't add up. There are those who say it's better to sell abroad, there are those who say it's better to sell at the winery. Maybe you should get your story straight."

It's a brilliant comment, ironic and absolutely on point. Because it exposes a very widespread dynamic in our sector: the temptation to turn every commercial choice into an ideological position.

It's not a competition. And we don't need a ranking.

Those who work in export tend to see wine tourism as a Plan B. Those who invest in hospitality often feel undervalued by those who "play away from home." The risk? Losing sight of the only thing that truly matters: selling well, with consistency and awareness.

It's not a matter of "getting our story straight." It's a matter of recognizing that there isn't a single valid path for everyone.

Export works. But it's not for everyone.

There are structured companies, with consistent volumes, dedicated staff, networks of agents and planned investments, for which internationalization is a logical, sustainable and

even necessary choice. But doing export in 2025 is not simple at all: it requires strategic vision, ability to monitor markets, readiness in managing logistics flows, complex regulations, unstable relationships.

Those who choose this path must do so with full awareness of the risks and responsibilities it entails.

Wine tourism is not a fallback. It's a strategic alternative.

On the other hand, there are small and medium-sized businesses that today, with the instability of international markets and growing sensitivity to the value of experience, can find in direct sales and hospitality a concrete lever for economic and identity sustainability.

It's no longer time to snub those who stay at the winery, who tell their wine story to tourists, who sell face to face. It's a real entrepreneurial choice. Not a surrender.

What if you could do both?

The most interesting answer, perhaps, is this: you don't have to choose. A winery that has resources, vision and organizational capacity can (and should) build a multichannel model, where export and hospitality coexist, horeca and direct sales, e-commerce and storytelling.

The real key is awareness of your product and your positioning.

Key points

1. Export and wine tourism are both valid strategies, not

competing ideologies to choose between

- 2. **Successful export requires strategic vision, resources, and expertise in international markets**
- 3. **Wine tourism is a legitimate business choice, not a fallback for failed exporters**
- 4. **The best approach combines multichannel sales including direct sales, hospitality, and export**
- 5. **Success depends on knowing your positioning and choosing strategies that fit your resources**