

Cultural heritage, entrepreneurship and wine roads in Tuscany

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Abstract: This paper deals with a travelogue in Tuscany and more specifically in its wine routes but also the gastronomic destinations that are in harmony with the rich cultural heritage, enjoying a journey filled in with a variety of opportunities to please and satisfy all kinds of tourist pursuits. Wine can be a unique alcoholic drink product with a living historical origin and deep symbolism. In addition, vineyards reveal the inextricable links that exist between the landscape and the image branding of a destination . Over time, viticulture and production are integrated into integral elements of the cultural specificity of an area, which is gradually becoming a "reference place" . Tuscany is a place of reference, as it combines high quality wine products with excellent gastronomy, rich cultural heritage and is also considered a life dream for a large number of wine lovers.

Keywords: Wine tourism , cultural heritage, gastronomy, gastronomic destination Tuscany.

1. Introduction

In Italy, wine tourism began to develop in the early 90's. The new, for that time, touristic product was developed only in certain areas. However, the increased demand led to the creation of a complete network of wine routes that covers all wine-producing areas. The land area of Italy is only 60% of the land area of France and yet it has a recognized and successful wine production. It holds the scepter in the production of wine and has managed to integrate it into Italian culture. Vast vineyards are growing everywhere. Italy has the 43 most different varieties of grapes and specifically over 1,000 with at least 440 currently used in wine production. Tuscany is a life dream for a large number of wine lovers (Ferentinos, 2017).

Place great importance on the integration of local cuisine in the wine tourism experience and emphasize the correlation between wine and food tourism as they consider one complementary to the other. The definition of wine tourism by Correia and Ascenao (2006) is of particular interest as it examines wine tourism as a means of attracting visitors not only to wineries but to the region as a whole.

The Wine Tourism Movement was founded to promote wine tourism as a tourism product, with the slogan "Look what you drink". This non-profit association brings together more than 600 members involved in the fields: groceries, restaurants, hotels, travel agencies, wineries, media, etc. and focuses mainly on the organization of wine festivals - internationally known for the open exhibition of products to the public, to international marketing (brochures, internet, etc.), to the development of wine roads, to research and to the development of quality standards (Valassa, 2011).

A large percentage of travelers want to experience a variety of gastronomic experiences and some of them travel for the sole purpose of these experiences. Gastronomy means not only taste but culture, history, customs, traditions and traditions of a place. Tourists are fascinated not only by a very nice taste of wine or food but by the combination of taste and geographical location of a place they visit. Therefore, that taste and location together create a successful interaction (Manola-Palanta 2020). Gastronomy highlights the country's identity, culture, customs and traditions. Terms related to gastronomy, which are used to search for the tourist destinations where they will find almost what they want - quality - tourism - good food - good location - local cuisine - is "food tourism", "gastronomy tourism", "culinary tourism". The term that has prevailed in recent years is "gastronomic tourism". (Manola, Koufadakis, 2020) In general, the taste experiences of visitors in an area create a sense of authenticity, an important factor that affects the psychology and behavior of the tourist, resulting in enhanced

sustainable tourism .

2. Cultural heritage in Tuscany

Medieval castles, stone houses, towers in the middle of nowhere in vast vineyards. There are small or large wineries everywhere and the visitors can take part in the pressing of grapes. Along the road there are producers selling wine from which the wine tourist can taste and get pure wines. In Italy the visitor has the opportunity to experience a complete wine experience to walk in the vineyards, become part of the wine production process and enjoy the special landscapes of Italy which are fully harmonized with the existence of wineries. (Ferentinos, 2017). Tuscany hosts some of the most famous wine regions. It is the most famous area in the field of wine tourism. In 2008, there were fourteen official wine routes in the area, contracted by the Tuscan Wine Road Federation. 439 wineries, 135 restaurants and 77 hotels collaborated in them. There are 29 Zones of Controlled Designation of Origin and 7 Zones of Controlled and Guaranteed Designation of Origin in the area. The frequent visits as well as the guided tours that accompany them help the tourists to get in touch with the cultural heritage, the traditions of the rural area and to strengthen the cultural dimension of the wine (Corigliano, 2005).

The Mediterranean climate in combination with the hilly soils and good sunshine creates the conditions for the ripening of the grapes - especially the red Sangiovese which is in great need of light. The phenomenon of Super Tuscans wines is completely special. It started in the late 1970s and took off a few years later. At least 85% of their content consists of local IGT grape classes. In the process of making these wines, Sangiovese is not used as the dominant variety, but other wine varieties - mainly Bordeaux varieties, such as Cabernet Sauvignon and / or Merlot.

The consumption is part of the hospitality and can accompany to expand gastronomic experiences, providing an occasion for socialization, relaxation and training (Alant & Bruwer, 2010). In this context, wineries have the opportunity to play a substantial role, not only as producers of the wine product, but also as brands. They consist of this way in a key axis around which a business environment can be built to attract visitors (Alonso & Liu, 2010).

3. Wine cultural roads

Italian wine laws first appeared in the 1960s and were based on the corresponding French legislation. Four ratings were established for the quality of the wine. The Monteregio di Massa Marittima wine road, the Montecucco wine road, the Montepulciano wine road and the Colli di Maremma wine road are some of the fourteen wine roads that cover a large area. The Tuscan region officially established wine and food roads and passed a law in 1996. (Antonioli Corigliano, 2005).

Some of them, such as the Montecucco street, are not only associated with the production of wine, but also with honey and olives, chestnuts and all the local products of Tuscany. The Wine and Vinegar Museum in the center of Montenero d'Orcia opened relatively recently. Cinigiano has an information center, which provides information on the 5 wineries included in the Grosseto wine route, products of 120 partner companies, but also locations of historical interest. The information center also has a wine tasting area. It is a regional park located on the outskirts of Tuscany, designated by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site. It came from an agreement reached between the five municipalities of Montalcino, Pienza, Castiglione d'Orcia, San Quirico d'Orcia and Radicofani with the aim of protecting their cultural landscape and promoting the sustainable development of the region. At a time when three of the municipalities were underdeveloped rural areas and Pienza known as a tourist destination, taking advantage of the production of Brunello di Montalcino, they turned their farmland into holiday farms. In addition to wine the area produces: pecorino cheese, olive oil, honey, charcuterie and saffron. Cultural resources include castles, abbeys and museums, Renaissance buildings. In the area there is the possibility of hosting on a farm, some of which provide lessons of local cuisine, but also accommodation in a luxury hotel (Lorenzini, 2010).

Wine tourism takes the form of cooperative agricultural complexes. In Tuscany there are many companies that combine wine supply and accommodation with courses in Italian cuisine and tasting, using in this way promoting exclusively local products (Manola & Angelopoulos, 2021).

In Italy, there is a direct relationship between quality wines and their success

Wine tracks. The offer of the wine tourism product is extendable presenting to the visitor all the aspects of the area -traditional villages,natural environment, cultural heritage, food (Asero & Patti, 2009).

Wine streets are usually associations founded by different partners - winemakers, producers of agricultural products, owners of restaurants that aim at the tourist development of the area.

The weakness of the Tuscan wine model is that wine roads are often considered all-inclusive packages consisting of different elements that are shaped according to demand. The Tuscan model served as a model for other parts of Italy -Piedmont, Emilia-Romagna, but was also the basis for the formation of the national legal framework of Italy.

Cultural routes are based on the premise of the man as a traveler (*homo viator*), who, over the years, has welcomed his future by traveling, seeking and admiring the world and also sharing the feelings and knowledge of his pursuits.

Cultural tourism is a special category of tourism motivated mainly by the connection with cultural heritage, both in rural and urban environments. According to Manola (2019) it covers an essential human need to experience specific emotions; that is why it includes unique overwhelming activities through sceneries, experiences and radical changes of the daily routine.

The Council of Europe has launched the programme “Cultural Routes” in 1987 which aims to demonstrate, by means of a journey through space and time how the heritage of the different countries and cultures of Europe contributes to a shared and living cultural heritage¹. Utilization of cultural heritage significantly contributes to the economic development of a country since it offers local people employment opportunities and enhances the potential of local business through extension of the tourist season(Manola & Koltsikoglou, 2020).

4. Enotourism in Tuscany

The sense of enotourism and what it actually means is under constant formulation and therefore, lots and various definitions are available. According to Hall (1996) “wine tourism includes visits to vineyards, wineries, wine festivals and wine shows for which grape wine tasting and/or experiencing the attributes of a grape wine region are the primary motivating factors for visitors”. The beauty of Tuscany has been an inspiration for writers such as Athanasiadu (2007), who believes that “Tuscany is one of the most beautiful places in the world and then there is nothing left but for Paradise to be here. Its beauty goes beyond borders, beyond History, Beyond anything else”. The definition above has been enriched by Getz (2000), who included those tourists traveling in the area for other reasons but also take advantage of the opportunity to visit wineries. In 1998 Dowling in his definition for wine tourism also includes the sense of the experience acquired by tourists through the activities they are involved with during their visit in the winery. More specifically he mentions that wine tourism is defined as: “Experiential tourism developing in wine growing areas that offers a unique experience, which incorporates elements of wine, gastronomy, culture, art, further education and travel”. Tuscany has been a tourist attraction, visited for its natural beauty, cultural events, gastronomy and mostly its rich wine tradition.

Wine might be a unique diet product of such vivid historic origin and deep symbolism (Alonso and Northcote, 2009). The vineyards reveal the indissoluble relations that exist between the landscape and the image product of a destination (Dreyer and Muller, 2011). Also eventually, wine growing (viticulture) and producing (viniculture) are integrated into unaccountable components of an area’s cultural singularity, which gradually transforms into “place reference” (Banks et al. 2007).

Based on the statistics provided by the official website “Wine Tourism Movement” (Movimento Turismo del Vino, 2012) this specific form of tourism pays 2,5 billion euros a year with a perspective of further increase. Wine has been number three motive for foreign visitors of Italy and that reflects on the number of visitors to wineries who are approximately 3,5 million annually. “Open Cellars” (Cantine Aperte) alone, attracts a million tourists (Alempaki , 2012). Other than wine, pecorino cheese, olive oil, honey, salt-cured meat and saffron are also produced in the area. Castles, abbeys, museums and Renaissance buildings are referred to as cultural funds.

Accommodation in cottages, where cookery lessons on local cuisine might be a possibility, as well as in luxury hotel is available in the region (Lorenzini 2010).

Enotourism has the form of agricultural cooperatives. In Tuscany there are plenty of businesses that combine wine catering and stay with Italian cookery and tasting lessons by using and promoting exclusive local products at the same time (Kokkosis et al. 2011). In Italy, there is an immediate relation between quality wines and the success of wine routes. The offering of wine tourism product is escalated by showing the visitors all the aspects of life in the area-traditional villages, natural habitat, cultural heritage, food (Asero & Patti 2009). The wine roads are usually associations founded by different associates-wine producers, local product producers, owners of catering areas aiming mainly at the touristy development of the area.

However, Tuscany's enotourism model shows a weakness; wine roads are frequently considered to be all inclusive types of holidays that consist of different details that can be readjusted on demand (Antonioli Corigliano, 2005).

5. Entrepreneurship in Wine tourism

The proper use of entrepreneurship of its businesses has played an important role in the development of Tuscany. With the right use of entrepreneurship, the strengthening of the business brand can be achieved. This is especially true in the entrepreneurship of wine companies (Vlassas, 2019) (Vlassas, 2021). In addition, we should not forget the tourists who have some form of disability and can be created the appropriate conditions for them to consume alcohol and specifically wine either in the winery or in some other form of activity, such as sports tourism (Vlassas, 2020) (Vlassas, 2022).

Conclusion

Tuscany model has been a role model for other regions in Italy- Piedmont, Emilia-Romagna, but has also been the foundation for Italy's national legal framework. The most significant conclusion is the possibility of developing a complete tourist product thematically based on wine. This way, the main features of the wine tourism product can be determined. In any case, planning activities that relate to tourists visiting wine areas (wineries, tasting, stay, catering) as well as, activities that have to do with wine, local products, traditions, habits and customs of the area is a necessary condition. This aspect helps tourists come in touch with the cultural heritage and tradition of the rural area as well as boost the cultural dimension of wine.

The offered agrotourism product should also give growers the possibility to predict changes and face challenges to their businesses. Therefore, both a national and international market can develop, through effective communication and promotion that will increase sales. Tuscany is a unique wine tourism destination because it combines an exquisite natural habitat with cultural heritage and famous Italian cuisine with quality wines and incomparable hospitality. Tuscany is a special destination for wine tourism because it can and does combine a great natural environment with cultural heritage, famous Italian cuisine and quality wine with unparalleled hospitality in an ideal travel destination.

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