

## Editorial

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# Introduction to wine tourism

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Wine tourism is still a young science. Notable contributions only date back to the 1990s. In German-speaking countries, the scientific scene on this topic has only been making an appearance since the 2000s. However, the development since then has been extremely dynamic and has been accompanied by scientific co-operation, particularly with universities and scientific institutions in Germany, Austria and South Tyrol. In 2009, the Wine Tourism/Culinary Commission was founded within the German Society for Tourism Science (DGT). The following year, the first scientific conference of the commission was held at the headquarters of the Rotkäppchen Group in Freyburg/Unstrut (Germany) under the auspices of the Harz University of Applied Sciences. Contributions can be found in the conference proceedings (Dreyer & Müller, 2011). In the following years, activities were intensified and conferences were organized in Oppenheim (Worms University), Bolzano (EURAC and FU Bolzano) and Vienna (FH Wien der WKW) and documented in conference proceedings (Scherhag, 2013; Lun et al., 2013; Wagner et al., 2017). Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, conference activities had to be reduced and partly shifted to digital meetings (Rüdiger et al., 2021). In 2022, there was once again a conference with in-person participation at Heilbronn University of Applied Sciences as the 5<sup>th</sup> CWTC Culinary and Wine Tourism Conference; the scientific conferences have been held under this title in cooperation with Vienna University of Applied Sciences (FH Wien der WKW) and IMC Krems University of Applied Sciences since 2015. The activities of the DGT commission members, who gathered for the 9<sup>th</sup> annual meeting at Worms University of Applied Sciences in 2023, also include this volume.

A special issue about travelling to wine. Is the topic interesting enough for tourism? The appearance of the magazine alone gives a positive answer, but this should be explained in more detail. Wine regions are travel destinations that have become increasingly attractive in recent years. Wine plays a role of varying importance when travelling; this will be explained in more detail in a moment. In any case, the fact is that it is not wine and its consumption alone that makes wine

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regions attractive. Rather, it is the combination of attractive wineries with other tourist attractions in well-tended, mostly rural cultural landscapes that increases demand. Quantification is not easy; opinions differ on the question of when a traveller in a wine region is considered a wine tourist by definition. In any case, the answer to this question must be taken into account when categorising the results of studies in wine regions in terms of numbers.

The international literature often takes a relatively simple approach and categorises wine tasting and sales as the defining characteristics of a wine tourist; other activities related to wine and the wine landscape play a subordinate role. One possible categorisation for segmentation is based solely on visits to wineries and distinguishes between primary and secondary wine tourists and non-winery visitors (Tafel & Szolnoki 2019). In a very narrow view, primary wine tourists only include visitors to wineries who stated in the study that wine and winemaking played an important or very important role for them personally during their trip. The remaining visitors to wineries are considered secondary wine tourists in the study. This means that tourists who do not visit a winery but undertake other activities related to viticulture in the region (vineyard hikes, etc.) are not considered wine tourists in this study.

Wine regions around the world are very different, both in terms of climate and topography of the landscape, the size of the wineries and the interest of the wineries in direct sales. For this reason, the research approach presented here may only be useful for a limited number of wine regions, but in many cases it misses the mark. In Germany, where this special issue is published, but also in other countries such as Austria, parts of Italy (e. g. South Tyrol) or parts of France (e. g. Burgundy), a more comprehensive approach is probably required. However, the approach presented here follows a widespread international opinion characterised by American and Australian researchers. While many European wine regions are characterised by their landscape and culture (river courses, castles, half-timbered towns, etc.), these attraction factors are often missing in the New Wine World, which may lead to this different assessment (Dreyer, 2021).

Three aspects are important for categorising wine tourism: The visitors (demand), the providers (from a tourism perspective, these are not just wineries) and the respective destination. Even if wine tourism can historically be categorised as a business trip because merchants bought the wines for their customers from the wineries (Scherhag, 2022), we are focusing here on leisure tourism. As part of local tourism activities, there are a variety of wine-related options for **visitors**, including food, scenery and cultural activities (Bruwer & Alant, 2009; Winemakers Federation of Australia (WFA), 2002; Hall et al., 2002):

- visiting vineyards and vineyards,
- visits to wineries,

- wine tasting
- savouring wine at its place of origin,
- visiting wine festivals and wine markets,
- experiencing the characteristics of a wine-growing region,
- experiencing the unique qualities of a contemporary lifestyle.

From the **providers'** perspective, wine tourism is sometimes much more than that. From an economic point of view, there are three basic reasons why winegrowing businesses are involved in wine tourism:

- **Direct** marketing instrument to increase the added value of the wine product through direct sales
- **Indirect** marketing instrument to increase awareness of the winery and thus support indirect sales
- Own **strategic business unit** to generate additional income beyond wine sales (Rüdiger, 2023)

Wine tourism is therefore often part of (strategic) wine marketing and thus an opportunity for wineries to sell their products directly to consumers (Getz et al., 2008) or to create a second mainstay with tourist offers (wine hotel, gastronomic offer, organization of wedding celebrations, etc.). As a result, this often leads to a close connection with culinary tourism (Peters, 2020). The more extensive the range of services offered by a winery, the more important cooperation with other players in the destination becomes – both from the wine and tourism industries.

Events are also an ideal opportunity for customers to familiarize themselves with the wines and to purchase them during the event. There is a direct relationship between tourism, direct sales and thus the increase in wine sales through tourism activities. The utilization of tourism elements – such as events – requires knowledge and event experience in addition to the personnel and spatial requirements. Studies have shown, for example, that autumn is the preferred time of year when wine tourists are particularly interested in wineries and their offerings; however, this is in conflict with the peak workload caused by grape harvesting and processing (Rüdiger, 2023). Consequently, existing resources must be allocated when utilizing tourism elements. Hall et al. see the use of tourism as a marketing instrument as the only possible distribution channel for smaller wineries that cannot generate fixed sales volumes (Hall et al., 2002).

According to Lakner and Merlet (2008), the primary goals of wineries that offer tourism elements are to establish contact with the end customer, increase the level of awareness of their own wines, generate wine sales and ultimately bind the customer to the winery. The aim is to create brand loyalty through tourism elements. Wineries thus follow a pull strategy that attempts to generate demand

for the product on the market, at specialist retailers, in the catering trade and in online retail through tourism activities. In this way, a wine tourism experience can strengthen the brand for the customer (Rüdiger et al., 2015).

In the wine industry in particular, as part of the agricultural sector, many businesses have diversified into tourism in addition to their core business. Service offerings such as conferences and celebrations, catering, hedgerow management, wine culture events or the rental of rooms for individual events such as company events, conferences, family celebrations or weddings (Dreyer & Schreiber, 2020) have led to a strategic business unit of the wineries. Wine serves as a legitimisation or »means to an end« to attract customers to the events in order to generate additional operating income (Rüdiger & Hanf, 2017). Seen at the operational and organisational level, tourism elements thus form a strategic business unit within the company, each with its own sales and profit responsibility, because like any other strategic business unit, these wine tourism elements are thus an organisational sub-unit within the company with an »independent market task« and separate sales and profit targets that can be defined independently of the company's other business units (Kotler et al., 2007).

To be categorised as wine tourism, the **destination** as a whole must also have a clear connection to wine (wine region, wine town, etc.). In addition to the terroir of the wine, the wine tourism terroir must also be taken into account (Hall et al., 2007) (Croce & Perri, 2017). This includes the interplay of climate and soil, i. e. the wine terroir, as well as the cultural characteristics of the inhabitants. Both together make a region incomparable for tourism. The wine terroir gives the vines their unmistakable local character through the influence of day and night temperatures, rainfall distribution, soil conditions and slope exposure and inclination. However, it is only the regional identity of the inhabitants with their customs and traditions, their hospitality and the derived offerings that provide a wine region with a more comprehensive and clearly recognisable differentiation from other travel destinations for tourists (Charters, 2006; Hoppmann et al., 2017; German Wine Institute (DWI), 2020). Some examples of specialities and traditions in viticulture: Trulli in Apulia, Pergel vine training in South Tyrol, vineyards on the top of mountain ridges in southern Styria, the »gemischte Satz« in Vienna, etc. In addition, the destination needs a strategy to develop and market wine-related attractions in order to create an image as a wine region (Getz & Brown, 2006; Scherhag, 2022). In this respect, cooperation between service providers from the tourism, catering and winegrowing sectors is essential for successful positioning (Scherhag, 2022). Summarising definition:

»**WINE TOURISM** in the narrower sense refers to visitors with predominantly **wine-oriented travel motives**, for whom appropriate **leisure activities related to wine** are provided, which enable the **experience of a wine region** through activities in the **wineries** (includ-

ing tastings) and in **nature** (including vineyard visits) as well as through the realisation of a **contemporary lifestyle with culinary and cultural offers** (including wine festivals). To this end, tourism and winegrowing businesses co-operate and pursue the goal of **strategic development** and marketing as an attractive wine region with a distinctive wine tourism terroir. This is based on **viticulture** with its peculiarities and traditions as well as the associated **regional identity of the inhabitants**« (Dreyer 2021).

The development of wine tourism around the world is as varied as the wine regions themselves. Apart from a few global wine trends, there are different challenges everywhere – depending on the existing conditions.

The scientific contributions to this Special Issue – even if the number is not very high – show a wide range of topics, both in terms of theoretical foundations and in relation to the status quo of implementation:

Paper **Rüdiger and Wegener**: KANO Model for experience quality measurement of wine tourism events

Experiences have become increasingly important in travel decisions and the choice of destination in recent years. This also applies to the use of wine tourism services, especially when attending events. Using the KANO-Model, Rüdiger and Wegener analyse the customer-specific requirements for the staging of wine events. The study is intended to provide recommendations for the staging of events at wineries and in wine-growing regions in order to increase the attractiveness of the event and thus contribute to its economic success.

Paper **Ehm**: Wine tourism experiences: A collaborative approach to implementing customer-centric offerings

Ehm's study aims to work out how German wineries can take a cooperative approach in their region and design products through customer-oriented wine tourism experiences – such as wine tastings, vineyard or cellar tours – in order to attract more short travelers to stay in the wine regions. Using the example of the co-operative market presence of #OpenDoorWein, in-depth interviews and workshops were conducted with decision-makers in the Palatinate. The online availability of information and online booking options were identified as success factors for this approach.

Paper **Melerba et al.**: Family-friendly wine tourism? A debate with evidence from three Portuguese wine routes

As a rule, wine tourism is predominantly practised by middle-aged adults travelling without children. However, there are other target groups, such as families with children, especially in rural destinations, where the topic of wine takes place in a special natural, cultural and social context. However, there is comparatively little data available on the target group of families with children in wine tourism. Melerba et al. conducted a survey on three Portuguese wine routes to analyse this target group in terms of general profile, travel motivation, attractions visited, satisfaction and loyalty. As a result, two different target group profiles appear to emerge: Visiting wine-related attractions and activities and having fun and socialising in a wine region and enjoying its landscapes, culture and rural life.

**Paper Inoue:** (Eno)tourisme in Switzerland-Producer initiatives and policies

Swiss wine production (21<sup>st</sup> position in the world) is supported by 2148 communities and is centred on the production of characteristic, local wines; a total of four languages are spoken in the wine-growing communities (German, French, Italian and Romansh) and the vines are cultivated at an altitude of between 200 and 1150 metres. Inoue looks at wine tourism, sustainable agriculture and sustainable tourism from a political perspective, based on landscape studies, and from the point of view of the grape and wine producers who practise (Eno)tourisme.

**Paper Tafel et al.:** Do German winegrowers see a connection between biodiversity and wine tourism?

The study by Tafel et al. shows that, from the perspective of the winegrowers surveyed (n=52) in a qualitative study, the landscape of the winegrowing region is considered to be highly attractive to tourists; the majority of the winegrowers surveyed are of the opinion that a biodiverse landscape has a positive influence on tourism in wine regions. The communication of a biodiverse landscape should therefore be taken into account in winegrowers' marketing. The significance of the landscape in the actual travel decision process must be analysed in a further study (guest survey).

After the articles, some project outlines (in alphabetical order of the researchers) will be presented to give an impression of the diversity of research approaches in wine tourism and culinary. The researchers are working on the projects and will be finalised in the near future. These are very different fields of research (Representative study by Harms et al., Scherhag/Reichle through to a modelled study of travel contexts by Spiegel, as well as promotional approaches – Olbrich). This provides an overview of the wide range of topics that can contribute to the subject of wine tourism and culinary; the contributions are at different processing levels.

The contact details of the researcher are listed so it is possible to contact them directly. A discussion about the research approach or the contribution of thematically related research is welcome. In this way, it can be ensured that correlations that have already been investigated can also be taken into account if they are not available to the researchers.

It can be assumed that some of the projects will be finalized soon and will be presented 2024 at relevant conferences, for example at the 6th Culinary Wine Tourism Conference at the IMC Krems University of Applied Sciences in Krems, Austria (May 22–25<sup>th</sup> 2024).

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