Wine and Vine Heritage Marketing in the Malbec Landscape

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Abstract

In recent times wine heritage preservation and development of wine tourism have become important in Argentina. Wineries, technological artifacts and landscapes of vineyards are becoming main attractions for tourism in the Malbec country, and their enhancement is also an element favoring rural development. Mendoza has been always the main destination within Argentina for wine tourists, and in 2013 Mendoza reached more than 1 million wine tourists, representing the 70% of the total visitors to wineries in Argentina. Malbec has become synonymous with Argentine wine and for most wine lovers, the Mendoza province means Malbec.

The paper explores the heritage in the wine areas of the province of Mendoza, Argentina, consisting of three viticultural areas, the North of the province (sub-divided in “Zona Alta” or Northern sub-region, and “Zona Este”, the Eastern sub-region), the Uco Valley, and the South of the province, three geographical areas where the Malbec grape variety is the main protagonist. Heritage is understood as a territorial context in which personal property, buildings, and landscapes coexist and are shaped by economic development; this is a well-defined environmental surrounding with multiple historical references, which together offers enormous possibilities for tourism activities as a development mechanism. The wine sector is presented as an integrating element of the historical, industrial, cultural and landscape heritage, with enormous possibilities for development of wine tourism.

The paper first approaches wine heritage marketing, with references to other international wine areas and their development of effective marketing strategies to position and recover their wine heritage as a fundamental tool of wine tourism development. The paper then is centered on the territories of the Malbec and analyzes the most important assets which are now preserved and deepens on the state of preservation of that property, their use, value, and tourism practices. The paper stresses the importance that the Malbec wine has had historically in the region; the creation of an Appellation of Origin that has the Malbec varietal and its oenological practices as its main reference (Luján de Cuyo) as a common intent of heritage preservation and successful marketing strategy to sell a product that it is not only the one bottled. The paper provides detail on the cultural and gastronomic activities offered around the wineries and their vineyard landscapes, the activities that wineries themselves offer, such as guided tours of their facilities, wine tasting and tasting courses, vineyard tours, and catering and hospitality. It also highlights the importance of the design of integrated wine tourism products, such as the “Wine Routes”, “Tango within the Wine Routes”, or the “Grape Harvest Festival”, and echoes the efforts of the Argentine Wine Corporation (COVIAR) in their implementation of the 2014-2020 Marketing Plan for the Wine Tourism Promotion in Argentina and the world.

The paper concludes that despite the progress made, there is still scope to enhance the development of wine tourism in the Malbec landscape areas and improve the conditions of the industrial, cultural and natural heritage around the wineries and vineyards.

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