

THE WINE, AS A TOURIST RESOURCE FOR THE PROMOTION OF LOCAL DEVELOPMENT. AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE REGION OF VINALOPÓ (ALICANTE) AND THE HIGHLANDS YECLA-JUMILLA (MURCIA)

Antonio Martínez Puche

Universidad de Alicante
antonio.martinez@ua.es

Francisco José Morales Yago

Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia
fjmorales@geo.uned.es

Wine culture is experiencing a time of great commercial interest in parts of the Spanish State, thanks to its popularity in the markets, tourism and social acceptance, and business innovation processes that have improved the quality of the wines and the promoting wineries. It has also passed the duality between farmer (raw material) and producer (the performing wine making and wine making), also becoming a tertiary activity in which the tourist practice, enriches and strengthens the use of land resources (cultural heritage and environmental, infrastructure and tourist facilities, local economy) as well as the appreciation, knowledge and preservation of aspects linked to the wine culture (history, tradition, landscapes of vines, wineries, farm tools, features and types soil, grape variety, wine production, wine flavors, etc.)

Today, in a globalized world, tourists, more experienced, presented new demands and motivations, claiming the highest possible quality, environmental respect and an increasingly personalized service. In this situation, tourist destinations, some to avoid stagnation and decline and others to encourage their development, they are reinventing their supply of tourism products and services, with the search for new products one of the most common strategies. Also in territories inside and they do not take, they do not have a tourist but industrial tradition (local production systems linked to the furniture, upholstery, footwear and natural stone), but nevertheless, taking advantage of an agricultural tradition and Becket, are taking advantage programs that have encouraged the wine production and the promotion of wine (PDR-Murcia, Ruralter, PDPT, etc.). The landscape of the vine reaffirm and confer unique aspects that transcend the passage of time, giving these areas a few

hallmarks entrenched, an issue that no doubt, are the faithful witness of time and therefore an identity attractive for the locals themselves and for potential visitors.

This paper presents how the wine tourism and wine routes, can be a product of great tourist and cultural potential, both from the point of view of demand and supply (heritage, gastronomy, adventure tourism, etc .) Also the importance and involvement of local actors (social capital), which are implemented to new exogenous investment (producers and wineries), which are trying to establish processes endogenization, cultivating native grape varieties and enhancing landscapes and people through signs identity, creating jobs and promoting the territory (place branding).

In this regard we propose in this article, three aspects:

1. The winemaking tradition in the districts of Vinalopó (Alicante) and Plateau (Murcia). An inherited landscape, and a productive tradition worth preserving. Historical and territorial context.
2. Integrated management of land resources by establishing a balance between economy, ecology and ethnography through Sustainability oenology. Recovery of agricultural activities and the possibility of economic diversification, optimizing local resources (environmental and cultural). Not forgetting the involvement of sociodemographic and social capital, in which public and private agents can lead to equipment and infrastructure in the context of enabling new sources of employment based on agriculture, museum management, the marketing of wines in the cellars, professionals for guided tours, cultural itineraries. Programs and projects that have helped it identify themselves. The compatibility of land uses will also be discussed.
3. Wine tours in Alicante and Murcia. Definition of supply and demand motivation (wine routes, themselves under the definition of TURESPAÑA) and its territorial impact (Place branding).

The wine is a great bet to diversify the economy in these regions, in fact commercial, hospitality and catering activity in general you can see benefit and cover the current deficit of the industrial sector, in the districts of Vinalopó, Yecla and Jumilla, that is shrinking by the current global economic crisis in which we find ourselves.

The potential of rural tourism, led by wine (Monnier, 2010) is emerging as a strategic sector and that is influencing aspects such as visiting wineries (Zarate, 2010) and sale of products, increased revenue in the hospitality sector visit cultural sites (Dubosq, 2010) who have not finished strengthened in the past which are the strengths of this domestic tourism.

If some wines are healthy, such a situation cannot be generalized to the entire Spanish State. Moreover, in general, in the DO Alicante, Yecla and Jumilla, improving quality has not offset the continuing loss of extension and benefits, in terms of what concerns viticulture. Hence the importance of exploring initiatives such as wine, from an integrated approach. However we must mean that only some wineries have managed to break into the necessary process of qualitative specialization, although most of them are supported by exogenous capital the world vine (especially in the districts of Vinalopó). Thus, some of the models built in wine farm in the province of Alicante, are not the most representative

in the area. However, we believe that wine tourism is being developed at a leisurely pace, closely linked to the new kitchen, a new tourist offer, personal experience, the taste for the authentic, the heritage, the landscape, the culture of a place, thanks to the work carried out from the Wine Routes of Spain, which can be identified in Yecla and Jumilla, albeit in the most isolated regions of the Vinalopó (Alicante).

This research has the aim of presenting the starting position of the wine, and territorial opportunities within certifications wine routes in the specified areas, but only from the perspective of the wineries that are part of the aforementioned routes and the possible connections with other resources of the territory. The intention is to further and propose another study, elements linked to the assessment of the claim, which have not been covered here.

The certification routes Jumilla, Yecla and Alicante has been an arduous but effective process due to the unity of the actors involved. SWOT analysis and interviews to highlight the need Bodegas greater connection between the three designations of origin to create a wine route intercomarcas contact the northern lands of Murcia and the districts of Vinalopó that can generate tourist flows beyond the possibility of tourism «sun and beach». In the province of Alicante the municipalities involved in this project of the Wine Route, are found difficulties to develop a tourism model based on domestic tourism and food and wine. This is due in part to the limited knowledge that exists about the wines of the area, the lack of training in wine tourism concepts by private companies, limited public funding both (after declining by municipalities of their economic items aimed at promoting tourism) as private and lack of awareness and involvement of local people. So except for Jumilla and Yecla, the districts of Vinalopó have to make greater efforts to promote and draw attention to their wines through activities and joint actions (OJ councils and wineries). In addition, not all wineries enjoy appropriate facilities to promote a tour. To this lack of specific signage and qualified personnel in tourism (guides and managers routes) because very few wineries that have them added.

In turn, what prevails in the three areas studied, is hiking, and not tourism, one of its limitations the lack of adequate housing infrastructure. The consolidation of wine tourism products is also insufficient because only some wineries have been able to capitalize and articulate an offer that benefits only their property, but it does not carry a catalyst for the rest of the territory. Hence the need to improve collaboration between the different wineries that make wine tours. That could be done through events and sponsorships where the different wineries collaborate with each other, such as music festivals made in Jumilla or the marriage of tasting wines from different wineries of the Wine Route of Alicante. The winemaking tradition in these territories is deeply rooted and this is an advantage in relation to tradition and craft, but perhaps also a handicap in relation to see the production and marketing of wine, beyond agriculture. Hence the importance of awareness-raising, training and networking that are made from the managements of the three wine tours analyzed.

The opportunities are many, as there is a firm commitment by local and supra-local administrations, and also go articulating wineries integrated wine routes in coordination with the other tourism resources that municipalities provide. In this regard it would be advisable that the managing bodies of tourism, direct their efforts to micro wine regions

with its own identity, linking warehouses with specialized events. These tour packages could even be in the same tourist brochure that encompasses all the tourist attractions of each wine-growing area. Figure 10 shows the connection of wine tourism with other types, such as rural tourism and gastronomic tourism (Brunori and Rossi, 2000). This relationship should be formalized with the signing of agreements between undertakings and implementation of cross-cutting activities, which have in common the wine. For example, with restoration companies, connecting with gastronomic tourism (Frochot, 2003), or active tourism, linking wine tourism with nature and culture. All this with the cooperation of municipalities and other public agencies involved in tourism activities and entities linked directly with the wine, such as regulatory boards in distant to what the wine culture and tourism potential occasions. Another important aspect is the personalization of tour packages according to the tourist expenditure of each segment of demand, which is a consideration in the next research.

Finally, in the context of this exploratory and qualitative research, we can establish prescription actions that could reverse in common and community benefit for the three analyzed wine routes:

- Promoting the culture of wine, mainly in bars and restaurants, including through training among restaurateurs own or promotion wine events such as inaugurations of new restaurants, cottages or opening of exhibitions or plays. This creation of a world around wine should also be spread by exposure privileged wines Yecla, Jumilla and Alicante in malls or other commercial establishments; oenological through workshops with children, to make contact with the raw material and know the process of elaboration; or by participating in courses of sommeliers and restaurants, cookbooks or business meetings the hotel sector or restoration with other entrepreneurs and associations linked to the culture, history, sports tourism.
- Make agreements between wineries and hotel establishments, houses or other properties as a means of attracting visitors, since there are not enough, and strengthen this relationship beyond the plate to put in some establishments indicating that belongs to Wine Route.
- Sign agreements with travel agencies and companies that sell package tours under the name-card gift boxes.
- Formalize agreements with wineries in other denominations of origin more enoturística tradition as La Rioja and Ribera del Duero, offering discounts or special offers to unveil the wineries of Alicante, Jumilla and Yecla and wine tourism option, using the umbrella brand Routes Wine of Spain, and networking established product in this club.
- Conduct open days at wineries with exhibitions of painting, photography, concerts, theater, etc., with the aim of merging different types of activities as very few wineries that carry out these initiatives.

Finally it means that as in all studies, this research is not without its limitations, which generate some of the future research. First, it has been trying to carry out an exploratory study, identifying the general aspects of participating wine routes, and by extension their

adjustment to the areas under study (Vinalopó and Plateau Murciano), analyzing its evolution to become routes certified wine. Then he made a segmentation considering only some wineries that are part of the wine route, analyzing the spatial context in which they are located. However in this segmentation have not been taken into account other variables of interest such as the perspective of visitors, not their origin or their motives, as we have also included companies, wine shops or establishments that are part of the route came. Our interest has resided in the wineries that are part of the wine routes, but not all of which are part of Appellations of Origin. Second, it means that there is intention to intensify the field study to complement the descriptive analysis here, and quantify and qualify visitors to the main wineries in different periods of the year and their origin, as we maintain this type of tourism, linked to wine, is an opportunity that meets the long tail theory in the area of influence of the sun and sand of the territory involved analyzed. Since the wine can create value by promoting customer loyalty leveraging existing resources in the territory, optimizing infrastructure and consolidate tourist products based on the existential, experiential and differential.

