

WINE TOURISM – A NEW IMAGE OF IAȘI COUNTY

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Abstract:

Wine tourism is an emerging form of tourism who took birth in crisis due to the development of wine-growing sector in the countries of the New World (New Zealand, Australia, USA). It appeared as a means to revitalize, preservation, use of the wine industry. The great handicap faced is the existence of a very complex offer but less legible on wine product and tourism. In Romania, the Iasi county is one of the national leader in terms of recognition of the most important wine brand in the country – Cotnari. Fame and age of the Cotnari vineyard that gave also the name of the most appreciate wine of the country make of Iasi county a wine tourism destination for the lovers of wine. High quality wine, wine-growing landscape of the county, the reputation gained by national and international competitions, facilitate the development of the wine tourism based on a local scale on a complex and competitive offer with other wine-growing regions of the country.

Keywords: wine tourism, wine, vineyard, viticulture, Iasi county.

1. Introduction

Wine tourism is an emerging form of tourism, which has developed into wine crisis, due to the wine industry in the countries of the New World (the United States, New - Zealand, Australia) that started priority to consume their own wines. Also, low consumption of wine in the world is another reason why it is wanted to be created a new form of tourism. Campaigns against alcohol have effects to reduce wine consumption. The consumer has gone from a frequent one to an occasional consumer. Wine tourism has emerged as a medium of revitalization, preservation, valorization of the wine industry.

The great handicap in which he confronts is the existence of an offer too complex but difficult to read on the wine product and the tourist offer. In advertising for products wine, wine tourism is defined as: "An Art of living (...), satisfaction and pleasure", an "Art

of living that must be privileged". Wine tourism is all this, but it is also a process where wine is the bearer of images, where the tourist can discover, meet, visit, learn, browse, enjoy, buy... Through the process, the advertising work is done by word of mouth, I speak, I return with friends. The definition and conceptualization of wine tourism in terms of supply chain (marketing) are mainly based on the motivation of the tourist and experience. For example, (Hall et al., 2000 cited in Getz and Brown, 2006) defines wine tourism as "all movements in the vineyards, wineries, wine festivals, fairs, where wine tasting and / or experience attributes of the wine region are the main reasons for tourists. "Getz (2000) cited in (Getz and Brown, 2006) states that there are three major perspectives in the definition of this concept as follows: wine producers, travel agencies and consumers. He argues that wine tourism is "a form of the behavior of the

consumer, a strategy by which the destinations develop and sell their image as a wine region and also an opportunity of marketing for growers to sell products directly to consumers" (Getz, 1998, cited in Charters and Ali-Knight, 2002). Recognizing also that wine tourism involves destination planning and strategy of marketing. Geographers are those which introduce the dimension of landscape in the definition of wine tourism and also the concept of *terroir*, both discussed in the wine world. Countries with a high reputation in the wine market such as Italy, Spain or France do they each opted for an original offer, that of agritourism routes but countries such as Greece, Germany, Switzerland, Hungary and Romania are also trying to raise awareness of their vineyards by enhancing their landscapes and opening their cellars to visitors (Darmaillac-Lignon, 2010).

Generally, european vineyards looking through the tourist activity, a revaluation of their heritage, new sales opportunities, new forms of communication to deal with increased competition from new world wines.

This article tries to complete the studies offered to this topic so contemporary, featuring a case study, namely lasi county, standing out the main features of the wine tourism applied on this county. It tries to present a different image of this region, as one belonging to wine tourism. Thus will be treated the wine tourism value of the county by analyzing the heritage like the landscape of vineyards, wine, wine festivals, wine tasting and art museums, as well as the county image seen by the *connaisseurs* of this form of tourism. Data presented are observations taken on the spot, the special literature or data taken after a survey conducted on a sample of 100 tourists at certain events related to wine.

2. Wine tourism value of Iași county

2.1 Wine-growing landscape of Cotnari vineyard

It can be said that in Moldova, vineyards still represent a territorial resource, but the path to which this region is proceeding is that of a heritage valorization. It should transform this resource that is a legacy of our people, a spiritual legacy in a heritage valorization.

UNESCO has classified vineyards in the world heritage of mankind. So there are a number of seven vineyards that are part of the living cultural landscapes. Iași county can offer a vineyard landscape that is worth to be included to the UNESCO heritage, it's about the Cotnari vineyard. This vineyard meets the core values of the Organization: it is an interesting site for mankind and it is unique and holds a symbolic side.

Let's enumerate some features of this vineyard to confirm the assertions above. The Cotnari vineyard is part of the renowned european vineyards in the northern limit of economic (45-50 ° Northern latitude) vine culture: Tokaj - Hungary, Rheingau - Germany, Champagne - France, vineyards where it gets recognized wines in the world. The Cotnari wine has transformed his name into a name of glory. In international or national events, congresses or exhibitions where the Cotnari varieties were involved, wine has always received awards and praise. For example the Czar of Russia, Pierre le Grand, during his visit to Iași, in 1711, said according to columnists that he has never drunk such wine to Cotnari. In a work published in Paris, in 1845, the Cotnari wines are presented as one of the best in Europe, rivaling those of Tokay. This wine was often regarded as superior to wines of Rhine (including Alsace wines), being referred to as "the Pearl of Moldova"

(<http://primariacotnari.wordpress.com/about/>). At the international exhibition in Vienna in 1873, Cotnari wine receives the diploma of merit and the exhibition in Paris in 1889 and 1900, Cotnari wine receives the Grand Prix. In the Great Universal Dictionary of the Century Paris, the fifteenth volume, page 1040, among the most prestigious vineyards in the world, it also cites the vineyard Cotnari. In the interwar period the vineyard enters a decline, but after the establishment of the State agricultural enterprise, the vineyard takes its value. Today the company is located in a more evolved form and is called SC Cotnari SA located in the village of Cotnari, Iași county. The Cotnari wines participated in over 20 international competitions and they received more than 150 awards, including 80 for the Grasă de Cotnari vine, 30 for Fetească albă, 30 for Tâmaioasă (Muscat) românească and 10 for the Cotnari vine. At the same time, the unit participated in 15 international competitions, receiving 95 gold medals (Floareș, A., 2000). It was noted that the Cotnari vineyard is the only one of the Romania which remained faithful to the native grape varieties. Mihai Macici (1996) call it "wine reservation". With such a history and such recognition, but with an aggressive promotion on the international market, the vineyard Cotnari may qualify to be elected as a UNESCO living viticultural landscape. What it needs to do is to submit an application (on specific criteria, for example the only Romanian vineyards with native vines) as did Burgundy or Champagne regions which have their current files on different topics. At this time where the quality of a product is the epitome of the market, the quality of the wine with everything what it means: name, label, certification, is also reflected in the quality of the landscape. It's forcing the look by consolidating a relationship, which is not self-evident, between product quality and quality of

the landscapes (Douance, H., 2009). And since the Iași county began to enjoy a very good quality of wine, it must also focus on the development of wine-growing landscapes.

2.2 The wine - a marker of identity and culture of the county

According to the classification made by Dimitrie Cantemir, Moldova wines follow the next hierarchy: the first place is occupied by the Cotnari wines, then wines of Huși, Odobești wines and on a fourth place are those of Nicorești, of Galați county. The Cotnari vineyard, enjoys the four grape varieties, the Tâmaioasa, the Feteasca, the Frâncușă and the Grasa - the latter two are only on this territory. The vineyard Cotnari, northern vineyard Huși and northern vineyard Iași are intended to exclusively produce white wines. « The wine is now a cultural marker sufficiently recognized to develop a new form of tourism increasingly popular, wine tourism, and to provide a specific tourist offer, which strengthens the local economy of some great vineyards » (Lignon- Darmaillac, S., 2011).

Wines are usually characterized according to several criteria: origin (or local): ranging from the countries (e.g. France, Romania) to a specific *terroir* (for example the Cotnari or Huși vineyards), the main grape variety (such as merlot or chardonnay) or assembly of several varietals (syrah, cabernet, merlot), the classification: table wine, DOC wine, IG wine, it can be a simple dealer brand (e.g. Baron of Lestac), the name of the winemaker (e.g. Louis Latour) or the name of the harvester (Éric Roche, La Rigodiere of Saint-Julien (Rhône)) or the cellar (Casa Oletanu, Casa Panciu, Cramele Copoului), color: white, red, pink and the vintage (or the year of harvest of the grapes). There are also a lot of producers who have chosen to promote their wines only under a brand, as is the basement of Olteanu with the range of

wines under the name Gramma (Iași county). The first sparkling wine was produced in Iași by professor Ion Ionescu de la Brad, returned to Romania after a specialization made in the Champagne region. In addition, Moldova is proud to an assortment of wine that is produced only here it is the liturgical wine or monastery wine. The fame of northern Moldavia is given by the great monasteries of Neamț and Suceava (where the wine-growing areas are missing). Is taken as the format the wines monasteries of the city of Iași,

such as the Cetățuia and Bucium monasteries. These wines monastery carry with them a past, a history, a culture (figure 1). The label on the bottle of wine produced in monasteries and the choice of name, monastic wine, stirs the imagination and recall a long history, lived and kept within the Romanian monasteries, ready to be offered to the public. Located in the category "Wine of Origin", "it tastes, or rather it enjoys and speaks" (Fischler, C. 1999).



Figure 1. The presentation of wine bottles a) in the space of the cellar tasting b) in the store located in the church of Cetățuia Monastery, Iași

Tourist agencies in the North of Moldova were included in their offers this practice; in the Iași region, there are several cellars belonging to the major producers of wine: Cotnari, Bolta Rece, Vinia, Bucium S.A., Casa Olteanu and the cellars of the Cetățuia monastery and Bucium Hermitage. It is the Icar Tours agency which promote wine tourism, as a significant section of the tourist activity of the Iași county.

The wine tasting is also part of the offer fairs, even religious theme, for example Fair religious objects, where it can be tasted the liturgical wine.

From a technical point of view "taste is taste carefully a product that we want to assess the quality, which is subject to the senses, especially of taste and smell, which is trying to

seeking to know its various defects and different qualities and expressing" (Ribereau-Gayon, J., 2000). The wine tasting is considered as a ritual of *savoir vivre* and forms of conviviality in the sense proposed by Dominique Picard, from the place it occupies in the reference system. In the Iași county there are shops that sell wine and related products, but also offer tastings. This is the case for example of the shop called Good point of the city of Iași, where weekly, special events held around the wine are organized. This is a great opportunity for the citizens of Iași because so are educated their tastes. There are also associations of food and wine, where guests are taught how to combine wine and food. The tastings are always held in an intimate setting,

the number of participants does not exceed twenty. Whenever there is a producer who makes known his wine, his art, his way of life through wine.

2.3 The Museum of vine and wine

Wine museums are a former phenomenon, in the sense that the wine has a long history and it has become a *sine qua non* part in the culture and civilization. Being archipresent, next to other phenomena of culture, but developing its own culture along the

time, the existence of museums for the wine is well understood. Existing museums are numerous but unimportant in architecture - eg cellars in castles, cathedrals and historic houses, become the historic monuments and transformed in this way in museums. One such example is the Museum of Vine and Wine Hârlău, in Iași county (figure 2). There is also a small private museum appeared in the basement of the Bucium Agroindustrial of Iași.



Figure 2. Museum of Vine and Wine Hârlău

Hârlău museum is structured on some fundamental ethnological coordinates. The first three rooms are dedicated to the three great moments of life: birth, marriage and death, originating objects, the suggestion of the customs, practices and beliefs that make up the specific rooms.

Other rooms are dedicated to the objects where the wines were kept, objects used in viticulture, winemaking. There is also a small cellar where it exposes the wines of the region of Moldavia (figure 3).



Figure 3. The cellar of Hârlău museum

The Museum of wine and vine of Hârlău represents a pole of attraction, being included in the circuit proposed by

the Icar tours agency. It is a small road of the wine of the Iași county, which includes the cave of Cotnari - Bilius

house- the Museum of wine and vine - and then the cellars of the city of Iași.

2.4 The wine festivals – celebrating wine

This kind of festivals takes place especially in urban spaces due to the deficit of specific infrastructure of rural areas. The wine is made in rural space, but the promotion of it takes place in urban areas because of greater openness to the public. Thus, the wine festivals began to appear in cities of Focșani and Iași. The city of Iași, the most important city of the wine region of Moldova could not remain in behind.

That is why from 2011 year it organizes a Festival at the end of year, called PROVINO and which is more specialized (that is to say the festival is based on three concepts: wine, arte and gastronomy) (figure 4). The activities that take place at this festival are only activities related to the wine - for example the school of wine, wine tastings, wine party, wine-catering conferences, associations food and wine. At this festival come specialists, actors, winemakers, producers across the country and the atmosphere is very friendly.



Figure 4. PROVINO wine festival in Iași

In 2011, the members of the European Order of Knights of Wine have set up a subsidiary in Iași, as a recognition of the importance of the capital of the largest wine-producing region of Romania. The city of Iași was once again the seat of wine cultural events (figure 5). 22 Knights of wine have been successful, and the guest of honour at this event was Josef Henei,

Ambassador of the European order of Knights of wine. European Order of Knights of Wine is an institution of private law, which was implemented in 1273, in the region-Eisenstadt of Austria, whose purpose is the promotion of the fundamental values of Europe, peace, friendship, freedom, focusing on the cultural wine part.



Figure 5. The members of the European Order of Knights of Wine

Neither the largest vineyard of Moldova does not let down, the common Cotnari initiated the first festival in 2012, dedicated to popular arts and wine, a local festival for local public but open to all fans of tradition and wine.

3. Heraldry of Moldova - the image of a tourist area as a marketing tool

The image of a destination is really important for the impact that the region has on tourists. Their motivations to choose a holiday destination also depend on the image that the region produces. By analyzing the image of different destinations, Gartner (1993) has been synthesized four main features, thus:

- more the area is extended, the image change is slow and difficult.
- the induction of a particular image should be long-term;
- the modification of an existing image depends on the expectations that

the current tourism authority holds and must be made with great care.

After a question put on an effective of 100 tourists meet at various events related to wine, namely "Coming to Moldova, what are the 3 words you associated with this region?", the answers were mostly focused on wine. Thus 80% of the respondents had as first thought, the word wine. In their consciousness Moldova is associated with that term precisely because of its famous vineyards. Of course, not missed any other area attractions of the region such as monasteries, the city of Iași, the names of traditional dishes, the names of personalities of culture, or even name of Cotnari wine. There is a triad in thinking of tourists; there is a close connection between food, wine and the spirituality given by the religion, the history and the monasteries (figure 6). Thus not only the city of Iași, but the entire region of Moldova was under the sign of the wine, it is a region full of spirituality and culture.



Figure 6. The image of Moldova region

4. Conclusion

Wine tourism is based primarily on potential wine. Of course that is not enough, because it takes an entire infrastructure to support also this form of tourism. But Iași county receives

many advantages to enroll among wine tourism destinations especially for wine enthusiasts. It is noticed that Cotnari vineyard, the most famous in the country, has the necessary variables to be entered in the UNESCO heritage list,

as it is the only winery that produces wines that are only domestic ones with which we can rival in a wine tourism market. Iași county is also animated by festivals, celebrations, meetings, museums, wineries, specialized stores, all developed in the region in order to give a new character to their county, to

enrich the culture. Wine tourism is a viable alternative for its development considering its own strengths compared to other counties. That's why it takes an aggressive promotion because the reputation of wines from Iași to reach worldwide.

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