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# Heritage and wine as tourist attractions in rural areas

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# Heritage and wine as tourist attractions in rural areas

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**Abstract** - In recent times, the search for a new relationship with nature, of quality and safety of foodstuffs and in particular the need for “identity”, of characterizing places as bearers of values and traditions have led an increasing number of people to see rural areas as places of values, resources, culture and products to discover and enjoy. Agriculture has taken on a multifunctional role and link with tourism is required to protect and exploit its “historical” resources (heritage) as a tool of interconnection between local products, countryside, traditions, cultural values but also to place emphasis of the territory and communicate it. The aim of paper is the role assumed today by firms regarding both the primary activity and other services, in particular those that express and support rural tourism. The objective is to assess the relationship between the company image, the entrepreneurial behavior built according to values, “typical” signs, historical resources of the rural world and the spin-offs on the territory. The research will be carried out by making specific reference to Calabria, a representative region of the Mediterranean area. Here, case-studies will be considered in sample areas where tourism and agriculture are integrated, with specific reference to vineyards and wine-making firms, is part of specific rural development strategies and initiatives. Therefore, we intend to highlight the important role of heritage and heritage marketing in order to privilege the competitive advantage that it can have for the company. The finding suggest the utility for rural tourism development: the heritage, which is often well preserved in rural areas is a valuable resource to integrate with management providing useful help as a vehicle for economic benefits also for a territory.

**Keywords**- heritage marketing, wine tourism, case study

## I. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, we have seen a profound rethinking of development models, especially that of industrial societies which, though obtaining widespread economic well-being, has led to a relative worsening of the quality of the environment and the loss of some values linked to cultural “expropriation”. This has also been the consequence of a vision of reality where culture and nature are often unconnected, and rural civilization with its places and traditions has had a marginal role.

In recent times, the search for a new relationship with nature, of quality and safety of foodstuffs and in particular

the need for “identity”, of characterizing places as bearers of values and traditions have led an increasing number of people to see rural areas as places of values, resources, culture and products to discover and enjoy. Therefore, the rural territory presents itself as a field in which to experiment sustainable forms of development and where agriculture has taken on a multifunctional role [1]. Agriculture and tourism is required to protect and exploit its “historical” resources (heritage) as a tool of interconnection between local products, countryside, traditions, cultural values but also to place emphasis of the territory and communicate it [2]. The depopulation of the countryside has gone hand in hand with a rise in the attention to rural spaces on the part of the urban population, with the search for new values in it, typical of the rural way of life [3]. The rural world is represented in an idyllic way “a peninsular blending of nostalgia, nature and culture, becoming the romantic combination of man and nature working in harmony ...” [4], while on the other hand, those who work in it tend to consider many of these elements appreciated by city-dwellers as signs of backwardness that they should free themselves of, since they are not able to perceive the economic potential. The agrarian countryside and its productive structures represent a significant area between these two perceptions. Past heritage is often seen in a picturesque way, disregarding its functional requirements. As a productive tool, one assumes that the quality of products and the working conditions depend on their particular form of architecture, and the increasing presence of visitors requires them to provide new services of hospitality and representation of the activity of the firm. New spaces to welcome are needed for them characterized in a different way from the past, and the firm itself is called on to communicate its status and its relationship with the territory of production [5]. Rural destinations where is present the integration tourism, farm, local resources, culture and natural environment are attractive and culture and tourism become resources for socioeconomic development of these areas [6]. The concepts of heritage, rural and tourism are multidimensional and interrelated [7] [8] [9].

The aim of this paper is the role assumed today by firms regarding both the primary activity and other services, in particular those that express and support rural tourism. The objective is to assess the relationship between the

company image, the entrepreneurial behavior built according to values, “typical” signs, historical resources of the rural world and the spin-offs on the territory.

The paper is structured as follows. Therefore, we intend to highlight the important role of heritage and heritage marketing in order to privilege the competitive advantage that it can have for the company. How heritage may play a role in the building of firm image? How much to open to visitors help to development the rural areas? The subject is linked also to the most general strategies of territorial marketing, and attention is focused on reflections at a company level of welcoming visitors but also the way in which the presence of visitors is encouraged and managed, and the importance acquired by the integration of tourism and agriculture, for which the communication and promotional activities become qualifying points of company philosophy.

Next, the literature on heritage, tourism and wine is reviewed, focusing on the importance that the wine is a resource created also to generate a flows of tourists and the implications on the firms and the territory.

Then, drawing from research conducted in Calabria, a representative region of the Mediterranean area, case-studies are considered which illustrate where wine tourism and agriculture are integrated (with specific reference to vineyards and wine-making firms) and are part of specific rural development strategies and initiatives.

## II. HERITAGE AND HERITAGE MARKETING

Besides creating economic resources, firms must have an active and transforming presence on the territory; they are centers of organization and aggregation, and factors of social and cultural change. The firm presupposes the existence of a “family”, a managerial group, human resources that often have their own history and are amalgamated and rooted in an environment, assuming an integrated identity between a certain community and its relational space, or rather, the identity of the territorial resource. The firm may also have the physical or cultural characteristics of a certain place, arousing interest and curiosity in a target group and therefore assuming the identity of the tourist resource. Identity is a topic that involves different regions and disciplines; it may be understood, for example, as a genetic heritage, belonging to a community, strengthening its dimension or a return to the places of origin [10]. Heritage comprises identity and must be seen as a resource, an object, a symbolic representation, a sign of a fixed territorial area or subject or firm that distinguishes a group as such and is directly correlated with collective social memory. It is the union between the past

and present, a collection of meanings, traditions, behaviors and attitudes necessary to understand the present, or rather to ensure continuity between the past and present [11]. In other words, heritage consists of carrying out, adapting, and re-interpreting elements of the past of a social group (its knowledge, skills and values), but by combining conservation and innovation, stability and dynamism, memories and creation, a new social significance that generates identity is created.

The firm is the heir of a heritage of products, history, contents, buildings and experiences that contribute to defining the firm’s identity, together with the identity of the territory, population and social groups [12]. However, for the firm, the reconstruction of knowledge and values of the past can only be done by starting with present knowledge and values [13]. Therefore, the firm takes on a function that is innovative and conservative at the same time: experience and history are established in it, but also an “open” space is created, able to welcome and involve other people in the enjoyment and appreciation of this heritage, a place of multidisciplinary knowledge, a social place and factor of integration (cultural, social, with the surrounding territory and stakeholders)[14].

The relationships and values that come out of the dialectics company-culture, company-territory, company-stakeholder assume an important function in the strategic plans of the company also because of the sudden changes of society and in particular its main customer, who seems to be increasingly positioned in the sphere of the intangible, in the search for culture and identity [10].

Kotler [15] states that “marketing is based on the idea that each individual has a set of needs and desires to be satisfied (self-esteem, food, education, socialization, fun, life style, creativity, etc) and that these are satisfied by a variety of products and services”. Making reference to the strategic approach of the firm in all its functions –from planning and designing the product, to the processes of production, sales or communication – may provide an important contribution also for the development and growth of the local economy as a decisive strategy for the transformation, development and promotion of the territory, the environment with which the company has contact with and where it is situated [16]. In particular, it is possible for a company to adopt a heritage strategy in communicating with clients, that is to refer to historical roots that place the company image as part of the culture, of a history that is not only individual but also collective. The heritage of the company – formed of material and immaterial elements and comprising photos, old tools, particular events, historical things, documents of the time or simply witnesses and artisan abilities linked to the production process – is then used strategically, emphasizing the aspects of current events

and interest for the “consumer-visitor” because heritage is non a mere collection of things and products but a real social selection [11].

The objective of the firm is to focus on references to values held to be useful for the image of the firm they want to present, applying the modern strategies of marketing and communication also with a view to change in the attitudes of the consumer, exercising influence on his behavior to his benefit through a strengthening of his own image, notoriety, visibility and trustworthiness. The simple production of goods and services is not enough: it is the “experiences” offered to the client that forms the foundation of the creation of value. In any event, an experience is memorable that involves the consumer on a personal level in the very act of consuming; they are experiences that create the personalization of the product and therefore increase its desirability [17]. The modality is participative - it tends to involve the visitor, recognizing him as an active part of a process that often directly involves him. In this sense, the firms often operate on the nostalgic search for authenticity of consumers who want to reproduce circumstances of the past in today’s world (c.d. *tribal retromarketing*) [18].

From the mid-980s, the application of heritage marketing by many firms has led to the creation of actual collections of objects, materials relating to the historical heritage (but not necessarily) of the firm, that is museums open to visitors [19]. Among these firms, the agricultural and agro-industrial ones stand out, since in these cases they can boast a wealth of, both social and architectural traditions. The traditional architecture, the way the houses are built, the organization of the agrarian and forestry environment, the charcoal-burner and snow-sweeper, the objects of rural civilization, the holy art, beliefs, legends and local literature; these are all elements that increase knowledge of places and the history of a community and contribute to qualifying the rural tourist offer of a territory [20].

The creation of a museum exhibition in the place of production has the double function of place for conservation of company memory, and also research and communication; the recuperation of buildings that are still standing allows the clear visible signs of history and company culture to be maintained and protects the historical, architectural and technological values that can still be recognized in the forms of buildings that exist. Besides, the increasing spread of forms of tourism based on knowledge and the appreciation of local products typical of the regions and quality bring an ever greater number of visitors to the producing firm and the territory of production, sparking a series of tourist-recreational and cultural activities that take place on the company premises so that the marketing of food products (c.d. wine and food marketing) and

company/territory heritage appear more connected, as the wider territorial tourist offer is integrated with the company offer or themed rural networks.

### III. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WINE, HERITAGE AND TOURISM

In many advanced societies, with the numerous changes linked to globalization, the spread of new technologies and the progress in telecommunications, the tourism sector has undergone radical transformations that have influenced also the tastes and choices of the demand. Today, this appears increasingly oriented and characterized by a return to nature, the search for choices that are eco-friendly, traditions and spirituality, by the de-standardization of consumer models towards matrices that are more sober and “experiential” holidays with a more active participation of tourists, both from a physical and intellectual viewpoint. “Experiential tourism” – based on the search and satisfaction of an emotional, sensorial and cultural relationship of the tourist/traveler with the spaces, situations, operators and providers of services, the host community, the environment and local culture – today finds as protagonists individuals who are more intent on experimenting and learning, desirous of authentic contact with the places visited and the realities that they represent. The new travel trends – full expression of ideas, sensitivity and contemporary style of life – often identified with definitions of sustainable tourism, responsible tourism, and cultural tourism – are linked to a large number of new segments of the market.

Parallel to these tendencies, from the point of view of the supply, the following aspects have become important: protection and valorization of the distinctive and authentic traits of culture, of local society and the territory in which it is situated, their diverse expressions (environment, rural architecture, artisans, uses, cuisine etc). This is because in a territory these resources are unique and cannot be reproduced elsewhere, which represents a source of competitive advantage and important elements of differentiation. So, the development of forms of tourism that exploit the cultural and natural heritage of areas that were not visited by many people until now – villages, inland areas, agricultural spaces etc. – has led to a new conception of the hospitality industry, more widespread and balanced, more rooted in local realities and distributed also in the rural space. In this environment, rural tourism, in its various forms today comprises a significant exchange of values and experiences between consumers and agricultural entrepreneurs in which very diverse elements come into play, such as educational tours, food events, agricultural

museums, traditional food festivals, local networks among companies, and work opportunities [21].

However, rural tourism is an activity that is closely linked to agriculture, and the tourist-consumer in some way sees it as a holiday in nature. In the literature on the subject there is a wide variety of definitions with different meanings attributed in the international area [22]; [23]; [24]; [25]. However, in Italy rural tourism refers mainly to the *agritourism*, which is on the increase, and appears to be strongly correlated to the rising success of typical local products or structures able to offer an “experience of tastes”<sup>1</sup>. The following factors have contributed to this increase: the profound crisis in the agricultural sector, that has led entrepreneurs to diversify their offer and exploit the company/territory resources for complementary activities, integrated with the primary one on a diverse level; the rising interest in the consumption of typical products and gastronomic tourism, seen not only as a way of getting to know products but also as a tool of social relationships; the need for cultural identity; motivation and promotion to new tourist “destinations” in order to participate in “diverse” cultures [26], [27], [28], [29], authentic, multi-sensorial and multidimensional experiences [7], [30], [31], [9], and the appeal of past elements in the present [11].

Recently, in the wake of the success of wine tourism (a term that describes tourist activity and free time dedicated to discovery, cultural enjoyment, wine-producing, and wine and the land, according to art. 1 of the European Map of wine tourism, that is a resource created to generate a flow of tourists, whose only motive is to discover the source of the product itself, to acquire knowledge of the places and ways of production [32]), fuelled also by the rise of associate movements, proposals of tourist experiences have been developed, also concerning other agrarian productions [30].

An example can be seen by the success of initiatives and networks like the “wine roads” and/or “olive oil roads”, “open cellars” and “cities of wine” accompanied by the development of themed associations, itineraries and various initiatives for a form of tourism that is not finalized only at the sale of products but an expression of diverse modalities of use, supported by the availability, often offered by networks of companies, of the necessary infrastructures and hospitality services connected [33].

Wine tourism, defined in different ways but all comprising a visit to the firm, the desire to know the productive process, traditions, history and culture of the

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<sup>1</sup> Besides being an integrative source of income, tourism in farms represents a valid tool of competitiveness and development of companies in rural areas, so much so that, according to 2008 ISTAT figures, there are more than 18.000 authorized firms, with an increase of 4.3 % compared to the previous year.

wine but also of the territory, the region through images, economic, social and aesthetic values, cultural and natural elements, historical signs rather than consumerism [34]; [35]; [36]. Wine is also a part of the heritage of a place. It is especially closer to it when it is identified by quality labels and brands that protect its identity and depend on the territory in which is produced [21].

In a recent Census study [37] 20 million Italians claim that they have taken part in tourism connected with wine and food of an area, though they do not consider themselves to be experts in the sector, and 7.5 million have actively participated in at least 4-5 wine and food experiences (of these, 2.6 million Italians define themselves as “wine tourists”). It seems therefore that food and wine tourism is not just a tendency and choice of a few specialists but is a consistent, widespread behavior.

#### IV. MATERIAL AND METHODS

The real, direct knowledge of the agro-alimentary product of quality, of the producing firm and the related landscape, comprising its diverse natural/cultural components and perceptive/representative stratifications are today often anticipated by a virtual knowledge that the company proposes to its visitors through various communication tools. The visual and verbal identity, the product, the co-branding initiatives, the showroom spaces, websites and electronic media and the people become fundamental tools to construct the experiences of and with the customer/consumer [38].

These tools contribute to defining a kind of emotional and visual experience of the product or the firm that later can be confirmed or proved to be untrue by the experience in loco and by direct and more in-depth knowledge that these instruments provide. This assumes greater relevance for those producing firms that combine the primary activity with other tourist services (catering, hospitality etc.) since today choice on the part of the user is determined more and more often by the Internet, due to the wealth of information regarding offers on websites and the quality of the ‘virtual visit’. Considering this, we have carried out an applicative analysis concerning a significant sample<sup>2</sup> of Calabrese

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<sup>2</sup> Through a research engine using some key words we found a group of company sites to analyze. The survey is limited to the present sites in the first five pages of results produced by Google. Subsequently, after verifying the existence of the site and the characteristics of the company (the analysis was limited to companies that make finished products), each URL contributed to the formation of a database. Altogether 75 companies were examined, 13 were excluded because the site was not available or presented characteristics that did not fit with the aims of the study.

vineyards, with high quality production and with their own sites on the web.

The survey was developed in three phases of which the first concerned the analysis of the territory, mainly cognitive, regarding the productive wine structure of Calabria in the Italian context, which was useful to focalize on some aspects of the market in the area of study.

The second phase was developed on the company websites through a check list of important aspects. The operators' sites and the information presented were analyzed in order to identify the key issues to be defined. The information gathered on the check-list was divided into three categories: of a technological nature (referring to the main elements necessary for presence on the net); of a commercial character (information of the offer of the product such as functional aspects, etc.); tourism services offered and heritage aspects linked to the company and the product that are important for visitors (information about the documented production, links with the territory, etc. ) (table 1).

Table 1. Principal heritage, technological and commercial key-issues

Heritage/Tourism	Commercial	Technological
Firm visit	Photos products	Contacts
History of firm's mark	N. bottles	Media support
Wine tasting shop	E.commerce	Video
Events	Online payments	Links
Reports	Secure transactions	Search functions
Museum	Traceability	Others
Old photos and materials	Complaints	
History of firm	Online forms	
Historic building	N. hectares	
Education materials	Description of the	
Photos of landscape	productive process	
Indications of quality	Others	
Organisation of cultural activi		
Others		

Several focus groups [39] were conducted with local business people, they were convened during april 2010. The average number of focus group participants was 8 with 1 hour and half approximately of discussion. Participating wine producers were asked about their experience with heritage and also wine market, general perceptions and knowledge of other enterprises, potential benefits and disadvantages compared to wine tourism, synergy with territory, aspects of marketing, the importance of landscape, etc.. These operators identified key issues regarding the development and the importance to use heritage as firm philosophy. Each operator was asked to assess the

62 valid cases were collected in the period from January-March 2010.

importance of each key issue and to rank them in a hierarchy of importance.

As a conceptual framework we chose the study of Wilson et al. [34]. This analysis adopts a qualitative method (in-depth interviews with focus groups) and has a community approach, which means that farm tourism is considered within its local economic context. The implication for policy makers is to support the whole community around the farm facility in order to generate multiple effects and positive externalities (e.g. the preservation of regional traditions and local food variety).

Subsequently, the data was re-grouped once more and highlighted on key issues that summarizes the behaviors of the entrepreneurs explored in one case study that permit that the theories are more clear and depth [40]. The case "Cirò" was chosen on the basis of criteria made in the target places, territory investigation, presence in the areas of the region with most tourists and the production of quality.

## V. RESULTS OF THE SURVEY AND DISCUSSION

### A. Productive wine-producing structure in Calabria in the Italian context

Calabria is the region in which the wine growing sector has the least impact on the regional agricultural economy – less than 2%. The incidence of AOC- AOCG wine on the total regional wine production does not reach 14% [41], it is clear that it has a very small place on the Italian map of wine producers.

Despite its ancient and "honorable" origins, on the base of the data of the last census – a decade old now and already then not very representative of the real situation – the structural data of wine producers in Calabria shows how the number of vineyards has recorded a decrease of 37.6% while the surface area of vines has decreased to 41.2%. The companies producing AOC wines have grown in numerical terms faced with a an increase in surface area (25 "quality" labels of which there are 12 AOC e 13 TGI).

The Calabria production of wine is equal to 1% of the national total of which 86% come in the category of traditional, 11% has the AOC label (0,3% of the country) and 3% TGI (0.1% of the country).

On the basis of the indications provided by the National Confederation of Voluntary consortiums for the protection of the denominations of Italian wines (FEDERDOC), the surface areas for the production of AOC and AOCG are less than 2.500 hectares, confirming what has been highlighted by the official statistics (table 2).

Therefore, only an extremely limited surface area is aimed at production of quality wine, even though the trend

is rising, while those used for “traditional” wines are prevalent, characterized by a high alcohol level with considerable body which, though appreciated at a local level, represents a limit to the commercialization, as it often seen as a blended product.

Table 2 – AOC/AOCG and TGI wine production in Calabria

	2005	2006	2007
AOC/AOCG production (HL/1000)	53.623	49.047	44.061
Grapes produced (q)	79.572	72.508	63.908
Surface areas reported(hectares)	1.483	1.381	1.287
Surface areas enrolled (hectares)	2.545	2.481	2.453
Surface areas reported/enrolled	58%	56%	52%
Output per hectare (q/ha)	50	53	50

Source: our elaboration of FEDERDOC data

One quality wine production area is Cirò. There are about a dozen producers of Cirò bottling about 30,000 hectolitres per year. The DOC Cirò is located along the Ionian coast in low lying hills. It is made also a *Bianco* (White), and *Rosato* (Rose), but it is the *Rosso* (Red) that is most famous. The Red must be made with at least 95% of the wine coming from Gaglioppo grapes. The remaining 5% can be *Trebbiano Toscano* or *Greco Bianco* grapes. The Gaglioppo and Greco Bianco are grapes that are very specific to this area and it would prove almost impossible to find grafted root cuttings of this type. The wines it produces are very unique and are characterized by their tannic and full-bodied nature, good structure, high alcohol content, traditional style and intense fruit presence.

On table 3 are summarised economic and market data about case study Cirò.

### B. Discussion

By summarising the data obtained from the discussion of Cirò operator some conclusions have been drawn.

The survey allowed us to define the main aspects of the way in which the operators present their products and services virtually, the opening to visitors and the image in reference to their cultural and historical identity and the local territory.

From a technical and commercial point of view we should observe that in general the virtual presence of operators seems qualified but these are aspects not analyzed.

The need to illustrate to the customer the place and modality with which the production is carried out, often implies the description, also through images (photographs, short films) of characteristic aspects of the agricultural terrain or a brief description of the production process.

Besides, this information draws on the relationship that they intend to build with the user who surfs in the site and who could be interested in buying the product. In this sense, the producer tries to correct the informative asymmetry that naturally occurs when the production can only be assessed virtually. In this group of variables, the image of agricultural land and vineyards prevails, the description of the productive process, the geographical description of the area and finally, photos of the regional countryside in general, not necessarily agricultural.

Table 3 – Case study wine Cirò

Quality Certification	AOC – D.M. 25/9/89- G.U. n. 85 del 11/4/90
Production Area	Cirò (Kr), Cirò marina (Kr), Melissa (Cz) e Crucoli (Cz)
Kind of Grapes	Gaglioppo (80%), Greco Bianco (15%), Trebbiano bianco (4%), others (1%)
N° of Producers	1.400 units
Production Max Surface Area	Red, Rose 1ha/115 q.; White 1ha/135 q. 1.750 ha
Wine cultivation	“Alberello” 1,00x1,00 -1,60x0,80 - 1,80x0,90; “Cordone speronato” with sesti 2,00x1,00 – 2,20-2,50 x 1,25-1,50
Association	Consortium Wine Cirò
Quantity max of production	200.000 hl
Production (year average)	45.000 q (80% Red – Classic Red; 20% White)
Principal vineyards (wineries, winemakers)	16-17
Firms leader	6
Markets	National and international

Source: [42]

As for the aspects that are connected to the application of the concept of heritage and the level of opening of the firm to visitors, whether they are real or virtual, and the relative offer of services, first of all, reference has been made to information of a historical nature concerning the producer’s need to inform clients of the past, often illustrious, of the firm, and also of the rooting of the firm in a productive area and in a techno-cultural tradition from which certain qualities of the product and certain values of reference of the firm descend.

The most relevant elements traced during the analysis are, in order, those concerning the history of the firm, those linked to the history of the territory, the presence of old buildings or tools and machinery, from the display of historical photos and finally to the history of the company label.

An on-the-spot investigation at a leading firm in the area of Cirò, representative of quality wines AOC “Cirò”, Melissa and the TGI “Val di Neto”, corresponds to these results although it does not boast a particular historical epoch and opening to visitors, considered a point of strength for success in the market, the presence of a cultural centre,



which forms part of the out-buildings of the firm, used for events such as wine-tasting courses, cultural evenings, conferences etc. boosts its image considerably.

The invitation to visit the firm is mainly motivated by the possibility to sample the products directly and then proceed to buy them. The offer of tourist-recreational services and catering and overnight stay is less frequency.

Services and cultural-educational facilities mainly concern the possibility to take guided tours preferably booked beforehand; there is a limited number of real educational farms with specific itineraries and learning experiences, and company museums and collections of cultural interest. In this sense, an interesting example has arisen, where a producing firm has restructured the productive buildings in a way that is well-designed and function. The company image appears built on modern elements with some recall to the history of the area rather than to the origins of the family and the company brand. The conservation of past testimonies are relatively present but there appears to be more the desire to give value to technological progress which places itself in a view of a wider tourism path through belonging to tourism associations.

## VI. CONCLUSIONS

The qualitative data collected on focus group have shown how the firms are interested in a wider circuit of tourism more through commercial results than aspects that can be identified with the strengthening of popularity, image and trustworthiness rather than “genuine” values of a historical, cultural and artistic nature linked to the territory. The attention to factors of quality of products and services is still sometimes insufficient, especially with reference to those that represent the specific needs of the tourists, that is reception in the context of use of services/products. Besides, the offer of hospitality does not seem very present (accommodation facilities, tourist information on wine, areas in which accommodation and wine are combined) in some places of wine production and relative integrated promotion with other forms of tourism (in particular that linked to culture, well-being and quality of environment).

The close integration between product and area of production, with all its specificities (this is the link that attracts tourists but also identifies the local products) should be a guarantee of quality of reception and of the territorial context but all this appears scarcely present and can be perfected through greater professional attitude of the operators of wine and food tourism, that often involves operators who must still acquire the adequate competences.

The associations of wine tourism seem to be dynamic and a source of wealth integrated with the activities of the firm but it is likely that the *forma mentis* of the entrepreneur needs to be changed in order to accommodate the figure of the guest and client at the same time.

The territory is seen as a source of competitive advantages but the network of local systems and relationships that are developed in it should be increased. However, the wealth of integration cannot express all its potential if there is a lack of adequate social connecting resources on which the widening of the sector to the global and immaterial depends.

From direct on-the-spot investigations it has emerged that private resources alone are insufficient and greater results would be obtained if they considered a “collective investment” (shared as much as possible) that sustain the process of adaptation of the firms. Investments that should be made in the adoption of a more inclusive management approach that creates virtuous circles of comparison and communication. To this regard, the results of the survey are quite clear: they describe a perception of a local relational climate that is quite negative, and highlight a gap between the autonomous action of firms and their ability to work with institutions whose first task is to exploit the possibilities of the territory. The development of wine tourism, and more in general, food tourism, linked to quality local products and to the territory they represent, is an opportunity for the success of wine production from a multidisciplinary viewpoint, if adequate funding is made. It is likely that several variables, of which most are unknown, will regulate the future of this sector within a very competitive globalised market, but protecting and promoting the niche product of “design” wine, over a limited area, requires times, strategic coherence and awareness of the rules of the market of the product of quality and the demand that comes from a form of innovative tourism.

Besides, the cases presented also show entrepreneurs interested in the application of heritage marketing, as a tool for the proposition of the firm in the market of rural/industrial tourism could be a source to positive results.

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