

The Emirates Academy

**Exploring the possibilities of wine tourism on the Maltese Islands with contrasts
and comparisons to global wine tourism.**

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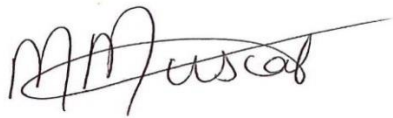
Submitted to:

Mr. Aaron Rizzo

**In partial fulfillment for the requirements of the
Degree of Masters of Business Administration**

Declaration

I, Michelle Muscat, declare that this is an original piece of work, produced entirely by me, and that all source material has been appropriately referenced. In addition, I attest that no portion of the work referred to in this thesis has been submitted in support of any other course, degree, or qualification at this or any other university or institute of learning.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'MMuscat', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Michelle Muscat

Abstract

Wine tourism is growing niche tourism, attracting people from all over the world who travel to different regions to have a unique and memorable wine experience. This study aims to investigate the possibilities of making the Maltese Islands a destination for this type of tourism. It is essential to analyse the demographics of these travellers and which factors influence and determine the wine-related region they chose to explore. The study will also analyse how wine producers can promote their local wines and how wineries can invest in attracting wine tourists. Another area to be explored is the benefits brought about by wine tourism within the hospitality industry.

The research involved qualitative and quantitative methods consisting of two surveys, one concerning wine enthusiasts and another sent to restaurateurs to investigate wine lists in restaurants. Questionnaires were given to tourists who visited wineries, others were given to tourists during their restaurant meal, and others were filled by six of the leading local wine producers. A detailed response questionnaire was also presented to the Chairperson of the Malta Tourism Authority to explore the authorities' insight on the subject and whether they have any proposals and suggestions for the industry's future.

Based on the participants' responses, the evidence shows sufficient interest in local wines, local gastronomy, and all the Maltese Islands' characteristics to market local wine tourism. It also shows that tourists interested in a wine-related experience will most definitely visit wineries and look for other wine-related activities such as festivals, fairs and museums. In addition, they are keen on tasting the local wines. Most are likely to attend wine tasting sessions at the winery and are even ready to pay for them if they are not offered for free. They also show interest in opting for local wines whilst dining in local restaurants, which are the leading showcase of these wines.

Another factor determining if tourists opt for local wines in restaurants is how well trained and knowledgeable the staff is about what is available on the wine list and about local indigenous grapes. Some also purchase local wines to take back home with them to enjoy at a later stage whilst reminiscing about their experience. Finally, it transpired that social media plays a critical role in deciding the destination. So,

wineries need to have striking websites and strong marketing campaigns to encourage potential tourists to choose the Maltese Islands as their preferred wine region for their travel experience.

Throughout the years, Maltese wineries have increased significantly, and the quality level rose to the highest level compared to international wines. This means Malta has all the qualities needed to become a sought-after wine destination. Wine tourism may be strengthened by efforts from all stakeholders involved, primarily wine producers, government authorities and the hospitality industry. After examining and identifying significant knowledge gaps associated with potential wine tourism, this study provides practical recommendations that may benefit the tourism industry in general with specific results in local wine tourism.

Keywords:

Wine Tourism, Wine-related, Local wines, Wine tourist, Enthusiast

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Table of Contents

Introduction	1
1.2 Eno-tourism, Oenotourism and Vinitourism	2
1.3 Malta	4
1.4 Objectives of this study	6
2. Wine Tourism	7
2.1 Who is the Wine Tourist?	8
2.2 Global Studies on the Wine Tourist.....	10
2.3 Studies on Demographics of Wine Tourists	11
2.4 The Demand and Supply of Wine Tourism	13
2.5 An Ideal Wine Experience for a Wine Tourist	14
2.5.1 Winescape	14
2.5.2 The Effect of Music on Wine Tourists' Choices.....	16
2.5.3 The Importance of Wine Festivals and Wine Related Events	17
2.5.4. Wine Involvement	18
2.5.5. Wine Storytelling	18
2.5.6. Wine Tasting Excitement	19
2.6. Comparing Relevant Features of Wine Tourism on the Maltese Islands	19
2.7. Indigenous and other locally grown grapes	21
2.8. In which way can Local Wineries Invest to Promote Wine Tourism?	23
2.9. The Importance of Wine Routes	24
2.10. The Relevance of the HORECA Sector in Wine Tourism.....	25
2.11. Benefits of Wine Tourism within the Hospitality Industry	26
2.12. The Possibility of Increasing Employment through Wine Tourism	27
2.13 The Authorities' role in the possibility of wine tourism in Malta.....	28
3. Methodology	30
3.1 Research Plan	30
3.2 Methodology design.....	32
\3.2.1 Pilot Stud	34
3.2.2 Online Surveys	36
3.2.3 Questionnaires.....	37
3.3 Ethics Considerations.....	39
3.3.1 Ethics for Online Surveys.....	39
3.3.2 Ethics for Questionnaires.....	40
4. Research Findings	41
4.1 Wine Enthusiasts' survey	41

4.2 Restaurateurs' survey	45
4.3. Wine producers' questionnaire	50
4.4. Winery visitors' questionnaire	54
4.5. Tourist Diners' questionnaire	57
4.6. Malta Tourism Authority questionnaire	57
5. Discussion.....	59
5.1. Wine Enthusiasts' survey analysis	59
5.2. Restaurateurs' survey analysis	61
5.3. Wine producers' questionnaire analysis	62
5.4. Winery visitors' questionnaire analysis	65
5.5. Tourist Diners' questionnaire	65
5.6. Malta Tourism Authority's questionnaire analysis	66
6. Conclusion.....	68
6.1. Limitations	68
6.2. Recommendations	69
6.2.1. Developing a Marketing Strategy with the help of Government Authorities	70
6.2.2. Wine Tourism Conference	70
6.2.3. Organised day trips or packages for wine tourists	72
6.2.4. Creating a Wine Route	73
6.2.5. Accessibility of Local Wines.....	73
7. Referencing	75
8. Appendices	83
8.1 Questionnaires to Wine Tourists (prior to pilot study).....	83
8.2 Research Matrix	85
8.3 Modified questions for Wine Enthusiasts' Survey	98
8.4 Restaurant Owners' Survey Questions	100
8.5 Questionnaire for Diners	101
8.6 Questionnaire for Wine Producers	102
8.7 Questionnaire for the Malta Tourism Authority	104
8.8 Consent Forms	105
8.9 Detailed Replies from the Chairperson of the Malta Tourism Authority	113
8.10 Sample Itinerary for Wine Tourism Conference	115
8.11 Sample Itinerary for Tours and Packages	118
8.12 Suggested Wine Route.....	120

List of Tables

Table 1: Major Wine Tourism Countries (Thach, 2016)	3
Table 2: SWOT analysis adapted from Peet (2018), Pemberton, Destination Strategic Management Plan.....	31
Table 3: Advantages & Disadvantages of Quantitative & Qualitative Analysis	33
Table 4: Demand for Wine Tourism (adapted from Getz & Brown, 2006).....	34
Table 5: Conducting a survey adapted from (Fowler, 2013)	36
Table 6: Detailed Response Questionnaire	54

List of Figures

Figure 1: Core, augmented and ancillary services in a wine region	13
Figure 2: Winescape (Terziyska & Damyanova, 2020).....	15
Figure 3: Do you visit wineries when you travel?	42
Figure 4: How many wineries do you visit in a trip?.....	42
Figure 5: Number of visitors at each winery?	43
Figure 6: Do you look for other wine related events?.....	44
Figure 7: Do you think that Malta & Gozo have the potential to be on the Mediterranean Tourism Map?.....	45
Figure 8: Number of local wines on the restaurant wine list	46
Figure 9: Do your staff suggest it?.....	47
Figure 10: Do you encourage the tourists to visit wineries?.....	48
Figure 11: Are you prepared to pair local food and wines?.....	49
Figure 12: Is the mark-up on your wine list equal for both local and foreign wines?.....	49
Figure 13: Was this your first visit to a winery?	55
Figure 14: Do you buy wines from the cellar door?	56
Figure 15: Do you look for other wine events?.....	56

1. Introduction

International wine tourism is a growing niche market (Getz, 2000; Qiu et al., 2013), which appeals to wine enthusiasts from all over the planet. Wine tourism is a fantastic experience: a combination of novelty, authenticity, information and fun. When a wine tourist discovers a wine country, he will aim to visit the region and explore what it has to offer. A typical wine tourist would want to learn about locally grown grapes, visit wineries, the barrels used, scents, temperatures, and the immense and never-ending vineyards. Wine and winemaking have a long history, with each country and region having different stories to tell, always connected to the people involved in the wine production, starting with the farmers and ending with the consumers.

Nowadays, drinking wine has become more than a trend, and people are deeply urged to learn more about this great and complex beverage. Wine and wine tourism have evolved so much, that since 2016 a United Nations body called the United Nations Wine Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), has been created devoted to the growth and development of Wine Tourism. A conference is held annually to address current matters within the industry. In September 2021, the 5th annual conference was held in A Reguengos de Monsaraz (Alentejo), Portugal.

The theme in 2020 was 'Wine Tourism – a driver for rural development and focused mainly on the contribution of wine tourism towards social and economic developments in rural areas. During the conference, several opportunities for experts within the industry were presented to find solutions to strengthen wine tourism and to find a way forward towards a more sustainable, inclusive, and resilient future for rural communities.

1.1 Definition of Wine Tourism

One of the first and most accepted definitions of wine tourism describes it as an experience of exploring vineyards, visiting wineries, attending wine festivals and wine shows for which grape wine tasting, and learning about grape wine regions' attributes are the primary motivating factors for visitors (Hall, 1996). In this definition, it is assumed that wine is the primary purpose of the visit; however, another definition includes a broader audience: 'Wine tourism is travel related to the appeal of wine regions and vineyards. It is a form of niche marketing, destination development, and an opportunity for direct sales and marketing in the wine industry.' (Getz, 2000). It is not always the case that the tourists' goals are primarily wine related; however, these are rapidly increasing as the thirst for knowledge increases. According to Steve Charters and Jane Ali-Knight (2002), wine tourism is a significant factor influencing the value of the destination.

Wine lovers travel around various wine regions: renowned ones, and others which are still being explored, to experience the unique passion of enjoying wine by understanding, sampling and consuming it. However, although both definitions seem to be precise, Carlsen (2004) suggests that a single agreed definition has still to be agreed upon and that wine tourism combines several activities for the visitor, such as exploring the region, tasting and purchasing wines, seeking information on where grapes are grown and how wine is made (Popp & McCole, 2016). It also enables visitors to explore the relationship between wine and vineyards, the local environment, and the history and culture of the region (Carlsen, 2004).

1.2 Eno-tourism, Oenotourism and Vinitourism

These are other terms used for wine tourism. The terms are derived from the Greek prefix 'oen', which means 'wine' and are used mainly in European countries. The most common term is Enotourism which can be defined similarly to wine tourism. Developing this type of tourism in counties rich in local gastronomy, culture and heritage is vital. Emphasis should be on encouraging excellence in gastronomy and connecting the agricultural industry with the hospitality industry by branding local

produce (Gracan, 2020). Eno-tourism has until now been analysed with three themes in mind.

- Wine tourism product
- Destinations strategy
- Wine tourist's profile

These three factors are fundamental in exploring the subject. Wine has been intriguing travellers for centuries but only in the mid-1990s has the academic study in the subject materialised. In 1998, The First Australian Wine Tourism Conference took place in Margaret River, Western Australia. This conference kick-started the interest in studying the industry as hundreds of journalists, travel agents, and winemakers participated. Since then, many countries have started to organise themselves to encourage wine tourism. The most popular have always been Old World countries, and avid wine tourists also mention favourite prime destinations such as Bordeaux, Burgundy, Champagne and Alsace in France, Tuscany and Piedmont in Italy, etc. Rheingau and Mosel in Germany, Rioja in Spain and Douro Valley in Portugal. In addition, however, we have seen increases in New World Wines and other emerging wine regions such as Napa Valley and Sonoma in California, USA, Marlborough in New Zealand, Adelaide, Yarra and Hunter Valleys in Australia, Stellenbosch in South Africa, Mendoza in Argentina and Santiago in Chile, being amongst the most intriguing as can be seen in Table 1.

<u>Old world</u>	<u>New world</u>	<u>Emerging countries</u>	<u>Budding countries</u>
Italy	USA	Greece	China
France	Australia	Austria	Thailand
Spain	New Zealand	Hungary	India
Germany	South Africa	Croatia	Japan
Portugal	Argentina	Canada	Korea
	Chile	Romania	Vietnam

Table 1: Major Wine Tourism Countries (Thach, 2016)

Since the wine world is becoming more international and wine tourism is expanding into other territories, some attractive emerging regions are becoming more popular. We find Santorini in Greece, which produces the Assyrtiko grape, Wachau in Austria with their increasingly popular Gruner Veltliner grape, the Niagara region in Canada and the Tokaj region in Hungary. In recent years, wine tourism has also been introduced in the Far East, with wineries producing fine wines in China (Feng, 2015), India, Thailand, Japan, Korea and Vietnam.

1.3 Malta

Officially known as the Republic of Malta, Malta is an archipelago in the centre of the Mediterranean Sea between Sicily and the North African Coast. It consists of the main island of Malta and the smaller islands of Gozo and Comino. The country covers a total area of 316 km².

In 2021 the Maltese population amounted to 517,000 people. The capital city is Valletta, which is found in the island's central area, and the official languages are Maltese and English. Malta is a nation well known for its history and culture related to a succession of rulers, including Romans, British, French, Moors and Knights of Saint John. It has various fortresses and temples dating back to 4000BC.

Malta is a popular tourist destination known for its warm climate, beautiful beaches and breath-taking landscapes that serve as locations for major film productions. Its surrounding sea influences Malta's typical Mediterranean climate. The average monthly temperature ranges from 9.9°C (during the winter) to 31.7°C (during the summer). The highest average daily temperatures are usually recorded in July and August, where sometimes heatwaves of up to 45°C occur. The lowest is recorded in February. Usually, winter is quite rainy, followed by arid summers. The average total rainfall of the Maltese Islands is around 600 mm. The months with the highest recorded rainfall are December to February, amounting to around 36% of the total annual rainfall. In the peak of summer, between June and August, the total rainfall is merely

1.8%. January till May and September till October represent 38.4% and 23.7% of the total precipitation, respectively. Soil types tend to vary and range from sandy to loam to clay. The climate on the island of Gozo is identical to Malta. The soil is mostly clay.

The motivation for this study is the impressive increase in the quality of wine produced on the Maltese Islands and the many benefits derived from this style of tourism. Currently, Malta is the smallest wine-producing country in the world, with a mere 430 hectares of vineyards. However, the total number of farmers cultivating vines is 900 (Agrikoltura, 2019).

Wine production in Malta dates back to the Phoenician times when in 800BC, some vines were planted. Then the Greeks and Romans carefully continued to develop production. However, during the time of Arab rule, all production ceased. Later came the Knights of St John, who again tried to resuscitate the industry, but unfortunately, the British decided to uproot numerous hectares to plant cotton (Michelin, 2020), and the industry almost halted. The British did not give importance to wine production, possibly because of their inclination to prefer beer. It was not until the late 19th century that a few vines were replanted, and early in the 20th century, the wine-producing industry was starting to retake shape. In 1907 and 1919, the two largest local wine-producing companies, both still very active, were established. In fact, one of these wineries now produce over two million bottles yearly.

On the Maltese Islands, we grow two native local grapes. These are Gellewza (red) and Girgentina (white). Gellewza produces light reds with hints of prune and cherry. It is widely used in producing sparkling wines, which are very distinctive in the Mediterranean (Falzon, 2014). The white grape Girgentina produces fruity and delicate whites with crisp acidity. It is often blended with Chardonnay. These two grape varieties give local winemaking an interesting and unique profile appealing to the wine tourist. During the 1970s wine production was starting to be taken more seriously, and the culture of wine improved by the day. International grape varieties

started being planted locally, and throughout the years, as demand increased, wineries started to import grapes because agricultural areas are very limited. In 2004 when Malta joined the European Union, all protective levies were removed. In 2007 two designations of origin for local wines were created. The Agriculture Directorate in Malta is the only competent authority on vine cultivation (Agrikoltura, 2019), winemaking practices and the marketing of wines.

These form part of the EU system of geographical indications:

- DOK Malta – Denominazzjoni ta' Origini Kontrollata - for a wine produced and packaged in Malta with a maximum yield of 84-91 hectolitres/hectares.
- DOK Gozo – exact requirements as above but produced and packaged on the island of Gozo.
- IGT Maltese Islands – Indikazzjoni Geografika Tipika – for wines produced and packaged from any of the islands for which higher yields are allowed than the DOK wines of 120-125 hectolitre/hectare.

The Ministry of Agriculture has approved and licensed 18 wineries on the Maltese Islands, having 5 of them in Gozo and the rest in Malta. The leading wineries organise guided tours and tastings. Depending on the season, tours cover the entire procedure from the planting, pruning, harvesting and fermentation, bottling and through to the ageing process. Some also include wine history museums and opportunities to taste and buy a variety of vintages. It is now becoming more critical, especially as part of the tourism recovery post-Covid-19 pandemic, to focus on wine tourism to increase awareness about our viticulture and promote our island as a boutique wine-producing region (Agrikoltura, 2019).

1.4 Objectives of this study

The main objective of this study will be to find out:

1. What factors influence wine lovers to travel worldwide to explore new wineries and vintages?

Then it would be interesting to highlight the following sub-objectives:

1. How can Maltese wineries and farmers showcase their locally grown grape varieties to the wine traveller?
2. How can Maltese wineries invest in promoting wine tourism?
3. In what way can the Maltese Hospitality Industry benefit from Wine Tourism?

The country in general will benefit from this study, but primarily winemakers, vineyard owners, farmers and the tourism industry, where visitors would be using hotels or other types of accommodation, restaurants, transport and other sightseeing attractions. Ideally, Malta will become a quality destination for wine lovers from all over the world. However, Malta is still very new to this type of niche tourism, so this research will help to bridge gaps in understanding the way forward in the wine tourism industry.

The Harvard referencing system will be used throughout this study by inserting text citations to all reports and recording all references in the final chapter. All researched reports were correctly cited and interpreted in the author's words without copying.

2. Wine Tourism

Wine tourism has evolved into a very valid and acknowledged type of tourism (Santos, et al., 2022). The marketing approach for this industry is growing worldwide, however further studies are required. Karlsson & Karlsson (2017), divided wine tourism in four typologies:

- The Open Door Wine Tourism where cellar doors are opened for wine tasting and similar activities
- The Edutainment Wine Tourism is a mix of education and entertainment where the tourist is interested in visiting the cellar and participating in other wine-related activities for educational purposes, such as wine workshops.
- Disneyland Wine Tourism is referred to when the tourists visit wine-related places other than vineyards such as wine museums.

- Eventification Wine Tourism relates to wine festivals and regular fairs which happen over a stipulated period, for example, Vinitaly which takes place every April and Wein Messe in March.

2.1 Who is the Wine Tourist?

When carrying out a wine tourism study, it is vital to identify the key players in the study. The leading characters are the tourists themselves, and it is essential to find out why they are intrigued to visit a particular wine region and what affects a wine traveller's behaviour. Segmenting the tourists and their expectations is fascinating because it examines the relationship between travelling concerning wine and the specific wine region chosen (Johan Bruwer, 2018). Numerous studies have researched who the wine tourist is, but there is no clear-cut definition. During the 3rd UNWTO Global Conference on Wine Tourism held in Moldova in September 2018, it was concluded that more research has to be done where the visitor is concerned. It is important to measure and understand wine tourism trends and have a clearer idea of what consumers are looking for among destinations (UNWTO, 2018).

There is no stereotype of a person who qualifies as a wine tourist; basically, it could be any traveller who becomes involved in appreciating wine and participates in wine experiences (Sekulic et al., 2017). In general, most tourists are intrigued by the appealing visual experience of the wine region; however, it has been studied that tasting and purchasing wine are the primary motivations for visiting the region. Therefore, wine tourists are very likely to engage in wine-related activities (Quadri-Felitti & Fiore, 2016).

Another factor influencing wine destination is the terroir, the natural environment where a particular wine is produced, consisting of soil, climate, mountains, valleys, lakes, oceans and rivers (Popp & McCole, 2016) (Bruwer, et al., 2017). The main product of interest is always the wine itself, but the characteristics of terroir add to a rich destination experience in which all senses of smell, taste, touch and sight are

affected (Holland et al., 2014; Kruger & Viljoen, 2019; Brochado et al., 2021). Research based on observing the wine tourists contributes to understanding their vacation expectations and what makes their experience valuable with a possibility of a repeat visit. Throughout their holiday, mainly wine tourists expect to enjoy tasting and buying local wines, but they also yearn to learn about grape varieties, wine production, viticulture and vinification. They also like to be part of activities where they can interact with farmers, winemakers, and wine specialists, thus enriching their knowledge of wine (Santos et al., 2019; Frost et al., 2020; Back et al., 2021).

Amongst the main wine tourists are:

- The wine lover; who is experienced in travelling to visit wine regions and cellars. This type of tourist would have strong knowledge and interest in wine and would most likely come from a high-income bracket, mature in age, and probably purchase from the winery. The wine lover would be urged to obtain more knowledge of the wines and the specific region (Back et al., 2021).
- The wine-interested tourist; would be of moderate to high income, exceptionally mature and would most probably have visited other wine regions and cellars and might very likely purchase from the winery. The interested tourists would also be fond of wine but less knowledgeable about the winemaking process (Sekulic et al., 2017) (Quintal et al., 2017).
- The curious traveller; this type of tourist would be of moderate income and education, and the cellar to him would be just another tourist attraction. He would appreciate wine but have minimal familiarity with the wine production process. Wine would not be his primary interest for a holiday. Within this sector, it is pretty challenging to say if he would purchase wines from the cellar door as some would also be non-wine drinkers visiting the wineries to enjoy the landscapes and the cultural resources (Carvalho et al., 2021) (Colin Michael Hall, 2008).

2.2 Global Studies on the Wine Tourist

A study was recently held in Sardinia, Italy, where several wine tourists' profiles who visited the most renowned wineries were explored. The researchers carefully monitored the tourists' behaviour, and the findings were that there are three clusters of tourists: the wine lover, the wine cultural tourist and the casual wine tourist. The latter is the relaxed tourist who might be in the vicinity of a winery and will decide to enter on the spur of the moment (Aise KyoungJim Kim, 2019).

In Northern Greece, another study was held where four types of wine tourists were identified. First, the wine lover is always present, with the same description as given earlier. Then we have the 'neophytes', who are low-income students very interested in wine and winemaking, and their major incentive is to visit wineries. The occasional visitor was also identified where the main objective here is gastronomy, so a one-off visit to a winery would be probable. Finally, the 'hangers-on', who are not primarily interested in wine or winemaking but the fact that they visit a winery is merely another tourist attraction. Further studies on this topic are vital to understanding wine tourists (Alebaki & Iakovidou, 2010).

There are also differences between the first-time visitor and the repeat visitor. According to Johan Bruwer and Isabelle Lesschaeve (2012), repeat visitors are more likely to already know the region, the wines and the winery. Their findings were that repeat visitors are more likely to return with the primary intention of buying wine from the cellar and re-experiencing the producers' in-house dining and wine pairing. On the other hand, the first-time visitor yearns for knowledge about the region and wines and the primary intention of the visit would be to take a tour of the winery and taste the wine (Bruwer & Lesschaeve, 2012).

2.3 Studies on Demographics of Wine Tourists

Other studies concerning the wine tourist have been conducted in many parts of the world. Some concentrated on the demographics of the visitor (Sohn & Yuan, 2013). This study concentrated on segmenting the tourists by what motivates them to select their wine destination region. It was established that by knowing the desires and needs of the tourist, the wine tourism industry may direct their marketing campaigns more directly to this audience.

According to a study in Germany by Koch et al, (2013), it was established that the two most popular age brackets for a wine tourist would be between 35-45 and 45-60 years. This study showed that these groups have higher income levels than other interviewees and were more interested in the world of wines. During the same year, a study held in Serbia concentrated more on segmenting the wine tourist according to how often they consumed wine: those who did so regularly or rarely or those whose consumption whilst abroad was determined by habit (Salai et al., 2013). Since wine tourism in Serbia is still developing, studies are being held constantly to determine the profiles of wine tourists. After looking into the demographic characteristics of a chosen group of tourists who visited wineries in Serbia, it was established that they were to be divided into two groups:

- Active wine tourists – these are tourists who have already visited wineries, who drink wine and who are interested in learning about wine.
- Potential wine tourists – these are tourists who drink wine, and would like to learn about wine but have never participated in wine tourism.

According to these statistics, the typical active wine tourist was male, aged between 35 and 44 and a university graduate with primary motivations to taste wine, visit wineries and learn about wine and its production. Secondary motivations would be participating in wine production and meeting people with mutual wine interests. Therefore, they will likely visit wineries that produce their favourite wines and participate in wine tourism without hesitation. However, the typical potential wine tourist proved to be a female aged between 25 to 34 years, also a university graduate with similar primary motivations as an active tourist but with less willingness to visit

wineries which produce wines they enjoy and not intrigued to participate in wine tourism (Sekulic et al., 2017).

In the USA, a study was held where another three segments of wine tourists were identified. This study concentrated more on how much variety the visitor expected and sought. There were high variety-seeking tourists, moderate variety-seeking tourists and others who tried to avoid variety altogether. The high variety seekers were identified as being younger, ready to discover more expensive wines, ready to take more risks and try more varietals, and more knowledgeable about the industry than the other two segments of tourists (Olsen et al., 2015).

It is important to note what attracts these tourists to the vineyards and cellars and what is expected to make their visit memorable and hopefully result in direct purchases from the cellar. The traveller needs to be motivated by attractions and offers at the cellar to make the visit enjoyable and memorable. Marketing and promotions from vineyards are essential, as well as tasting, events and festivals. These attractions are also vital to encourage revisits. The personal interaction and direct involvement with wine will motivate tourists to repeat experiences (Afonso et al, 2018).

Travellers are not only interested in the actual visitation of the winery and vineyard but also expect to experience a wine festival in a particular wine region (Alebaki & Iakovidou, 2010; Bryd et al., 2016). Some travellers also enjoy wine-related agricultural activities, such as pruning, grape picking and harvesting (A A Dorofeeva, 2019).

The wine region must also attract travellers through its history and culture as can be seen in Figure 1, adapted from Byrd et al. (2016).



Figure 1: Core, augmented and ancillary services in a wine region

(Source: modified after Byrd et. al. 2016)

2.4 The Demand and Supply of Wine Tourism

The wine tourism system combines supply and demand to produce a wine tourism experience. The demand side of wine tourism is brought about by the motivations and expectations of the visitor himself, whilst the supply side comes from the industry, which supplies all resources to be used by the wine tourist for their wine-related visit. Successful wine experiences are when the visitors realise that they have gained knowledge about the wine region and its environment and that the visit resulted in an enjoyable, memorable and unique experience (Santos et al., 2019).

Most studies about the supply side of wine tourism have focused on winery or vineyard owners and authorities who have a say in policy-making decisions and the area's residents. Other studies, which are not so common, have been carried out from the perspective of other wine tourism suppliers such as restaurateurs, hoteliers and other wine-related attraction suppliers. In recent years studies to bridge the gap between the

supply and demand sides of wine tourism are being developed (Quadri-Felitti, D; Fiore, M.A. 2016).

2.5 An Ideal Wine Experience for a Wine Tourist

According to Santos et al. (2020), for a fulfilling wine experience, the following four pillars are vital:

- Winescape
- Wine involvement
- Wine storytelling
- Wine tasting excitement.

These four dimensions must combine concurrently during the visit to fulfil the tourists' expectations.

2.5.1 Winescape

Although earlier studies have established that the most popular activity of wine tourism is cellar related, lately, it has become a 'winescape'. Until recently, it was unclear how to define winescape (Bruwer & Lesschaeve, 2012). However, today it is clearly understood that the human factor plays a vital part in wine tourism, so winescape is a combination of tangible and intangible elements, such as culture, landscape, scenario, architecture, artefacts, museums, vineyards and indeed visits to cellars (Quintal et al., 2015; Bruwer & Gross, 2017). In addition, some writers explore the winescape as a credit to a broader conceptualisation of the tourist experience (Leri & Theodoridis, 2019; Vo Thanh & Kirova, 2018) or through image branding (Bruwer & Gross, 2017). The three components that make up a desirable winescape experience are the presence of vineyards, the activity of wine production and the visits to cellars where the storage of wine occurs. The four major stages which contribute to the winescape experience, as highlighted in Figure 2 (Terziyska & Damyanova, 2020), have been considered to be:

- The time spent researching and planning the visit, sometimes even tasting wine of the particular region at home or in a restaurant prior to visit.
- The actual travel experience of visiting the region and purchasing wine
- The sensation of wine tasting and purchasing
- Memories of the experience which could include drinking wine when back at home from the destination visited.

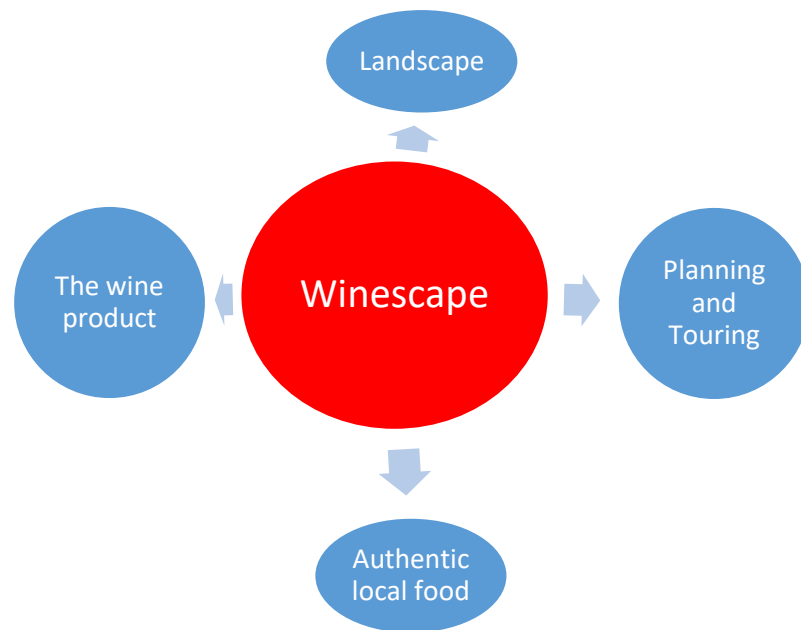


Figure 2: Winescape (Terziyska & Damyanova, 2020)

On the other hand, according to a study by Pivac (2012), it was shown that a complete wine experience must include these characteristics:

- Wine tasting and purchasing
- Getting together with people of similar attributes
- Making the most of outdoor activities in wineries
- Enjoying the rural landscape
- Learning about wine production
- Becoming familiar with various wines
- Selecting wines in a catering establishment
- winery tours

- tours of other wine-related attractions and activities
- relaxation

When a visitor engages and benefits from his visit, a commended wine experience is created (Thomas et al., 2016).

There have been many authors who have studied the wine tourists' behaviour, likes and dislikes, and attitudes which will make their wine travel experience to be memorable (Mitchell et al., 2012; Cohen et al., 2013; Saayman & Merwe, 2015).

It has been established that there are three crucial types of research in wine tourism;

- cellar door satisfaction, which is the satisfaction derived from the actual visitation of the tourists to the winery and the experience of wine sampling in the tasting rooms whilst also educating themselves about the procedures involved in producing wine and motivations in such experiences
- classifying population groups either by demographics, which are mainly related to the visitors' age, gender, social class and ethnicity and also psychographic attributes relating to the visitors' attitudes, interests and beliefs
- marketing utilising wine routes and other wine-related activities, such as festivals and events

2.5.2 The Effect of Music on Wine Tourists' Choices

Most of these studies centred on increasing the revenue at the cellar doors and understanding what the visitors expect. However, more studies focused on other aspects such as attitudes in spending (Saayman et al., 2012), behaviour and conduct, the connection between the consumer and travel with a particular interest in food and wine (Kruger et al., 2013), the relationship between listening to music, especially local music while tasting wine. Recent studies have proven that music has a powerful effect on one's choice of gastronomy. Live, local music in cellars entices more visitors to purchase on-site. Also, events with folklore music encourage the tourist to discover

more about the region and its wines. Therefore, the choice of music played significantly influences the tasting (Wang & Spence, 2015).

Furthermore, it felt necessary to analyse the effect of music on food and wine tasting attributes (Wang & Spence, 2018). In a study by Zellner et al., (2017), it was discovered that if tourists are listening to a particular region's music, it is highly likely that they would want to drink that region's wine. If, for example, the visitors are listening to Greek music during their visit, it is improbable that they would opt for a French wine, but most probably would be intrigued to try a Greek wine. This was studied in further depth in Taiwan, where a sample of 40 people participated in an experiment where they were given two glasses of red wine each. The participants were neither familiar with the wines nor with the music being played. French and Spanish songs were being played, and the participants had never travelled to the relevant countries of France and Spain. They were asked to choose their preferred wines. It was discovered that more than half of them unknowingly changed their preference according to the music they were listening to (Hsu & Yen-Jung, 2020).

2.5.3 The Importance of Wine Festivals and Wine Related Events

During the Wacky Wine Weekend, a wine festival held annually in Western Cape, South Africa, it was identified, by analysing over 450 questionnaires filled up by visitors, that four main factors make up a unique and memorable wine-tasting experience.

These four factors are:

- Qualities and attributes of the winery
- Themes and wine-related activities
- Information provided concerning winemaking and grape knowledge
- Novelty

This was the first time that novelty appeared as a contributing factor in wine tourism, and it proves that a winery, cellar or tasting room does not necessarily have to be significantly large but ideally should have something unique to contrast it from others (Saayman & Van Der Merwe, 2015). A solid winescape structure for healthy wine

tourism must include a robust economic development, landscape, natural setting, environment, layout, signage and the passion of the local people. These attributes are highly regarded in a complex macro-context of a wine territory (Santos et al., 2020).

2.5.4. Wine Involvement

The wine tourism experience relies entirely on senses, where all senses are used as follows:

- Taste – tasting of local wines, local fresh grapes, regional cuisine and other local products
- Smell – the aroma from regional wines, from the land and countryside, the aromas of wine being fermented, the cellars where wines age, the scent of herbs from nearby fields, flowers and the local cuisine.
- Touch – touching various wine bottles and glasses, the grapes whilst harvesting and pruning
- Sight - seeing the colours of the grapes, the wine colours, the greenery in the vineyards, unique local architecture, going to events and festivals to see the people enjoying wine events
- Hearing – the sound of bottles being opened, wine being bottled, wine equipment in the process of wine production, folklore music (Santos et al., 2019).

Winery visits directly increase tourist involvement, increasing interest in wine production with a multiplier effect. Once a winery is visited, the wine tasted, and the labels seen, an immediate familiarity with the range of wines is created. This is expected to directly increase sales at cellar doors, bottle shops, and restaurants (Santos et al., 2020).

2.5.5. Wine Storytelling

Product storytelling is about telling the story of how the product came to be. The same goes for wine. Every wine producer has a story about how his business evolved and

the struggles involved in becoming the producer he is today. Through storytelling, the customers feel emotion toward the winery and its history. Similarly, every bottle has a story the visitor would like to hear about, from the wine inside the bottle to its name and label. When tourists visit a winery, they allow the producer to showcase their wine portfolio through storytelling. Stories relating to vineyards, cellars, wine-producing families with history and the wine itself are remembered far more than just describing a grape and its aromas (Carvalho et al., 2021). Storytelling is one of the most significant and exciting parts of the involvement in wine tourism, together with other diverse elements such as 'nostalgia', 'hedonism', 'significance' and 'novelty' (Crespi-Vallbona & Mascarilla-Miro', 2020).

2.5.6. Wine Tasting Excitement

Dining experiences, including drinking wine, have proved to bear excitement and attract tourists looking for novelty and unique 'wine and dine' events in different destinations. So, the presence of local wines in hotels and other types of accommodation is vital. Many hotels offer a complimentary drink to tourists on arrival, and serving good quality local wine to start the visitors' stay is always very well welcomed. Furthermore, hotels and restaurants must train their staff to become more knowledgeable about wine to inform tourists of local wines and serve them professionally. If served well, wine is a tangible product that can create a unique and memorable experience full of excitement that visitors will never forget and return to (Yu-Chin et al., 2019).

2.6. Comparing Relevant Features of Wine Tourism on the Maltese Islands

Keeping all this in mind, Malta, rich in history and culture, may be compared to many regions from the Old World wine producing countries and other emerging wine countries and regions. The merging of ideas between hotels, restaurants and cultural activities will make the region a prominent wine location (Colombini, 2015). Sensation seeking is also an essential variable in wine tourism (Hernandez, et al., 2022). Although travellers and spending power vary with the demographics of the tourist, many also find it exciting to have the possibility to be able to venture around a wine

region, possibly off the beaten track. This could incentivise visiting the region (Graeme Galloway, 2008). Malta's advantage over other regions is the warm, inviting climate. The island attracts many visitors who enjoy the sun and beaches, especially the younger generation. Malta must lure youths and make wine tourism more attractive by combining wine education events. Therefore, creating new, unique, memorable experiences must differentiate the 'wine product' to consumers, especially in a new emerging wine destination (Festa et al., 2015).

According to a study in Western Australia by Charters & Fountain (2006), the satisfaction derived from a younger visitor's cellar visit is considerably much less than that of an older visitor. Youths felt they were not given the same attention as the older generation, and most felt they were just given the wine to sample and left on their own. They expected to have some first-hand experience in the vineyards themselves and interact more with the staff rather than just being left with a wine glass in hand. They would have preferred if they had been given more information and asked about their preferences. The findings were that the younger generation was more interested in enjoying the experience as a whole rather than only the wine tasting (Charters & Fountain, 2006). The language used during cellar visits must be carefully explained. A study by Isabel Negro (2012) concluded that the French language has a rich wine vocabulary, and metaphors are used where wine is shown as people, objects, buildings and food. This is not always understood by the audience, especially the younger generation, so great care must be given to ensure they are not lost during an intensive cellar visit (Negro, 2012).

To further expand on profiles of potential tourists, it must be stated that many wine regions do not encourage or support visitors with children. For example, a study in Burgundy revealed that there was a lack of family participation in wine tourism. Undoubtedly, this type of niche tourism is not primarily viewed as a family attraction. Two main reasons are the reluctance to expose young children to alcohol and the fact that what is showcased at wine tourism activities is of little interest to children. However, on the other hand, some events, such as festivals and other wine tourism

attractions, appeal to families (Haurant, 2012). In the small village of Romaneche-Thorins in France, Georges Duboeuf, in 1993, started building what has become known as the 'French Disneyland for Wines'. Named The Hameau Duboeuf, it is the first theme park with wine-related activities. It reveals a fun, educational way with interaction that the vine and the wine experience can offer (Allen, 2014). Adults can carry on with their wine-related activities whilst children are cared for in other fun and educational experiences. Since then, other theme parks in Bordeaux have also been built; however, they are more focused on adult wine-related activities.

2.7. Indigenous and other locally grown grapes

Another interesting fact when deciding to visit a wine region is the curiosity and anticipation to learn about and taste the country's indigenous grapes and other grapes grown within the region (Vukojevic et al., 2022). Indigenous grapes are those which originate in the region and are not imported. Wine tastes better if experienced in its region of origin. Clear examples are watching a sunset over the vineyards of Valdobbiadene with a glass of Prosecco, enjoying a meat feast on a barbeque in Australia with a robust Shiraz or sipping a creamy Chardonnay which could be drunk anywhere all over the world but would taste flawless over the perfectly manicured vines in the region of Burgundy, France.

Malta is proud to have two indigenous grapes that make up 38% of total vines, of which Girgentina, the white grape, totals 25%, whereas Gellewza, the red grape, mainly used for rose' wines makes up 13% of total vines. The average yield for Gellewza is higher than Girgentina (Falzon, 2014). Both vines are Phylloxera-resistant coastal grape cultivars and are often still dry-farmed and grown in the traditional bush method. Malta may not yet be well known for wine production like its Mediterranean neighbours, but as of late, Maltese vintages are competing very well with other counterparts from all over Europe, and the Maltese islands are rapidly becoming promising enough to be an emerging wine destination. Malta has been producing wines for centuries, but in recent years the quality has improved thanks to investments by winemakers, rich soils and the favourable Mediterranean climate. Malta offers

modern-styled wines, which carry an extensive curiosity apart from being very enjoyable to drink. Firstly, they are scarcely available. Malta is the smallest independent wine-producing country in the world; the Maltese archipelago makes a droplet of the global wine ocean. What is surprising about Malta is that for the island's small size, there is a vast selection of wines: white, red and rosé wines to choose from. Malta can offer a diverse wine for any occasion (Meekers, n.d.).

Apart from these two indigenous grapes, other international grapes grown locally include Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Syrah, Grenache, Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay, Carignan, Chenin Blanc, Moscato and lately also Insoglia and Grillo. In Malta, grapes ripen much quicker because of the hot and humid climate (Anon., 2021). Maltese wines have rapidly gained importance and relevance locally. This is because the level of quality has improved dramatically in recent years.

Some wines have also been in international competitions and fared exceptionally well. Maltese wines won two prestigious medals at the 2017 Challenge International du Vin in Bordeaux, France. One was a gold medal for a Chardonnay, whilst a bronze medal was won by a Viognier (Mediatoday, 2017). In 2020, an organic Maltese Premium wine of the 2018 vintage won a gold medal at the International Organic Wine Awards 2020 in Germany. This competition is held specifically for international wines made from organic grapes. An organic red wine of 2018 vintage was the first Maltese premium wine to be EU certified as Organic. This was the third consecutive year this wine received awards in this prestigious competition. In the 2021 edition of the Decanter World Wine Awards (DWWA), which took place in London, two important awards were also won by Maltese wines. A silver medal was awarded to a Merlot 2018 DOK Malta, whilst the Sauvignon Blanc 2019 DOK Malta Superior received a well-deserved bronze medal in a highly competitive field. One of the oldest and most distinct wineries in Malta has earned 34 international honours to date (Mallia, 2021). These awards show that Maltese wine producers are investing heavily in improving their wines.

Local wines need to be showcased internationally. More accessibility of the high-quality local wines globally will create an awareness which will place the Maltese Islands as an emerging wine-producing region. During the time of this study, one of the local Michelin-starred restaurants in Malta was invited to participate in a 'Four Hands' event held in the heart of London. It consisted of a six-course dinner paired with high-end Maltese wine from a relatively young, boutique winery flown in specifically for the occasion. A perfect example of marketing the wines and making them available also internationally. The curiosity created through the wines will lure visitors to the Maltese Islands, and hopefully, Malta will be added to the wine tourism map. Through earlier studies, it has been established that although the most popular wine tourism regions are still in the Old and New World, there has been a significant wider geographical circumference of new territories. Wine tourists seem to be looking for new horizons in new wine growing areas and emerging wine regions (Chong, 2017) (Kerma & Gacnik, 2015).

2.8. In which way can Local Wineries Invest to Promote Wine Tourism?

The wine tourist expects to access information about the country, wine zone, vineyards, cellars, grape varieties, events, tastings, festivals, and fairs to feel inclined to visit the region. This information should be readily available on the internet, and vineyards and cellars should clearly indicate location, signage, operating hours, optional tours and tastings, and prices (Dressler, 2017). When the traveller has all this information, he will choose his destination and plan his travels. In this era of digital information, it is vital for wineries and other stakeholders in wine tourism to have detailed and attractive websites to enable prospective visitors to choose their destination.

Therefore, great importance must be given to constructing the website of wine tour operating companies. Usually, the creation of a website is entrusted to technical people, but especially in the case of wine tourism, the content of the website should be dealt with by the marketing managers (Dressler, 2017). They should dedicate more time to designing the narrative content of the website and include storytelling to make

it more memorable to the reader. User-friendly websites which give the visitors a feel of interaction seem to have a more significant impact on the potential tourist (Cassar et al., 2018). Wine tour operators with websites with a clear indication of opening times and authenticity in content, activities and organised events fare much higher than other wine tour operators.

2.9. The Importance of Wine Routes

Sometimes some wine tourists plan their wine tasting journey from their home country with plans of which wines to try and which to purchase from the respective cellars. Therefore, every region needs to plan its wine route to attract visitors (Platania et al., 2016). A typical wine route in a wine-producing region consists of unique signage and marked roads where travellers can find natural, cultural and environmental landscapes and vineyards, cellars, wine shops, spas and accommodations related to the wine industry. A wine route will assist the traveller in planning a trip, starting with accommodation in a possible wine-related hotel and planning which wineries and cellars to visit. Wine routes have been sought after by tourists since the early 20th century, with the most popular being:

- Germany – on the Rhine Valley slopes with magnificent views overlooking vineyards and medieval villages with prominent architecture
- France – the beautiful landscape of Alsace, Champagne and Burgundy
- Italy – Tuscany and Piedmont
- California – The Napa Valley Wine Train
- Australia – Tamar Valley Wine Route
- South Africa – has the longest wine route in the world, measuring 850km from Cape Town to Port Elizabeth
- Portugal – The Douro Valley (Trisic et al., 2019)

Wines routes are possible through a collaboration between wine producers, vineyards, cellars, wine boutique shops, accommodation, restaurants and government authorities which should be involved in the infrastructure of the roads to make the route quickly and safely accessible to the visitor (Karagiannis & Metaxas, 2020).

Other decisions can indeed be made after they leave using smartphones. Any valuable information available on the internet will enable the winery to build a relationship with the tourist. Firstly, through the website, the tourist can ask for any details before his trip. It is then up to the vineyard or cellar to build on the first attempt to hold on to this prospective buyer. Digital platforms are determinants of which regions the visitors will select (Marino, et al., 2022). Often, communication between the cellar manager and the prospective tourist will also result in hotel and restaurant recommendations. Travellers ask the cellar managers to suggest leisure places where to consume the wines. The visitor can plan his trip better, and the winemaker or cellar manager can count on a customer for a definite sale. After the trip, they can still be in touch for further online sales (Sellitto, Wenn & Burgess, 2003). Also, when the tourist has enjoyed his wine trip, the probability is that he will recommend the wines to third parties, and then the winery can make more direct sales (Madill and Nielson, 2010).

Another interesting study about attracting wine tourists is about having wine museums. Although wine lovers are interested in the actual tasting of the wine and its history, it is crucial to preserve the heritage of the region's wine and wine culture and encourage visitors to delve into the past happenings and evolution of the land and wines. Wine museums are spaces where history and identity interact. It is where the ancestors' hard work is displayed and understood, especially in the old-world wine regions. This research was compiled on wine museums in the Douro region of Portugal (Inacio, 2018).

2.10. The Relevance of the HORECA Sector in Wine Tourism

Within the industry, HORECA is the term applied to the hotel and restaurant sector (HOTels, REstaurants and CAfé). A wine traveller looks out for essential factors when choosing a wine destination: its restaurants and wine lists (Terblanche & Pentz, 2019). As we have mentioned earlier, before the trip, the wine lover would have researched restaurants and thoroughly explored various wine lists. A wine connoisseur would

leave no stone unturned to ensure that any restaurant he visits would have good local wine available (Terblanche & Pentz, 2019). Research has shown that a good, carefully planned wine list, combined with knowledgeable wine service, plays a significant role in a restaurant's success.

Local wines must be marketed well on the wine list. Over recent years, Maltese restaurants have improved both in quality of food and service, which could work in two ways. A tourist could have been encouraged by the restaurant sommelier to try a particular local wine, and consequently, it could lead to a visit to the winery by recommendation of the same sommelier. On the other hand, after a visit to a local winery and sampling local wines, the tourist would opt to order the wine from the restaurant if it is available on the wine list, thus increasing sales for the restaurant and the winery itself. If a restaurant wants to market local wines, a study on designing the wine list is vital (Sirieix et al., 2011).

2.11. Benefits of Wine Tourism within the Hospitality Industry

Wine tourism is niche tourism that has been growing continuously in its importance worldwide (Gomez et al., 2018). This type of tourism is a different type of tourism than mass, where usually most tourists look for nothing in particular other than relaxing on a beach in the sun or skiing in winter in easily reachable areas. On the other hand, wine tourists travel with the main aim of exploring wine-producing territories, which are mainly in rural areas. This enables travellers to visit less popular regions than where the mass tourist would visit, thus exploring less well-known areas.

The importance of wine tourism brings about several advantages for the wine producers and the wine region. The wine industry mainly affects three crucial economic sectors: agriculture, manufacturing and trade. Several wine producers have, throughout the years, diversified their business from just having vineyards and producing wine. Through wine tourism, they have established themselves in the hospitality industry by investing in accommodation for their visitors, more attractive

cellars to host tasting events, and opened restaurants where visitors can relax after a day of sightseeing and wine tasting. Therefore, from wine tourism, the local community will also benefit from such investments. Their quality of life will become more exciting, and they will have a reason to be proud of their natural heritage and promote it to the tourists (Cunha et al., 2021).

An increase in wine tourism creates an increase in employment and an increase in income. Ultimately, through the multiplier effect and the fact that people are left with more available income, economic activity will increase and the protection of the region's natural heritage (Alonso and Liu, 2012; UNWTO, 2017). Very surprisingly, studies about the benefits of wine tourism were not looked into by the Old World of wine-producing countries but rather by New World countries such as South Africa, Australia and New Zealand (Gomez et al., 2018). The broadening of wine tourism brings about a vital benefit where rural areas tend to develop naturally when travellers explore various wine-producing regions. For competitiveness in rural tourism, small businesses must successfully satisfy visitors' experiences (Komppula, 2014). These stakeholders must unite and join in a mission to provide unique and attractive tourism experiences (Dissart & Marcouiller, 2012).

As time passed, it was discovered that during the first nine years of this century, only 17 scientific studies were published about the subject, but in the following nine years up to 2019, the number of articles rose to 43, meaning the studies more than doubled, showing the interest in this field (Cunha et al., 2021).

2.12. The Possibility of Increasing Employment through Wine Tourism

In a study on enhancing wine tourism in Greece, researchers concluded that primarily the aim was to boost employment in the sector, increase the number of wine tourists quantity and level, strengthen the local economy, and enrich the tourism product (Stravrinoudis & Tsartas, 2012). In the case of Malta, where wine tourism is still in its early stages, it is vital to invest in human resources and train local people to make the hospitality industry more attractive. The Institute of Tourism Studies (ITS) in Malta

provides several short and long-term courses, even leading to degrees in hospitality. ITS specialises in wine courses for both existing and potential employees in the hospitality sector. Such courses are also open to wine enthusiasts who want to expand their knowledge on the subject and become potential wine tourists.

2.13 The Authorities' role in the possibility of wine tourism in Malta

For a country to increase its prominence on the world's wine map, it must have help and guidance from relevant authorities. In Malta, assistance is given and should also increase considerably by the Malta Tourism Authority under the guidance of the Ministry of Tourism and the Ministry of Agriculture. Although every region might have several wine producers' associations, it is essential to have a national association to coordinate and build strategies and policies that regard the wine sector (Dissart & Marcouiller, 2012). It would be necessary to have strategies to bring together people in business and institutions to promote the industry. The association's main aim should be to promote the tradition of wine production. For a healthy wine tourism industry, all stakeholders must combine their efforts and resources to work together and create a framework for the further development of the industry. It is suggested that key public and private players join forces to highlight the significant opportunities and problems the developing wine tourism industry might face (Festa et al., 2020). It is not only important to focus solely on wine production but on each of the other sectors which make up the wine tourism industry. Unfortunately, this is sometimes the situation, especially in the Old World wine-producing countries such as Europe, when compared to New World wine-producing countries such as New Zealand, the USA, Argentina, Australia and South Africa (Gomez et al., 2018).

An interesting case study was held in China, where a completely new wine destination in Ningxia was studied. Ningxia is a region in central China visited by thousands of tourists annually to visit famous tourist sites. Although, at the time of the study, there were 72 wineries in Ningxia, there was no activity towards wine tourism. Therefore, the question was, similar to that on the Maltese Islands, how to gain recognition as a wine region. Other similarities to Malta seemed to be the need to develop top-class

winemaking skills, investment in more wineries, planting more vineyards, and solid financial backing. Therefore, the government in Ningxia devoted itself to developing a strategy to become a high-quality wine region by attracting wine tourists. The government's involvement involved developing a ten-year vision and a strategy to make Ningxia a prominent wine region. The main focus of this strategy was aiding in financial backing and investing in local human resources. It is safe to say that pre-Covid -19 pandemic, Ningxia made rapid development in the industry, although it also has similar limitations to the Maltese Islands. The main issue is that an excessive number of well-known wines from the Old and New worlds of wines enter China at relatively low prices. This causes great competition in terms of prices (Zhang & Thach, 2016).

Wine tourism should focus on the beauty, quality and uniqueness of the region which Old World wine-producing countries have in abundance (Sasso & Solima, 2018). It has now become evident that rural areas have finally become an interesting subject to consider when developing new tourism sectors with a particular focus on the wine tourism industry (Salvatore et al., 2018). This is where the public sector would be involved, and other stakeholders will develop rural areas into attractive wine-related destinations.

3. Methodology

Methodology in research refers to the strategy and plan of a research project. According to Polit and Beck (2004), this term refers to ways of acquiring, organising and analysing data. Bowling (2002), explains that methodology is the full design and structure of the research subject in; the size and sample methods, and the procedures used to collect the data and to analyse it. For the purpose of this study, it was first decided to research past studies on the relevant subject of international wine tourism focusing on the wine tourist and what attracts the tourist to the wine destination.

3.1 Research Plan

Before starting the research on Wine Tourism in Malta, a SWOT analysis was carried out to identify the main strengths and weaknesses and which threats and opportunities Malta is faced with, as shown in the table below:

Strengths	Weakness
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Malta has a strong tourism industry.• Malta has a rich history and culture.• Maltese people are renowned for hospitality.• Most locals are multilingual.• The local climate boasts long months of sunshine which is beneficial for tourism, grape growing, harvesting and winemaking.• Malta is considered a safe region.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There are no official organisations between authorities and wine producers.• There are limitations due to the size of the island.• Malta lacks specialised people.• Entry into Malta is mainly by air.• Lack of established reputation.• Insufficient awareness of all stakeholders about the immediate solid

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Malta boasts two indigenous grapes – Gellewza being the red grape whereas Girgentina being the white. • Considering the limitations, Malta has a solid social media presence. 	effects of what this type of tourism would include
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passionate winemakers might look for new opportunities to improve. • Fresh marketing ideas can be created to promote eno-tourism in collaboration with government authorities or several wine producers. • The use of social media can be refined to create demand for local wines. • Expanding the already vast range of wine events and marketing them internationally. • A collaboration with environmental and other NGOs can be formed to create more areas where events can take place. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other established countries already have reputable wineries and wine routes. • Malta has hefty licensing fees. • There is a high expense for importing and maintaining equipment. • COVID-19 pandemic • Rising inflation leading to high costs for the consumer

Table 2: SWOT analysis adapted from Peet (2018), Pemberton, Destination Strategic Management Plan

After undertaking the above analysis, it seems that are insufficient incentives and promotions from the authorities to promote Malta as a possible wine tourism destination.

The main focus on eno-tourism is the tourist, the product and the region. According to Michael Orbolato (2018), Tuscany, Italy, was the first wine region to attract eno-tourism. This is because the wine producers understood how beneficial it is to attract wine lovers to the destination through their cellar doors. In the last decade, in California, Napa Valley is also one of the favourite regions in this industry (Orbolato, 2018). So we must discover who the potential wine tourist ideally is and whether the wine producer/vineyard owner is willing to improve the product with state authorities and other variables.

3.2 Methodology design

Methodology research is how we design, conduct, analyse, report and interpret our studies. Keeping this in mind, the methodology chosen for this study was a combination of both qualitative and quantitative analysis. The initial plan was to be more qualitative by holding interviews and observing visitors in wineries and tourists dining out. However, because of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, it was decided to send out detailed response questionnaires via email to the chosen wine producers and to the Malta Tourism Authority, instead of face-to-face interviews. Also, since at the time when the research was being held, the number of tourists had been very low, instead of observing tourists in various wineries, it was decided to hold online surveys aimed at wine enthusiasts and restaurant owners, and to hand out questionnaires to the limited number of tourists who actually visited a particular winery during a specific week.

Another option was to organise a focus group to help with the research. A focus group helps the researcher gather more information in a shorter time by bringing together several people with similar demographics to answer several questions. The researcher then analysed the reactions and responses of the participants. However, for the same reason, the Covid-19 pandemic made it challenging to bring people together. Another reason was that in this particular study, many people were involved, so it was highly impossible to find an appropriate time and place to bring these people together. Therefore, it was confirmed that the best way was to compile surveys and detailed

response questionnaires to the relevant people to have a mix of quantitative and qualitative analysis.

Some advantages and disadvantages of both Quantitative and Qualitative analysis are shown below in Table 3:

Research Method	Advantages	Disadvantages
Quantitative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This was used to achieve measurable statistics from surveys carried out with wine enthusiasts and restaurateurs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can only test pre-set questions without allowing room or a discussion.
Qualitative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The detailed questionnaires allowed for a thorough dialogue with wine producers and MTA officials to establish behavioural patterns • Provided more information to bridge gaps in knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time consuming for both the researcher and the participant • Difficult to investigate

Table 3: Advantages & Disadvantages of Quantitative & Qualitative Analysis

The table 4 below shows the importance of identifying the indicators influencing wine tourism demand which was used in the methodology preparation:

Demand for wine tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitations to wineries
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demographics of visitors
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amount spent in wineries or wine region
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitors satisfaction and destination attractiveness
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possibility to visit other attractions and events
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comparing destination and match expectations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of the destination area

Table 4: Demand for Wine Tourism (adapted from Getz & Brown, 2006)

3.2.1 Pilot Study

Therefore, the planned data collection will be derived mainly from detailed response questionnaires and surveys. The surveys were conveyed online whilst questionnaires were either sent by email or given by hand as hard copy at the winery. Keeping in mind the limitations that the Covid-19 pandemic brought about, the detailed response questionnaires were ideal to hold because direct contact with the participants was avoided. The flexibility for the participants to answer the questions at their convenience was also a benefit. Questionnaires also allow as many questions to be asked as possible, however it is in the interest of the researcher to stick to short questions to encourage participants to answer easily. Similarly, surveys were also used to avoid direct contact with participants and to reach a larger number of people. Surveys can be administered online via emails, mobile devices, and social media, thus reaching participants from all over the world. Surveys are relatively easy to manage and anonymity can be retained.

As briefly mentioned before, following a pilot study of the previous plans to have interviews and visits, a few amendments had to be made to the questions. When the questions were sent to a few people to test the waters, it was decided that since the number of tourists in Malta during the period was very low, it was highly impossible

to collect a large number of responses from cellar visits. The intention was to visit several wineries to observe the behaviour of the wine tourists and hand them a questionnaire to fill in before they leave. After the pilot study, some questions were modified.

It was planned that these answers would demonstrate a good insight into what visitors to wineries are after. It would have explained how different social groups and cultures are affected by the events surrounding them on our islands. Initially, it was planned to take a population sample of approximately 250 visitors who would have visited the various wineries (Johan Bruwer, 2018). The initial plan was to visit the six participant wineries to observe the visitors and leave questionnaires for the visitors to fill in. As can be seen from these questions shown as Appendix 8.1, they were mainly directed at tourists visiting our local wineries. Instead, we left questionnaires at one of the wineries for a whole week, and 40 visitors participated by answering the questions. These questionnaires were given by hand, as a hard copy, to the general manager of the winery which still held cellar visits at the time of this research.

Then an online survey generated by Survey Monkey was set up, and some of the questions were modified to divert them to Wine Enthusiasts to help understand what this section of people looks for during their wine-related visits. For the purpose of this study, the wine enthusiasts were people active on social media who were known to the researcher personally or through wine related events and who share a passion for wines

Surveys are generally used to investigate a targeted population's opinions, behaviour and ideas (Fowler, 2013). In order to conduct a good survey which leads to informative data, it is imperative to plan and make sure that the following steps are adhered to as described in Table 5:

	Decide on what the population target will be
--	--

Steps to be followed to ensure informative data when conducting a survey:	Plan the type of survey
	Design the questions
	Send out the survey
	Collect responses
	Analyse results
	Draw conclusion from the results

Table 5: Conducting a survey adapted from (Fowler, 2013)

Before all the research survey questions and questionnaires were finalised, a research matrix was compiled. The matrix helps bind each question to either the study's primary objective or any of the three sub-objectives being explored. Also, each question is linked to a section of the literature review. This matrix is shown as appendix 8.2 in the appendices section. Following this matrix, the process of sending out the surveys and questionnaires took place.

3.2.2 Online Surveys

The decision to use surveys was mainly due to their many advantages, strengths and benefits. One of the main advantages of surveys is the high response rate, thus ensuring that a large part of the targeted population will give direct and precise answers. Conducting a survey is also relatively low in cost, unlike other methods where participants are paid and where travelling expenses are incurred. Being an online survey, it was also possible to invite participants from around the globe, thus having a more expansive view of the participants' opinions. Another significant advantage is that results are exact, enabling the data collected to be more accurate. The first survey was sent to 180 contacts via Facebook and WhatsApp, and these contacts were all connected as wine lovers or wine enthusiasts and made up of people who love

travelling for wine experiences, sommeliers, wine importers, wine collectors, wine connoisseurs and other people who share a passion for wines. The survey questions are shown in Appendix 8.3.

Another online survey which was also conducted through Survey Monkey, was a survey sent out to restaurateurs. This is another important area for wine tourism as most tourists, especially those interested in wine, would visit restaurants at some point during their visit. The targeted population here was some 55 restaurant owners, all members of the ACE, the Association of Catering Establishments. The reason behind this survey was to analyse the importance of a good wine list in a restaurant and to find out if and how tourists chose wine while dining. The questions about this survey are shown in Appendix 8.4.

The data from this survey was used to analyse the tourists' behaviour when presented with a wine list and how important it is for our industry to be well equipped and trained to market our local wines (Terblanche & Pentz, 2019).

3.2.3 Questionnaires

A short questionnaire was also prepared to be presented to tourists dining in a particular restaurant one evening. It was forecast that in a high-end restaurant with a capacity of 50 diners, at least one third would be tourists. The tourists were forecast to be of medium to high average spend.

The questionnaire was presented after their meal to help analyse their opinions regarding wine drinking during their meal. Whilst offering them a drink at the end of their meal, they were invited to spend a few minutes answering the questions shown in Appendix 8.5.

Together with the data to be analysed from the two above surveys and the diners' questionnaire, information from detailed response questionnaires sent to wine producers and vineyard owners will also be gathered.

Firstly, the various wine producers on the islands were identified. The Ministry of Agriculture has officially licensed 18 wine producers all over the Maltese Islands (Agrikoltura, 2019).

Out of the eighteen licensed wineries, six were chosen to send questionnaires to. Two were chosen from Gozo and four from Malta, so various answers from all over the Maltese Islands will be available. Apart from being very helpful and cooperative, these wineries were chosen to participate in the questionnaires because they seemed to be the most mentioned from the results in our online surveys. A detailed response questionnaire was prepared to highlight the most critical dilemmas and queries about what would increase the quality and quantity of wine tourism. The questionnaire presented is shown in Appendix 8. 6.

The last but very important questionnaire was prepared and presented to the Malta Tourism Authority. The questions shown in Appendix 8. 7 were asked to explore whether there are any future plans to invest and expand in this niche type of tourism and also to establish what the opinion is on the future of local wine tourism.

After gathering this information from tourism authorities, wineries, tourists, diners, and local wine enthusiasts, it would then be possible to study and analyse the results to build customer personas and have a target market. For example, should the wine lover (Back, et al., 2021) – a fanatic who wants to taste all types of wines in the winery and who would like to have all the information available be targeted? Or the wine interested tourist (Sekulic, et al., 2017), passionate about food and wine and willing to try and pair local food and wine? Or the curious traveller (Carvalho, et al., 2021), who happens to be in Malta and would not mind trying local wines? On the other hand, information regarding the wineries themselves will be collected. For example, is the

wine producer ready to improve and be more visitor-friendly? Are authorities willing to aid and subsidise winemakers to create events, improve legislation, and cooperate further to invest in this niche tourism market? The data from the questionnaires will then involve summarising the mass data that has been collected and studying the frequencies and differences between variables. When analysing qualitative data collected from surveys, questionnaires and observations, it is crucial to uncover and understand the phenomenon and its meaning.

3.3 Ethics Considerations

Whenever any research is carried out, importance must be given to moral principles that govern a person's behaviour in conducting an activity (Saunders, et al., 2009). These principles are called ethical considerations and guide us throughout our research process. Ethics include voluntary participation, informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality. These considerations protect the research participants' rights, strengthen the research's relevance and maintain scientific integrity. The main principles of Ethical considerations are:

- respect
- confidentiality
- trustworthiness
- responsibility
- truth-telling
- fairness
- right to withdraw (Saunders, et al., 2009).

3.3.1 Ethics for Online Surveys

Both surveys conducted were anonymous. These were sent to wine enthusiasts and restaurateurs. However, all participants were informed of the aims and objectives of the research taking place via an introductory message through Messenger in Facebook, WhatsApp and emails depending on which method was used to contact them. Although all contacts were known to the researcher, the replies came in anonymously through Survey Monkey.

3.3.2 Ethics for Questionnaires

An opening paragraph explaining the reason for this research was written in all the questionnaires presented. Both the wine producers and the authorities who answered the questionnaires were asked to give consent for the use of the data provided by signing a consent form. The consent forms were either sent by emails or delivered by hand to their relevant offices. The duly signed consent forms can be seen in Appendix 8.8.

Ethics ensure that no harm is done to the researcher or participant during the study or by the data collected and presented. All the questions asked, related to the topic of study which is the main objective of wine tourism on the Maltese Islands. Therefore, no psychological harm will be done to any of the participants as no personal questions were asked. All information given will only be used for the sole purpose of this study and will be destroyed after the thesis has been finalised.

4. Research Findings

After all the surveys and questionnaires were collected and finalised, the findings of the study are presented hereunder prior to being discussed in the following chapter.

4.1 Wine Enthusiasts' survey

The first online survey was sent to approximately 180 participants who are Facebook and WhatsApp contacts and all quite familiar with wine and travelling. This survey analyses who the wine tourist is and what he/she looks for when travelling. The total response rate was 72.2% that is 130 participants responded to the survey. The highest percentage of responses came from the 45-54 age bracket that is just over 40% whilst the lowest response rate came from the 18-24 age bracket at 1.55%. 73% of all respondents were male whilst 27% were female. Since this survey was carried out online via Survey Monkey, it was possible to have the opportunity to receive responses from overseas as well. In fact, apart from the 93% of respondents who were from Malta, 3.08% came from other European countries, 2.3% came from the United States of America and 1.54% came from other countries.

The average income of respondents vary, with the highest response of 33% coming from the 36,000 to 60,000 euro income bracket. Followed closely at 29.23% coming from the 20,000 to the 35,000 euro bracket. 24.62% of respondents stated that they come from the over 80,000 euro bracket and the least number of replies came from the 61,000 to 79,000 euro bracket totaling 13.08%.

When the participants were asked how many times they travel in a period of one year, the majority of them at 46.15% replied that they travel between one to three times a years, 29.23% travel between three and five times and 24.62% travel more than five times in the same period.

When the participants were asked whether they visit wineries when they travel, 72.31% stated that they do with a high percentage of 86.31% stating that they visit one to two wineries and 13.68% replied that they visit multiple wineries. Only 27.7% of all participants do not visit any wineries at all when they travel. This can be seen in Figures 3 and 4 below.

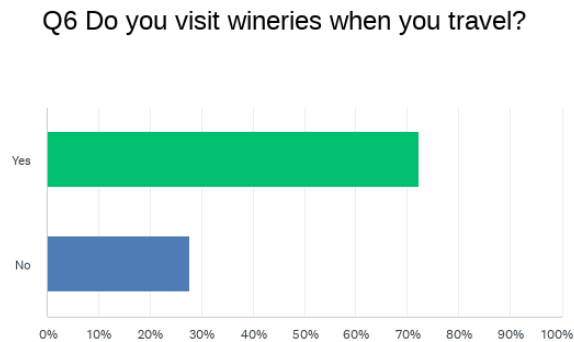


Figure 3: Do you visit wineries when you travel?

n=130

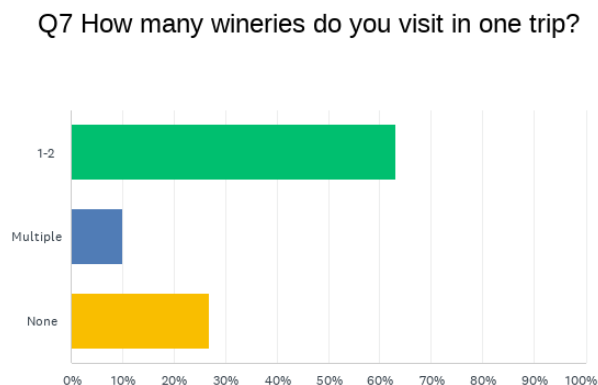


Figure 4: How many wineries do you visit in a trip?

n=130

The next question on the survey analyses whether the respondents travel specifically for wine experiences and 40.77% of them replied that they do, however 59.23% replied that they do not travel explicitly for such an experience.

When the respondents were asked if they had ever visited wineries in Malta and/or Gozo, 83.08% replied that they did and only 16.92% said that they have never been to local wineries.

In Figure 5 below, it can be seen that the most popular winery that the respondents visited was the winery number three. This winery was visited by 56.36% of the respondents, that is, 69 visitors, and closely followed by 49.18% who visited winery number two. The other three wineries had a similar amount of visitors each whilst 32.79% of all the participants mentioned that they visited other wineries.

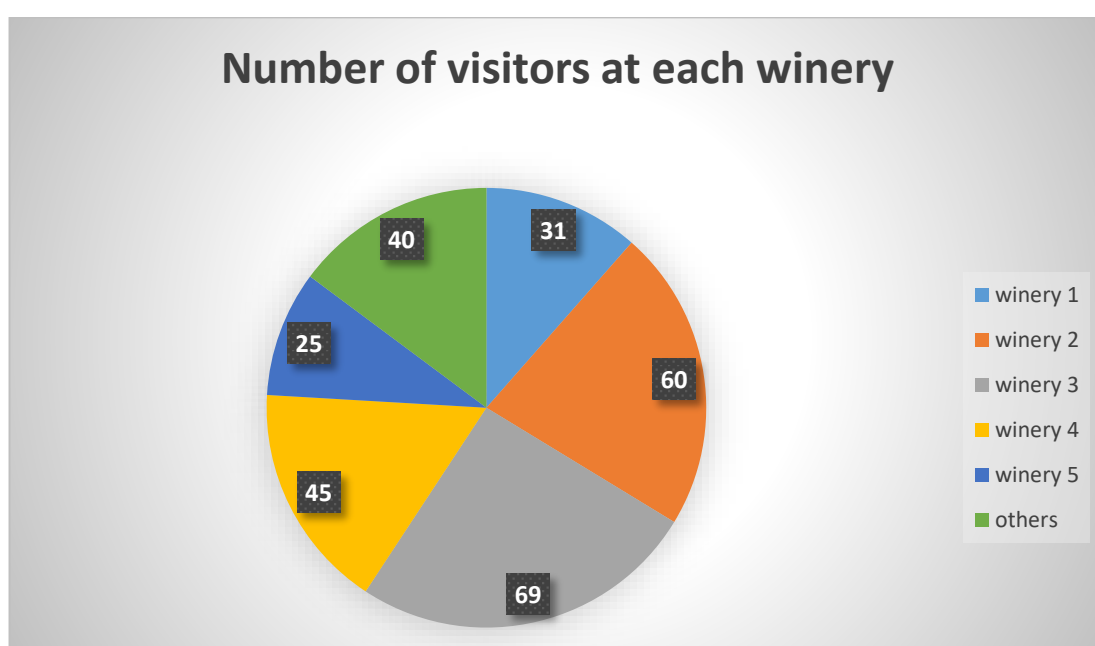


Figure 5: Number of visitors at each winery?

n=122

The majority of respondents showed their interest in visiting local wineries in the future whilst only 10%, which add up to 13 of our respondents showed no interest in doing so. When asked if they participate in wine tasting during cellar visits if offered for free, almost 93% of the 128 respondents replied that they do and 87& are also likely to pay for these events should it be necessary. Only 10% were indifferent to whether they would be ready to pay or not and less than 3% replied that they most definitely not be prepared to pay.

To analyse further the behaviour of the respondents, they were asked if they would be interested to purchase wine from the cellar door. A high percentage of 90% replied that they would either definitely or most probably end up doing so. Only 1% were adamant that they would definitely not be interested in buying whilst 10% stated that they probably would not. Furthermore, when asked how much their average spend would be, 27% answered that they would spend between 10 to 25euros, 55% would spend between 30 to 50 euros and 18.25% replied that they would normally spend over 100 euros.

The participants were also asked whether they have a private wine collection at home. 80% responded that they do. In fact, 10% said that they have a grand collection, 34% said that they have a moderate collection whilst 36% stated that they have a limited collection. Only 19% replied that they have no collection at all. When asked whether they would consider enhancing their private collection with some of the local prestigious wines, 77.7% replied that they would and only 22.31% said that they had no interest to do so.

The relevance and availability of other wine related events was analysed in a further question asking participants if they would be interested in more than just vineyard and cellar visits. As can be seen in Fig. 6 below, less than 1% replied that they would definitely not be interested. However, 39% replied that they would definitely be interested in other wine related events and 50% replied that they probably would.

Q19 Do you look for other wine-related events other than vinyard visits?

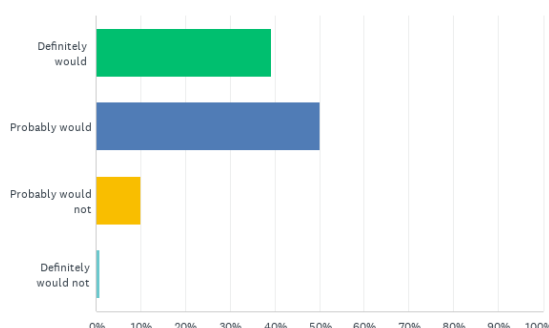


Figure 6: Do you look for other wine related events?

n=130

The last question in this survey was whether the participants think that Malta and Gozo have the potential to be placed on the Mediterranean Wine Tourism map. As shown clearly in fig. 7 below, 39.23% of the respondents strongly agree, closely followed by 44.62% who agree. 12.3% had no preference, whilst only 3.85% disagreed.

Q20 In your opinion, do you think that Malta & Gozo have the potential to be placed on the Mediterranean wine tourism map?

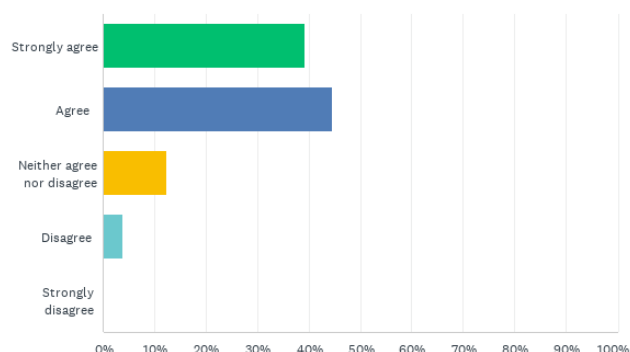


Figure 7: Do you think that Malta & Gozo have the potential to be on the Mediterranean Tourism Map?

n=130

4.2 Restaurateurs' survey

The second survey was also compiled using Survey Monkey and was sent to 55 restaurant owners who form part of the Association of Catering Establishments. Fifty-one of them replied, bringing the response rate to 92.72%. It was discovered that 17 of the 51 respondents replied that tourists dining at their restaurant fall into the 50-80% bracket, and 12 replied that 40% of their customers were tourists. Another 17 said that tourists are between 10 to 40% of their total diners whilst only five restaurants have less than 10% of their diners who are tourists.

When asked about the number of wines on their wine lists, five restaurateurs replied that they have over 300, and four replied that they have between 200 and 300 wines. The majority, 16 restaurants offer between 100 to 200 wines, 11 offer more than 50 but less than 100 wines, whilst 15 restaurants have less than 50 wines on their list.

Figure 8 below represents the relationship of local wines to the whole wine list. In five restaurants, 50 to 80% of all wines were local, and in four restaurants, only less than 10% were local wines. Most respondents state that 20 to 40% of the total wines on their wine lists are local.



Figure 8: Number of local wines on the restaurant wine list

n=51

When asked whether tourists enquired about local wines with their meals, all respondents replied in the affirmative. Figure 9 below shows the percentage of tourists choosing local wines because staff suggests it.

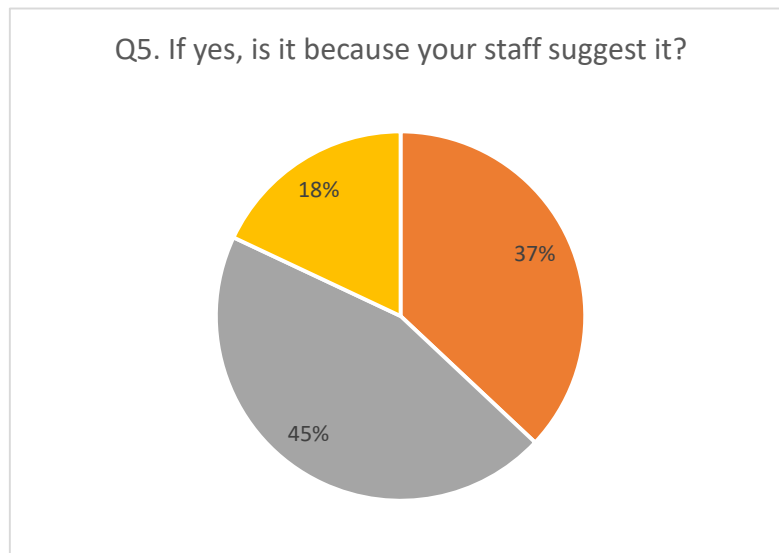


Figure 9: Do your staff suggest it?

n=51

It is seen that 37% of the tourists choose local wine because staff suggests it. 45% of the tourists choose local wine out of their own will, whereas 18% sometimes ask for suggestions but ultimately make their own decisions. 98% of all respondents are keen to encourage local wine when tourists show interest in suggestions.

The respondents were asked if they encouraged the tourists to visit local wineries and which ones they encouraged most. As can be seen in figure 10 below, out of the 50 respondents it is seen that 32 of them replied that they do, whereas 18 do not choose to encourage winery visits.

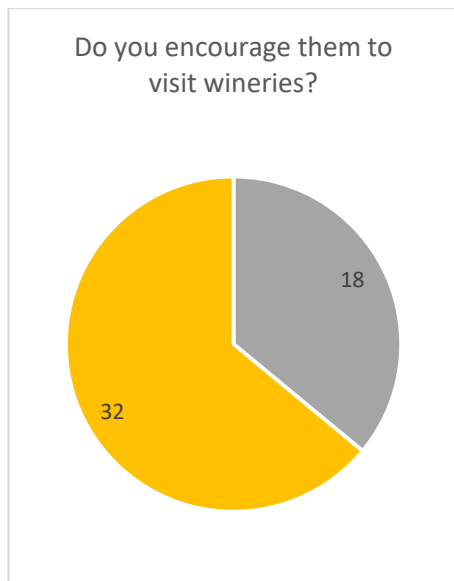


Figure 10: Do you encourage the tourists to visit wineries?

n=50

It was also analysed whether service staff are well trained and informed about local wines, locally grown grapes and the two indigenous grapes of Girgentina and Gellewza. 59% of the respondents replied that their staff were well prepared, but 37% replied that they were not.

To further analyse the extent to which restaurant owners are ready to promote gastronomy in Malta, they were asked whether they are prepared to pair authentic local food with local wines. To this question, as shown in figure 11 below, 78% answered that they were willing to do so, whilst 22% showed no interest.



Figure 11: Are you prepared to pair local food and wines?

n=51

The last question asked to the restaurant owners was to understand if the markup on the local wines was equal to that of the imported wines on their lists. As shown in figure 12 below, 39% said that the markup was not equal, whereas 61% confirmed that the profit margin was equal.



Figure 12: Is the mark-up on your wine list equal for both local and foreign wines?

n=51

4.3. Wine producers' questionnaire

The research was also conducted by sending detailed response questionnaires to six leading local wine producers. This research aimed to deeply analyse the resources available in the respective wineries and what wine producers are willing to do to enhance tourist visitation to their vineyards and cellars. The six wineries have submitted their relevant signed consent forms to give permission for this data to be used as seen in Appendix 8.8.

Winery	Winery 1	Winery 2	Winery 3	Winery 4	Winery 5	Winery 6
Number of years in operation	16	28	103	5	92	16
Name of respondent	Producer/ Manager 1	Producer/ Manager 2	Producer/ Manager 3	Producer/ Manager 4	Producer/ Manager 5	Producer/ Manager 6
Position and for how many years	Owner/ Winemaker For 16 years	Estate Manager 10 years	Head of sales on- trade for 7 years	Owner and Director since inception	Owner 12 years	Manager 1 year
Number of employees	1 viticulture 1 cellar assistant	11 full- time 2 part- time	125	6 full- timers with part - timers during harvest	1	5

Are employees multilingual?	Maltese Italian English	Maltese English Italian Spanish	Maltese English Italian	Maltese English Italian French Finnish	Maltese English Italian	Yes
Do you organize tours of your vineyards?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Are you always open to visitors or only by appointment ?	By appointment	Open on weekdays and weekends by appointment	Open 6 days a week	By appointment only	By appointment only	By appointment only
How many visitors do you get daily?	4	No fixed number. 13,000 per year	30-60	Varies	15-30	Varies
How many visitors can you take at one go?	50	Approx. 70	50	80	30	30
Do you have the possibility	No	No	No	No	No	No

of offering accommodation on site or nearby?						
Do you offer restaurant services on site?	Yes	No	No	No, but we host events by private chefs	No	No
Do you create wine and food pairing events on site?	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Would you be interested in investing in a restaurant or B&B service?	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Would you be interested in creating other events? Any ideas?	Yes Blind tasting league	Yes More open days and collaboration	Yes Meet the winemaker, vertical tastings, tasting from barrels.	Yes	Yes expanding	Yes. Weddings, dinners, BBQ's, Festas

Do you have a history of your winery? Does it include a museum or a collection of old vintages?	No. Few older vintages	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Would you be interested in collaborating with other wineries to create a wine enthusiast hub?	Yes with foreign wineries	Yes. Already done in 2019 to organize a wine trail	Yes	Not at the moment	Yes	Yes
Would you be willing to collaborate with state authorities to host wine fairs?	Depends on which fairs	Already done. Plans disrupted due to pandemic	Yes	Only abroad	Yes	yes
How do visitors get to know about your winery?	Social media, Restaurants, Wine	Social media, MTA, Recomme	Social media,	Social and digital media,	Internet	Social media

	enthusiast s.	ndations from hotels and restaurant	Good reputatio n	referrals, articles		
What is your marketing campaign?	Social media, Travel agencies, MTA	Social media, tourist publicatio n		Yes	Trip advisor, google	Social Media
Do you collaborate with travel/tourist agencies and operators?	Yes	Yes	Yes		No	Yes

Table 6: Detailed Response Questionnaire

A detailed analysis of this table will be given in the Discussion sub chapter 5.3 further on.

4.4. Winery visitors' questionnaire

In June 2022, when tourism seemed to start kicking off, hard copy questionnaires were left for a week at a popular local winery for visitors to fill in at their leisure. This particular local winery was chosen since they normally have the highest number of visitors, and are usually open for long hours. Unfortunately, the number of visitors still has not matched pre Covid-19 number. However, after a week, 39 questionnaires were picked up which were made up of 11 US citizens, 13 British, 3 from New Zealand, 4 were locals, 2 Italian and 1 Dutch, 1 from Luxembourg and 1 from Mauritius. These

questionnaires were all anonymous and there was an introductory message from the researcher explaining the reason behind the study. The purpose of this questionnaire was to study who visits the winery, how they rate it and most importantly if they purchase wine from the cellar.

As can be seen in Fig. 13 below, the majority of visitors had already visited another winery before.



Figure 13: Was this your first visit to a winery?

n=39

Although most of the participants do not travel specifically for wine experiences, it can be seen that they are almost all interested in wine tasting sessions, even though they sometimes have to pay for it.

The graph in Figure 14 below shows that a substantial majority will buy wines at the cellar door, proving that winery visitations are a prime element of wine marketing and should be vital in the process of promoting local wine tourism (Olsen et al., 2015).



Figure 14: Do you buy wines from the cellar door?

n=39

The wine tourists were asked whether they were interested in other wine-related events whilst on vacation, and the answers were quite at par, as seen in figure 15 below which confirms the study held in Greece that further research into understanding wine tourists is required (Alebaki & Iakovidou, 2010).

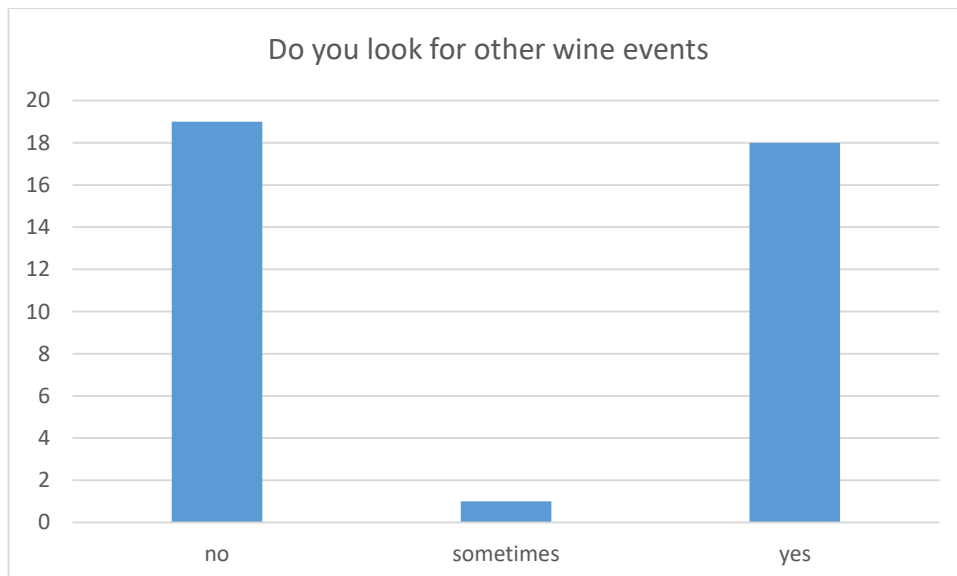


Figure 15: Do you look for other wine events?

n=39

4.5. Tourist Diners' questionnaire

A simple response hard copy questionnaire was also presented to several tourists dining in a restaurant one evening. This questionnaire aimed to analyse whether tourists always drink wine during their meal and, if so, how they choose the wine. They were also asked whether they had been to wineries and, if so, which ones. The questionnaires were given to 25 tourists after their meal at a high-end restaurant with an extensive wine list consisting of over 280 labels of which 20% are local wines. The wines at this restaurant range from medium to high end wines. Twenty of the diners happily filled in the questionnaire. The tourists were mainly from the United Kingdom, Italy, Poland, South Africa, Switzerland, Greece and Australia. The questionnaire was anonymous so no consent forms were needed. Permission from the owner was obtained and a consent form is also attached in Appendix 8.8. Twenty respondents are justifiable because it is a small restaurant with a daily similar amount and style of tourists, so a one-time sample was done.

Of the respondents, 80% replied that they always drink wine in restaurants whilst three diners replied that they mostly do and one replied that he sometimes does. When asked what happens when they are presented with the wine list, 11 participants said that they prefer to ask the sommelier for advice, eight will stick to their favourite wines whilst one replied that he will choose a local wine. 75% of the respondents had already tasted local wines as opposed to 25% who did not. Amongst the wines which the diners mentioned that they had tasted were wines from various wineries, both new boutique wineries and older ones. Only 7 of the diners had visited local wineries and rated them very well. The diners were asked whether they have considered buying local wine to take back to their country. Eleven replied that they will or already have whilst 9 replied that they will not.

4.6. Malta Tourism Authority questionnaire

A detailed response questionnaire was also sent by email to the Malta Tourism Authority within the Ministry of Tourism, Malta. A copy of this questionnaire is presented as Appendix 8.7. The aim of the questionnaire was to find out whether the

authorities themselves believe in, and are interested in promoting local wine tourism and in which way they can help especially concerning marketing and promotion. It was also asked how wineries and vineyard owners can be encouraged to invest in agritourism and how the local hospitality industry can benefit from this type of niche tourism.

The replies showed that the authorities believe in the potential of the local wine tourism market. They are ready to aid with marketing and promotion of wine related activities and believe that best result is achieved by cooperation of all stakeholders.

5. Discussion

Wine is a distinctive product which is uniquely diverse from any other food or drink. Wine tourists aim to gain a unique tourism experience during their travels as can be seen from the results of these surveys and confirming previous studies (Thanh & Kirova, 2018). This research study was held to analyse both from a demand and supply perspective, the possibilities of wine tourism on the Maltese Islands with contrasts and comparisons to global wine tourism.

5.1. Wine Enthusiasts' survey analysis

From the first survey sent to wine enthusiasts it was seen that the highest percentage of respondents were male, between the age of 45-54 and earning between 36,000 and 60,000 per annum. This means that the typical wine enthusiast is middle aged and earns a middle to upper range of income. Therefore, tourists of this age group are more likely to travel and spend money on their interests, in comparison to younger travelers (Sekulic, et al., 2017). They would be more likely to travel to wine regions and visit restaurants so they can enjoy the local food and wine experience. This confirms that wine tourism is not a cheap interest indeed (Quintal, et al., 2017).

The age bracket and income are quite similar to other countries such as for example Germany and Spain but on the contrary are generally females (Lopez-Guzman, et al., 2014). On the other hand, the typical Italian wine tourist is a male but much younger in age, 26-45 years old (Colombini, 2015). All other demographic characteristics are all very similar throughout the European and Mediterranean cultures.

The study shows that all respondents travel once or more during the year with the highest percentage of 46, who travel between one to three times a year. There were over 25% who stated that they travel more than five times a year. A very high percentage of these travelers, which is over 72% visit wineries during their travels. This confirms that wine enthusiasts spend a considerable sum of their annual income on travelling with the intention of having wine experiences. Visitation of wineries is a determining factor in wine tourism (Bruwer & Lesschaeve, 2012). Over 70% also responded that they visit more than one winery during their travels. From the

respondents over 83% said that they have been to local wineries and were also asked to mention where they had visited, and it shows that interest in winery visitation is all across the islands.

In a study conducted in Greece it was evident that the most important incentive for the tourist is the actual visitation of the winery, the tasting, followed closely by the interest in taking in as much information as possible about the wines and their production, and then by finally purchasing the wines (Alebaki & Iakovidou, 2010). From the results of the survey, it was also observed that almost all of the respondents would participate in wine tasting sessions if they were offered for free and over 86% were also ready to pay for these sessions if asked to. This analysis confirms studies by McNamara & Cassidy (2015) and also shows that there really is a genuine interest in wine tasting during visitations. Most wine lovers' primary intention for cellar visits is the tasting itself (Bruwer, et al., 2018). It was also seen that many of the participants who attend cellar visits also purchase wine and therefore, they are the most active and dynamic of wine tourists. More than half of the participants said that they normally spend up to €50 on every visit where 18% said that they spend over €100. It is very likely that these visitors will take the wine back home to their country and share with family and friends.

Technology today also enables them to re purchase online from the comfort of their home. Approximately 80% have also replied that they have a collection of wines at home, and some were also interested to enhance their collection with some of the local prestigious wines. This confirms the fact that cellar visits generate more income for the wine producers (Afonso, et al., 2018). The importance of having other events organized other than the usual cellar visits and tastings, is vital. From our survey it shows that almost 90% of the participants are eager to attend other events such as wine-related festivals, fairs and museums. It is very clear that there is a thirst for such events as was also evident in prior studies (A A Dorofeeva, 2019) (Saayman & Van Der Merwe, 2015). From this study, an interesting 83% believe or strongly believe that the Maltese Islands have the potential to become a wine tourism destination which is a very encouraging analysis for the promotion of the wine tourism industry.

5.2. Restaurateurs' survey analysis

In the second survey directed towards restaurant owners, it was recorded that one third of the participants said that tourists made up from 50-80% of their customers. Less than 10% said that only 5% were tourists. This means that if tourists are a large percentage of diners, restaurants are a showcase of local wines. This analysis confirms earlier studies by Terblanche & Pentz (2019). The more readily available the local wines are, the more the diners are likely to opt for them. It resulted that although a number of restaurants had a very large variety of wines, only 5% offered more than 50% of their wines as local. This needs to be improved upon to reach the objective of what can be done locally to install the sense of promoting local wines to our tourists.

This study shows the level of importance given to local wines by restaurant owners. There is much more room for improvement and it is evident that restaurants have a high potential to market local wines and are the most likely places where the tourists have the most options available at one time (Sirieix, et al., 2011) (Terblanche & Pentz, 2019). All the respondents replied that all tourists are keen to try local wines, whether it is suggested by staff or not. Staff should be encouraged to convince tourists to taste local wines (Gomez, et al., 2018). It is imperative for staff to be well trained and knowledgeable about local and indigenous grapes to be able to help diners choose their wine appropriately and help them pair it with their meal (Sirieix, et al., 2011) (Yu-Chin, et al., 2019). Many had also mentioned that the diners had already visited local wineries too and were familiar with specific wineries. This shows that tourists are not only interested in tasting wine or having it with their meals but also show the importance of visiting wineries (Karagiannis & Metaxas, 2020). 78% of the respondents stated they already do or are very willing to pair local food with local wine with the intention of encouraging more the niche area of local gastronomy (Saayman & Van Der Merwe, 2015).

The results of this study show that over 60% of the participants treat local and foreign wines equally, thus making the same profit margin on both equally. This should be studied further to keep local wines as competitive as possible to foreign wines. From

this study some of the findings of previous studies are consolidated, but it can also be said that the type of restaurant and location might request a different set up of wine lists depending mainly on how appealing to tourists the restaurant may be. This may have an impact on the restaurant owners' decisions on what wines to choose for their wine list, what percentage of them would be local and what price range (Sirieix, et al., 2011).

5.3. Wine producers' questionnaire analysis

Interesting responses were received from six wine producers who answered our detailed response questionnaires. The wineries which participated in our study have different demographics varying from relatively new wineries to much older ones dating back to 1919. Other differences were in the number of employees they have. The smallest winery employs a single person whereas the largest one employs over 100 people. A similarity within all the wineries at the time of the study was that they are all owned and managed by males. The size of the winery, however, does not have any relation to the amount of visitors they can take because the winery which employs the least people state that it can take approximately 80 visitors at one go during organized events, however the largest winery will only take 50. This means that the newer wineries are investing and giving a lot of importance to winery and cellar visitations thus reaching the two sub objectives of this study. It transpires that all of them hold tours of their vineyards and tasting sessions which is vital for the marketing and promotion of their wines. Some have specific opening hours whereas others are open by appointment only but they all understand the importance of visitations both by local and foreign tourists (Charters & Fountain, 2006).

Two decades ago the importance for wineries of visitation to cellar doors was recognised by both the tourism and wine industries (O'Neill and Charters, 2000) (Alonso, et al., 2014) The service and attention given at the cellar door will enhance the visitors' winescape and the more memorable the experience the greater the chance of their purchasing wine and their return to the winery and most important of all to Malta. It is the emotional experience derived by visits to cellar and other memorable experiences that attaches the tourist to the region (Bruwer & Gross, 2017).

Although almost none of the respondents had the possibility to offer onsite accommodation at the time of the questionnaire, most of them seemed interested to do so but showed the need for help from the relevant authorities. Working together with the state to enhance the surrounding regions of the wineries would also be of help to develop the areas. (Salvatore, et al., 2018). In fact, one of the participants, which is a winery in Gozo stated that they have a project which started in 2002 to have an estate consisting of 10 rooms to rent as part of an agriturismo project but only obtained full permits in 2021. Full progress was halted due to the Covid-19 pandemic but they are eager to finalise the estate to be in full potential by 2023.

Some of the wineries have a fully equipped kitchen but do not use it as a daily restaurant open to the public. They are happy to invite established private chefs for specific organised events such as wine pairing dinners or weddings/parties or just provide nibbles, mostly local gastronomy to offer during wine tasting (Quadri-Felitti & Fiore, 2016) (Yu-Chin, et al., 2019). One participant even said that it would be inappropriate to open a restaurant since most restaurants and high-end hotels are their main customers and it would jeopardise their business relations. The intention of the wine producers is to think outside the box and create authentic events to encourage visitation and increase cellar sales. One participant will be introducing a blind tasting league for wine enthusiasts, another said that they hold vertical tastings, tastings from the barrel and 'meet the winemaker' events whilst another mentioned cultural events which are compatible with wine appreciation and wine culture.

In another example, a Gozitan wine producer is interested in creating events associating local wines to local 'festas' which occur weekly during the summer months. These events will create new possibilities to encourage visitation to wineries since visitors are always looking for new and authentic activities (Crespi-Vallbona & Mascarilla-Miro', 2020). Almost every local winery who responded to our questionnaires were proud to say that they have a library of older vintages, one winery also has a museum and another has several artefacts and photos of when the vineyards were being planted. These are all available for visitors to see, thus adding to unique

experiences for tourists (Quintal, et al., 2017). These activities are essential for the main objective of this study.

When asked whether they would be interested to collaborate with other local wineries to create a wine enthusiast hub, not all wineries were interested. One winery stated that it had already initiated talks with the Agricultural Directorate to organise a wine trail in 2019.

As already mentioned in earlier studies enthusiastic wine tourists start planning their destination according to what attracts them to the region and a planned wine route (Platania, et al., 2016). A few wineries especially in Gozo, for instance mentioned that they already collaborate between them to organise events on a larger scale instead of marketing their wines on the own. Merging for the sole intention of creating activities will increase the popularity of the winery as has been studied in Greece in 2020 (Karagiannis & Metaxas, 2020). Other wineries were not too particularly keen on collaborating with other local wineries unless there would be a direct benefit to their winery. In general, the participants are interested in participating in wine fairs abroad but their limitations include the size of their estate and the financial investment involved. More involvement between stakeholders and authorities is needed (Dissart & Marcouiller, 2012).

Marketing plays an important role in the promotion of local wines. It is how and where people get to know about what is going on in a winery, which wines are available, how to get to a winery and where wines can be tasted (Cassar, et al., 2018). The participants all agreed that social/digital media is the way forward. Most importantly a regularly updated website is a must and google analytics should be monitored. This confirms a study by Dressler (2017) in Germany, where the author argues that the growth of wineries, which will enhance wine tourism, depend on their visibility. The author emphasises that wineries should focus on brand visibility through innovative marketing strategies to encourage wine tourism in the region (Dressler, 2017). Being present in restaurants, bars and hotels is also vital for tourists to become familiar with

the wines thus creating the curiosity to visit the wineries. A strong element in a marketing campaign is also ‘word of mouth’. Most of the wineries also collaborate with tour operators and travel agents to attract tourists towards their cellars.

5.4. Winery visitors’ questionnaire analysis

From the questionnaires received from the winery visitors it was quite interesting to see that a good percentage of these tourists do not travel for a specific wine experience but ultimately, they do visit one or more of the local wineries and even rate them very highly. The most interesting point that was found out from this study was that most visitors had been to other wineries before, showing that there is a curiosity factor that lures tourists towards local wineries. It seems that winery and cellar visits are very popular because the visitors are always looking for a unique and memorable experience every time they visit a new wine region (Quintal, et al., 2015). Also, the majority of visitors have also bought wines from cellar doors meaning that with more effort and commitment from wine producers there is a high potential rate of tourists who would consider visiting wineries and purchasing wine directly from wineries (Quadri-Felitti & Fiore, 2016).

5.5. Tourist Diners’ questionnaire

The target group in the next questionnaire were tourists who were given a few short questions after their meal. There was a mix of tourists from different countries on a particular evening and they were asked whether they always drink wines with their meals and 75% of them replied that they do and their reaction to how they choose their wine was quite different from each other. Some prefer to stick to their favourite classic, others refer to the staff for advice on local wines. This confirms what was determined earlier, that staff must be knowledgeable and trained about local wines (Thomas, et al., 2016). The majority of the participants stated that they had tried local wines and also mentioned their favourite one (Vukojevic, et al., 2022).

Some of the diners also stated that they had visited wineries although the number was not very impressive. However, those who did, rated the wineries quite highly. The more local wines are marketed the more tourists would want to visit cellars and vineyard and hence the growth of wine tourism (Sekulic, et al., 2017). Some diners were also interested in purchasing local wine and taking them back to their countries to share with friends and family and also to bring back memories of their travels (Olsen, et al., 2015).

5.6. Malta Tourism Authority's questionnaire analysis

Malta produces some excellent wines which are limited in quantitative terms but not in quality (Meekers, n.d.). Over the past years Malta has seen the development of facilities that promote winemaking, in addition to various wine bars that have opened in towns and villages all over the islands. Many of these facilities reflect indigenous characteristics and authenticity which aim to improve the potential of wine tourism as a niche market (Gomez, et al., 2018). This also transpired from the replies in detailed response questionnaire given to the Chairperson of the Malta Tourism Authority (MTA). These can be seen in Appendix 8.9.

It was confirmed that one of the MTA's main objectives, is to successfully market and promote the Maltese Islands internationally. MTA regularly promotes Malta's gastronomic attributes in various international markets. Until now the Maltese Islands are promoted during travel fairs where the MTA's presence is always a priority.

By promoting events which are of traditional gastronomic characteristics, especially where local wines are involved, the attractiveness of the Islands will increase (Alonso, 2012). However, as the MTA insists, there needs to be a process in pace which certifies authenticity of the local products. It was also said that MTA can support initiatives to ensure that wine related activities are well packaged and presented to potential tourists. MTA can help in strategically planned activities, especially when they are organized during the lean periods of tourism. Activities such as harvesting, pruning, grape picking and wine making which combine with local food and wine traditions, will attract visitors that are inclined to choose a destination over another because of such

cultural activities. From this questionnaire, it was determined that closer cooperation between all stakeholders is key (Stravrinoudis & Tsartas, 2012). Hotels, travel agents, tour operators and primarily the MTA together with other governmental institutions should work together with wine producers, hospitality associations and local councils to organize wine related activities such as wine and food festivals which appeal to potential wine tourists. The MTA also disclosed that the idea of having a wine museum to further promote the history of winemaking in Malta is being discussed.

Investment in agritourism was also studied and it was concluded that it needs to be supported with integrated policies and management structures so that tourism activity is efficiently managed to ensure that the rural environment of the Maltese islands is well preserved. It was also expressed that wine tourism has the potential to become a valuable niche market (Getz, 2000), which enhances what Malta has to offer, especially when combined with local food (Yu-Chin, et al., 2019). Wine tourism is a market which should not be associated with mass tourism but with smaller numbers. However, this segment of tourism can attract a profile of travellers with a high average spending power, as discussed in the study of the wine tourist profile (Koch, et al., 2013).

6. Conclusion

Unique wine regions are determinants for destinations of wine tourism. In light of all the information collected in this study exploring the possibilities of wine tourism on the Maltese Islands, it is clear that the possibility truly exists. As a wine tourism destination, Malta may consider itself privileged to display the dual nature of a Mediterranean island destination of sun and sea and also possesses a vibrant urban dimension. Other factors influencing the wine-loving traveller are the ease of connectivity by having frequent flight and sea voyage options, various accommodation options and a high-quality gastronomic scene. Travelling purposely for wine experiences is undoubtedly not a cheap hobby, so wine tourists expect sterling service together with value for money.

6.1. Limitations

Based on quantitative and qualitative research, it can be concluded that although there were minimal surprising findings, most of the participants' replies were as expected. Some limitations to this research were that it was held during the Covid-19 pandemic, and the possibility to hold interviews was very limited, as was the number of tourists visiting the islands. In light of this, the sample size in surveys and questionnaires might not have been as planned. Furthermore, since wine tourism is relatively new to Malta, there was a lack of previous studies on the subject. The detailed response questionnaires also have some limitations because although they are time-consuming, they are challenging to investigate and verify, and answers have to be taken for granted. It is very difficult to question and investigate the answers given by the participants.

From the research conducted through surveys and questionnaires, it can be concluded that Maltese wineries have come a long way to produce fine quality wines after hefty investments in production, storing and marketing their wines. The number of premium wines produced locally from Malta's indigenous varieties is few, so it would be hard

to take that line to promote our wine region. However, the quality of the wine is of utmost importance. Therefore, it must be ensured that visitors to the islands will always find good quality wines on the market, whatever grape varieties the wine is made up of. This will encourage visitors to spread the word that Malta is not just a sun and sea destination but a unique gastronomic destination offering great wines to taste and discover, combined with beautiful landscapes, history and cultural activities. The study determined that tourists are very interested in local wines and were ready to even pay for tastings at cellars. In general, they also opt for local wines in restaurants, and some also purchase wines at cellar doors. Although the study noted that only a tiny percentage came to Malta specifically for a wine experience, the absolute majority were eager to seek other wine-related activities. This proves that visitors are eager to learn more about our viticulture and vinification and were very satisfied after tasting the wines. It also resulted that tourists mainly seek information before their holidays through websites and social media, implying that wineries should be cautious when selecting their marketing tools. The more attractive and user-friendly the marketing tools are for visibility, the greater the chance that the potential tourist would choose one destination over another (Cassar et al., 2018).

6.2. Recommendations

From the surveys conducted amongst wine enthusiasts, it was concluded that the majority believe that the Maltese Islands have the potential to be placed on the Mediterranean wine tourism map.

During the Malta Tourism Strategy Conference 2021-2030, it was stressed that the strategy recognises that Malta needs to aim for high quality at all levels of the tourism value chain. This is because quality is increasingly influencing travel destinations. The vision toward recovering from the Covid-19 pandemic is to strengthen Malta's status as a quality destination of choice. One of the strategic challenges tackled during the conference was to enhance the visitor experience by focusing on promoting what is indigenous to the Maltese islands and enriching the gastronomical experience. By promoting the niche of wine tourism, Malta will aim for tourists with higher expenditure than those of mass tourism.

6.2.1. Developing a Marketing Strategy with the help of Government Authorities

Wine tourism can be promoted through efforts and investments from wine producers and authorities. However, wine producers believe that promotion with a more international approach should come from the Government since local wineries do not have the proper budgets to invest in wine tourism marketing. It is recommended that the Ministry for Tourism and the Agricultural Directorate together with the Ministry of Culture should address this issue (Stravrinoudis & Tsartas, 2012). A strong marketing campaign should be structured, and a striking logo should be created.

6.2.2. Wine Tourism Conference

A recommendation to be taken seriously would be to organise a Mediterranean Wine Tourism Conference aimed at reaching out to local stakeholders and authorities, inviting primarily:

- Journalists
- Tour Operators
- Travel Agents
- Tour Guides

From all over the Mediterranean countries to give them the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the history of wine production in Malta, and the possibilities of marketing the idea of local Wine Tourism internationally.

The conference would ideally be spread over two or three days and should take place at a venue which would have a large auditorium, break-out rooms for smaller discussions and a large area for networking and socialising.

On the first day, after registration takes place, an introductory welcome speech would be given by the Minister of Tourism to inaugurate the conference and then different panels would hold discussions relating to wine tourism.

It is recommended that the first discussion would be:

‘A Grape Escape’ – An introductory discussion about Malta becoming an emerging wine tourism destination. What does Malta have to offer?

The panel would include representative from:

- The Malta Tourism Authority
- The Gozo Tourism Authority
- FATTA – The Federated Association of Travel and Tourism Agents
- The Malta Union of Tourist Guides

Other discussion panels would be about:

- A focus on promoting what is indigenous to the Maltese Islands
- The importance of Media in wine tourism
- Harnessing data and use of modern technologies in wine tourism
- Connectivity – Ensuring a healthy airline/sea route network
- Gastrodiplomacy – which is a new term to describe how food and wine can be used to build or improve a destination image for the international market
- Introducing Maltese and Gozitan wine producers

For these discussions it would be recommended to have representatives from the following associations and entities on the panels:

- The Association of Catering Establishments
- The Malta Hotels and Restaurants Association
- The Institute of Tourism Studies
- The Chamber of Commerce
- The Ghammieri Wine Advisory Board
- Airmalta

On the third day the main hall would be transformed into an exhibition and workshop area where attendees will be free to meet and network with all exhibitors. It is recommended that appointments are set prior to the conference to avoid queues at particular stands. All confirmed bookings would receive a list of exhibitors with relevant contact details. The exhibitors would include wineries, restaurants, tour operators, travel agents, car hire, accommodation and tour guides. The last evening would consist of a gala dinner in the main hall of the same venue and would include a high-end meal using only local ingredients, with each course paired with a local wine. During the dinner the wine makers will be present to give a brief description of the wines presented on the evening. The will come to an end with a closing speech from

the Minister of Tourism. A detailed 'set-up' itinerary is shown as an example in Appendix 8.10

The aim of this conference is for the Maltese Islands to gain visibility within the Wine Tourism Industry.

6.2.3. Organised day trips or packages for wine tourists

An advantage of having a small archipelago of islands is the facility to also plan various fun-filled packages for visitors. Some recommendations could be getting together with incoming travel agents and tour operators to suggest either day trips to specific wineries or an example of a three-day or five-day package for potential wine tourists. An example of these packages is shown in Appendix 8.11. These would ideally include visits to wineries, including tours of the vineyard with possible interaction during harvest or pruning season. Visits to the wine production and storage areas, wine tasting sessions combined with local nibbles and storytelling are a must. The evenings should be enhanced with organised dinners on-site at a potential winery or at a restaurant that promotes the same local wines in combination with authentic local food. Since there are also wineries on the island of Gozo, it would be suggested to also plan a day to visit the wineries while visiting other cultural and historical landmarks.

Given that the climate in Malta is typically Mediterranean and that Malta is surrounded by sea, boat charters with local wine and food pairing dinners should also be recommended. The wine producer or representative would accompany the visitors on board and provide information and explanations about the specific winery and wine specifications. This again would combine gastronomy with other sun and sea tourist attractions. Emphasis should be made on wines and relaxation. An example would be for a winery to invest in creating a wine spa for visitors to spend a day in. This new way of relaxing is called 'Vinotherapy' and has become quite popular in elite spas worldwide (Rutkowska, et al., 2016), where visitors can indulge in self-care by bathing in wine and having grape body scrubs.

6.2.4. Creating a Wine Route

Another interesting idea would be to create a Wine Route. This is to be discussed among all stakeholders who should be involved in the complete infrastructure of the roads to enable safe and easy access for the visitor (Karagiannis & Metaxas, 2020).

A wine route is created by having a clear map of the Maltese Islands showing all official wineries and vineyards as suggested in Appendix 8.12. It would also be recommended to pin other wine-related areas onto the map, such as tasting rooms, enotecas, restaurants, accommodation and areas available to hold events. A study by Byrd et al. (2017) in the USA states that appropriate signage proved to be a vital contributor to how successful wineries had become.

6.2.5. Accessibility of Local Wines

Another possibility to encourage local wine tourism is making local wines available and accessible in touristic areas, such as airport lounges, ferry terminals and during touristic activities all over the island. This could be made possible by installing vending enomatic machines, allowing tourists to purchase local wines by the glass with the correct capacity and served at the correct temperature and sample them at their leisure (Stelzig, 2022). This will make local wines more attractive and might encourage tourists to visit wineries and return to the islands to better familiarise themselves with the local wine scene.

This study intended to illustrate what stakeholders think of the possibility of Malta becoming an emerging wine region and what could encourage wine tourism in Malta. In general, wine producers, catering establishments, wine enthusiasts and tourism authorities agree in principle that this would be possible. Very encouraging results were revealed from the study and it transpires that the main objective of discovering what attracts wine lovers to travel worldwide to explore the wine world has been achieved. The study also revealed what can be done by the wineries and farmers to showcase their locally grown grapes to the traveller and what can be done locally to market local wines internationally. It was confirmed that the Maltese hospitality industry will benefit from wine tourism; however, it is advisable and also necessary to

conduct more profound research as soon as the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic are over. Further research will analyse deeper what potential wine tourists expect from Malta and what further investment is required. Future studies would confirm and build on the recent research done. Hopefully, the recommendations suggested in this research will be considered and studied further for the benefit of booming wine tourism on the Maltese Islands.

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8. Appendices

8.1 Questionnaires to Wine Tourists (prior to pilot study)

Kindly allow me to introduce myself. My name is Michelle Muscat, and I am the owner of Ristorante La Vela in Pieta, Malta. At the moment I am reading an MBA in International Hospitality Management at the Malta Institute of Tourism Studies and Emirates Academy in Dubai. I am currently conducting research on Wine Tourism with the aim of exploring the possibilities of wine tourism on the Maltese Islands with contrasts and comparisons to global wine tourism. I kindly ask you to participate in this research which will enable me to get a better insight of your opinions on the subject whilst respecting anonymity. I sincerely thank you for your patience and contribution.

1. Kindly state age, sex and country of residence
2. How often do you travel in a period of one year?
3. Why Malta?
4. How did you find out about this winery?
5. Is this the first winery you have visited? How would you rate it from 1-5, 5 being the highest rate
6. If your answer to question 3 was no, how many wineries do you visit when travelling?
7. Do you travel specifically for wine experiences?
8. What experience with wines do you have?
9. What is your favourite grape and style of wine?
10. Do you taste wines during your visit if they are available for free?
11. If tastings are not free, will you pay for an organised tasting in the cellar?
12. Did you buy wine from the cellar door? If yes, what is your average spend?

13. Will you be taking wine from this winery to your country?
14. Do you have a private cellar at home?
15. Would you be interested in enhancing it with some of our prestigious wines?
16. Would you visit another winery?
17. Do you look for other wine events other than visiting of vineyards and cellars?

These answers will give me a good insight into what visitors to wineries are after. It will help me understand and explain how different social groups and different cultures are affected by the events that surround them. I am planning to take a population sample of approximately 250 visitors from the various wineries.

Thank you for your co operation

Cheers!

Michelle xx

8.2 Research Matrix

<u>Wine Enthusiast Survey</u>	<u>Reason for question</u>	<u>Relation</u>	<u>Connection to literature review</u>
1. Kindly state age a. 18-35 b. 36-50 c. 51-65 d. over 65	To find out the age group of respondents	Main objective	Who is the wine tourist? Studies of demographics of wine tourists (Koch et al., 2013)
2. Sex Male or Female	To determine the gender of the respondents	Main objective	Who is the wine tourist? demographics (Sekulic et al., 2017)
3. Country of residence: Malta, Europe, out of Europe	To find out where respondents come from	Main objective	Who is the wine tourist? Where do they travel from (Getz, 2000)
4. What is your average income? a. between €20,000 to €35,000 b. between €36,000 to €60,000 c. between €61,000 to €79,000 d. over €80,000	To establish income of the average wine tourist	Main objective	Who is the wine tourist? (Quintal et al., 2017)

5. How often do you travel in one year? 1-2, 3-5, 5 or over	To determine willingness to travel	Main objective	Frequency of travel (Johan Bruwer, 2018)
6. Do you visit wineries when you travel? Yes or no	To determine how many tourists visit wineries	Sub objective 2	Segmenting tourists and their reason to travel (Johan Bruwer, 2018)
7. If answer to quest 6 was yes, then how many wineries do you visit when travelling? 1 or more	What type of tourist? The curious, the enthusiast, the wine lover	Main objective and Sub objective 2	The importance of wine related travel (Sekulic et al., 2017)
8. Do you travel specifically for wine experiences? Yes or no	Is it just a coincidence or a planned visit?	Main objective	Is it just a tourist attraction? (Alebaki & Iakovidou, 2010)
9. Have you visited Maltese/Gozitan wineries? Yes or no	Are local wineries attractive enough?	Sub objective 1 & 2	Importance of visibility and attractiveness of websites (Cassar et al., 2018)
10. If your answer to question 9 was yes, then which did you visit?	Which wineries are the most attractive and reachable?	Sub objective 1& 2	Understanding which wineries attract most visitors
11. If your answer to question 9 was no, are	Are local wineries approachable and accessible?	Sub objective 1 & 2	Importance of accessibility

you interested in doing so? Yes or no			(Karagiannis & Metaxas, 2020)
12. Do you taste wines during your visit if they are available for free	To find out if visitors are really interested in wine tasting	Main objective and Sub objective 1 & 2	Understanding if the visitors are only interested in visiting or also in interacting/ tasting wines (Alfonso, Silva, Goncalves & Duarte, 2017).
13. If tastings are not free, will you pay for an organised tasting in the cellar? Yes or no	To what extent do visitors wish to taste the wine	Main objective and sub objective 1 & 2	Willingness to pay for tastings (Bruwer & Lesschaeve, 2012)
14. Do you buy wine from cellar door? Yes or no	To find out if visitors purchase wine direct after tasting	Sub objective 1,2,& 3	Understanding how wineries market their wines at cellar door and interaction of visitor to purchase (Afonso et al., 2008)
15. If yes what is your average spend? a. up to 10euros b. 10 to 50 euros c. over 100 euros	To find out how much visitors are willing to spend on local wines	Sub objective 1,2,& 3	Related to marketing of wineries and willingness to purchase wine (Saayman et al., 2012)

16. Do you take local wines back to your country? Yes or no	To find out if visitors actually take local wines with them to their country	Main objective and sub objective 1	Related to how far local wines are attractive to tourists and the possibility of them being showcased abroad (Bruwer & Lesschaeve, 2012).
17. Do you have a private cellar back home?	To find out how interested in wine the visitor actually is	Main objective	Understanding the depth of interest in wine (Olsen et al., 2015)
18. Would you be interested in enhancing it with some of our local prestigious wine? Yes or no	To find out how much the visitors actually would like to invest in local wines	Main objective	Understanding to what extent visitors liked local wines (Olsen et al., 2015)
20. Do you look for other wine events other than visiting of vineyards and cellars? Yes or no	To help understand what the visitor is looking for during his holiday	Main objective	Related to other activities other than visiting wineries and tasting (A A Dorofeeva, 2019) (Saayman & Van Der Merwe, 2016)
19. Do you think Malta & Gozo have the potential to be placed on the Mediterranean Wine Tourism map? Yes, no or maybe	To find out if wine enthusiasts believe in local wines, their potential and the Islands' potential	Main objective	Related to whether wine enthusiasts see Malta and Gozo as a possible wine destination (Colombini, 2015)

<u>Restauranteurs survey</u>			
1. What percentage of your customers are tourists?	To establish demographics of diners	Main objective and sub objective 3	Restaurants should compile their wine lists according to its target population (Terblanche & Pentz, 2019)
2. How many wines do you offer on your wine list?	To find out potential of restaurant	Sub objective 3	Understanding the hospitality sector (Sirieix et al., 2011)
3. What is the percentage of local wines on your wine list?	To establish what importance restaurateurs give to local wines	Sub objective 3	Understanding the hospitality sector (Terblanche & Pentz, 2019)
4. Do tourists opt for local wines?	To determine if tourists are interested in ordering local wines in restaurants	Main objective and sub objective 1,2 & 3	Understanding if local wines are being chosen by diners (Terblanche & Pentz, 2019)
5. If yes, is it because your staff suggest it?	To find out if tourists are well informed of local wines	Main objective and sub objective 2	Establishing if wineries are making their wines approachable enough (Sirieix et al., 2011).

6. When tourists choose a local wine do you encourage it?	To determine if restaurateurs encourage local wines	Main objective and sub objective 1 & 2	Understanding if restaurateurs are encouraging this niche tourism (Gomez et al., 2018)
7. Do you encourage them to visit a local winery? If yes, which one?	To determine if restaurateurs encourage cellar visits	Main objective and sub objective 3	Understanding if the hospitality industry encourage cellar visits (Santos et al., 2020).
8. Is your staff well trained and informed about local wines and our 2 indigenous grapes?	To find out if restaurant staff are well prepared to sell local wines	Main objective and sub objective 3	Establishing the importance of well trained staff (Sirieix et al., 2011) (Yu-Chin et al., 2019)
9. Are you prepared to pair local food with local wines?	To determine if restaurant owners encourage their chefs to enhance menus by local food and wine pairing	Main objective and sub objective 3	Establishing commitment of restaurateurs to lure diners into their establishment by novelty and authenticity (Saayman & Van Der Merwe, 2015)

10. Is your mark up on local and foreign wines equal?	To find out if restaurateurs treat local and foreign wines equally?	Sub objective 3	Understanding whether restaurant owners are willing to have a different mark up to promote local wines (Sirieix et al., 2011).
<u>Questionnaire to diners (tourists)</u>			
1. Which is your country of residence?	To establish country of residence	Main objective	Target group is tourists
2. Do you always drink wine with food in a restaurant?	To find out tourists' preferences	Sub objective 3	Establishing whether tourists drink wine with their meals.
3. What happens when you are presented with a wine list in a restaurant? Do you look for a simple local wine? Or do you read all the list and look for one of your favourite classics at the best price? Or do you prefer asking the sommelier for advice?	To determine tourists' reaction when presented with a wine list	Main objective and sub objective 3	Dining out is an experience. Diners react differently in restaurants. Some seek novelty, other seek advice (Thomas et al., 2016)
4. Have you tried local wines?	Are diners interested in local wines?	Main objective and sub	Understanding whether tourists try local wines during their meals

		objective 1,2 & 3	(Vukojevi et al., 2022)
5. If yes, which was your favourite?	Which are the favourite local wines?	Sub objective 3	Understanding which wines tourists appreciate most and which are most marketed best
6. Have you visited a local winery? If yes how would you rate it?	To establish whether casual diners are interested in wine experiences	Main objective and sub objective 1 & 2	Understanding what the wine tourist is interested in (Pivac, 2012)
7. Have you considered buying wine to take home?	Is the casual diner ready to purchase local wine to enjoy back home?	Main objective and sub objective 3	Understanding the depth of interest in wine in casual diners (Olsen et al., 2015)
<u>Questionnaire to Wine Producers</u>			
1. Name of winery and years in operation	To determine demographics of company	Main objective	Establishing details of winery
2. Name of person, position and number of years in same position	To ensure competency of person filling in the questionnaire		Establishing details of winery

3. How many employees does the winery have? Kindly explain in which sections	To know more about the winery		Establishing details of winery
4. Are you and your employees multilingual?	To determine attractiveness to winery	Main objective and sub objective 1 & 2	The importance of communication (Isabel Negro, 2012)
5. Do you organise tours of your vineyard?	To determine accessibility to vineyards	Main objective	The importance of interaction (Charters & Fountain, 2006)
6. Are your doors always open to visitors, or is it by appointment only?	To determine accessibility to vineyards and cellars	Main objective and sub objective 1	Understanding the wine tourists requests
7. How many tourists do you receive daily?	To determine potential of winery	Main objective	Understanding winery potential
8. How many visitors can your winery take at one go?	To determine potential of winery	Main objective and sub objective 1 & 2	Understanding winery potential

9. Do you have the possibility of offering accommodation on site? Or nearby?	To determine possibility of accommodation Main objective and sub	Main objective 2 & 3	The development of wine tourism regions (Salvatore et al., 2018)
10. Do you offer restaurant services on site?	To determine possibility of organising events on site	Main objective and sub objective 2 & 3	The more services available on site will increase revenue for the winery (Quadri-Felitti. D: Fiore, M.A. 2016)
11. Do you create wine and food pairing events on site?	To determine possibility of organising events on site	Main objective and sub objective 2 & 3	Wine tourists look for gastronomic experiences (Yu-Chin et al., 2019)
12. Would you be interested in investing in a restaurant or B&B services on site or nearby?	To determine possibility of growth potential	Main objective and sub objective 1,2 & 3	The more services available on site will increase revenue for the winery (Quadri-Felitti. D: Fiore, M.A. 2016)
13. Would you be interested in creating other events? Do you have any specific ideas?	To explore wine producers' intentions and novelty	Main objective and sub objective 1,2 & 3	The importance of exploring new possibilities (Crespi-Vallbona & Marscarilla-Miro', 2020)

14. Do you have a history of your winery? Does it include a museum and a collection of old vintages?	What authenticity will visitors explore	Main objective and sub objective 2 & 3	The importance of having unique experiences (Quintal et al., 2015)
15. Would you be interested in collaborating with other wineries to create a wine enthusiast hub?	Are wine producers willing to work together?	Main objective and sub objective 1 & 2	Possibilities of wineries merging to create events (Karagiannis & Metaxas, 2020)
16. Would you be willing to collaborate with state authorities to host wine fairs?	Exploring the possibility of approaching state authorities for aid	Main objective and sub objective 1,2 & 3	State and stakeholders collaborating (Dissart & Marcouiller, 2012)
17. How do visitors get to know about your winery?	To find out how the winery is marketed	Main objective and sub objective 1, 2 & 3	The importance of marketing and promotion (Cassar et al., 2018)
18. What is your marketing campaign?	To find out how the winery is marketed	Main objective and sub objective 1, 2 & 3	The importance of marketing and promotion (Sellito, Wenn &
19. Do you collaborate with travel agents, tourist agencies and tour operators?	To find out the marketing potential	Main objective and sub objective 1, 2 & 3	The importance of marketing and promotion (Cassar et al., 2018)

<u>Questionnaire to authorities</u>			
1. Do you think there is a market for Wine Tourism in Malta?	To find out if tourism authorities see Malta as a location for wine tourism	Main objective 1	Understanding the reality of why Malta should be on the wine tourism map (Gomez et al., 2018)
2 How can local authorities assist in marketing and promoting this type of tourism?	To find out if authorities are ready to help	Sub objective 1, 2 & 3	It is of crucial importance that authorities help out (Alonso & Liu, 2012)
3. Is there a possibility for the government (MTA) to sponsor or subsidise local wineries to promote local wines by having stands in annual wine fairs such as Vinitaly, Prowein, or London Wine Fair which are fairs which showcase international wine to the wine industry?	To find out to what extent authorities are ready to help	Main objective and sub objective 1, 2 & 3	Understanding the importance of help from authorities to promote the region (Stravrinoudis, Tsartas & Chatzidakis, 2012)
4. What do you think we can do locally to attract this type of tourism?	To find out if authorities have further ideas to explore this industry	Main objective and sub objective 1, 2 & 3	Finding out further ideas

5. How can we encourage winery/vineyard owners to invest in agritourism	To find out if authorities have further ideas to explore this industry	Main objective and sub objective 1, 2 & 3	Finding out further ideas
6. The local hospitality industry will definitely benefit from this niche type of tourism. Would you have any suggestion which we can explore?	To find out more suggestions	Main objective and sub objective 1, 2 & 3	Wine tourism is beneficial to the hospitality industry (Alonso & Liu, 2012; UNWTO, 2017, Cunha et al., 2021)

8.3 Modified questions for Wine Enthusiasts' Survey

Kindly allow me to introduce myself.

My name is Michelle Muscat, and I am the owner of Ristorante La Vela in Pieta, Malta. At the moment I am reading an MBA in International Hospitality Management at the Malta Institute of Tourism Studies and Emirates Academy in Dubai. I am currently conducting research on Wine Tourism with the aim of exploring the possibilities of wine tourism on the Maltese Islands with contrasts and comparisons to global wine tourism. I kindly ask you to participate in this research which will enable me to get a better insight of your opinions on the subject whilst respecting anonymity. I sincerely thank you for your patience and contribution.

1. Kindly state age, 18-35, 36-50, 50-65, Over 65
2. Sex: M or F
3. Country of residence: Malta, Europe, Out of Europe
4. How often do you travel in a period of one year? 1-2, 3-5, over 5
5. Do you visit wineries when you travel? Yes or No
6. If your answer to question 5 was yes, how many wineries do you visit when travelling? Only 1, more than 1
7. Do you travel specifically for wine experiences? Yes or no
8. Have you visited Maltese /Gozitan wineries? Yes or no
9. If your answer to question 8 was no, are you interested in doing so? Yes or no
10. If your answer to question 8 was yes, which did you visit: Meridiana, Marsovin, Ta' Betta, Markus Divinus, Ta' Mena or other
11. Do you taste wines during your visit if they are available for free? Yes or no
12. If tastings are not free, will you pay for an organised tasting in the cellar? Yes or no

13. Do you buy wine from the cellar door? Yes or no
14. If yes, what is your average spend? Up to 10e, 10 to 50e, over 100
15. Do you take local wine back to your country? Yes or no
16. Do you have a private cellar at home? Yes or no
17. Would you be interested in enhancing it with some of our local prestigious wines?
Yes or no
18. Do you look for other wine events other than visiting of vineyards and cellars?
Yes or no
19. Do you think Malta & Gozo have potential to be placed on a Mediterranean wine
tourism map? Yes, No or maybe

These answers will give me a good insight into what visitors to wineries are after. It will help me understand and explain how different social groups and different cultures are affected by the events that surround them.

Thank you for your co operation

Cheers!

Michelle xx

8.4 Restaurant Owners' Survey Questions

1. What percentage of your customers are tourists?
2. How many wines do you offer on your wine list?
3. What is the percentage is of local wines on your wine list?
4. Do tourists opt for local wines?
5. If yes, is it because your staff would have suggested it?
6. When tourists choose a local wine, do you encourage it?
7. Do you encourage them to visit a local winery? If yes, which one?
8. Is your staff well trained and informed about local wines and our two indigenous grapes?
9. Are you prepared to pair local food with our local wines?
10. Is your mark-up on local and foreign wines equal?

8.5 Questionnaire for Diners

Dear Diner,

Kindly allow me to introduce myself.

My name is Michelle Muscat, and I am the owner of Ristorante La Vela. At the moment I am reading an MBA in International Hospitality Management at the Malta Institute of Tourism Studies and Emirates Academy in Dubai. I am currently conducting research on Wine Tourism with the aim of exploring the possibilities of wine tourism on the Maltese Islands with contrasts and comparisons to global wine tourism. I kindly ask you to participate in this research which will enable me to get a better insight of your opinions on the subject whilst respecting anonymity. I sincerely thank you for your patience and contribution.

1. Which is your country of residence?
2. Do you always drink wine with food at a restaurant?
3. What happens when you are presented with a wine list in a restaurant? Would you look for a simple local wine? Or do you read all the list and look for one of your favourite classics at the best price? Or do you prefer asking the sommelier for advice?
4. Have you tried local wines?
5. If yes, which was your favourite?
6. Have you visited a local winery? If yes, how would you rate it?
7. Have you considered buying local wine to take back home with you?

Thank you and cheers!

Michelle xx

8.6 Questionnaire for Wine Producers

1. Name of winery and number of years in operation
2. Name of the interviewee. Position and number of years in the same position
3. How many employees does the winery have? Kindly explain in which sections.
4. Are you and your employees multilingual?
5. Do you organise tours of your vineyard?
6. Are your doors always open to visitors, especially during weekends or is it by appointment only?
7. How many visitors do you get daily?
8. How many visitors can your winery take at one go?
9. Do you have the possibility of offering accommodation on-site? Or nearby?
10. Do you offer restaurant services on site?
11. Do you create wine and food pairing events on-site?
12. Would you be interested in investing in a restaurant or B&B services on-site or nearby?
13. Would you be interested in creating other events? Do you have any specific ideas?
14. Do you have a history of your winery? Does it include a museum and a collection of old vintages?
15. Would you be interested in collaborating with other wineries to create a wine enthusiast hub?

16. Would you be willing to collaborate with state authorities to host wine fairs?
17. How do visitors get to know about your winery?
18. What is your marketing campaign?
19. Do you collaborate with travel agents, tourist agencies, and tour operators?

8.7 Questionnaire for the Malta Tourism Authority

Wine tourism has gradually become a ‘niche’ market internationally, attracting visitors of various demographics to travel around the world with the principal aim of having wine experiences. Up until a few years ago wine tourism was only popular in Old World wine-producing countries such as Italy, France, and Spain etc. and also in New World countries such as New Zealand, Chile, USA, Australia and South Africa. Nowadays emerging wine-producing countries like Greece, Austria, Bulgaria, Macedonia etc. are managing to lure tourists by attracting them towards their growing wine industry. Maltese wineries have grown considerably over the past few years increasing in both quality and variety of local wines. For my Master’s thesis I am exploring the possibility of placing Malta on the wine tourism map and with your permission I would like your opinion on the subject

- Do you think that there is a market for Wine Tourism in Malta?
- How can local authorities assist in marketing and promoting this type of tourism?
- Is there a possibility for the government (MTA) to sponsor or subsidise local wineries to promote local wines by having stands in annual wine fairs such as Vinitaly, Prowein or London wine fair which are fairs which showcase international wine to the wine industry?
- What do you think we can do locally to attract this type of tourism?
- How can we encourage winery/ vineyard owners to invest in agritourism?
- The local hospitality industry will definitely benefit from this niche type of tourism. Would you have any suggestions which we can explore?

Whilst thanking you in advance for your time and cooperation in this matter, I promise that after my thesis is complete I will continue to work hard to promote our Island as best I can

Yours sincerely


Michelle


8.8 Consent Forms

Research Participation Consent Form

I, the undersigned, give my consent to Michelle Muscat, ID No 398289(M), to process the information provided by myself for the purposes of research and the completion of the Master's thesis as approved by ITS and in line with the applicable ITS rules and regulations and Maltese Legislation.


Name & Surname of participant


ID Number of participant


Signature of participant

31.07.22
Date

Research Participation Consent Form

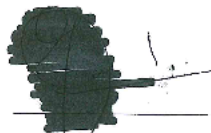
I, the undersigned, give my consent to Michelle Muscat, ID No 396268(M), to process the information provided by myself for the purposes of research and the completion of the Master's thesis as approved by ITS and in line with the applicable ITS rules and regulations and Maltese Legislation.


M-TA

Name & Surname of participant



ID Number of participant



Signature of participant

26/05/2022

Date

Research Participation Consent Form

I, the undersigned, give my consent to Michelle Muscat, ID No 396268(M), to process the information provided by myself for the purposes of research and the completion of the Master's thesis as approved by ITS and in line with the applicable ITS rules and regulations and Maltese Legislation.



Name & Surname of participant



ID Number of participant



Signature of participant

18.10.21

Date

Research Participation Consent Form

I, the undersigned, give my consent to Michelle Muscat, ID No 396258(M), to process the information provided by myself for the purposes of research and the completion of the Master's thesis as approved by ITS and in line with the applicable ITS rules and regulations and Maltese Legislation.



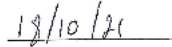
Name & Surname of participant



ID Number of participant



Signature of participant





Date

Research Participation Consent Form

I, the undersigned, give my consent to Michelle Muscat, ID No 396268(M), to process the information provided by myself for the purposes of research and the completion of the Master's thesis as approved by ITS and in line with the applicable ITS rules and regulations and Maltese Legislation.


Name & Surname of participant


ID Number of participant


Signature of participant


Date

Research Participation Consent Form

I, the undersigned, give my consent to Michelle Muscat, ID No 396268(M), to process the information provided by myself for the purposes of research and the completion of the Master's thesis as approved by ITS and in line with the applicable ITS rules and regulations and Maltese Legislation.



Name & Surname of participant



ID Number of participant




Signature of participant


4th July 2022


Date

Research Participation Consent Form

I, the undersigned, give my consent to Michelle Muscat, ID No 396268(M), to process the information provided by myself for the purposes of research and the completion of the Master's thesis as approved by ITS and in line with the applicable ITS rules and regulations and Maltese Legislation.


Name & Surname of participant


ID Number of participant


Signature of participant

22nd July 2022

Date

Research Participation Consent Form

I, the undersigned, give my consent to Michelle Muscat, ID No 396268(M), to process the information provided by myself for the purposes of research and the completion of the Master's thesis as approved by ITS and in line with the applicable ITS rules and regulations and Maltese Legislation.

[Redacted]

Name & Surname of participant

[Redacted]

ID Number of participant

[Redacted]

Signature of participant

30/06/2022

Date

8.9 Detailed Replies from the Chairperson of the Malta Tourism Authority

1. Do you think that there is a market for Wine Tourism in Malta?

Gastronomy or culinary tourism, which encompasses food and wine, is a central component of the destination tourism product and has a major role in the way tourists experience a destination. Gastronomic tourism is defined as visitors who are motivated to travel to a destination by local food, wines and drink. It also has a strong bearing on repeat business. As such, gastronomic tourism has gained an enormous potential in recent years. Food and wine represent centuries of traditions and cultural activities and people are willing to travel to a destination to sample and experience authentic food and wine. Food and wine tourism is big in Europe and continues to grow. Malta produces some excellent wines, which is limited in quantitative terms but not in quality. Over the years, we have seen the development of facilities that promote winemaking in Malta, in addition to various wine bars that have opened in town and villages all over the island. Many of these facilities reflect indigenous characteristics and this all helped to improve the potential of wine tourism, as a small niche market. However, we must be realistic, as we cannot compete with established destinations like those in the north of Italy and French regions.

2. How can local authorities assist in marketing and promoting this type of tourism?

One of MTA's main objectives, is to successfully market and promote the Maltese islands internationally. MTA regularly promotes Malta's gastronomic attributes in various international markets; it also supports the promotion of local gastronomic events in different manners. Various locally produced food and wine activities are sold during the organised tours or activities and MTA can help towards the clustering of "local food and wine" activities that offer traditional gastronomic experiences. These will raise Malta's appeal, particularly with segments that are motivated by gastronomic (including wine) experiences. However there needs to be in place a process which certifies authenticity of our local products.

3. Is there a possibility for the government (MTA) to sponsor or subsidise local wineries to promote local wines by having stands in annual wine fairs such as Vinitaly, Prowein or London wine fair which are fairs which showcase international wine to the wine industry?

As already stated, MTA's main role is to market the Maltese islands. However, it can also support initiatives to ensure that food and wine products/activities and events are well packaged and presented with visitors to Malta. MTA can also help in strategically planned activities, especially those that are organised during the lean periods.

Activities such as grape picking and wine making and other similar events that combine local food and wine traditions, will go down well with visitors that are inclined to choose a destination over another because of cultural activities.

4. What do you think we can do locally to attract this type of tourism?

Closer cooperation between all stakeholders is key. Tourism stakeholders, whether hotels, travel agents, DMC's or excursion providers and indeed MTA, together with other government agencies, should work together with wine producers, hospitality associations, Local Councils and others, in an effort to organise activities, such as wine and food festivals, which have a strong appeal for tourists and locals alike, especially in the winter and off-season months. Restaurants and bars should promote local wines more prominently with visitors, whilst hotels and accommodation providers can help to increase awareness of local wines with our visitors. Another idea that has been discussed over the years, is for Malta to have a wine museum to promote the history of winemaking in Malta.

5. How can we encourage winery/ vineyard owners to invest in agritourism?

Agritourism, has a very wide meaning, and it is important that looks at those segments that are best suited for a rural experience in the Maltese islands, after taking in consideration the circumstances of our islands and the limitations we have on this type of product offer. Wine making is a successful story in Malta and the successful development in this sector should be applauded. Investment in agritourism needs to be supported with integrated policies and management structures in order that tourism activity is efficiently managed to ensure that the rural environment of our islands is well preserved.

6. The local hospitality industry will benefit from this niche type of tourism. Would you have any suggestions which we can explore?

Wine tourism can become a valuable niche market that enhances the Malta offer, especially when combined with local food. This is a market that should not be associated with high volume visitors, and one should look at smaller numbers. However, this segment can attract a profile of travellers that register a better than average spend and better than average yield. Wine tourism can help to promote and preserve local cultural traditions, which can be an important competitor differentiator in the market place.

8.10 Sample Itinerary for Wine Tourism Conference

The Mediterranean Wine Tourism Conference to be held at the Mediterranean Conference Centre in 2023.

Itinerary for 3 day conference:

Date: 6th- 8th March 2023

Venue: Mediterranean Conference Centre in Valletta.

The Venue shortlisted is the magnificent 16th-Century building – The Mediterranean Conference Centre located in Valletta. The sheer size, scale, and beauty and its conversion into a modern conference centre in 1979 make the MCC an impressive architectural feat. The MCC is immersed in Maltese history with magnificent views of the Grand Harbour. Indeed, its innovative restoration won the international acclaim with the coveted 'Europa Nostra' award for successfully blending the fine old architecture with modern technology. With Maltese wine production dating back over two thousand years to the time of the Phoenicians, we immediately felt this was a befitting venue to host the 'The Malta Wine Tourism Conference 2023', where attendees could enjoy a marriage of culture and wine indulgence. The Mediterranean Conference Centre is one of Europe's largest conference centres within a historical setting. It is a rare example of heritage building functioning to the demands of the 21st Century and is sure to impress attendees.

To gain access, pre-registration is required.

Upon arrival, attendees will be provided with an event welcome pack.

Itinerary:

Day 1: Monday 6th March 2023

10.00-10.30: Attendees gather in Sacra Infermeria Hall. Half an hour of networking and getting to know each other. As a start off to the 3 day conference attendees mix and mingle whilst enjoying a taste of Malta's only 'bubbly' Brut as a welcome drink, created entirely using the 'Methode Traditionnelle' Chardonnay grapes.

10.30-10.45: Attendees are kindly requested to find their seats in the Republic Hall for the start of the Conference.

10.45-11.15: Welcome speeches by Minister for Tourism and Minister for Agriculture.

11.15-12.30: Malta – 'A Grape Escape' – An introductory discussion about Malta becoming an emerging wine tourism destination. What does Malta have to offer?

The panel will include representatives from:

- Malta Tourism Authority

- Gozo Tourism Authority
- FATTA – Federated Association of Travel and Tourism Agents
- Malta Union of Tourist Guides

12.30-13.30: Lunch break – attendees are free to have a light lunch at the Republic Hall or anywhere in the vicinity of the location

13.30-14.15: A focus on promoting what is indigenous to our islands: Guest speaker - Wine educator at ITS

14.15-15.00: The importance of Media in Wine Tourism: Guest speaker– Wine educator at Malta Bartending Academy

15.00-15.15: Coffee break and attendees are to proceed to the breakout rooms according to their interests

15.15-17.00: Breakout rooms:

Michel'Angelo Grima Hall – MTA and GTA representatives discussing 'Enhancing the Visitor Experience'

Vassalli Hall – Harnessing data and use of modern technologies in wine tourism

David Bruce Hall – Airmalta and Malta International Airport Representatives discussing 'Connectivity - Ensuring a healthy airline route network'

La Cassiere Hall – Addressing the Sicilian Market

Girolamo Cassar Hall – MHRA representatives discussing possible packages with potential tour operators

Perellos Suite – Transport companies representatives discussing transport packages for wine route groups

Day 2: Tuesday 7th March 2023

10.00-10.30: Networking for half an hour over coffee and proceed to theatre in Republic Hall

10.45-12.30: Panel discussion about 'Gastrodiplomacy', a brand new term that defines how food & wine can be used to build or improve destination image, promote their cultures, globalize their food industries, attract international tourists, and build relations with international wine and food lovers.

The panel will be made up from representatives of:

- The Association of Catering Establishments
- The Malta Hotels and Restaurants Association
- The Institute of Tourism Studies
- The Chamber of Commerce
- The Ghammieri Wine Advisory Board

12.30 -13.30: Lunch break – attendees are free to have a light lunch at the Republic Hall or anywhere in the vicinity of the location

13.30-15.00: Introducing Maltese and Gozitan wine producers – What is their foresight on local wine tourism.

Guest speakers: Wine Producers

15.00-15.15: Coffee break and attendees are to proceed to the breakout rooms according to their interests

15.15-17.00: Breakout rooms:

Each Breakout room will be assigned to a specific wine producer. These workshops are intended for marketing and promotion of individual wineries.

Both evenings are free however attendees are recommend to visit restaurants which offer a substantial amount of local wines.

Day 3: Wednesday 8th March 2023

10.00-17.00: Republic Hall will be transformed into an exhibition and workshop area where attendees will be free to meet and network with all exhibitors. It is recommended that appointments are set beforehand to eliminate queuing at particular stands. A list of all exhibitors(which will include wineries, accommodation on wineries, hotels, car hire, restaurants, enotecas, travel agents, tour operators, private tourist guides etc.) will be sent to all paid up attendees with relevant contact details.

17.00-19.00: Free time

Optional closing off of conference from 19.30 onwards

19.30: Welcome drink at Sacra Infermeria Hall

20.00-24.00: Seated for Gala dinner at La Vallette Hall which will include a 7 course meal using local ingredients, with each course paired with a local wine. During the dinner, the wine producers will be present to discuss the pairing of their wines with the selected menu. The Conference will come to an end with a closing speech from the Minister of Tourism.

8.11 Sample Itinerary for Tours and Packages

Itineraries for ‘Day tours’ or ‘Packages’ for Wine Tourists

Day	Tour	Itinerary
	10.00:	Pick up from Meeting place in Sliema - Drive towards Siggiewi amongst various vineyards
	11.00 -12.00:	Tour of vineyards and cellars of Winery 1 including a didactical wine tasting.
	12.15:	Drive towards Dingli:
	12.30- 15.00:	Tour of vineyards and cellars at Winery 2 where a light lunch will be served in the vineyards.
	15.15:	Drive towards Rabat
	15.30-16.30:	Visit and tour of Winery 3. A didactical wine tasting will be held of the wines produced in this winery.
	16.30-18.00:	Free time to wander around Rabat and the medieval city of Mdina
	18.15 -22.00:	
		Summer time: Drive towards Sliema where a local wine pairing dinner will be served on board a boat with live folklore music whilst enjoying sunset.
		Winter time: The meal will be served in a typical local restaurant with live folklore music.

Itinerary for a full ‘3 day Wine Route Package’:

Day 1

10.00:	Pick up from Sliema meeting point - Drive towards Siggiewi amongst various vineyards
11.00 -12.00:	Tour of vineyards and cellars of Winery 1 including a didactical wine tasting.
12.15:	Drive towards Dingli
12.30- 15.00:	Tour of vineyards and cellars at Winery 2 where a light lunch will be served in the vineyards.
15.15:	Drive towards Rabat
15.30-16.30:	Visit and tour of Winery 3. A didactical tasting will also be held in this winery.
16.30-18.00:	Free time to wander around Rabat and the medieval city of Mdina

18.15 -22.00: Summer time: Drive towards Sliema where a local wine pairing dinner will be served on board a boat with live folklore music whilst enjoying sunset.

Winter time: The meal will be served in a typical local restaurant with live folklore music.

Day 2

10.00: Pick up from Sliema meeting point - Drive to Cirkewwa to take the ferry to Gozo

11.30: Arrival in Mgarr Gozo and drive towards Victoria, the capital city of Gozo.

12.00-14.00: Proceed to a local eatery to have a light lunch including the local 'Fтира' (which is now local heritage). Also served are other local specialties such as fresh Gozitan sheep cheese, olives, pickled onions, pasta omelette, etc. This meal will be accompanied by Gozitan wines.

14.15-17.00: Free time to wander along the street of Victoria

17.15-18.30: Drive towards Winery 4. Tour of vineyards and cellars including wine tasting.

18.45 – 21.30: Tour of Winery 5. This will include dinner served in the vineyard during sunset including wine pairing.

22.00: Ferry back to Cirkewwa Malta and drive towards drop off point in Sliema.

Day 3:

10.00: Pick up at Sliema meeting point and drive towards winery 6, in the south Malta.

11.00-13.00: A detailed tour of one of the oldest wineries in Malta, producing over two million bottles per year. A didactical tasting with local nibbles will be held in the huge cellar and also a visit to the small museum in the same building.

13.15: Proceed to the fishing village of Marsaxlokk

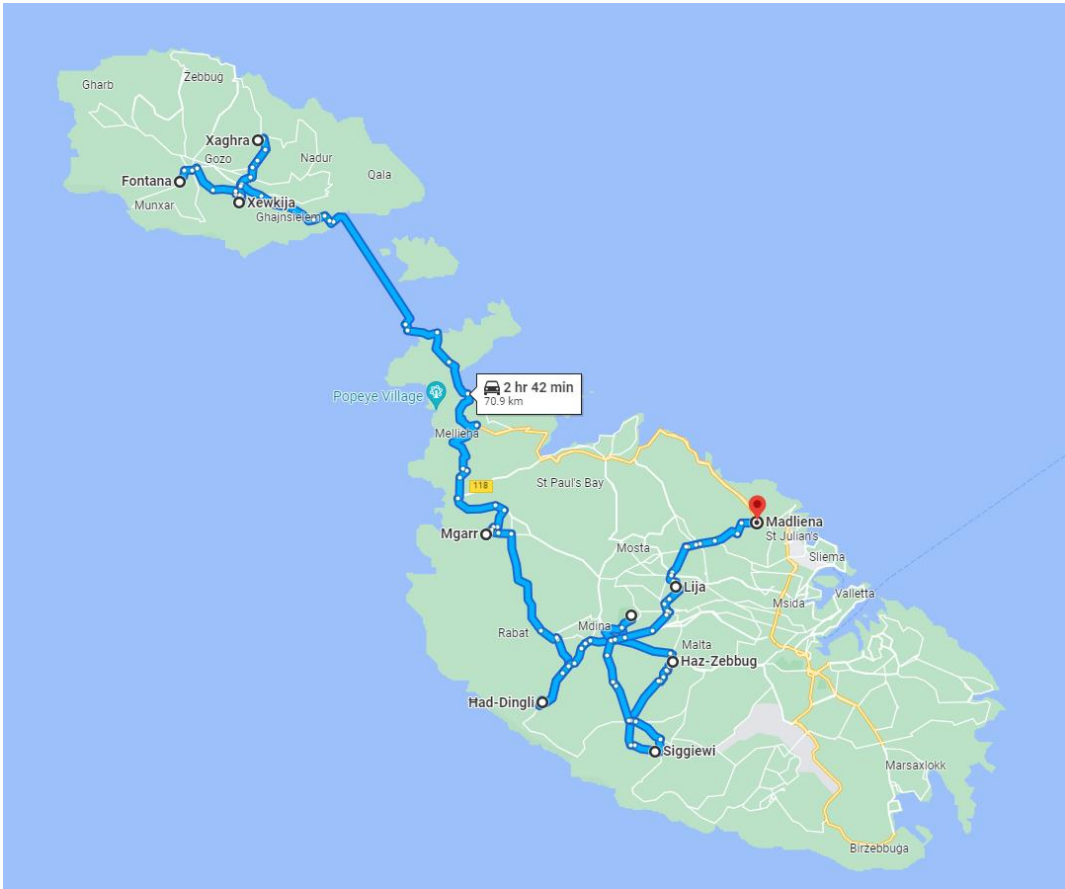
13.30-15.00: Lunch at one of the typical restaurants in Marsaxlokk serving authentic Maltese food paired with wines from Winery 6.

15.15-16.45: Free time to walk along the sea in this pretty village watching local fisherman.

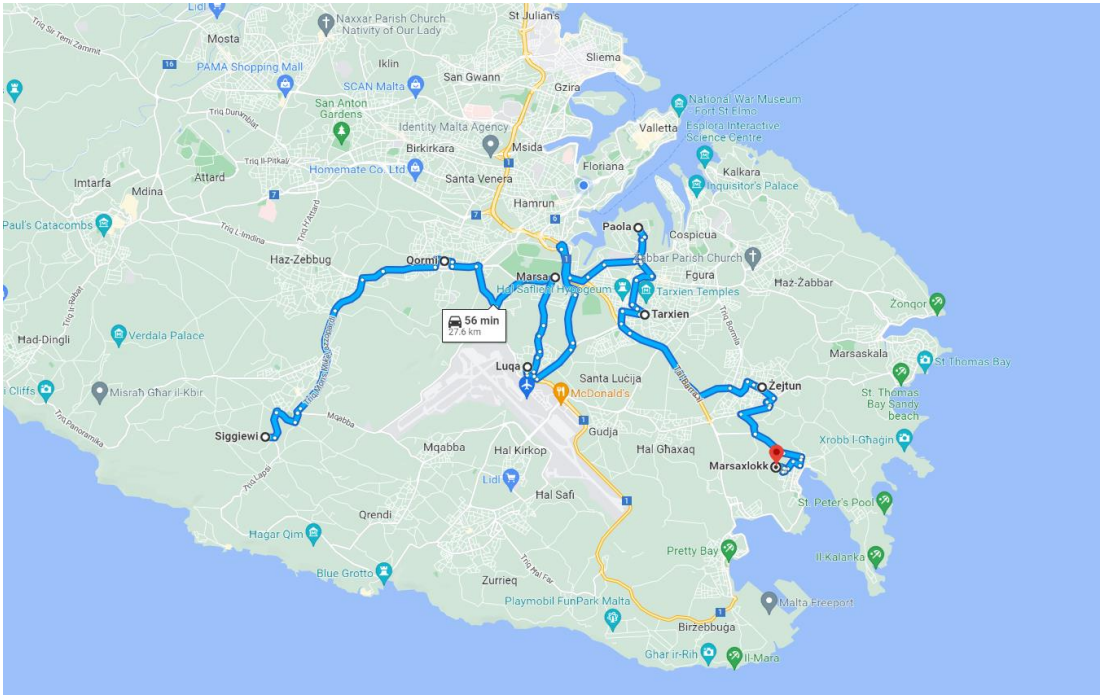
17.00-21.30: Visit to the vineyards of Winery 6. A tour of the vineyards together with wine tasting amongst the vines. Depending on the season, visitor interaction will take place. Visitors will be invited to take part in either pruning, or harvesting. Dinner will also be served on the vineyard with paired wines.

22.00: Proceed towards drop off point in Sliema.

8.12 Suggested Wine Route



North Wine Route



South Wine Route