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Articles and essays

Visitation Practices in the Wineries of Serra Gaúcha: winemaking and tourism in South Brazil

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Abstract

Wine tourism in Brazil has grown rapidly since its introduction as a regular activity in the early 1990s. The leading winemaking and wine tourism region in the country is *Serra Gaúcha*, in the state of Rio Grande do Sul. This paper aims to describe the practices of tourism visitation to the wineries of *Serra Gaúcha*, with particular attention to issues related to the history of visitation, receptive structures and organization, visitation routes, complementary products and services, communication and promotion, and amount and profile of winery visitors. These objectives have been achieved through literature review, documental research and semi-structured interviews with managers of 14 wineries that receive visitors. The paper reveals the success of the wine tourism in *Serra Gaúcha* and details how this outcome has been achieved. The symbiosis between tourism and winemaking is indicated as one of the main contributing factors.

Keywords: wine tourism, wine, wineries, Serra Gaúcha, Brazil

Resumo

Práticas de visitação nas vinícolas da Serra Gaúcha: unindo vitivinicultura e turismo no sul do Brasil

No Brasil, o enoturismo surgiu como atividade regular a partir da década de 1990 e desde então tem crescido rapidamente. A principal região produtora de vinho e receptora de enoturistas no país é a Serra Gaúcha, no Rio Grande do Sul. Este artigo objetiva descrever as práticas de visitação turística das vinícolas da Serra Gaúcha com particular atenção em questões relacionadas ao histórico da visitação, à estrutura e organização receptiva, aos roteiros de visitação, aos produtos e serviços complementares, à comunicação e promoção, e à quantidade e perfil dos visitantes das vinícolas. Tais objetivos foram alcançados por meio de uma revisão bibliográfica, pesquisa documental e realização de entrevistas semiestruturadas com gestores de vinícolas que recebem visitantes, totalizando consultas a 14 propriedades. O trabalho revela o sucesso da atividade

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enoturística na Serra Gaúcha e detalhes sobre como tais resultados são alcançados. A simbiose entre turismo e a vitivinicultura é apontada como um dos principais fatores.
Palavras-chave: enoturismo, vinho, vinícolas, Serra Gaúcha, Brasil

Resumen

Prácticas de visitación en las bodegas de Serra Gaúcha: vinicultura y turismo en el sur de Brasil

En Brasil el enoturismo se ha convertido en una actividad regular en la década de 1990 y desde entonces ha crecido rápidamente. La principal región productora de vino y destino de enoturistas en el país es la Serra Gaúcha en Rio Grande do Sul. Este artículo tiene como objetivo describir las prácticas de visitación turística de bodegas en Serra Gaúcha, con especial atención a los temas relacionados con la historia de la visitación, la estructura y la organización de receptiva, los itinerarios de visita, los productos y servicios complementarios, la comunicación y la promoción, y la cantidad y perfil de los visitantes a las bodegas. Estos objetivos se logran a través de una revisión de la literatura, investigación documental y realización de entrevistas semi-estructuradas con los gerentes de 14 bodegas que reciben a los visitantes. El trabajo revela el éxito de la actividad enoturística en Serra Gaúcha y detalles sobre cómo se logran esos resultados. La simbiosis entre el turismo y la industria del vino es visto como un factor importante para tanto.
Palabras clave: enoturismo, vino, bodegas, Serra Gaúcha, Brasil

INTRODUCTION

The wine roots in Western civilization are age-old and evident. In many countries, wine is an integral part of food, culture, economy and society. The interest in this beverage motivates a number of activities, including shopping, studies, events, and traveling, among others. The relevance of wine as source of motivation for tourism travels, especially wine tourism, has been broadly noticed and discussed (Carlsen & Charters, 2006; Croce & Perri, 2010; Hall, 2003; Hall, Sharples, Cambourne, & Macionis, 2000; Peris-Ortiz, Rama, & Rueda-Armengot, 2015).

Wine tourism is already considered a traditional activity in some European countries, such as France, Italy, Spain and Portugal. In the last past decades, this activity reached new world regions and started being developed in several countries of European colonization, as the United States, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Argentina and Brazil. In Brazilian lands, wine tourism appeared as regular activity from the 1990s, and it has grown rapidly since then; *Serra Gaúcha*, in Rio Grande do Sul, is the leading winemaking and wine tourism region in the country.

The reality and practices of wine tourism are different around the world: structures, activities and perspectives present variations coming both from the adjustment of the segment to local conditions and from the innovations that offer gains of quality and efficiency to companies and consumers. Considered the importance of *Serra Gaúcha* to Brazilian winemaking and wine tourism, the systematic description of reality and practices that exist in this region can be understood as the main Brazilian contribution to the panorama of world experiences in this field.

Despite its relevance, national literature on this theme is limited and scattered. The few existing studies on wine tourism at *Serra Gaúcha* are essentially about historical, cultural and organizational aspects (Costa, 2010; Lavandoski, Tonini, & Barretto, 2012; Marques & Santos, 2012; Silva, 2008; Tonini, 2007; Tonini & Lavandoski, 2011; Valduga, 2007, 2012; Valduga & Valduga, 2016; Zanini, 2007; Zanini & Rocha, 2010). Nevertheless, the availability of systematic descriptions of practices of visitations to the wineries of *Serra Gaúcha* is very restricted.

In order to fill this gap, this study aimed to describe the practices of tourism visitation to the wineries of *Serra Gaúcha*. The specific objectives of this paper were to describe issues related to the history of visitation, receptive structure and organization, visitation routes, complementary products and services, communication and promotion, and amount and profile of winery visitors. In order to achieve these objectives, one performed documental research on the reality of wine tourism of the region, bibliographic research to discuss concepts related to wine tourism and identify works focused on the region studied, as well as semi-structured interviews with managers of 14 wineries that offer wine tourism in the region.

WINE TOURISM: CONCEPTS AND PRINCIPLES

For Hall, Johnson, et al. (2000), visitations to wine producing regions were already part of the Gran Tours, trips of formative character directed to youths coming from rich European families, common between the 17th Century and 19th Century. According to Dallanhol and Tonini (2012), the development of European wine tourism routes goes back the early 20th Century, with initiatives in Germany, France and Italy.

There are different concepts of wine tourism in academic literature. In one very comprehensive definition, Beames (2003) establishes that wine tourism is intrinsically related to every experience that the visitor lives in the context of wine production. In turn, Hall, Johnson, et al. (2000, p. 3) define wine tourism as "[...] visitation to vineyards, wineries, wine festivals and wine shows for which grape, wine tasting and/or experiencing the attributions of a grape wine region are the prime motivating factor for visitors". Seeking to construct a more comprehensive conception, Valduga (2007, p. 16) characterizes wine tourism as:

> A segment of the tourism phenomenon that presupposes the displacement of people, motivated by the organoleptic properties and by the whole context of wine tasting and elaboration, as well as by the appreciation of traditions, culture, gastronomy, landscapes and typicalities of the producing regions. It is a phenomenon endowed with subjectivity, in which the main substance is the encounter with those who produce grapes and wines.

Therefore, it is a manner of complex consumption of the landscape and cultural context, since, as Gimenes (2012, p. 13) observes, "wine tourism articulates a number of attractants [...] whether in terms of the local natural landscape, or in terms of the setting created for production of wine and reception of tourists, or

by means of the flavors tasted, created from the location of production,". Thus, it might involve different motivations.

These motivations may not be related directly to the consumption of wine, but rather oriented to the grapevine landscape and rural atmosphere provided by the producing regions. For instance, in a study on the Australian district of Canberra, Mitchell, Hall and McIntosh (2000) identified that besides the motivations associated directly to the beverage consumption, the participation in festivals and related events, entertainment and socialization with friends, encounter with the producer and the possibility to enjoy the production regions were also relevant.

It is in this perspective that Dallanhol and Tonini (2012, p. 39) indicate that wine tourism develops from different activities that aim at allowing the tourist "[...] to make the visitation to the wineries and learn about the process of wine elaboration; taste the products; go shopping at a retail store; know the local gastronomy and lodge at the production region." Thus, as Tonini (2007) points out, wine tourism can be characterized as a system that is influenced both by visitor's individual aspects and by the offer as a whole. Therefore, the study on wine tourism demand should consider characteristics as cultural references and personal perceptions, a union between previous experience, information and preferences.

Visitors at a same wine tourism attractant may have, besides different interests, different levels of knowledge of wine. Discussing the visitors' profiles, and from a research performed in Australia, Charters and Ali-Knight (2002), proposed four categories of wine tourists:

- Wine lover: Visitor who has already a good knowledge of the beverage, and has familiarity with the theme from books, television programs, courses, previous tastings and visitations to other producing regions. The motivation is clearly focused on learning about wine and on the tasting offered, as well as on the enjoyment of the lifestyle associated with wine. This visitor tends to be less interested in secondary activities offered by wineries.

- Connoisseurs: Wine lovers sub-category, and the difference is that the visitors have an even more specific interest in the knowledge provided by the visit, especially in relation to aspects such as the production and tasting of the beverage, as well as aspects concerning the characteristics of the grapevines.

- Wine interested: Visitors who may have participated in tasting and visits to other wineries but have little previous knowledge of wine and its universe. The motivation is less defined and they seem to have interest mainly in knowing how to taste wine, besides going shopping, but present little interest in harmonizing food with wine.

- Wine Novices: Visitors who have little previous knowledge of wine and its universe and are more likely to participate in general visits, showing little specific interest in the process of wine production or in the perception of the beverage organoleptic characteristics. They have interest in a more active touring in the winery instead of simply tasting wine at the establishment door.

In addition to these categories, Dallanhol and Tonini (2012) emphasize the typology proposed by Johnson (1998), which identifies two main wine tourists' profiles: the specific tourist, who makes the visitations for pleasure, but whose central motivation is the specific interest in some grape or wine; and the generic tourist, who seeks leisure and relaxation in a wine tourism context. Part of the differentiation and segmentation of wine tourists is due to purely individual issues. However, some differences are associated with demographic and social issues, such as age, income and family cycle of life (Dawson, Holmes, Jacobs, & Wade, 2011).

The study of Alonso, Fraser and Cohen (2007) investigated the differences between New Zealand's national and foreign winery visitors, identifying that domestic consumers have more knowledge of wine, while the foreign visitors had greater disposition to pay higher prices for wine bottles.

Wine tourism, in this sense, is a system that involves different subjects that might receive different benefits from its development. Gimenes (2012) mentions that the consumers have the opportunity to go through new and possibly remarkable sensory and cultural experiences in different landscapes, enjoying both the beverage and its possible harmonization with food and the wine culture in a broad meaning. This includes not only the tasting itself but also the possibility to accompany the different stages of the production cycle.

In the study of Mitchell and Hall (2003), it is verified that in New Zealand, for instance, the visitation to wineries are seasonal and influenced by wine provision and demand, with preference for the summer. This seasonality is due to aspects of the markets, such as country of origin, level of knowledge of wine, as well as the wine region in terms of tourism traffic. The seasonality brings as implications to the wineries issues related to the cash flow and budgetary planning. The impact depends on whether the winery is highly dependent on cellar door sales to tourists or whether it diversifies its distribution channel, being able to overcome the challenges of seasonality.

In turn, the receiving community is favored by the strengthening of the instances of winemaking production chain and by the increase of investments directed to visitors attendance, such as restaurants, hosting services and commerce in general, which ends up stimulating other local economy spheres (Gimenes, 2012). There are also a number of benefits to the winemaking industry, with emphasis on the already mentioned strengthening of wine production chain as a whole, the opportunity of improvement of retail sales and the strengthening of the brand, which becomes more known and competitive. Besides, the presence of stores in the wineries is evidence of revenue complementation due to the commercialization of other beverages produced at the property, food products (as jams, cheese, confection), or even products associated with the wine universe, as glasses, corkscrews, service utensils, aprons and congeners. Many of these items are personalized and seen as memorabilia, also representing an important strategy of brand divulgation and fixation.

In a similar reasoning, Dallanhol and Tonini (2012) observe that the wine industry is supported by the tourism practice – and by the search for knowledge and rest associated with the wine universe – in order to obtain the advantage of direct sale, since the visitors have the opportunity to taste the beverage at the wineries and, in case they want, acquire it at the establishment, without remuneration to intermediaries. For the authors "the tourism practice in winery

regions is responsible for a substantial improvement in sales, helping the divulgation of the product and making winemakers to double efforts in search for quality" (Dallanhol & Tonini, 2012, p. 43).

This idea of direct sale can be complemented by Mitchell et al. (2000), who show studies in New Zealand indicating that almost 50% winery visitors repurchased some product between six and eight months after the visitation. The fidelity to the brand appeared among the visitors of certain middle and great-sized regions and wineries, as well as among domestic visitors and people with advanced knowledge of wine and who drink it more frequently.

After the presentation of the concept and importance of wine tourism, the next item approaches general aspects of the development of this activity in Brazil, highlighting the wine production and the organization of wine tourism in the country, with special attention to the region of *Serra Gaúcha*, locus of this work.

WINEMAKING AND WINE TOURISM IN BRAZIL

The production and consumption of wine in Brazil go back to the beginning of the Portuguese colonization. However, the national production has been dominated until recently by rustic wine types produced from American and hybrid grape varieties, such as Isabella, Bordeaux and Niagara. Almost all consumption of fine wine was supplied by imports but, in the early 1990s, with the opening of the country to the international market, the winemaking industry started a slow process of modernization due to foreign competition (Farina & Roloff, 2015). In this period, some international companies arrived to the country, such as Chandon and Almaden, and the producers started investing in European grapes, as Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Chardonnay. Moreover, the national knowledge of the process of wine production evolved a lot, both through the interchange with Argentine, Chilean and European producers and through courses related to enology.

Nowadays, Brazil has 83.7 thousand hectares of wine production and more than 1,100 wineries (IBRAVIN, 2016b). The country occupies the 19th position in the ranking of countries regarding the area cultivated with grapes (more than 82 thousand hectares), the 12th position in the production of grapes (1.5 million tons) and the 13th position in wine production (350 thousand tons). There was 100% growth of the national fine wine production from 2004 to 2014, going from 25 million to 50 million liters (Copello, 2015). Nowadays, the wine production occurs in 13 Brazilian states: Santa Catarina, Paraná, São Paulo, Minas Gerais, Espírito Santo, Rio de Janeiro, Goiás, Mato Grosso, Bahia, Pernambuco, Ceará, Maranhão and Rio Grande do Sul (Copello, 2015).

In the *Planalto Catarinense* (highlands of the state of Santa Catarina), there are around 150 wine labels elaborated in the region of São Joaquim as altitude fine wine, with emphasis on the production of Cabernet Sauvignon. In 2014, there was an area cultivated of 4,225 hectares of grapevines throughout the state, with production of 11 million liters of table wine and 12 million liters of fine wine. In the *Urussanga* (state of Santa Catarina) region, there is production of Goethe grape, a hybrid breed used in the production of juices and table wine, and registered with the National Institute of Industrial Property (INPI in the Portuguese acronym)

as Indication of Source. The region has 40 hectares and produces 750 thousand liters of Goethe wine (Copello, 2015; Grizzo, Burgos, & Milan, 2014).

In the Northeast, the region of the *Vale do São Francisco* (San Francisco Valley), between the states of Bahia and Pernambuco, has a recent wine production. However, the different terroir[2] allowed a promising production of Syrah, Touriga Nacional, Tempranillo and Petit Verdot grapes. The *Vale do São Francisco* has 370 hectares cultivated and produces 3.5 million liters of fine wine, of which 1.5 million liters are Moscato sparkling wine (Copello, 2015; Grizzo et al., 2014).

There are also new terroirs being studied and worked on in Brazil, with emphasis on the Southeast and the Midwest. In relation to the Southeast, wine types have recently arrived to the market, and there is still a lot to be discovered on this terroir. Regarding the Midwest, in the *Serra dos Pirineus* (Pirineus mountain range, state of Goiás) region, the first winemaking enterprises have been lately initiated (Copello, 2015; Grizzo et al., 2014).

The South is the main wine producing region in Brazil, with highlight to Rio Grande do Sul. With humid subtropical climate, the state is responsible for the production of about 90% bottles available on the national market. In the area, there are four wine producing regions: *Serra do Sudeste*, *Campos de Cima da Serra*, *Campanha Gaúcha* and *Serra Gaúcha*, briefly described in Chart 1:

Chart 1 – Wine producing regions in the state of Rio Grande do Sul

Region	Main characteristics
Serra do Sudeste	Presenting more stable climate, it is one of the new terroirs and has important wineries, as *Chandon*, *Casa Valduga* and *Lídio Carraro*. The terroir of the municipality of *Encruzilhada do Sul* is versatile and offers positive results for different grapes as Tempranillo, Touriga Nacional and Tannat. Nevertheless, the vinification occurs in Bento Gonçalves, state of Rio Grande do Sul (Farina & Roloff, 2015; Grizzo et al., 2014).
Campos de Cima da Serra	It has more severe winters and produces grapes in altitude, as Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc. It has a good end of maturation of late harvest grapes (Farina & Roloff, 2015; Grizzo et al., 2014).
Campanha Gaúcha	It presents more continental climate, favorable soil and propitious temperature to large-scale production. The grapes produced in the region of the *Campanha* are generally vinified in *Serra Gaúcha*. In 2013, there was production of 5.23 million kilos of grapes and 3.86 million liters of fine wine; the table grapes produced 110 thousand liters of juice and derivatives. They produce Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Tannat, Pinot Noir, Tempranillo and Touriga Nacional, and the Tannat is very well adapted to the *Campanha*, where is largely produced (Copello, 2015; Grizzo et al., 2014).
Serra Gaúcha	With markedly European humid climate and acid soil, it stands out for the production of Chardonnay, Riesling Italic and Pinot Noir. In 2014, there was production of 581 million kilos of grapes, elaboration of 192 million liters of table wine and 34 million liters of fine wine, with great emphasis on the sparkling wine (in 2013, 15.8 million sparkling wine were produced)(Copello, 2015; Grizzo et al., 2014).

Source – Author's elaboration

2. Terroir: The term refers to the interaction between natural environment and human factors, including aspects of natural environment (climate, soil, relief) and also the human factors of production - including varieties choice, agronomic aspects and aspects of elaboration of products (TONIETTO, 2007).

Serra Gaúcha is considered the epicenter of the Brazilian wine production, besides being the most traditional producing region. As presented in Figure 1, it is composed of 47 municipalities, having suffered strong influence from Italian immigration between the second half of the 19th Century and first half of 20th Century. In addition, it has received nuclei of German and Polish colonization. The region has five registers of Geographical Indication with INPI: *Vale dos Vinhedos, Pinto Bandeira, Monte Belo do Sul, Altos Montes (Flores da Cunha)* and *Farroupilha.* All these regions have Indication of Source, and the *Vale dos Vinhedos* has Designation of Origin as well. Besides, the region has a Collective Brand registered with INPI, the Consortium of Producers of Sparkling Wine from Garibaldi (CPEG in the Portuguese acronym).

Figure 1 – Simplified map of winemaking regions of Rio Grande do Sul and Santa Catarina

Source – IBRAVIN (2016a)

In 2014, *Serra Gaúcha* produced 581 million kilos of grapes, and 54 million kilos were of vitis vinifera (common) grapes, used for production of fine wine and sparkling wine. *Serra Gaúcha* properties do not exceed 14 hectares; they are small farms whose heritage is the tradition from the ancestors, and present family labor. On average, the grapevines occupy 2.6 hectares/property and there are four dwellers/property, with around 57 thousand people working in the grapevines of the region (Copello, 2015; Grizzo et al., 2014).

Wine tourism in *Serra Gaúcha* is an important and consolidated activity (Chiattone & Chiattone, 2013), which, according to Valduga (2007), started in the 1970s and 1980s. The same author sustains that the development of the activity in the *Vale dos Vinhedos* (sub region of *Serra Gaúcha,* composed of the municipalities of Bento Gonçalves, Garibaldi and Monte Belo do Sul) occurred due to the beginning of commercialization of fine wine directly in wineries, such as *Vinícola Fontanive* (already extinct), and the current *Casa Valduga.* The association of the region with the wine universe was strengthened by events as *Fenachamp* (Sparkling Wine National Festival) in Garibaldi, *Fenavinho* (Wine Festival) in Bento Gonçalves, and *Festa da Uva* (Grape Festival) in Caxias do Sul, as well as by the articulation and creation of cooperatives and associations (Valduga & Valduga, 2016).

In institutional terms, Dallanhol and Tonini (2012) highlight the creation of the following: *Sindicato do Vinho* (Wine Union), in 1928 (aiming to congregate and defend the winemakers' interests, regulating offer and prices); *Sociedade Vinícola Riograndense Ltda* (Winery Society of Rio Grande do Sul), in 1929 (created as commercial body of the *Sindicato do Vinho,* aiming to improve the image and reputation of Rio Grande do Sul wine in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro)*; União Brasileira de Vitivicultura (*Brazilian Winemaking Union – UVIBRA in the Portuguese acronym)*,* in 1967 (founded to gather winemaking companies and sector entities in the country); and *Associação de Produtores de Vinho do Vale dos Vinhedos* (Wine Producers Association of Vale dos Vinhedos – APROVALE in the Portuguese acronym)*,* in 1995 (founded aiming to promote the sustainable development of the *Vale dos Vinhedos* by means of wine tourism*).*

It is observed that during several years, the producers of the region organized themselves from cooperatives, and the *modus operandi* in force included the delivery of the plantation, which was processed and transformed into wine. *Cooperativa Aurora* and *Cooperativa Garibaldi* appeared in 1931, and the history of the region merges with the history of its initiatives. *Cooperativa Garibaldi*, for instance, appeared as a solution to give destination to the grape produced and was the first cooperative to produce varietal wine (wine produced from a single grape variety) in Brazil, with *Granja União* historical label, and it has contributed to research advance and a more elaborate winemaking. This cooperative had its first exports event performed in 1948; in 1990, it created a tourism complex, and since the 2000s it works to demonstrate that is able not only to produce jug wine but also has technology and capacity to produce fine wine (Vinícola Garibaldi, 2017).

In the 1980s, due to the weakening of some cooperatives, a group of winemakers detached and sought to professionalize their production, directing their children to courses in winemaking, thus creating many of the family-owned wineries that still exist today (Dallanhol & Tonini, 2012). With the search for professionalization, these spaces used the development of the wine tourism as strategy of divulgation and revenue complementation.

It is indispensable to mention the importance of implementation and development of the Experience Economy project in seven municipalities of the region: Bento Gonçalves, Caxias do Sul, Cotiporã, Garibaldi, Nova Prata, Veranópolis and Vila Flores. This project was developed in 2006, in partnership with the following bodies: Ministry of Tourism, Brazilian Micro and Small Business Support Service (SEBRAE in the Portuguese Acronym), Union of Hotels, Restaurants, Barrooms and Similar Businesses (SHRBS in the Portuguese acronym) of Grape and Wine Region, and *Marca Brasil* Institute. With the creation of several tourism products associated with the wine universe, the objective was to assure the interaction between the tourist and the local nature and culture, making him/her to be character of the context visited (Brasil, 2015).

It is worth mentioning that, in addition to the wine, other elements of *Serra Gaúcha* are also responsible for attracting tourists. Actually, the region is an important Brazilian tourism destination, one of the leading exponents of tourism offer in Rio Grande do Sul, attending mainly the domestic demand of travelers. *Serra Gaúcha* offers mainly attractants related to cold climate and

nature, as cultural events, gastronomy (also with emphasis on products as chocolate, *café colonial*, barbecue and Italian and German food), cozy ambiances, trails, waterfalls and adventure activities, provided by municipalities as Nova Petrópolis, Gramado, Canela, Flores da Cunha, Nova Pádua and Bento Gonçalves. However, despite being highlighted, the wine tourism visitation to the wineries in *Serra Gaúcha* has not yet systematically been described in academic literature. Thus, the section below seeks to fill this gap.

VISITATION TO WINERIES IN SERRA GAÚCHA

The study of the practices of visitation to wineries in *Serra Gaúcha* was conducted from qualitative semi-structured interviews with the managers of establishments. The wineries were selected based on an attempt to conduct a census survey among those that are part of APROVALE, APROBELO, ASPEGUVIO, CPEG/AVIGA associations, which represent the winery collectivity of the municipalities of Bento Gonçalves, Monte Belo do Sul, Garibaldi (*Vale dos Vinhedos*) and Pinto Bandeira, in the state of Rio Grande do Sul.

However, the collection of data was limited by the collaboration of the managers of each establishment, as well as by the availability of time and resources for conducting the research. Seventeen wineries were found, representing 20% of the total number of establishments identified. Among these wineries, three did not provide service to tourists, and 14 of them were defined as final sample. Chart 2 presents the establishments that integrate the sample:

Chart 2 - Wineries researched and respective production regions

	Winery	Producing region
1	Don Laurindo	Vale dos Vinhedos
2	Lídio Carraro	Vale dos Vinhedos
3	Michele Carraro	Vale dos Vinhedos
4	Miolo	Vale dos Vinhedos
5	Peculiare	Vale dos Vinhedos
6	Pizzato	Vale dos Vinhedos
7	Cooperativa Aurora	Pinto Bandeira
8	Valmarino	Pinto Bandeira
9	Faé	Monte Belo do Sul
10	Fantin	Monte Belo do Sul
11	Cooperativa Garibaldi	Garibaldi
12	Vaccaro	Garibaldi
13	Battistello	Garibaldi
14	Milantino	Garibaldi

Source – Author's elaboration

Despite the restrictions, the sample was satisfactory for the description of wine tourism in the region due to the considerable degree of saturation of the

information obtained. The interviews were conducted in May 2015, with personal approach to the manager of each establishment during periods that varied from 15 to 60 minutes. Speeches were transcribed and their information was analyzed from summary charts, presented in the sequence of this article.

It is important to mention that, among the establishments researched, there are examples of different sizes and in distinct stages of tourism development. Chart 3 presents the general data of each winery researched:

Chart 3 – Productive chart of wineries researched

	Winery	Hectares of own grapevines	Amount of liters/year*	Amount of bottles/year*	Number of Employees*
1	Cooperativa Aurora	No information	38,000,000	50,540,000	1,100 families cooperated
2	Miolo	1,000	12,000,000	15,960,000	No information
3	Cooperativa Garibaldi	850	No information	No information	370
4	Vaccaro	30	300,000	400,000	6
5	Lídio Carraro	43	225,000	300,000	33
6	Valmarino	16	200,000	266,000	11
7	Pizzato	45	173,000	230,000	40
8	Don Laurindo	15	90,000	120,000	8
9	Milantino	No information	60,000	80,000	Family itself
10	Peculiare	6	15,000	20,000	4
11	Faé	0	6,000	8,000	3
12	Fantin	No information	1,500	2,000	3
13	Battistello	11	No information	No information	4
14	Michele Carraro	No information	No information	No information	Family itself

Source – Author's elaboration

Cooperativa Aurora (*Pinto Bandeira*), *Miolo* (*Vale dos Vinhedos*) and *Cooperativa Garibaldi* (*Garibaldi*) are the largest producers and can be considered large-sized wineries, with an average of 25 million liters produced per year. *Vaccaro*, *Lídio Carraro*, *Valmarino*, *Pizzato* and *Don Laurindo* are considered medium-sized wineries, producing about 197,600 liters/year, and *Peculiare*, *Faé, Fantín*, *Battistello* and *Michelle Carraro* are small-sized wineries, producing 13,750 liters/year on average, with the mention that *Michelle Carraro* works on an almost artisanal scale. It should be noticed that *Cooperativa Aurora*, *Miolo* and *Cooperativa Garibaldi* wineries are also the ones with the largest distribution of their products, being known throughout Brazil. Moreover, *Cooperativa Aurora* exports its products to several countries, besides having ISO 9001 and ISO 14000 certifications (Vinícola Aurora, 2017).

All the wineries produce fine wine, and the most common grapes are Chardonnay, Merlot, Moscatel and Riesling Italico. Almost all wineries work with sparkling wines, especially those of Brut characteristic.

History of visitation

As already mentioned, the wineries studied are in different stages of tourism development. Chart 4 indicates the year of foundation of the wineries and the year of tourism activity start-up.

Chart 4 – Year of foundation and start-up of wine tourism activities of the wineries

	Winery	Region	Year of foundation	Year of wine tourism activity start-up
1	Coop. Aurora	Pinto Bandeira	1931	1967
2	Coop. Garibaldi	Garibaldi	1931	1990
3	Vaccaro	Garibaldi	1955	2001
4	Michele Carraro	Vale dos Vinhedos	1985	2003
5	Faé	Monte Belo do Sul	1988	2014
6	Miolo	Vale dos Vinhedos	1989	1992
7	Milantino	Garibaldi	1990	2015
8	Don Laurindo	Vale dos Vinhedos	1995	1995
9	Valmarino	Pinto Bandeira	1997	2001
10	Pizzato	Vale dos Vinhedos	1998	2000
11	Fantin	Monte Belo do Sul	2001	2001
12	Peculiare	Vale dos Vinhedos	2002	2003
13	Lídio Carraro	Vale dos Vinhedos	2004	2004
14	Battistello	Garibaldi	2005	2005

Source – Author's elaboration

Cooperativa Aurora and *Cooperativa Garibaldi* were inaugurated in the 1930s, being those that have been in operation for the longest time. Another large-sized winery, *Miolo*, began its activities in the 1980s, as well as *Michelle Carraro* and *Faé*. As Dallanhol and Tonini (2012) observe, the 1980s was a milestone for wine production professionalization in the region, and 11 out of the 14 wineries studied were founded from this period.

The three largest wineries – *Cooperativa Aurora*, *Cooperativa Garibaldi* and *Miolo* – are the precursors regarding service to tourists. The interviews revealed that wine tourism in the region did not happen in a manner notably planned and fomented by marketing actions, and these types of actions are conducted in a more reactive way. In some cases, as in relation to *Miolo* winery, the first tourist reception services were created by the owner with inspiration in the services offered in foreign wineries. These pioneers inspired the other wineries in the region, describing a typical technology transfer and overflow process. The support of public power and entities, such as SEBRAE, strengthened only after the tourism flow has already reached certain expressiveness. It is noticed that many of the younger wineries started their wine tourism activities simultaneously with their foundation, following other successful examples of *Serra Gaúcha,* and due to the understanding that the visitations strengthen the brand and promote the products to new consumers.

It should also be mentioned the importance of events such as the National Wine Festival (*Fenavinho*) that began in 1967 in Bento Gonçalves (which marked *Cooperativa Aurora* wine tourism activities start-up) and the *Fenachamp* (Sparkling Wine National Festival), which began in Garibaldi, in 1981. Initiatives such as the Experience Economy project, in addition to the *Rota dos Espumantes* (Sparkling Wine Route)[3], *Estrada do Sabor* (Taste Road)[4], both in Garibaldi, and *Caminhos da Pedra* (Stone Paths)[5] in Bento Gonçalves, are also important elements to attract tourists to the wineries.

Amount and profile of visitors

In 2013, the *Vale dos Vinhedos* received 283 thousand tourists, and 60 thousand visited the place in the first quarter of the year (Vale dos Vinhedos, 2017); however, most of the wineries studied, despite recognizing the importance of tourism to the winery operation, declared that they had no formal flow control of visitors, which makes the indication of any number impossible. The information collected can be seen in Chart 5.

Chart 5 – Amount of visitors

	Winery	Number of visitors/year
1	Miolo	200,000
2	Coop. Aurora	150,000
3	Coop. Garibaldi	75,000
4	Pizzato	6,000
5	Vaccaro	4,000
6	Valmarino	3,000
7	Battistello	No information
8	Don Laurindo	No information
9	Lídio Carraro	No information
10	Peculiare	No information
11	Faé	Very recent tourist receipt
12	Fantin	Very recent tourist receipt
13	Milantino	Very recent tourists receipt
14	Michele Carraro	There are no formal registers

Source – Author's elaboration

3. It is composed of 20 wineries, among them: *Battistello*, *Cooperativa Garibaldi*, *Don Laurindo*, *Milantino* and *Vaccaro*.
4. It involves families that have agriculture and agribusiness as main activities, and which receive tourists in their properties. Nowadays, the families that integrate the project are *Bett*ú (tasting and sale of special wine), *Jorge Mariani* (ecological agriculture, with tasting and sale of wine, bread, cheese and salami), *Odete Bettú Lazzari* (meals), *Olir Brugali* (production and trade of bread, cheese, salami, coppa, wine and juice), *Vaccaro* (meals, wine tasting, visitation to the winery).
5. It is composed of seven kilometers that encompass 28 stone-and-wood buildings, forming a scenario that refers to Northern Italy. There are mills, stores of pasta, loom, mate and sheep, besides cafeterias and churches.

As already expected, the largest wineries – and the best-known wineries in the country – are the ones that receive the largest number of visitors. The main markets are Rio Grande do Sul, Santa Catarina, Paraná, São Paulo and Minas Gerais. Nevertheless, the demand is not restricted to these states, since the wineries receive tourists from all over Brazil and from other countries as well. Regarding the international demand, Argentine tourists stand out. In general, the flow of tourists is concentrated mainly from December to February, when the grape harvest coincides with school holidays, and in July, month of school holidays and winter season.

Among the tourists that live farther away, a considerable portion does not have the region of the wineries as the main destination of their trips. Tourists traveling to Gramado (state of Rio Grande do Sul – RS) or Canela (RS) are very frequent, using these cities as a point of support for one-day excursions to visit the wineries. In these cases, the visitation is often organized through receptive tourism agencies of Gramado or Canela.

A large portion of tourists that visit large wineries travel by tour buses, including those departing from Gramado or Canela, and there are those who take road routes through different regions. Regarding smaller wineries, almost all tourists travel in private cars, characteristic that reflects both greater purchasing power and greater interest in the wine.

Much of the demand is made up of couples without children, but the presence of families with children is also frequent. For these cases, the wineries generally have a few attractions and specialized services so that children usually entertain themselves with the differentiated elements of the landscape, besides tasting grape juice.

In addition to tourists motivated essentially by leisure, there are also study groups, such as schools and universities. Among the groups from universities, those from the courses of Environmental Engineering, Chemical Engineering, Gastronomy, Tourism, Business Administration and Enology stand out.

Tourists generally have varied levels of prior knowledge of wine. If we consider the typology proposed by Charters and Ali-Knight (2002), the region receives from people who taste wine for the first time in life (wine novices) to great experts (wine connoisseurs). However, most visitors are people who drink wine on a daily basis, presenting some experience regarding the product, but without deep technical knowledge, which would characterize a predominance of the category 'wine interested'. If considered the typology proposed by Johnson (1998), which separates wine tourists between 'specialist' and 'generic', there is prevalence of the second category, although the first category is also attended.

It was identified that each person is used to visiting four or five wineries per day, which causes many establishments to diversify their activities offering or even select the information to be transmitted during the visitation, in order not to repeat data and tire the visitors.

Structure and receptive organization

The several wineries in the region that work directly with tourists have significant heterogeneous dimensions. The largest wineries – also those with

the greatest tradition in this service – *Cooperativa Aurora* and *Miolo*, have relatively large structures for reception, counting on attendance teams with a few dozen employees, as can be seen in Chart 3. These establishments usually have good accessibility and ability to receive some tourism buses at the same time, consequently being more sought out by groups of travel agencies and excursions. However, family groups and small groups of friends also visit these establishments.

Smaller wineries usually have a not so mass-market standard, serving mainly family and friend groups. The interviewee representatives from these wineries understand that the places are searched for those who already know the larger establishments, and seek a different, more 'authentic' and less touristy experience.

In some cases, the access is more difficult because of the distance from the city and the lack of road pavement, and the receptive structure is generally more informal. There are also cases in which the attendance to the tourists is conducted in the house of the owner of the establishment, as happens in *Faé* and *Fantín* wineries.

VISITATION ROUTES

The visitation programs of the wineries present some recurrent patterns, which allowed the definition of four categories, presented in Chart 6.

Chart 6 – Categories of visitation programs

Categories of the visitation programs	Main characteristics	Wineries
Basic	They offer information on wine production and tasting.	Battistelo, Michele Carraro, Milantino,
Regular	In addition to information and tasting, they offer visitation to certain areas of the wineries	Peculiare, Faé, Valmarino, Lídio Carraro, Don Laurindo, Fantín
Differentiated	They offer information on wine production and tasting, besides exclusive elements as differentiated tasting, grape harvest and other activities. Activities offered regularly by wineries with greater reception structure.	Pizzato, Vaccaro
Special	They offer special services upon specific groups' demands. The elements of this category may belong to any one of the three previous categories.	Miolo, Cooperativa Aurora, Cooperativa Garibaldi

Source – Author's elaboration

The basic program, which is usually the standard in small wineries, is that which includes only information offering and wine tasting. The service is very personalized, and the information provided usually varies according to the

client, themes related to history, wine production, local traditions, specific characteristics of the winery, and also according to the wineries already visited, taking into account the level of knowledge acquired and the fatigue of the tourists. The tasting usually includes one to three different types of wine. Most wineries offer grape juice to people that do not drink wine, including children.

The regular program, besides the information and the tasting, includes the visitation of certain areas of the winery, defined by each establishment. However, some of the common points are the vineyards, the old and the current wine production facilities, and the product storage areas. Information on grapevines, soil and climate is usually presented when there is visitation to the plantation. In the old production facilities, traditional equipment, such as presses, barrels, oak barrels, bottles and others, is usually presented. The present production facilities allow the tourist to visualize the equipment currently used, the movement of workers and supplies and the chemical and oenological analyzes of the wine in preparation. These regular programs are mostly offered by the wineries with larger structures. The traditional visitation route is usually pre-established, not providing for the possibility of changes to meet specific group demands.

The basic or regular programs at larger wineries cost around R$ 15.00 per person. The amount charged for visitation can usually be used partially or fully as credit reverted to purchases at the winery store. In smaller wineries, and with more flexible visitation programs, the service is often free. In these cases, as the flow of visitors is more selective, most tourists purchase products at the store of the property, so that the sales revenue replaces that of the ticket route.

Differentiated programs usually include some unique elements that are not part of the regular program. In many cases, the differential is in the visitation of a specific space that is not usually visited in that particular winery. There are also programs that offer different tastings that include greater number of wines. In these cases, tasting is usually done in more reserved and structured environments. There is also the seasonal program of grape harvest, in which tourists actively participate in agricultural work, obtaining greater contact and information about the process. These differentiated programs are regularly offered by wineries with larger receptive structure.

Finally, the special routes are organized on demand, including the visitation of closed points for common groups or detailed information about a given aspect of specific interest. In the latter case, a trained winemaker is assigned to explain the production process thoroughly. There are also cases of groups with an interest in other aspects of the wine business, such as administration, marketing, human resources and others.

Chart 7 identifies the main services offered by these wineries, which allows a better understanding of what may compound a visitation.

A differentiated service is offered by *Vaccaro* winery: the tourist makes a basket with colonial products and makes the meal in any space of the property, including the bucolic vineyards. The *Miolo* winery, in turn, receives food trucks on weekends. Two wineries, *Lídio Carraro* and *Pizzato*, offer food services for groups, but those are at restaurants of the region that provide meals in its dependencies with menu harmonized with wine from each property.

Four wineries have spaces for events, which are usually rented not only for parties, birthday parties and weddings, but also for dinners of associations, clubs and confraternities linked to wine. Cocktail and even buffet services are provided by some wineries outside their own spaces, such as *Pizzato* and *Lídio Carraro* wineries. In these cases, the winery serves lunch or dinner in hotels and other spaces during social and commercial events. The realization of tastings in trade fairs and commercial events is also a strategy for the usual divulgation of products.

Chart 7 – Services offered by wineries studied

Winery	Tasting	Production visitation	Grapevine visitation	Harvest	Food	Event	Courses	Store/ Products sale
Region: Vale dos Vinhedos								
Don Laurindo	■	■	■					■
Lídio Carraro	■	■	■		*			■
Michele Carraro	■							■
Miolo	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Peculiare	■	■						■
Pizzato	■	■	■	■	*			■
Region: Pinto Bandeira								
C. Aurora	■	■			■	■	■	■
Valmarino	■	■	■	■	■			■
Region: Monte Belo do Sul								
Faé	■							■
Fantin	■	■	■		■	■		■
Region: Garibaldi								
Battistello	■	■						■
C. Garibaldi	■	■			■	■	■	■
Milantino	■	■	■					■
Vaccaro	■	■	■		■			■

* Meals offered in partnership with restaurants of the region

Source: Author's elaboration

Three wineries offer courses of various types and specialties. In terms of duration, courses range from a few hours to a year and a half. Regarding the content, they range from introduction for laypeople oenology to complete programs, including specific courses on winemaking technical issues. The introductory courses usually include information about the history, the production process

and tasting of different types of wines. *Miolo* winery offers the longest program, where the visitor participates in the whole production process, including grape harvesting, press, process in tanks, bottling and labeling. This program includes three moments in the winery, so that the subscribers have to travel repeatedly to the destination. At the end of the course, the tourist-student takes home ten boxes of wine with his/her name on the label.

All wineries have products for sale, reinforcing what is exposed by Dallanhol and Tonini (2012), Gimenes (2012), Hall, Sharples et al. (2000) and Mitchell and Hall (2003) regarding revenue complementation for the winery. Some offer only the own wine, but most of them have structured stores with a wide range of products. Six categories of products for sale can be identified. The first set is naturally formed by the various types of wine produced at the winery. The second group includes products directly associated with wine consumption, such as corkscrews, sealing stoppers, wineglasses, wine pails, dosing accessories and cases for bottles and glasses. The third group refers to food products, such as juices, liqueurs, *grappa* (distilled from grapes), vinegars, jellies, jam, biscuits and cheese.

A fourth set consists of products that store and provide wine and related aspects knowledge, such as books and DVDs. The fifth group relates to the trade of various types of handicraft and souvenirs with symbols that refer to wine or that bear the winery brand. In this case, there are objects such as frames, clothes, key chains, calendars, games, children's toys, cosmetics and others. In this set are even some objects that make popular jokes with the wine theme, such as products that make pun on Tommy Hilfiger, American fashion brand, bringing in characteristic typeface the sentence "Tommy Vinho" ("Drink Wine").

The sixth set consists of objects that have no direct relationship to the main business of the winery. In this set, there are the products with symbols that refer to other local elements, such as mate gourds, postcards and souvenirs with the name of the city or state. This category also includes souvenirs of local production that do not bear any symbol that refers to this origin. Finally, some basic objects of tourists' needs are included in this set, such as water bottles, batteries, digital memory cards and others.

It is interesting to note that entrepreneurs consider products associated with wine and bearing the brand of the winery not only as a source of revenue but also as a way to strengthen their brands. In addition, it is important to highlight that relatives of workers and owners of the wineries are responsible for part of the production of items that are for sale, so that the revenue retention in the family unit is increased.

The majority of visitors at the wineries purchase items in their stores. The percentage of tourists who buy at least one item reaches 90% in some wineries. The total value of the purchase clearly varies according to the type of visitation route made, so that the more differentiated or special the itinerary, the greater the spending tends to be. In *Cooperativa Garibaldi*, for example, the average ticket value paid by tourists who take the differentiated route is around R$ 50.

Communication and promotion

The communication of wineries with the potential consumer market occurs through several ways. Advertising in traditional media is restricted essentially to large wineries, such as *Cooperativa Aurora*, *Cooperativa Garibaldi* and *Miolo* winery. Participation in industry fairs and formation of partnerships with tourism agencies, hotels, restaurants and other tourism establishments are widespread. Online communication media have also been widely used, including tools like Facebook, Twitter and various travel websites. All wineries have their own electronic pages but *Faé* and *Fantín* wineries, which are divulged by APROBELO. Only six out of the 12 wineries that have their own website divulge their wine tourism activities, and *Miolo* is that which provides more information, not only providing the timetable, but also values and activities that can be performed.

The wineries also count on great communication support from news and reporting channels.

Newspapers and magazines often divulge information spontaneously on the most diverse aspects related to wineries, including wine types, production processes, tourist reception services, courses, etc. A channel of communication that has gained great importance in recent years are the blogs specialized in wine and gastronomy, in addition to annual guides that present the award winning wines.

These awards are important for the visibility of the winery, and its wines and the distinctions are highlighted on the websites of *Cooperativa Aurora*, *Cooperativa Garibaldi*, *Miolo*, *Vaccaro, Lídio Carraro, Pizzato* and *Battistello* wineries. According to the interviewees, whenever a wine is awarded, its demand grows substantially and, consequently, the visitation to the winery increases. This type of award is also used as an argument for valuing wine to tourists during the visitation.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Despite the tradition in wine production, the emergence and development of enotourism in Rio Grande do Sul is recent. This short history reveals a rapid upward trajectory, in terms both of the number of visitors and of quality of services offered. This success is due to not only the entrepreneurial initiative of the producers but also to the quality of the wine produced, as well as its association with other tourism attractions in the region.

The corpus researched allows us to observe that the relationship between wine production and tourism in *Serra Gaúcha* is currently configured as symbiotic. By reproducing what is observed in literature, it is verified that tourism in the region depends intimately on wine, and that it is a fundamental element for the growth of this industry, contributing to the diffusion and strengthening of wineries' brands, as well as increasing the flow of production from the direct relationship with the consumer.

From the data collected, it was observed that wine tourism in the region in question has been developing from a heterogeneous set of properties, with respect to dimensions and characteristics of production and to the offering of visitation activities. In this sense, it is possible to find products destined to different visitors' profiles, considering different palates, consumption profiles,

sophistication patterns, and even different interests and previous knowledge related to the winemaking universe.

Large wineries are often sought out because they are famous and already consumed brands, in addition to the publicity provided by the investment in marketing and commercial agreements with agencies. Small wineries, despite the lack of publicity, are often sought out by visitors who have been in the region and/or by those who want to know and taste a more artisanal form of production. The visitation to smaller wineries also provides more unique experiences and knowledge, which differentiate the visitor from the tourist mass. This can bring elements that favor self-affirmation and social prominence of the visitors at wineries that are outside the traditional circuits.

Even considering this heterogeneity, the interviews allow us to identify that wine tourism was assumed as a relevant activity due to the already mentioned functions of commercialization of wine production and brand divulgation, and for the possibility of revenue complementation from the commercialization of other products associated with the brand or region. Thus, the data collected confirm the socioeconomic benefits of wine tourism, as pointed out by Hall, Johnson, et al. (2000), Gimenes (2012), Hall, Sharples, et al. (2000), Dallanhol and Tonini (2012) and Mitchell et al. (2000), regarding the stimulation of the wine production chain and local economy.

The revenue from the visitation fees does not seem to be an important financial element for the economy of the wineries, being largely surpassed by the revenue coming from the commercialization of wine and other products. Another aspect that deserves to be mentioned is the nature and characteristics of the different activities identified – visitations, tastings, harmonization, meals, courses, among others –, which seek to inform the production conditions or the organoleptic specificities of the wines, and reinforce contents related to the regional culture, emphasizing aspects of the local identity that strengthen this tourism destination. However, the absence of systematized data on the volume and profile of visitors in these wineries impedes deeper understanding of which groups demand what activities, what could be useful to guide the planning and management of wine tourism in each property.

Based on the information presented, we can considered that the objectives of this article – to describe the practices of tourism visitation to the wineries of *Serra Gaúcha*, with special attention to aspects related to the history of visitation, structure and receptive organization, visitation routes, complementary products and services, communication and promotion, and to the quantity and profile of winery visitors – have been achieved. The information presented here can serve as a reference for comparing wine tourism activities that take place in different regions, offering examples of practices that may inspire new strategies, as well as highlighting successful strategies already adopted. Future research may also use this work as start-up for the description of the practices of tourist visitation to wineries located in other regions, especially in Brazil's other wine producing regions. Another natural sequence of this work would be to conduct studies that aim to approach the theme of visitation to wineries from the perspective of the tourist, evaluating demographic and behavioral aspects, as well as aspects related to the satisfaction reached with the tourism experience.

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