

ENOTOURISM IN ITALY

**N. Barlanytska
K. Chala**

National University of Food Technologies

Wine tourism is big business in Italy. In 2008, for the first time, Italy produced more wine grapes than France. The 20% of the world production (33% of the European Union production) comes from Italian vineyards. Only recently, the importance of wine in Italy has been felt not only related to production and consumption but also to the attractiveness of this product so deeply connected to the territory. At present, wine tourism in Italy represents a very important source of income for small firms and generally for territories. Apparently around five million people contribute about 2.5 billion euro to wine making territories. Grapes are to be found in every Italian region. Winemaking has a very long tradition in the country, and Italy enjoys a positive trade balance in this sector. Until the mid-1980s, wine production was not generally of a high standard and, indeed, much table wine was cheap and of very poor quality. The industry then went through a series of reforms that introduced strict quality controls, and standards rose to a level whereby Italian wines can compete at international level with French wines. Italy's best-known wines are Chianti (produced in Tuscany), Barolo (produced in Piedmont), Soave (produced in the Veneto), and the white wines of Collio (produced in Friuli), Marsala (from Sicily), and Brunello (produced in Tuscany). Italian wine tourism has become very popular, and there are many wine routes to follow in different regions of Italy.

Northern Italy

From the internationally acclaimed wines of Piedmont to those of Valle d'Aosta, Lombardy, Liguria, Trentino-Alto Adige, Friuli-Venezia-Giulia and Veneto, another world-renowned wine region, Northern Italy is home to many of the country's finest and most expensive wines. Most notably, Piedmont in the northwest features the famous age-worthy red wine of Barolo, made from Nebbiolo grapes, and the sparkling white wine of Asti, made from Muscat grapes. Meanwhile, the northeast's most significant wine region is Veneto, notable for the Soave area, famous for its white wine made from Garganega and Trebbiano grapes.

Central Italy

Central Italian wine tourism includes the regions of Emilia-Romagna, Umbria, Latium, Abruzzo, Marche and Tuscany, perhaps the most famous of all Italian wine regions. The latter is best-known for Chianti, a red wine made primarily from Sangiovese grapes. In addition to the Chianti region, Tuscany hosts the Montalcino and Montepulciano regions, both producing their own fine red wines (Brunello di Montalcino and Vino Nobile di Montepulciano, respectively) made from Sangiovese grapes. Italy's other central states are far less-renowned for their wines. Still, Emilia-Romagna, Umbria and Latium produce some of the country's best-known wines (Lambrusco and Frascati), while other regional highlights include red wines produced in Abruzzo and Marche and made from Montepulciano grapes, as well as white wines

produced across the region and made from Verdicchio grapes, the most commonly used grape for white wines through central Italy.

Southern Italy

Moving south toward the Italian boot, wine tourists will find the regions of Molise, Campania, Basilicata and Calabria, Puglia and Sicily. Puglia (the heel of the boot) and the island of Sicily have two of the region's top wine reputations. The former is famous for both red and white wines produced from grapes like Aglianico, Negroamaro and Primitivo (much like California's Zinfandel). Its top wines include Castel del Monte, Copertino, Salice Salentino and Primitivo di Manduria, while those of Sicily's top wine is Marsala, a fortified wine made from Grillo, Catarratto, or Inzolia grapes.

References

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