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## WINE TOURISM AS A FACTOR FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL TOURISM

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### Abstract

Wine roads are starting to develop and enrich the offer of rural tourism in the Republic of North Macedonia. Wine tourism is that part of tourism that includes visiting wineries, consuming wine, tasting cheeses, as one of the dishes that is characteristic and compatible with wine. Macedonia is a country with great potential for the development of this type of tourism. Some of the Macedonian wineries work intensively in this direction. The wineries in their offer include accommodation in their facilities in order to attract tourists who want to experience something different from this aspect. While staying in one of the suites at one of the wineries, almost every part related to winemaking is at your fingertips and you can fully understand the process of creating a new wine.

**Key words:** tradition, cultivation, history, cellars

**JEL Classification:** Tourism and Development

### INTRODUCTION

Wine is the extract and essence of the grape, while the grape is the essence that comes from the soil where it sprouts. The ancients said "Tell me where you're from and I'll tell you what you're like, grapes carry within themselves the soil from which they sprouted and the climate under which they were grown. It unites the elements of nature with the strength, wisdom and spirit of the people who lived before us. Through wine we combine the past and the future, the tradition of the old masters in harmony with modern knowledge and technology, contributes to the development of rural tourism. Wine is one of people's favorite alcoholic beverages. Whether it is red or white wine, people really enjoy its taste and it is the most commonly consumed drink in all celebrations. The very thought of this delicate subject inspires respect, the play of numerous aromas and flavors, with the texture and structure of food and wine is extremely sophisticated. If we add here the subjectivity of the consumer's personal experiences and his current mood on the one hand, and the inspiration of the sommelier and chef on the other hand we get the "Fibonacci code" complicated or not, there are still some rules in this maze that we should generally adhere to.

Add the 30-century tradition of wine making, the hospitality of the locals and the delicacies of Macedonian traditional cuisine and you get one of the most interesting wine destinations in Eastern Europe, which can be seen by the increasing number of tourists interested in wine tourism. Today, wine tourism in Macedonia is experiencing a significant development, which can be seen through the increasing number of new private wine cellars that are enriching their activities in the direction of the development of local rural tourism. In addition to the increasing number of private wine cellars, wine tourism in Macedonia is being strategically developed at the state level through the development of wine routes, organizations, chambers and associations that aim to ensure the development of rural tourism in Macedonia on a global scale.

### MATERIAL AND METHODS

1. Macedonia - the land of wine

1. History

Macedonia has a rich wine history. During the time of Philip the Second and Alexander the Great, the members of the Macedonian royal dynasty were known as great lovers of wine. This tradition continues during the time of the Roman Empire when Macedonia is one of the

most important wine regions in the empire. Also, the great importance of wine is retained during the penetration of Christianity, when in almost all orthodox Christian ceremonies performed in churches, wine is part of the tradition. An example of this is the wedding ceremony where wine along with bread and salt is given to the bride and groom.

All these ceremonies are still present today and in this way the tradition of the meaning of wine is continued. Historical facts also say that wine played an important role during the reign of King Samuil, the Middle Ages and the end of the Turkish rule in Macedonia. Numerous archaeological finds have proven that the affinity towards growing wine grapes and wine production is one of the most important in Macedonian history. Today, Macedonia has 24,000 ha of vineyards that produce significant amounts of wine.

The intense aromas of Macedonian wines are the result of the combined influence of both Mediterranean and continental climates, with hot summer days and cooler nights. The extended ripening process of the grapes ensures the rich colors and complex aromas of the wine. Macedonia has vineyards with the famous modern French varieties of wine grapes, but also vineyards with native varieties of grapes, such as Vranec from the red ones, Žilavka and Temjanika from the white ones, and Stanushinata from the pink ones. Winemaking in Macedonia has a rich and varied potential like any other country, but this potential has only just begun to be exploited, even though the country has a long and significant history of wine production.

## 2. Wine regions

According to the climatic characteristics and classification of the EU, the Republic of Macedonia is considered as III-C-b zone for the cultivation of vines and has adopted the oenological rules that apply to this zone. A basic characteristic of this zone is that the wines can have acidification, but not enrichment, which corresponds to legislation and current practice of wine production in the country. There is one wine-growing region in Macedonia, which can be geographically divided into three regions:

- 1) Vardar valley, i.e. in the Central region (former Povardar wine region) - covers about 83% of the total production,
- 2) Western region (former Pelagonsko-Pologsko viticulture region) - covers 13% of the production and
- 3) The Eastern region (former Pchinjsko-Osogovo viticultural region), - covers about 4% of the total production.

## 3. Wine cellars

Today, Macedonia has 24,000 ha of vineyards that produce significant amounts of wine. The two most important indigenous grape varieties grown in Macedonia are Vranec (red) and Smederevka (white). In addition to these two most popular varieties, international varieties of wine grapes are grown, such as: Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Pinot Noir from the reds and Chardonnay, Riesling and Sauvignon Blanc from the whites. In addition to these, other varieties of wine grapes are grown in Macedonia, such as Muscat Otonel, Semillion, Rkatsiteli, Grenache Blanc and Kadarka. Finally.

## 2. Wine tourism as an integral part of rural tourism

The analysis of the individual characteristics and the very term interpretation of rural tourism, eco-tourism, wine tourism, gastronomy as a tourism product, hunting tourism, fishing tourism, farm tourism, agricultural farm tourism, cultural tourism and religious tourism, indicate a common component. , and that is the development of activities in a rural environment. Wine tourism represents a new type of tourism with double benefits for both tourism and the rural area.



The definition of rural tourism differs in different countries in Europe there is no single definition of rural tourism, rural tourism mainly refers to all services and activities offered in rural areas. Common key elements of rural tourism are:

- the rural area;
- preserved nature;
- accommodation in traditional village households;
- bed and breakfast with the possibility of independent food preparation;
- traditional rural gastronomy;
- communication with the hosts;
- getting to know and/or participating in agricultural activities, the tradition and way of living of the local population.

Through the development of wine tourism, rural areas can be regenerated, and on the other hand, economic progress and nature conservation can be achieved. According to the analyzes of the WTO (World Tourism Organization) and ETC (European Travel Commission), Europe as the number 1 tourist destination in the world shows a tendency to increase the number of tourists who use extended weekends as a way of rest from avoiding the stressful life in urban environments.

### 3. Wine tourism in rural areas in the Republic of North Macedonia

Macedonia as a country abounds with beauties and tastes that would attract every tourist. Unlike other famous wine regions, Macedonia is like an undiscovered treasure for every wine lover and anyone with an exploratory spirit, attracted by the long wine history and tradition and by the top wines in the rural areas. In addition to quality wines, untouched nature, ecological food and hospitality are the other things for which Macedonia is recognized in the world. Macedonia has an authentic history and tradition and of course that distinguishes us from other countries, but no less important are the local grape varieties from which top quality wines are produced.

### 4. Barovo wine camp as a factor for the development of rural tourism

Barovo wine camp is a unique tourist location that offers a stay in wine barrels in which Macedonian wine has been aged for decades. The wine camp captures the unity of time and place, the feeling of oneness with nature and with the history of a rural environment. Accommodation in a barrel is a fusion of untouched nature and endless vineyards, the tradition and culture of wine, local food and the unique taste of terroir created over centuries. The wine camp consists of 12 adapted barrels for accommodation, two shower rooms, a dressing room and a kitchen, all completely renovated from old barrels that aged Macedonian wine for more than 40 years. Each barrel is equipped with a bed and bedding, and electricity is provided for them through solar panels. The barrels are arranged in a way that allows each of them to have its own terrace with a chair to enjoy an unforgettable view of the sunrise and the unobstructed vineyards. Natural materials are used in Barovo Wine Camp, so something that has a wine character and is authentic to the region, and complements the whole wine story that is told and passed on to tourists. It is considered that domestic tourists would be interested in weekend visits and replacing classic restaurants and already known destinations with such an extraordinary experience. While, foreign tourists would be more interested in rural tourism, sports, getting to know local landmarks and traditional ways of producing food and wine. If we consider tourism demand and the wants and needs of tourists, there are several different groups of visitors, whether domestic or foreign.

### 5. Popova Kula as a factor for the development of rural tourism

The natural beauties of the region make Popova Kula an ideal place for the development of rural tourism. In cooperation with experts, Popova Kula offers various activities in rural areas

during your stay with them. Hotel "Popova Kula" offers 33 rooms, each named after the varieties of wine produced in Popova Kula and decorated in harmony with the colors and shades of the wine. All are equipped with: telephone and internet, air conditioning and satellite TV. Most of them also have a balcony with an amazing view of the beautiful surroundings – a real challenge for nature lovers. During their stay at the winery, guests can, if they wish, join a walk through the vineyards, grape picking, wine tasting, and a visit during wine production. By staying in the winery itself, they have the opportunity to enjoy the rural environment where the vineyards of the winery are located.

#### Doshnica River

A relaxing walk along the course of the beautiful r. Doshnica (with the possibility of a picnic lunch), Doshnica River is one of the cleanest rivers in Macedonia. From its source, which is located about 20 km south-southwest of Demir Kapija, under the highest peak of Kozhuf Mountain, all the way to Demir Kapija, there are no settlements or settlements. Before flowing into the r. Vardar near the Demirkapi Gorge, r. Doshnica passes through the lowlands of the Demirkapi valley hidden by the old forest that grows along its course.

Cycling - around the vineyards of Popova Kula

Rent a bike and take a tour around the vineyards, Length: 13.5 km; Altitude: start 178m, highest point 390 m.

Bird watching

Demirkapi Gorge is one of the richest ornithological reserves in Europe in terms of the presence of rare vulture birds. In cooperation with the local ornithological club, we offer bird watching tours with an expert guide.

Fortress Avg

A slightly more strenuous hike to the remains of the ancient fortress of Prosek, combined with moderate walking and easy walking on the way back. This tour is intended for people who are ready for slightly more difficult physical activities. The Prosek fortress was a strategic place, located on the stone hill on the left side of the Demirkapi Gorge. The view from this place is spectacular!

Klisura village

Easy to moderately difficult hike to the abandoned village of Klisura, the village of Klisura is located south of Demir Kapija, just behind the Krastavec hill this is the oldest village within the Demir Kapija municipality. Enjoy the beautiful peaceful nature surrounded by mountains with the opportunity to visit the church and the monastery in the village. The village of Klisura is also a great place for bird watching.

The Lost World - Radnja Village

Deep in Kozuf Mountain, a forbidden place for Turks during the Ottoman Empire, lies the land of the free - the village of Radnja, the village was established in the early days of the Ottoman Empire. It was completely destroyed during the Second World War and is therefore abandoned today. Today, one true story of a lost world remains.

Tikvesh Valley - wine tasting tours

Although there are more than 80 wineries in Macedonia, most of the grapes and wine are found in Tikveštia, and therefore most of the wineries are found right here. All wineries are located within a radius of 30 km from Popova Kula, which allows an easy and quick visit to those that are open to tourists.

Chelavec village

A moderately strenuous hiking tour along the Juruchka River to the village of Chelavec, spectacular starting point - between the two tunnels in the Demirkapi Gorge, and then continue to the small but beautiful gorge of Juruchka Reka.

Hot springs on the r. Doshnica true hidden treasure for tourists - refresh yourself and merge with nature. Before the very entrance of r. Flowing into the Demirkapi valley, the river has

formed natural whirlpools suitable for refreshment. The water in the whirlpools in summer is warmed by the sun, but also by the accumulated heat from the rocks that surround them.

#### Cooking lessons for traditional Macedonian dishes

One of the things that you should definitely do when you are visiting Macedonia is to try the local food. It will also be an unforgettable experience to try to learn to prepare your favorite Macedonian traditional meal. We offer you this unforgettable experience.

#### Traditional dance and dance classes

Macedonia has a rich musical and folklore heritage. While you are here it would be an unforgettable experience to get to know some of this cultural treasure better. We provide you with exactly this.

#### Rock climbing

Demirkapi Gorge is one of the best places in the world for rock climbing. This place is the choice of professional climbers from all over the world. However, it is also a perfect place for beginners or enthusiasts.

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Changes in tourism candidates, those among young people, who according to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) set their life values and prefer to spend those who are directly money in rural areas, the community knows that tourism the introduction of new products or services in the wine industry is not a key to opening the door to an innovative offer, but it is the result of which today the tourist offer should be created and the ruriliminalism should be developed.

In the wine camp Barovo and Popova Kula you have a unique opportunity to experience the complete wine story and rural environment. Not only to taste the wines, but to directly discover and reveal to you the knowledge of the cultivation of the vine and its production that begins in the vineyard itself.

### **CONCLUDING REMARKS**

Wine tourism represents a new type of tourism with dual use for both tourism and rural areas. Mainly under rural tourism are defined all services and activities that are offered in rural areas. Through the development of wine tourism, rural areas can be regenerated, on the other hand progress and nature conservation can be achieved. Unlike other famous wine regions, Macedonia is like an undiscovered treasure for every wine lover and anyone with an inquisitive nature, attracted by the great wine history and tradition and by the top spirits in the rural areas. In addition to quality wines, untouched nature, ecological food and hospitality are the other things for which Macedonia is recognized in the world. Macedonia has an authentic history and tradition and they are no different from other countries, but they are no less important and are grapes from which top quality wines are produced. It is a significant difference and a sufficient reason for the promotion of the uniqueness of our country in relation to the wine tourism offer and therefore also the reasons for rural tourism.

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