Can Tourism on Madeira Island Support Wine Tourism and, in turn, Madeira Wine?

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Renate Joas

Motivation for choosing this topic

In 2019, when having visited Madeira as a professional wine tourist, I had the opportunity to become acquainted with several producers of Madeira Wine, restaurants and shops, and explored the beautiful landscape and flora, but also having heard and felt the producers' grief and shared their deep regret that their wine making heritage is not appreciated in all its significance. In particular, when talking to Helena Borges, H. M. Borges, it became very clear to me—knowing that fortified wines like Madeira Wine don't meet the average taste of consumers—that out of the potential of tourists visiting the island too few people find their way here. At that time, I already was thinking that this situation needed to change and more people should become aware of these great wines, which I personally value highly.
When it came to write the thesis, I felt the strong desire to engage more deeply with the complex interplay between sustainable wine tourism on the island of Madeira and the underrated significance of Madeira Wine; and therefore, I chose this as my topic, with the following proposed title:
"Wine tourism on Madeira island and Madeira Wine marketing—can both be strengthened to sell and support Madeira Wine?" sharpening and simplifying it to the final title above.

Problem/objective

The island of Madeira has enormous tourism potential, yet this is not reflected in sales figures for Madeira Wine. Many questions arose regarding what the actual problems are. First of all, one problem with the complex Madeira Wine seems to be that most people do not even think of tasting it or considering it, for instance, as an aperitif or pairing it with food. To find out why this is the case, it was necessary to examine more closely the possible reasons why tourists visit the island of Madeira; furthermore, to look at the image of Madeira Wine, how the wines are positioned and marketed. But it is definitely more complex than that. The objective was to gain a clear picture of the state of wine tourism on the island, identify the key players, and what measures are being taken to attract tourists and win them over to Madeira Wine. It was also important to understand how tourists perceive Madeira Wine in order to draw conclusions about how the situation could be improved.

Methodology

Primarily, I conducted in-depth online research, using publicly available data and facts regarding the tourism and wine tourism situation in Madeira; in particular, from official local bodies like IVBAM/Vinho Madeira, DREM, and international institutions like UNWTO. Available studies were also considered as well as websites promoting Madeira tourism. With sustainability in mind, the aim was also to gain insights into pressing tourism-related issues on the island as well as environmental topics. Furthermore, I focused my research on websites providing information about the island's wine industry and hospitality sector—specifically marketing initiatives and offerings related to Madeira Wine from producers, restaurants, bars, and so on.
I also analysed typical wine information systems such as Drinks Business and Decanter—as well as influential platforms like Vivino—in order to understand the general image of Madeira Wine. I

consulted specialized wine literature, books, magazines, and blogs to gain an overall picture about history and current developments.
To obtain first-hand information, wine institutions, producers, and restaurants were surveyed via email. In particular, I have sent a comprehensive list of questions to IVBAM—covering topics such as wine tourism statistics, strategy, marketing to support oeno-tourism, the coordination of strategies and measures (including producer involvement), promotion, etc.—which was answered in detail and offered insights into the work of IVBAM. To understand local marketing, I contacted producers, upscale restaurants, and wine bars, and inquired about the distinctive ways they emphasise Madeira Wine in their promotion. Always haunted by the question "why do not all visitors—not drinkers excluded—try Madeira Wine?"
Last but not least, I matched all those findings with my own experiences.

Content

The content of the thesis is divided into introduction and four chapters, followed by a conclusion; see below.
In the **introduction**, I present the topic and the associated issues; as well as a brief overview of the research methodology applied, an outlook on content, and conclusion.
The **first chapter** is about the definition of wine tourism versus tourism and the typology of wine tourists, categorised into four segments, that can be considered in marketing.
The **second chapter** is dedicated to the 600-year history and the closely intertwined development of the Island of Madeira and its wine, highlighting milestones in terms of trade, visitors, and early tourism. Aspects such as growing conditions, grape varieties, and wine styles, as well as the unique winemaking process, are examined.
A major point is the **third chapter** about exploring tourism versus wine tourism on Madeira Island with an emphasis on sustainability. Tourism is expanding in volume, but wine tourism stays low. Regarding the key factors of wine tourism, the aim is to identify the activities and offerings currently available to tourists in relation to Madeira Wine. These primarily involve wine experiences often combined with nature, offerings available at the wine producers, accommodations with focus on wine, events and thematic programmes. Exploring options for innovation and the impact of expanding tourism on wine tourism are also being considered.
The **fourth chapter** of marketing aspects and strategies emphasises facts about the commercialization of Madeira Wine, it covers strengths and weaknesses, producer's market shares and their competitive positioning, the image of Madeira Wine as well as marketing efforts to attract new target groups, and possible trends. Different hurdles are considered, such as the complexity of wine styles, and other facts. A key objective is to increase awareness and visibility of Madeira Wine among tourists on the island; this includes strategies and recommendations for turning tourists into wine tourists.

Conclusion

The conclusion summarizes the results of the previous chapters and highlights the importance of sustainability, as well as the interesting but limited range of available activities with focus on Madeira Wine; also citing best-practices. Restaurants could place greater emphasis that they serve Madeira Wine; and on the fact that Madeira Wine pairs excellently with their cuisine. All stakeholders could increase their efforts and cooperate to strengthen the overall presence of Madeira Wine—making it more visible and appealing to tourists, and consequently increases sales.