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Maria Francesca Romano and Michela Natilli

# Wine tourism in Italy: New profiles, styles of consumption, ways of touring

## Abstract

*Italy has always been a wine country: it produces 20% of the world and 33% of the European wine production; in 2008 it has produced more wine grapes than France. More, Italy is also a country with an ancient tradition in tourism. But there are weakness in these sectors: Italy is, among the big touristic countries, the one with the more fragmented accommodation capacity; in the last 20 years it moved from the fourth to the fifth place as tourism destination, according to the World Tourism rankings. The wine tourism is still at beginning and there is lack of data and information about it. Starting from this situation, the aim of this paper is to present a new approach to study wine tourism, explaining the proposed methodology through the data collected in surveys on tourism and wine tourism in Italy, with a focus on Tuscany. Data used are along to the topic, starting from Italian situation where there is a strong connection among wine, food, territory, art and culture, considering both potential and real wine tourist. Analyzing data of Italian and foreigners tourists we demonstrate that in Italy wine tourism is not a niche tourism, but it is a subset of the same travel, with a strong evidence of a mix of tourisms. Results obtained in several field researches are exposed to show how studying attitudes and values of tourists, but also their mobility on a territory, could give new perspectives for promoting wine events in Italy; furthermore, differences between Italian and foreigners tourists are taken into account.*

## Keywords:

*wine tourism; web survey; type of tourists; Italy*

## Introduction

Italy has been always an ideal land for tourism, whose popularity is based mostly on natural attractions and historical heritage. Italy, as tourism destination, has an ancient tradition, and it still remains one of leading nations in terms of the number of tourist arrivals. Although in 2007 Italy was surpassed by China in terms of tourist arrivals, from 2000 to 2007 inbound arrivals to Italy have increased for 2,5 millions (UNWTO, 2008). Until 2000, foreign travelers have perceived Italy as a cultural tourism destination, while other types of tourism (seaside or mountain) were mostly for domestic travelers (Battilani, 2001). Over the last decade, new ways of traveling are becoming

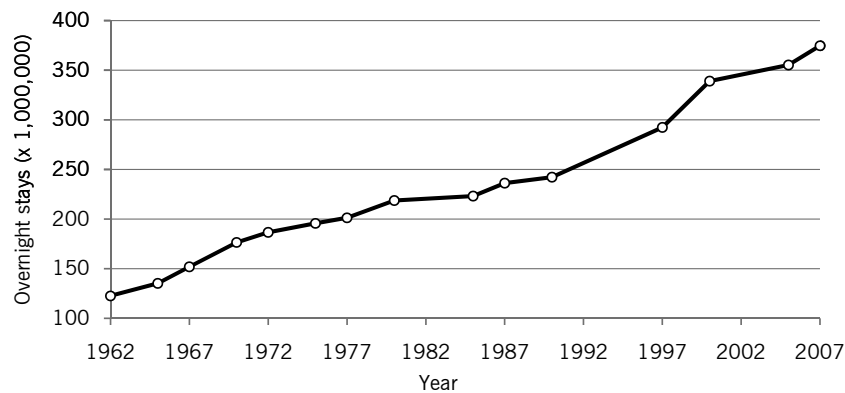
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more and more important and Italy attracted new types of tourists with a wider touristic offer and introduction of low cost flights. In Italy the presence of tourists have increased in the decade 1962-72, while in the 20 following years the increase is less strong. It experienced a new sharp increase between 1992 and 2007 (Figure 1).

Figure 1  
**OVERNIGHT STAYS IN ITALY 1962-2007**



Source: our elaborations on ISTAT data

However, in the last decade Italy has experienced different level of increase in the number of visitors, high at a national level, but also with differences across regions. It is normal so to try to investigate at what extend it is possible to understand the phenomenon of tourism, since it is very complex and it seems impossible to be studied using traditional methods (Tracò, & Tortorella, 2007). Even if a strong motivation, especially for foreigners tourists, is related to cultural tourism, it is clear that there is a new interest into culture in a wider sense, and that the appeal of Italy is strongly connected to the "Italian lifestyle", connected to popular tradition and to local values. The results of a recent survey of tourists to Italy (ISNART Unioncamere, 2008) show that cultural tourists visited museums, monuments, exhibitions, archeological sites, but they also did excursions, shopping and they tried local products (wine and food). These are complementary activities which can represent an important factor for the generating repeat visits (Ferrari, 2009, p. 42). One of these complementary products is wine tourism with developments that aims to consolidate and promote wine tourism. To this end, the *Associazione delle Città del Vino* was set up whose purpose is to coordinate and give visibility to very many small municipalities whose economic structure was wine dependent. Therefore, 'wine roads' (*Strade del Vino*) were set up and legislatively recognized in 1999.

The absence of a Ministry for the Tourism, abolished in 1993, caused the lack of a global promotion of the Italian tourism products, particularly crucial in a period, as already discussed, in which the nature of tourism demand changed globally. This lack became a weak point of the Italian touristic offer: although Italy is among the biggest tourism countries, it is also the one with the more fragmented accommodation capacity. Only 4.4% of the total number of rooms is part of a hotel chain, compared to 34% in Spain and the 38% in France (Page, 2006).

The same fragmented structure is a characteristic of the wine production - the small and fragmented nature of wine production is one of the Italy's weakest aspects. In 2008, for the first time, Italy produced more wine grapes than France (News Coldiretti, 2009). The 20% of the world and 33% of the European Union production comes from Italian vineyards (Christiano, 2008; News Tigullio Vino, 2008). The annual wine production is, on average, 51 million hectolitres, 33% of which is exported (News Coldiretti, 2006). Moreover, wine sales proved the most lucrative for the Italian wine market in 2008, and the performance of the market is forecast to accelerate for the five-year period (2008-2013). Italy is also the world leader in wine export (on average, 18 million hectolitres per year - News Il Sole 24 Ore, 2009), with a value in 2008 of some 3.5 billion of euros (Vinitaly, 2009). Italy remains the biggest exporter to the US, ahead of Australia and France, where the popularity of Tuscan wines like Chianti and Brunello, and the more recently Sassicaia, is now being matched by wines from Piedmont, in particular Barolo, Barbaresco, Barbera and Grignolino. However, only 1,200 out of 770,000 Italian wine firms can reach the international market, though a lot of small wineries reach a very high quality production (WineNews, 2009).

### **Wine tourism in Italy**

The success of the Italian wine sector, alongside world-wide popularity of Italian cuisine on the demand side, and the policy of tourism product diversification on the supply side, had prompted a serious and coordinated approach to wine tourism development in Italy. Significant effort was put into this endeavour by wineries, communities and regional planners: actually there are 140 wine routes established, accompanied by variety of themed itineraries through wine-producing regions. There are numerous local wine events organised through the year, but the most popular is Open Cellars (Cantine Aperte) in spring time: this initiative, organised by the Wine Tourism Movement (MTV), originally began in Tuscany but then spread quickly to Italy's other wine-producing regions. Open Cellars, apart from offering an opportunity to see where and how wine is made and discover the difference of tasting it at its source, also offers visitors a chance to learn about traditions and culture linked to winemaking and country life. Although wine is the chief focus, Open Cellars also offers tourists a chance to taste other farm products, especially olive oil and other regional foods and cuisine. Another initiative is "Calici di Stelle" (in August) sponsored by Città del Vino. Therefore, wine tourism product is among those more recently added to the portfolio of Italian tourism products. At present, wine tourism in Italy represents a valuable source of income for small firms and, generally, for destination community.

In spite of the growing popularity of wine tourism in general, the research on wine tourism is only emerging slowly: there is a growing need of knowledge about the size of the sector, of estimates and monitoring data. There are some studies and reports available (Antonioli Corigliano, & Viganò, 2004; Marangon, Visintin Fontana, & Zaccomer, 2008; Censis, 2006, for example) but, although they are valuable, there is a need of further investigations to understand the value of the economic volume of this type of tourism. For instance, CENSIS estimated that every 10 euro spent in the vineyard generates 50 euro in earnings for the local economy (2006), and that about

five million people contribute about 2.5 billion euro to wine making territories (according to data communicated by CENSIS during the Bitez 2008, Milan). A recent survey conducted in 2009 by GPF research group estimates that, in Italy, there are about five million of dedicated wine tourists, also known as "wine nuts", but experts believe that the wine tourism movement is operating at only 20% of its potential and could easily double in the near future.

### **Researching wine tourists: Methodological challenges**

Given the size of the Italian wine production sector, the numerous initiative to link it with tourism and large and steadily growing visitor demand for winery visits, it would be interesting to have a precise estimation of the number of tourists which can be considered "wine-tourists" and their profile. However, given the large number of wine tourism related initiatives, their peculiarity, their change over time, this estimate, from a methodological point of view, is almost impossible. Nevertheless, we believe that, in spite of inevitable methodological weaknesses, it is of the utmost importance to obtain a profile of the wine tourists in Italy or their "identikit" that would consist not only of their socio-demographic characteristics but, more importantly, of their attitudes and values, perceived connections between wine, food, territory, art and culture and the ways these connections can form the basis for promoting the territory.

Therefore, the purpose of this paper is twofold. Firstly, it aims to profile Italian wine tourists but, more importantly, given the methodological challenges associated with this, to present a novel methodological approach used to this end. This approach, currently piloted in the region of Tuscany, could be replicated in other Italian areas and wine regions of other countries with similar structure of their wine sector.

The most relevant aspect that should be considered here is that, generally, it is not easy to define holiday: until a few years ago, the idea of a vacation in Italy was connected to culture, seaside and mountain. This is not true anymore, partly because the economic importance of tourism related to the territory, the food, the wine is growing and becoming a large part of the tourism revenues (Battilani, 2001) and partly because tourists are people who want to enjoy gratifying experiences based on alternatives activities (Marzo-Navarro, & Pedraja-Iglesias, 2009). Given these aspects, it is obvious that it is not always easy to carry out surveys on wine tourism, neither to get all the needed information just from one survey.

The starting point is the awareness that understanding the wine tourist could not be gained only from field surveys at wine events, such as festivals, or directly when they visit canteens or vineyards. By far, such an approach to profiling wine tourists is dominant (i.e. Charters, & Ali-Knight 2002; Mitchell, & Hall, 2001). Such surveys, although relevant, should be considered only as the first phase of the broader research agenda. Even if the wine festival visitors are considered an appropriate sample of the wine tourists, it is very difficult to obtain statistically significant estimates, due to the large number of wine events and the lack of a complete and exhaustive list of these events. While such an approach may be sufficient for smaller geographic areas where

the aim is to obtain a profile of local or regional wine events visitors, more relevant results could be obtained only by planning a network of surveys, so that the empirical results can be multiplied and would allow comparison between different areas. Even then, the wine event visitors are the only part of the total population of wine visitors. The question on how to tap into a total population of wine visitors still remains. One of the possible approaches that we have adopted is to include the virtual wine tourists defined as those that are enrolling to thematic web portals. Therefore, we have decided to use a two-fold approach: a) web survey of visitors to the web portals related to food and wine, and b) field survey of wine event visitors.

In the view of proposed aims of this study, we turn now to the detailed outline of the methodology and results obtained. In the interpretation and discussion of these results we will show how the use of both sources of information enable the construction of a global picture of the phenomenon "wine tourist", with a mutual advantage of both sources. This is somehow ambitious, but, in our opinion, it is the unique way to obtain knowledge on wine tourists in short time and at a low budget.

### **Researching potential wine tourists**

The idea of understanding wine tourists by interviewing them during wine festival or similar events, as stated before, is not sufficient to understand their needs, but above all, it does not give any hints on how to improve the quality of the tourism offer and to enlarge the demand. In this sense, it is very important to study people who are interested in wine tourism, to get suggestions and to improve and extend the offer to a larger part of the population. The ways to do it can be different and in this study we suggest the use of a web survey to reach a large population while, at the same time, reduce time and costs associated with such research.

Given the need of doing a web survey, it was necessary to find a list of people enrolled to web portals related to the topics of food and wine. These web sites encourage users to register. Information required by the registration procedures differs between web sites, not only in the type of data collected, but also in terms of the information being defined as compulsory. The list of registered users can be considered as a population frame. The advantage of having a list of users as the population frame is in the possibility to apply random sampling methods and/or to monitor the quality of the collected data during and after the collection period.

The frame list used in our study was based on the registered users of the Gambero Rosso web site ([www.gamberorosso.it](http://www.gamberorosso.it)). Gambero Rosso is a well known Italian publishing group dedicated to food and wine with the web site, monthly magazine, TV channel and a food and wine themed attractions *Città del Gusto* (bottle cellar, workshops, classrooms, a wine bar and a gourmet accessory store, etc.) in Rome and Naples. As this was one of the most visited Italian web site dedicated to food and wine, we were confident that all people registered as users were interested in enological and/or gastronomic themes. The study was designed for the Italian people enrolled to the web site, and therefore all the individuals enrolled to the web site were included in the frame list.

The analysis done on the socio-demographic characteristics of the Gambero Rosso users indicated that these were people of all ages, of both sex, resident in all Italian provinces, in small and big cities. We were not sure about the level of education of these people as this information was not a compulsory field in the registration form, but we speculated that these people were likely to be better educated than population in general. In Italy, there is a pronounced tendency that Internet is used more often by the better educated (Sartori, 2006). Based on the number of subscribers, their socio-demographic characteristics and their interest in the enogastronomic themes, we have concluded that the Gambero Rosso users are appropriate target population for our web survey.

The use of a web survey allowed us to obtain a lot of complex and detailed data, not easily obtained with a paper-and-pencil or even a telephone questionnaire. Furthermore, the web questionnaire allowed us to design it in a dynamic way, so that we were able to administer different sets of questions to different types of respondents. The average time for completion of the questionnaire was 15 minutes. Respondents accessed to questionnaire with a key-code. At the end of each frame data were stored (with date and time of entry and exit plus key-code) after pressing the "continue" button. After the first step, respondents could close the browser and, at the next entry, they could go back to the frame they have just left.

We carried out two national web surveys, the first one in 2006 and the second in 2008. In 2006, we collected 9,367 questionnaires (response rate  $RR2=9.9\%$ <sup>1</sup>). Characteristics of the respondents are reported in Table 1. A comparison of socio-demographic characteristics of the population with the sample revealed that there were no significant differences along these characteristics.

Table 1  
**SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS  
OF WEB SURVEY RESPONDENTS, 2006**

| Characteristic     |             | %  |
|--------------------|-------------|----|
| Age                | 18-34       | 21 |
|                    | 35-49       | 60 |
|                    | 50+         | 19 |
| Sex                | Female      | 38 |
|                    | Male        | 62 |
| Geographic area    | North-East  | 19 |
|                    | North-West  | 28 |
|                    | Centre      | 40 |
|                    | South       | 13 |
| Level of education | Compulsory  | 5  |
|                    | High School | 46 |
|                    | University  | 49 |

In order to illustrate the practical value of this research, we have performed a cluster analysis using as input variables preferences in buying food, interest in enogastronomic media and level of technological knowledge, age, sex and level of education. The

analysis identified four clusters that differed in the attitudes to wine and food: 1) Feast and festivals enogastronomic tourists (26.25%); 2) Gourmet eno-gastronomic tourists (25.1%); 3) Accidental eno-gastronomic tourists (27%) and 4) Teetotal eno-gastronomic tourists (21.4%).

The first cluster of tourists consists of people who like visiting traditional events, love local food and wine and enjoy staying with friends. Compared to others, this cluster is made of younger people with a high level of education for which wine is a synonym of socialization and friendship. The second cluster is made of sophisticated tourists: they are very careful about the quality of food and drink they use ("quality above all"), they are quite interested in enogastronomic traditional media and have very good technical skills. Generally, this cluster is composed of people with a good job and high level of education. For them, wine is a "cultural" product strictly related to the territory. The accidental wine tourists are people with a medium level of technical skills, very mindful of the quality of food and drink, but not fussy, and have no interest in traditional enogastronomic media. They are made of all age groups and have a medium level of education. The last type "teetotal" tourists are interested only in gastronomic products and not in wine. They read lots of traditional media related to gastronomy, but have no technical skills. The quality of products that they buy is important. In this cluster females living in South Italy are dominant.

After two years, in 2008, we conducted a new web survey on Gambero Rosso registered users and we collected 9,173 questionnaires (RR2=10,9%): the differences between 2006 and 2008 frame lists were in the new entries and the old users who discontinued their subscription. Therefore, in the 2008 frame list, there were more female subscribers and greater number of users from South Italy and island compared to 2006. (Table 2).

Table 2  
**CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS,  
WEB SURVEY 2008**

| Characteristic  |            | %  |
|-----------------|------------|----|
| Sex             | Female     | 43 |
|                 | Male       | 57 |
| Geographic area | North-East | 42 |
|                 | North-West | 15 |
|                 | Centre     | 25 |
|                 | South      | 18 |

In this second survey our interest was more focused on "word related to wine": we included a number of open-ended questions on preferred wines as well as on ideal vacation. The primary aim was to gain a deeper knowledge of potential wine tourists, and to this end we asked them to describe their ideal holidays. Of interest were those who have spontaneously used words relating to food and wine. On 4,500 answers to this question, we verified if a word related to wine and food tourism (i.e. vineyard, winery, names of wine, food, or similar) was present in this variable. As presented in Table 3,

slightly less than one third spontaneously mentioned these words; furthermore wine and food words are equally used in all regions. For people really interested in wine and food tourism these aspects are part of a more complex picture; Italian population is more likely open to experience different kind of tourism together.

Table 3

**USE OF WORDS RELATED TO WINE AND FOOD  
IN THE DEFINITION OF THE IDEAL HOLIDAY (%)**

| Region     | Yes  |
|------------|------|
| Center     | 30.1 |
| North East | 31.2 |
| North West | 31.1 |
| South      | 32.8 |
| Total      | 31.1 |

Other useful information comes from the analysis of the 1,000 respondents to both surveys, what enabled us to analyse the responses obtained on the ideal type of holidays according to the type of eno-gastronomic tourists obtained through the cluster analysis. As illustrated in Table 4, gourmet wine tourists are people who use more words connected to wine in describing their ideal vacation. These are people for whom wine is a cultural product strictly related to territory and, therefore, in defining their ideal vacation they are more willing to search for wine and food products related to the place they are visiting. In contrast, the accidental wine tourists have other interests on holidays, not necessarily connected to food and wine, as this group had the lowest proportion of words related to food and wine mentioned in their description of ideal holidays.

Table 4

**USE OF WINE AND FOOD WORDS IN DESCRIBING  
IDEAL VACATION BY TYPE OF TOURIST (%)**

| Type of tourist     | Use  |
|---------------------|------|
| Feast and festivals | 26.4 |
| Gourmet             | 44.9 |
| Accidental          | 37.3 |
| Teetotal            | 33.9 |
| Total               | 36.0 |

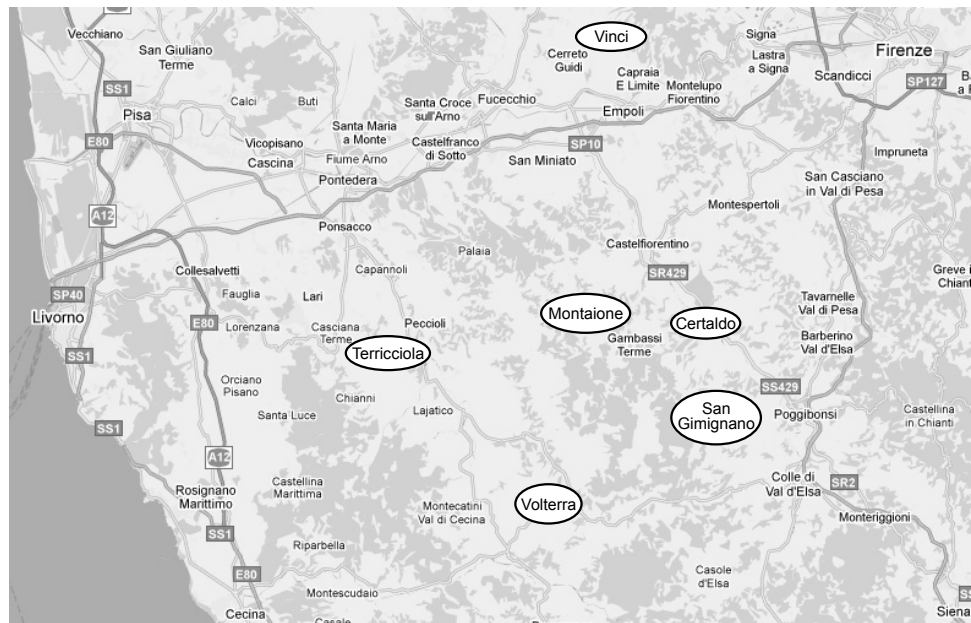
## Researching "real wine" tourists in Tuscany

As stated at the outset, we have attempted to obtain a profile of wine tourists by combining two methods – web-based survey of potential wine tourists and field survey of event visitors to profile, what we have called, 'real' wine tourists. To obtain profile of the latter group, we have conducted three field surveys in Tuscany – an area where wine is deeply embedded into the way of life. The first survey was carried out in 2005, on the participants to local festival "The Grape and Wine Feast" held in Terricciola; the second survey was done in 2007 in Volterra during the "AD1398" (a medieval reconstruction of life in 1398) event and during the special exhibition "Etruscans in Volterra"; the third survey was carried out in 2008, in four municipalities - San Gimignano, Certaldo, Vinci and Montaione – where also the main art cities of Tuscany are

located (Florence, Pisa and Siena). The second and third surveys were not focused on wine tourism, but some questions on the things the tourists were doing during the vacation were asked. The reason why we wanted to explore also these two surveys is related mainly to the fact that in Italy a vacation is composed by a mix of tourism: people are not only interested in culture but they decide to visit a place to discover culture but also to try local food and wine.

During festivals or special events, the most efficient way of data collection is via face-to-face interview. However, although classical pen and pencil can be used when surveying visitors to events, the advance of technology allowed more efficient data collection by using personal digital assistant (PDA). The PDA not only allowed faster data collection, but its use saved the subsequent costs associated with data entry. The challenge to design and implement a low cost and just in time survey can be addressed by using ICT tools (Romano, & Natilli, 2007). Therefore, we have interviewed "real" tourists face-to-face, using Personal Digital Assistants (PDA) to collect data. In this way, the task for the interviewers was easier because they could walk with the respondent through the festival area, without forcing him/her to stop at a fixed location.

Figure 2  
SURVEYS ON "REAL" TOURISTS: MAP OF THE SIX TUSCAN MUNICIPALITIES INVOLVED



Source: <http://maps.google.it/maps?hl=it&tab=wl>

Our population in all three studies was defined as all the visitors of the festivals or all people on holiday in the areas involved (location of municipalities is presented in Figure 2). Therefore, in contrast to the web-based survey, both domestic and foreign visitors were eligible to participate and we have obtained information about Italian region of residence or country of origin.

In Table 5 we report number of people reached, showing both the number of interviewed people (respondents) and the number of people reached. Given that a person generally does not travel alone, we asked how many people were in the group, so information like country or region of origin, vacation characteristics and transportations were known for all people (reached people), through the answers of the respondent.

Table 5.

**REAL TOURISTS SURVEYS:  
INTERVIEWED AND REACHED BY LOCATION AND YEAR**

| Location      | Year | Interviews | Tourists reached Italian | Tourists reached Foreigners |
|---------------|------|------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Terricciola   | 2005 | 294        | 771                      | 248                         |
| Volterra      | 2007 | 960        | 3,603                    | 733                         |
| Vinci         | 2008 | 582        | 897                      | 1,697                       |
| Certaldo      | 2008 | 584        | 523                      | 997                         |
| Montaione     | 2008 | 291        | 65                       | 1,364                       |
| San Gimignano | 2008 | 599        | 838                      | 2,127                       |

For the "The Grape and Wine Feast", in Terricciola (a small municipality nearby Pisa), respondents are loyal visitors to the festival, with 46% making frequent visits and further 42% visiting festival often (Table 6). Such high rate of festival attendance can be attributed to the long standing tradition of this event, which has been organised annually since 1962. This also helps explain the structure of the visitors in terms of their region of origin, where there is a sizeable proportion from outside the region. In terms of socio-demographics, those with higher education and technical skills (in terms of computer usage) were over-represented, indicating the real wine tourists are not much different from the potential ones identified through the web-based surveys.

Table 6.

**FREQUENCY OF VISITING THE WINE FESTIVAL BY VISITOR ORIGIN (%)**

| Frequency | Coming from |        |       |       |
|-----------|-------------|--------|-------|-------|
|           | Terricciola | Nearby | Other | Total |
| Never     | 23.0        | 5.1    | 17.9  | 11.2  |
| Sometimes | 52.5        | 41.2   | 35.7  | 42.5  |
| Often     | 18.0        | 40.7   | 41.1  | 36.1  |
| Always    | 6.6         | 13.0   | 5.4   | 10.2  |

In the field survey conducted in Volterra in 2007, we collected information on tourists participating in activities related to culture, but we asked some questions about the interest for and consumption of local products – food and especially wine – during vacation. Results reveal that almost the all respondents declared that they were going to visit the town and to taste local products (wine and food). This result support the assumption that wine and food is an integral part of the entire travel experience offered by a destination. Volterra respondents were characterised by high level of education - 38% of festival visitors and 51% of exhibition visitors were tertiary educated (Table 7). As in the case with visitors to the "The Grape and Wine Feast", they were better educated in comparison to the potential tourists surveyed via web.

Table 7  
**SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS  
OF RESPONDENTS**

| Characteristics | Event  |            |
|-----------------|--------|------------|
|                 | AD1398 | Exhibition |
| Age             |        |            |
| 18 -            | 4.3    | 1.7        |
| 19-25           | 7.2    | 4.1        |
| 26-35           | 22.7   | 10.8       |
| 36-45           | 30.2   | 29.3       |
| 46-55           | 20.9   | 25.5       |
| 56-70           | 12.9   | 25.5       |
| 70 +            | 1.8    | 3.0        |
| Education       |        |            |
| University      | 37.7   | 51.1       |
| High School     | 43.2   | 39.8       |
| Compulsory      | 19.1   | 9.0        |

In 2008, a field survey in Valdelsa area (Certaldo, Montaione, San Gimignano, Vinci) was conducted. The scope of this survey was to study the characteristics of tourists in these four municipalities. In this case, also, the survey was not focused solely on wine tourism, but we included many questions related to food and wine in order to understand the connections among different kind of tourism. As in the web-based survey, we have asked respondents to define their ideal holiday. The total number of descriptions was higher than the number of respondents, indicating that, for respondents, holiday was a mix of experience (Table 8). The most frequently mentioned are those relating to the cultural holiday (almost 8 out of 10), but almost 30% of tourists defined their holiday as wine and food. Moreover, it is interesting to notice that foreigners defined their holiday as wine and tourism vacation more than Italians did. This is probably due to the market position of Tuscany's tourism product, and to the fact that, for an Italian person, wine and food are seen as a "cultural product" of the territory.

Table 8  
**DEFINITION OF THE HOLIDAY (%)**

| Descriptors   | Italians | Foreigners |
|---------------|----------|------------|
| Cultural      | 76.7     | 57.5       |
| Wine and food | 27.1     | 33.1       |
| Green         | 22.8     | 34.0       |
| Relax         | 34.4     | 47.5       |
| Seaside       | 3.5      | 6.8        |
| Bath and term | 0.5      | 0.8        |
| Don't know    | 1.5      | 0.9        |

That wine and food are important aspects of holidays in Tuscany is also indicated by the high level of knowledge of the regional wine roads. In two (Vinci and San Gimignano) of four municipalities included in the surveys, wine roads are established. A sizeable proportion (40%) of respondents had knowledge of the wine routes, particularly in the light of the fact that not all can be considered wine tourist and large proportion of them are foreign visitors. When examining the socio-demographic profile of those

who have defined their holiday as food and wine based, there was still higher proportion of tertiary educated – 41% compared to the 38% of all respondents.

## Conclusions

The data just presented permit us to have a glance at domestic and foreign wine tourists in Italy. Although field surveys were carried out only in Tuscany, we have arguments to argue that these results can be extended to other Italian wine areas: for tourists in Italy there is a strong interaction among different types of tourism (i.e. cultural, green, etc.), and this is true both for Italians and foreigners. We believe that a comprehensive analysis of wine tourism in Italy should be carried out in peculiar forms than in other countries, in order to avoid distortion in data collection and interpretation. Approaching tourists only at wine events, or for few days in wineries, could lead to an underestimation of tourists. Moreover, the interest declared in wine and food need to be addressed on wine or special events, discovering new communication ideas to capture and guide mobility of tourists across the territory.

Interviewed enogastronomic travellers, and also other travellers, had a high education level and more than 2 out of 3 acquire information by Internet. These data confirm the validity of our approach consisting in analyzing both potential and real tourist. Furthermore, the web respondents are not so different from interviewed with respect to demographic characteristics.

It has to be highlighted anyway that probably Italy suffers of the lack of organized marketing of wine events: they could be better communicated to tourists both by web and more traditional ways in order to increase participation of tourists present in a territory to wine events in vineyards/wineries. The large amount of small firms is actually a serious obstacle to an effective marketing, and now, given the negative trend in international tourism that emerged during the second half of 2008 intensified in 2009 by the global recession (UNWTO, 2009), it is more and more crucial to support wine firms and to reinforce this kind of tourism. E-commerce could be another tool to extend relations between tourists (future potential customers) and wine firms, taking into account the need of high standard level of quality, as shown by our data. Summing up, the very last conclusion is that tourists feel wine as a product of a territory: they taste the territory through wine.

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## Note:

<sup>1</sup> Response Rate (RR2) is calculated as the number of complete or partial interviews divided by the number of interviews (complete plus partial) plus the number of non-interviews (refusal) as suggested by AAPOR 2009.

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