

TRENDS IN THE EVOLUTION OF VITICULTURE IN THE EUROPEAN INTEGRATION PROCESS

Monica Felicia DUMITRASCU (GOIA)¹

¹ Ph.D. Student, The Bucharest University of Economic Studies

Abstract

Viticulture has a long tradition in Romania with eight well-established regions that have the most favourable climate and soil conditions. The European integration represented a major challenge for all economic activities and viticulture was not an exception. The paper aims to outline the main trends of Romanian viticulture by considering the general aspects of this activity, the current legal provisions, Romania's position on the world wine market, and a number of development projects. It is researched the possibility of developing tourism for a better valuation of opportunities arising in the context of European integration process.

Keywords

Romania, viticulture, wine, tourism

Introduction

The research aims evaluating both the current state of marketing at a local level and regarding the wine-viticulture branch from the perspective of wine tourism; elaborating a predictive model for developing a marketing strategy in the wine tourism industry; validating the predictive model by the wine-viticulture experts in Romania. In doing this were necessary documentation regarding scientific works relevant to the field; statistical analysis of the relations, networks, interactions of importers-buyers within the wine-viticulture industry in Romania and mapping the results; quantity and quality analysis of the Romanian websites associated with the wine industry; econometric analysis of the data resulted from a social-economic poll on subjects from the countries within the European Union. The poll will take several parameters into consideration, such as age, sex, residence, income, studies, location, accessibility, pricing, attachment to location and so forth; expert opinion (the Delphi method) with specialists from a range of fields connected to the wine-viticulture industry for validating the proposed marketing strategy within the doctoral paper. At the end of the three year research period the goal is to narrow down the possibility of selecting a region that would benefit from the development of wine tourism both from a macro and micro-economical standpoints, organizing a database regarding the current relations between the various forces at work regarding the process of promoting of the wine industry in Romania, carrying out a poll with a minimum of 80 respondents from different member countries of the European Union in order to extract a potential profile of the tourist interested in wine tourism and elaborating a viable long-term marketing strategy in order to improve and promote Romanian wine areas at a larger scale. The wine tourism marketing strategy will also be handed out to serve as a guide to competent regional authorities. Some results of the first stages are summarized in this paper.

1. Literature review

Viticulture routes represent important touristic attraction at a global level and are often used as promotional touristic instruments at a much larger scale (Carlsen, 2006, Croce, 2010). In scientific literature, mostly international, developing viticulture tourism is seen as a long-term strategy (Hingley, 2002). More times than not, promoting touristic sites with a viticulture industry is performed by means of an online medium (Leighan, 2014), by means

of horizontal-type networks (Lewis, 2015) but also by means of often innovative tools adapted to the specifics of local environment (Richardson, 2003). Moreover, international scientific studies focus specifically on the consumer himself, many of the studies being carried out regarding his perception of the entire process (Govindsamay, 2014), this aspect having been also included in Romanian speciality studies (Păduraru, 2012).

2. General aspects of Romanian viticulture

Viticulture is an applied science that studies the morphological, biological and technological measures for cultivation of vines in order to establish modern technologies of cultivating, to ensure high yields and quality.

Viticulture was one of the major occupations of Mediterranean civilization of all time, occupying an important place in the material and spiritual culture. In time history has given an important position to this agricultural branch.

The core of wine symbolism is due to the fact that it is one of the first alcoholic drinks of the humanity, which, by the purity of its composition, has many qualities that place it among the top medicines ever used. Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, Jews used wine both as food and medicine, and ritual element, Bacchus liquor, the main symbol of Mediterranean civilization.



Fig. 1 Viticulture in Romania

Viticulture is an old activity in Romania, as the grapes and wine has represented for hundreds of years one of the greatest natural riches of the country. Over time, the Romanian wines have gained and preserved their fame, due to their quality, which placed our country, along with France, Spain, Italy, Germany or Portugal, among the largest wine manufacturers and exporters in Europe.

Our country has important differences in terms of ecoclimate. Due to these differences, the grapes maturation, for the same variety is 4-5 weeks earlier in Greaca (Giurgiu County) compared to Cluj-Napoca. Some differences are caused by the altitude, exposure, slope, the presence of river basins etc. This background generates the ecopedological differences that make the maturation in Dabuleni (Dolj County), on the ameliorated sands, for Muskat Pearl of Csaba grapes to be 4-5 days earlier compared to Zimnicele (Teleorman County).

Therefore, there are large habitats, named wine regions that, in general, overlap the historical provinces, representing certain particularities regarding the ecological conditions, the types

of grapes cultivated, the technologies applied, the level of yield, and the qualitative characteristics of the resulting wine products.

Given the particularities mentioned above, there are the following wine growing regions:

- I. Transylvania
- II. Hills of Moldova (Moldova)
- III. Hills of Wallachia (Muntenia)
- IV. Hills of Oltenia (Oltenia)
- V. Hills of Banat (Banat)
- VI. Hills of Crisana and Maramures (Crisana-Maramures)
- VII. Hills of Dobrogea (Dobrogea)
- VIII. Danube terraces (VIII), and sands and other favorable land from the south of the country (IX).

After 1990, with the restoration of land to former owners, vineyards started to be operated individually. In time, and requiring funds for replacement and/or proper maintenance, the quality of vine crops has started to degrade, which could be noticed in production and exports. The possibility to access grants changed the situation radically. At the moment, according to the data provided by the National Office of Vine and Wine products (ONVPV), in Romania there are 2,348.91 hectares cultivated with Feteasca Neagra, 12,972.56 hectares with Feteasca Regala, 12,850.58 hectares with Feteasca Alba, 11,407.38 hectares with Merlot, 6,567.80 hectares with Riesling, 6,333.12 hectares with Aligote, 4,973.38 hectares with Sauvignon, 4,832.71 hectares with Cabernet Sauvignon and 3,987.15 hectares with Muscat Ottonel.

Romania is among manufacturers of high quality wine, mainly to due to the European funds accessed. According to FAOSTAT, in 2010, Romania was the 21st wine manufactures, by the volume of yield, with 125,000 tons. The sales on wine on Romanian market increased in 2011 by 15%, approx. Euro 400 million, after decreasing in 2009 and 2010, according to National Vine and Wine Employers Organization (PNVV).

Romania is an important European wine manufacturer, having a rich history and tradition related to this drink, considered a divine liquor. Today, the country goes through important changes, building a future in accordance with the European Union standards and aspiring to become an appreciated member of the international community of wine manufacturers.

The 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century until World War were characterized by extensive and close ties with France. In the wine sector, those ties have culminated in practical help given by French winegrowers immediately after phylloxera ravages from the last two decades of the 19th century. The result was replanting everything, which was made with noble vines brought from France: Pinot Noir, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc and others.

These considerations are important, as our country is part of the EU and our domestic products compete with wine from countries with a much longer experience in manufacturing and marketing wines. In this regard, recent studies show that, in terms of value, productivity per hectare of vineyard is 6 times lower in Romania than in EU countries. The production of grapes per hectare in Romania amounts to 70% of the EU countries and wine production - 45%. At national level, there are several important actors, such as: Murfatlar Romania, Jidvei, Cotnari, Vincon Vrancea, Recas Winery, Carl Reh Winery and Halewood Winery.

3. Viticulture and legal provisions

However, most often, vine growing is a tradition that is passed and the specific procedures and techniques are learned through practice. For the effective work, unskilled workers are used, labor being, in this case, extremely cheap.

Besides the usual authorizations, which must be obtained in advance by any company for operating vineyards are required a specific number of licenses, including (depending on the case):

- Authorization to plant vines;
- Authorization for vineyards removal;
- Decision granting the right to produce wines with original name;
- Certificate of the right for marketing wines with designation of origin;
- Certificate for making distillates aging and bottling vineyards outside the designated area of origin claimed;
- License to carry out fermentation in bottles outside the designated area by the origin of the grapes.

The main laws in viticulture sector are: Law no. 244/2002 republished for the system of Vine and Wine Common Market Organization, published in the Official Gazette, Part I, No. 633 from 14/09/2007; Government Decision no. 1134/2002 approving the Methodological law enforcement of vineyard and wine law in the system of common market organization no. 244 / 2002, published in the Official Gazette, Part I, no. 798 from 04/11/2002; Decision no. 1228 of 1 October 2008 on the procedure of granting Community financial support producers in the wine sector; Decision no. 1228 from 1 October 2008 on the procedure of granting Community financial support producers in the wine sector; Order no. 581 of 15 September 2008 approving the Norms regarding financial support to wine producers who use concentrated grape must and / or concentrated grape must rectified to increase the natural alcoholic strength of fresh grapes, grape must, grape must in fermentation and new wine still in fermentation; Order no. 580 of 15 September 2008 concerning the withdrawal control of wine by-products; Order no. 572 of 4 September 2008 for approving the Implementation rules of the grubbing up of vineyards; Order no. 247 of 23 April 2008 on approving the Implementation rules program restructuring / reconversion of vineyards, with community support for campaigns conducted in 2008 / 2009-2013 / 2014; Order no. 224 of 7 April 2008 approving the Methodological Norms concerning the conditions of retail table wine in bulk; Order no. 142 of 29 February 2008 for approving the Implementation rules of Council Regulation (EEC) No. 1601/1991 on general rules on the definition, description and presentation of flavored wines, beverages based on flavored wine and flavored wine-product cocktails; Order no. 487 of 27 July 2009 approving the model of winegrower booklet and its implementation for marketing wine grape production; Order no. 408 of 24 June 2009 amending the Annex to the Order of the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Forestry no. 397/2003 approving the nomination and employment settlements viticulture areas on wine regions, vineyard and viticulture centers and some other rules and regulations.

4. Romania's place on the world wine market

In terms of the surface cultivated with vines, as the production of wine grapes and Romania is among the top 10 wine-producing countries in the world, having an advantageous position compared to other European countries

- Rank 5 - area planted with vines (5.8% of the total area cultivated in Europe) after countries like Spain, France, Italy and Portugal.
- Rank 6 in terms of grape production (3.6% of total European production) after Italy, France, Spain, Germany and Greece.
- Rank 6 in terms of wine production (2.9% of total European production) after France, Italy, Spain, Germany and Portugal.

5. Development projects

Romania aims at a complex, interdisciplinary approach, concentrating on both vineyard issues, and ampelographic, agro-chemical, physiological, agro-technical and plant protection, as this is the only way to develop sustainable and performing viticulture. In this regards, attention should be paid to the following aspects:

1. Assessment of ecological, biological and technological resources in wine-growing areas from the west of Romania.

Lately, there have been large fluctuations of climatic factors, influencing the vineyards, which require a review of climatic resources and adaptation to new technologies, in the given conditions.

2. Sequential tracking of technologies from the reference areas

Usually, there are the same technologies inherited from generation to generation, therefore, the results are unsatisfactory, incomparable with those obtained in European wine holdings. It therefore requires an accurate inventory of these technologies, with their advantages and disadvantages.

3. The development of new culture technologies, taking into account the variety, ecological resources and requirements of sustainable viticulture.

Given the new climate, ecological, social and economic context, it is necessary to have a close interdisciplinary cooperation that considers these changes and develops new sustainable technologies that include, the updates and innovating solutions from the advanced viticulture of European countries, and the ecological conditions specific to our areas, and the variety of grapes cultivated.

The development of these technologies must focus on the principles of sustainable viticulture, that aim to increase the quality of the products and reduce the harmful impact on environment, quality of life, the ultimate goal being to obtain products friendly for the human body.

4. Comparative analysis of five technological models, identifying the positive and negative aspects on production and quality.

By proposing new technologies, we have the means of comparison, a sustainable alternative to classical technologies, being beneficial for the holdings.

5. Identification of varieties suitable for the new technological models.

In the reference wine areas, there is a large variety of grapes and biotypes, including local ones that are not researched sufficiently, therefore we intend to revitalize them.

From this rich wine germplasm, as a result of the research, should be selected the valuable types and biotypes, suitable for sustainable technologies that also bring the necessary authenticity of the vine products.

6. The development of the most technological models for each area, taking into account the lack of workforce.

New cultivation technologies shall be developed, focusing on soil and environment protection. Within these technologies, experiments shall be made with various technological sequences:

- Soil maintenance systems: biological systems, using plants for green manure, black field;
- Differentiated fertilization: green manure, manure, composted pomace;
- Differential fruit load depending on variety, block, natural conditions, and destination of the production;
- Different works and green operations;
- Integrated control of pests and diseases with emphasis on non-polluting biological measures;
- Determining the optimal moment for harvesting depending on the destination of the production.

7. Implementation and popularization of new technological models.

New durable technologies shall be made available to all interested parties through publication in books, manuals, magazines, debates, seminars, roundtables, demonstrations.

8. Monitoring the new technologies and their influence in the quality of vine products and efficient holdings.

The research team and its partners and collaborators should monitor the way the new technologies contribute to durable development of each wine area and efficiency of activities and holdings.

Conclusion

Romania is an important wine-growing area with a large share in Romanian viticulture. It offers favorable natural conditions for growing vine varieties especially for high-quality wines. The geographical location and infrastructure superior to other wine regions, attracted a large number of investors in Romania, in recent years, thus contributing the revival of viticulture.

As a result of the investments made, many new holdings producing wine replaced the old plantations, increasing performance.

However, in the reference areas there are many vineyards occupied with vines in poor biological conditions that require replacement with young plantations, demanded on the international market.

There are many small properties, and cannot be operated efficiently by mechanization, therefore they should merge and the properties should be regrouped. Many owners do not have the necessary knowledge or money needed for efficient plantations. For each area, new technologies are necessary, taking into account the ecological resources of the cultivated area, representing possible models for small producers that are not specialized in this field, but still want to work the plantations themselves.

References

1. Carlsen, J., Charters, S. 2006. *Global Wine Tourism: Research, Management and Marketing*, CABI (CAB International).
2. Comisia Prezidențială pentru Politici Publice de Dezvoltare a Agriculturii (2013) – *Cadrul Național Strategic pentru Dezvoltarea Durabilă a Agriculturii și a Spațiului Rural pentru Perioada 2014 - 2020 – 2030*.
3. Croce, E., Perri, G. 2010. *Food and Wine Tourism*, CABI (CAB International).
4. Govindasamay, R., Kelley, K. 2014. *Agritourism consumer's participation in wine tasting events: An econometric analysis*. Revised and resubmitted to the International Journal of Wine Business Research 26(2):120-138.
5. Hingley, M., Lindgreen, A. 2002. *Marketing of agricultural products: case findings*, British Food Journal (104)10: 806-827
6. Leighann, N., Judith, M. 2014. *Using winery web sites to attract wine tourists: an international comparison*, International Journal of Wine Business Research, 26(1): 2-26
7. Lewis, G.K., Byrom, J., Grimmer, M. 2015. *Collaborative marketing in a premium wine region: the role of horizontal networks*, International Journal of Wine Business Research, 27(3).
8. Paduraru, C., Boboc, D., Ion, R.A. 2012. *Marketing research on producers' perceptions about wine promotion*, International Journal of Food, Agriculture & Environment 10(3&4).
9. Richardson, O., Dennis, C. 2003. *UK vineyards sector case study: Analysis of retail activities using exemplar strategic marketing tools*, British Food Journal, 105(9): 634-652
10. Zahiu, L., Dachin, A., Manole, V., Boboc, B., Zaharia, C., Ion, R.A., Turek, M., Subic, J., Popescu, C., Zaharia, I. 2009. *Analiza filierei sectorului vitivinicol in Romania*, Editura Ars Academica.