vinetur

Sicilia DOC Launches Academy to Train Wineries in Tourism, Technology and Energy Use

Consortium-funded courses will cover hospitality, winemaking innovation and energy efficiency for professionals across the Sicilia DOC sector.

Friday, September 25, 2026



The Consorzio di Tutela Vini DOC Sicilia said Friday that it is starting a new training program for its member wineries, an effort the group says is meant to help Sicilian producers respond to changes in tourism, production technology and energy use.

The program, called DOC Sicilia Academy, will be paid for by the consortium and offered to professionals working across the Sicilia DOC wine sector. The organization said the courses will focus on three main areas: wine tourism and hospitality, winery innovation and winemaking technology, and energy efficiency and sustainability.

The announcement was made in Palermo by the consortium, which represents the Sicilia DOC denomination. Camillo Pugliesi, the group’s director, said training has become necessary as producers face shifting consumer demand, higher operational pressures and a more competitive market. He said the academy is intended to give wineries practical tools rather than general guidance, especially in areas tied to direct sales, visitor experiences and production performance.

A large part of the program will center on wine tourism, which the consortium described as an increasingly important business line for Sicilian wineries. The courses are expected to cover hospitality management, business development and access to new markets. The consortium said it wants wineries to treat visitor reception as a core part of the business, not only as an add-on to production.

That focus reflects broader tourism trends on the island. The consortium cited an Italian Ministry of Tourism report forecasting that occupancy at accommodation facilities in Sicily would reach 63% between June 15 and September 15, above the national average of 58.9%. The group said those figures point to continued demand for travel experiences linked to local identity, food and wine, and rural destinations.

For many wineries, that trend carries financial importance beyond tasting-room traffic. Direct contact with visitors can create new sales channels, strengthen brand recognition and encourage repeat purchases after travelers return home. In Sicily, where wine production is tied closely to regional identity and landscape, the consortium is betting that stronger hospitality skills can help producers capture more value from the island’s visitor economy.

The academy will also include technical training for winery operations. According to the consortium, the curriculum will cover sensory identification of wine faults, production and tasting of traditional method and Charmat sparkling wines, methods for making modern rosé and red wines, and the molecular basis of wine aromas. The stated goal is to help wineries update technical knowledge and improve product quality in a market where consumer preferences and production standards continue to evolve.

A separate group of courses will address energy management and sustainability, areas that have become more pressing as producers face higher utility costs and pressure to reduce environmental impact. The consortium said those modules will examine energy consumption monitoring, production process optimization, photovoltaic systems, energy storage, energy communities and how to assess the economics of new investments. The program is designed to help wineries cut costs and improve operational efficiency while adapting to stricter environmental expectations.

The launch of the academy also reflects the scale of the Sicilia DOC system. The consortium said the denomination includes nearly 8,000 winegrowers and about 500 bottlers. Created in 2012, the organization is responsible for promoting and protecting the Sicilia DOC label, both in the interest of producers and consumers.

The consortium said Sicily is Italy’s largest organic wine-growing area, accounting for 30% of the country’s total organic vineyard surface. It added that the island has more than 42,000 hectares under either organic or integrated production standards, placing it first among Italian regions using sustainable viticulture practices on that basis.

The new program comes as wine producers in Italy and elsewhere are under pressure to diversify revenue, improve efficiency and respond to changing patterns in tourism and consumption. For Sicilian wineries, that means balancing traditional production with newer demands tied to visitor services, technology upgrades and energy planning. Through the academy, the consortium is trying to move those issues from the margins of winery management to the center of day-to-day business decisions.