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Alentejo Wine Chief Urges Producers to Pursue Higher Value

At a Lisbon event, Luís Sequeira said quality, sustainability and wine tourism offer the region its best defense in a changing market.

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A wine and food event focused on Portugal's Alentejo region brought producers, retail guests and tourism officials to El Corte Inglés in Lisbon on Thursday evening, where the discussion centered on how one of the country's best-known wine regions is trying to

respond to changes in the global wine business.

La Vida Ibérica, Lda. and the Lisbon branch of El Corte Inglés hosted the session at 6:30 p.m. in the Sala de Âmbito Cultural on the sixth floor of the department store. The event was part of the “Sabores e Paladares Ibéricos” series and carried the title “Um Alentejano cai sempre bem,” a phrase that linked the evening to Alentejo’s wines, food and regional identity.

The main speaker was Luís Sequeira, president of the Comissão Vitivinícola Regional Alentejana, or CVRA, the regional body responsible for Alentejo wines. His presentation, titled “Wine Sector: Crisis or Opportunity,” focused on what organizers described as deep changes affecting the wine trade and on the options open to producers as consumer habits shift.

According to information released by the organizers, Sequeira began with the evolution of global wine consumption and argued that Alentejo’s response should be built around higher value, product quality and clearer differentiation in the market. His remarks were framed around the need to strengthen the entire Alentejo wine chain rather than treating production, promotion and tourism as separate activities.

The presentation also touched on the region’s strategic wine plan, sustainability, marketing, export markets, wine tourism, viticulture, enology, inspection and oversight, and research and development. Organizers said Sequeira also promoted a broader vision of regional development in which wine is presented alongside olive oil, gastronomy, cultural heritage and tourism as part of a single visitor experience.

That message reflects a wider debate now underway across European wine regions, where producers are weighing weaker consumption in some mature markets, changing tastes, environmental pressures and the need to defend margins with more distinct products. In Alentejo, the issue is especially important because the region has spent years building a strong domestic image while also trying to improve its position in international markets.

The evening included a tasting of five wines intended to represent different strands of contemporary winemaking in Alentejo. The wines were from Cananó, Rocim, Paço do Conde, Quinta da Pigarça and Adega das Flores. Organizers said the selection was designed to show both stylistic variety and some of the priorities shaping the region's current strategy, including Vinhos de Talha, or amphora wines, old-vine production and the PSVA, the sustainability program for Alentejo wines.

Food pairings were also central to the event. Guests were served Évora DOP cheese, Serpa DOP cheese, black pork ham and black pork chorizo, together with olive oil and honey from Paço do Conde. The tasting format underlined a message often advanced by regional promoters in Portugal and Spain: that wine sells more effectively when presented as part of a wider food and travel offer, especially in regions that depend on rural tourism and protected local products.

The setting was also significant. By holding the event at El Corte Inglés in Lisbon, the organizers placed a rural producing region inside one of the capital's best-known commercial venues, using a retail and cultural space to reach an urban audience that may include both consumers and trade buyers. No attendance figure was released, but the program was presented as part of an ongoing series aimed at publicizing Iberian territories through talks, tastings and tourism promotion.

The session moved beyond Portugal in its final part, when representatives of the government of Extremadura introduced "Outono Mágico do Vale do Ambroz," or "Autumn Magic of the Ambroz Valley," a seasonal initiative in the neighboring Spanish region. Organizers said the presentation was intended to create a symbolic link across the Iberian border by highlighting two nearby territories with strong food traditions, shared rural landscapes and closely connected tourism interests.