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Green Wine Tourism Conference in Portugal

International Wine Tourism Conference to Highlight Green Practices in Portugal

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In the heart of Portugal's Douro and Tâmega regions, renowned for their historical connection to wine production, an exciting event will be held this October: the International Conference on Wine Tourism titled "Wine Tourism with a Green Sense: Heritage, Communication, and Innovation". This gathering, organized as part of the Verde Sentido project by the Associação de Municípios do Douro e Tâmega (Association of Municipalities of Douro and Tâmega), will be hosted in Amarante on October 3rd and 4th, 2024. The event is supported by the international network Great Wine Capitals, a

global benchmark for excellence in wine tourism, and is set to address the future of wine tourism through a sustainable lens.

The Verde Sentido project aims to elevate the Douro and Tâmega regions as premier ecotourism destinations, intertwining wine tourism with the area's rich cultural heritage, culinary traditions, and natural landscapes. With an emphasis on the distinctive Vinho Verde wines and regional gastronomy, the conference will shine a spotlight on integrating innovation with tradition to create a sustainable and competitive future for wine tourism in these areas.

The event is an international collaboration, drawing in experts from across the globe to present on key issues facing the wine tourism industry. The opening session will feature prominent regional leaders, including the Mayor of Amarante, representatives from the Association of Douro and Tâmega Municipalities, and Catarina Santos Cunha, a Porto City Councilor. Their speeches will emphasize the importance of this initiative for the region's future growth and the need for a balance between environmental sustainability and economic development.

One of the highlights of the opening day will be a presentation on Great Wine Capitals' 25 years of global collaboration, exploring how this network has fostered sustainable wine tourism development through knowledge sharing and innovative practices. Another important presentation will introduce the Green Sense: Tasting Experiences project, part of an enogastronomic route designed to offer tourists immersive experiences centered on local wines and cuisine.

The conference will further explore three major themes across a series of panel discussions featuring experts from leading wine-producing regions such as Rioja (Spain), Rheinhessen (Germany), Verona (Italy), and Saint-Émilion (France). These discussions are as follows:

- **Technological Development and Innovation in Wine Tourism Destinations:** This panel will delve into how emerging technologies, including digital platforms, data analytics, and automation, can be harnessed to enhance visitor experiences and streamline operations at wineries and vineyards. Experts from various regions will offer insights on how technology has become an integral

part of the visitor experience, especially in the post-pandemic era where virtual tours and online wine-tasting experiences have surged in popularity.

- **Round Table:** Best Practices in the Enogastronomic Route "Green Sense": This round table will highlight case studies from the Verde Sentido initiative and other successful wine tourism projects. It will explore how integrating food tourism with wine routes can deepen visitor engagement, promote local producers, and contribute to the preservation of culinary heritage. The discussion will offer actionable insights for creating compelling tourist experiences that fuse the flavors of the land with the art of winemaking.
- **Communication in Wine Tourism:** Dialogue between UNESCO Heritage and Wine Regions: This session will focus on how to effectively communicate the unique values of wine regions that are also UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Participants from regions like Porto (Portugal), Lausanne (Switzerland), and Saint-Émilion (France) will explore strategies for preserving and promoting the cultural, historical, and environmental significance of these landscapes in the context of global tourism. The intersection of heritage conservation and modern tourism demands will be central to this discussion, especially as these regions navigate the complexities of increasing visitor numbers while safeguarding their authenticity.

At the heart of this conference lies the theme of sustainability, with the organizers and participants emphasizing the importance of a balanced approach to tourism development. For the Douro and Tâmega regions, home to some of Portugal's most celebrated wine-producing areas, environmental stewardship is paramount. This is not only to preserve the natural beauty of the landscapes but also to ensure that the region remains attractive to future generations of tourists and wine lovers.

The conference will highlight sustainable tourism models that respect both the environment and the local communities. With the increasing global awareness of climate change and the pressures it places on agricultural practices, many wine-producing regions are turning toward eco-friendly methods in their vineyards, from reducing pesticide use to implementing water conservation strategies. By sharing these practices, the conference aims to foster a collective commitment to reducing the environmental footprint of wine tourism.

Verde Sentido and Regional Development

The Verde Sentido project, developed by the Association of Douro and Tâmega Municipalities, extends its reach across the municipalities of Amarante, Baião, Celorico de Basto, Marco de Canaveses, and Resende. Recently, the project has also included Cabeceiras de Basto and Mondim de Basto, demonstrating a growing regional collaboration aimed at promoting both economic and social sustainability.

One of the driving forces behind the Verde Sentido initiative is the aspiration to develop competitive advantages for the region. The focus is not solely on attracting visitors but on fostering long-term growth that benefits local communities and businesses. By promoting a unified strategy that highlights the region's strengths—its wines, landscapes, and culinary heritage—the project is laying the foundation for a thriving wine tourism industry that can compete on an international stage.

The International Conference on Wine Tourism in Amarante marks a pivotal moment for the Douro and Tâmega regions. With a focus on innovation, heritage, and sustainable practices, the conference promises to set the agenda for the future of wine tourism not only in Portugal but globally. As the wine industry continues to evolve, with sustainability and cultural preservation at its core, events like this one are essential for fostering collaboration and sharing knowledge. Ultimately, Verde Sentido and its partners are building a roadmap for a greener, more inclusive future in wine tourism.

As this prestigious event approaches, anticipation is growing. Stakeholders, wine enthusiasts, and tourism professionals alike look forward to what promises to be a landmark conference, paving the way for a new era of wine tourism that prioritizes environmental responsibility and the celebration of local heritage.