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UK Wine Tourism Sees 55% Growth, Contributes 25% to Vineyard Revenue

WineGB urges government policy changes to sustain momentum, highlighting sector's importance to rural economy and potential visitor base.

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WINE TOURISM IN NUMBERS

WineGB surveys members each year to track key growth trends. Over 130 members replied to the 2024 Industry Survey, which together account for over 90% of wine production in the UK.

300 vineyards and wineries involved in wine tourism

Top tourism activities:



260 guided tours and tastings



275 cellar doors and shops

103 venue hire





97 self-guided tours



92 places to stay



38 picnic areas



92 places to eat

WINEGB
WINES OF GREAT BRITAIN

Wine tourism in the UK is experiencing remarkable growth, now contributing 25% of vineyard revenue. Last year, 1.5 million visits were recorded, marking a 55% increase from 2022. WineGB, the industry body, is advocating for policy changes to sustain this momentum. The WineGB Tourism Report 2024 emphasizes the sector's importance to the rural economy and suggests actions to support further expansion. With a potential visitor base of 16 million, WineGB is urging the government to implement policies that could unlock the sector's full potential.

Currently, 60% of producers anticipate over 20% growth in visitor numbers over the next five years. WineGB has identified seven key actions needed to support the sector's continued expansion. These include introducing a Cellar Door Duty Relief scheme similar to Australia's, which would encourage sales and boost tourism. Increased funding for national and regional tourism bodies is also recommended to promote wine tourism more effectively. Additionally, reinstating tax-free shopping and reducing entry visa costs could attract more international visitors.

Improving planning and infrastructure is another priority. WineGB suggests a more consistent planning process with specialized officers and investment in rural transport and digital connectivity. Expanding education programs to ensure a skilled workforce is also crucial. Reducing the high costs of brown tourist signs would make vineyards more accessible.

According to the report, 60% of WineGB members plan to invest in tourism, focusing on food offerings, events, and accommodation. The sector has benefited from collaborations, such as training initiatives with VisitEngland and Knight Frank to enhance visitor experiences. WineGB is set to launch ‘The WineGB Guide to UK Wine Tourism’ ahead of the August Bank Holiday, showcasing top vineyard experiences, including tours, tastings, and cultural events.

The report, launched during English Wine Week 2024, aims to inform producers, the trade, and policymakers about the sector's value and the actions needed to accelerate its growth. It highlights that around 300 vineyards and wineries are involved in tourism, offering activities like cellar doors, guided tours, venue hire, accommodation, and dining. Wine tourism accounts for 25% of total income for surveyed producers, and

60% plan to invest further in tourism, targeting food, events, and accommodation.

WineGB is actively working to support the sector through collaboration, representation, education, and communication. They have formed a Tourism Working Group to bring together regional groups and members. They are also advocating for the sector through membership in the Tourism Alliance. Training initiatives include 'Placemaking' workshops with Knight Frank and inbound tourism training with VisitEngland.

The report calls on the government to implement seven key policy changes to accelerate growth. These include introducing a tax relief scheme on cellar door sales, providing better funding for Local Visitor Economy Partnerships, and increasing budgets for national tourism boards. Making the UK more attractive by reintroducing tax-free shopping and making entry visas more affordable is also recommended. Improving the planning system for vineyard applications and enhancing cooperation to develop tailored training for wine tourism skills are crucial. Prioritizing investment in essential rural infrastructure and making official brown tourist signs affordable and accessible are also necessary.

In summary, the report presents a compelling case for UK wine tourism as a thriving industry crucial for rural economies. It clearly outlines the support and policy changes needed from the government to unlock its full potential. With wine tourism proving to be a vital part of the rural economy, all eyes are on policymakers to support its continued growth.