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Brazilian Coffee Region Reinvents Itself as Emerging Wine Tourism Hub

Espírito Santo do Pinhal and neighboring towns see rapid growth in vineyards, hospitality investments, and visitor demand despite challenges.

Monday, September 8, 2025



In less than twenty years, Espírito Santo do Pinhal, a city in the interior of São Paulo state, and neighboring towns in the Serra dos Encontros region have undergone a significant transformation. Once known for their coffee plantations, these areas are now

emerging as a new center for wine production in Brazil. According to data from TurisAgro, the region currently has 47 structured wine projects spread over more than 200 hectares of vineyards. Annual production has reached 1.5 million bottles.

The growth of viticulture in this part of Brazil is closely linked to wine tourism. The proximity to major urban centers such as São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, and Belo Horizonte has helped attract visitors interested in wine-related experiences. These include guided tours of vineyards, tastings, and educational activities about winemaking. For many local entrepreneurs, tourism now accounts for more than half of their revenue and is essential for making investments in the sector viable.

Producers in Espírito Santo do Pinhal and nearby towns have invested heavily in infrastructure aimed at tourists. New restaurants, wine bars, and hospitality projects are being developed to meet growing demand. The Merum winery in Espírito Santo do Pinhal was designed as a hospitality complex from the start. In Jacutinga, Minas Gerais, the Terra de Carvalho winery has invested 22 million reais in a project that will include a hotel by 2027.

Despite these investments, the region still faces challenges in meeting visitor demand for accommodation. Estimates suggest there is a shortage of up to 3,000 beds across the area. This gap highlights both the rapid growth of wine tourism and the need for further development in hospitality services.

Wine tourism has also become a survival strategy for producers during the early years when vineyards are not yet producing at commercial scale. Many properties open their doors to visitors before their first harvests are ready for sale. By offering tours and tastings, they generate income that helps sustain operations until wine production ramps up. This approach allows for a faster return on investment compared to relying solely on bottle sales through traditional retail channels.

However, there are obstacles to overcome. High prices remain a concern for both producers and visitors. Bottles often sell for more than 150 reais each, while tours can cost over 300 reais per person. Producers also face the challenge of establishing a distinct identity for local wines in a competitive market.

Even with these hurdles, investors see long-term potential for sustainable growth if production and tourism can be balanced effectively. The transformation of Espírito Santo do Pinhal and its neighbors from coffee lands into a wine destination reflects broader changes in Brazilian agriculture and tourism. As more visitors seek out unique experiences close to major cities, regions like Serra dos Encontros are likely to play an increasingly important role in the country’s wine industry.