

9th UN Tourism Global Conference on Wine Tourism

The Art of Wine Tourism

6-7 October 2025, Plovdiv, Bulgaria

Provisional Programme

Background and Objectives

Wine tourism stands at the intersection of cultural heritage, regional development, and creative expression. As the sector evolves, it increasingly embraces not only the tradition of winemaking itself, but also a wide array of complementary art forms and creativity that deepen the visitor experience and foster meaningful connections with places, people and stories.

The 9th UN Tourism Global Conference on Wine Tourism, to be held in **Plovdiv, Bulgaria**, a city with winemaking traditions dating back over 5,000 years and a rich cultural legacy shaped by centuries of history, will explore the theme “**The Art of Wine Tourism.**” This edition will highlight the multi-faceted relationship between wine tourism and the arts, positioning both as vital tools for protecting heritage, promoting creativity and enhancing the attractiveness of rural and wine-producing destinations.

The conference will broaden the definition of "art" to include architecture, music, literature, visual and performing arts, but also the art of culinary traditions, of hospitality, design, as well as digital and experiential storytelling. From vineyard landscapes and traditional winemaking techniques to the crafting of wine glasses and the staging of immersive tastings, every aspect of the wine tourism value chain is a form of art worthy of discovery, preservation, and celebration.

This shows that wine tourism is a stage for cultural exchange, sustainable local development and innovative experiences that resonate with diverse travellers, including younger generations and those seeking low- or no-alcohol options.

Through a dynamic programme of **panel discussions, expert presentations, masterclasses, and thematic visits**, the Conference will bring together **policy makers, destinations, entrepreneurs, academicians and experts** from around the world. The aim is to explore how wine tourism can:

- Serve as a driver of **economic diversification and social inclusion**;
- Promote the **preservation of cultural traditions and heritage**;
- Leverage **art and creativity** to enhance visitor engagement and community pride;
- Support **regional cohesion and resilience** in the face of global change;
- **Foster environmental sustainability** and protect biodiversity;
- Embrace innovation to shape the **future of tourism in wine regions**.

By showcasing both established and emerging practices, and encouraging collaboration across sectors, the 9th UN Tourism Global Conference on Wine Tourism will reaffirm the sector's role as a catalyst for sustainable development—where the art of winemaking and the art of experience come together in one of Europe's most culturally rich wine destinations.

Sunday, 5 October 2025

(Time TBC) *Arrival of international participants (pick-up from Sofia and Plovdiv airport to official hotels provided to those who completed registration)*

Venue: “Boris Hristov” House of Culture

15:00 – 18:00 Registration

17:00 – 19:30 *Visit of the Bishop’s Basilica of Philippopolis and the Urban Wine Festival (optional, for registered participants only)*

Venue: Plovdiv Drama Theatre

19:30 – 22:00 **Welcome Cocktail** - Welcome remarks

Monday, 6 October 2025

Venue: “Boris Hristov” House of Culture

09:00 – 09:30 *Transfer from official hotels to venue¹*

09:00 – 10:00 **Registration**

10:00 – 11:00 **Opening Ceremony**

- Mr. Kostadin Dimitrov, Mayor of Plovdiv
- Mr. Georgi Tahov, Minister of Agriculture and Food of Bulgaria
- Mr. Zurab Pololikashvili, Secretary-General, UN Tourism
- Mr. Miroslav Borshosh, Minister of Tourism of Bulgaria

Masters of Ceremonies: Ms. Lili Barzeva and Mr. Mark Fowler

11:00 – 11:15 **Blend the Art of Bulgarian Wine**

Krasimira Kodukova, Board Member, Bulgarian Association of Wine Professionals (BAWP)

11:15 – 12:00 **High Level Session: Wine Tourism as a Driver of Sustainable Development – Co-creating new opportunities**

This session will explore the opportunities and key enablers for developing and promoting wine tourism as a driver of sustainable and inclusive tourism development. It will highlight national strategies, policy frameworks, and collaborative initiatives that support innovation, cross-border cooperation, and regional route development. Particular focus will be placed on strategic partnerships and coordinated efforts to position wine tourism as a competitive and integrated segment within broader tourism agendas.

Moderator: Cordula Wohlmuther, Regional Director for Europe, UN Tourism

¹ Detailed transfer schedules will be available at the official hotels.

Speakers:

- H.E. Ms. Irena Georgieva, Deputy Minister of Tourism of Bulgaria
- H.E. Ms. Anna Karamanli, Deputy Minister of Tourism of Greece
- Dr. Elif Balci Fisunoğlu, Vice General Manager, Tourism Operations & Development, Türkiye Tourism Promotion and Development Agency (TGA)
- Ms. Irena Todorova, Executive Director of the UNESCO Regional Office in Sofia
- Mr. Andrej Orlandic, Director General of Ministry of Tourism of Montenegro

12:00 – 12:15

Get Inspired! Sculpting the Future of Wine Tourism: The Tenute Lunelli Journey

Keynote by Camilla Lunelli, Communication and Sustainability Director, Gruppo Lunelli (Italy)

12:15 – 13:00

Wine Tourism and the Arts: What makes an experience unique

Integrating the arts into wine tourism—whether through gastronomy, music, design, or cultural expression—adds emotional depth and a strong sense of place to the visitor experience. As travellers increasingly seek authentic, creative, and inclusive activities, there is a growing opportunity to reimagine how wine tourism is designed and delivered. This session will explore how destinations and businesses can create distinctive experiences that connect wine with diverse forms of art, appeal to evolving audiences (including the sober-curious), and elevate the identity of wine regions. It will also examine how innovation across the value chain, strategic partnerships, and emerging technologies like AI and blockchain can enhance authenticity, traceability, and personalization, while generating shared value for communities, visitors, and the environment.

Moderator: Sandra Carvao, Director of Market Intelligence, Policies and Competitiveness (UN Tourism)

Speakers:

- Gergana Todorova, CEO, WineTours.bg (Bulgaria)
- Pilar Rodríguez, Chef of Food&Wine Studio Restaurant at Viu Manent Winery; UN Tourism Ambassador for Gastronomy Tourism (Chile)
- Nicolas Manfredini, CEO, Winalist (France)
- Camilla Lunelli, Communication and Sustainability Director, Gruppo Lunelli (Italy)

13:00 – 13:30

Tour of Wine Exhibition led by HE the Minister of Tourism of Bulgaria

A guided tasting of Bulgaria's rich winemaking traditions, featuring indigenous grape varieties such as Mavrud, Rubin, and Shiroka Melnishka Loza, which embody the history and character of Bulgaria's wine regions. Expert sommeliers and winemakers will be on hand to share insights into the unique terroir and techniques behind each bottle.

Venue: 2019 Exhibition Hall, City Art Gallery

13:30 – 15:30

Lunch

15:30 – 16:00

*Transfer from venue to masterclasses locations***Venue(s):** Various locations

16:00 – 17:30

Thematic Masterclasses

In a highly interactive and participative atmosphere, participants will have the opportunity to gain in-depth insights into a topic of their choice, while exchanging challenges and exploring solutions to issues facing the industry.

- **Masterclass 1 - A Culinary Canvas: Enhancing Wine Tourism through Gastronomic Art** (Plovdiv Regional Ethnographic Museum)

Explore how local cuisine, culinary traditions, and creative food pairings can elevate wine tourism experiences and strengthen the connection between territory, identity, and taste. The session will also discuss sustainable practices across the entire wine tourism experience, from eco-friendly production methods to waste reduction and resource conservation, emphasizing the role of sustainability in wine pairing and gastronomy.

Speaker: Pilar Rodríguez, Chef of Food&Wine Studio Restaurant at Viu Manent Winery; UN Tourism Ambassador for Gastronomy Tourism (Chile)

- **Masterclass 2 - Staging the Moment: The Role of Events in Wine Tourism** ("Boris Hristov" House of Culture)

Discover how cultural, artistic, and seasonal events can activate wine tourism destinations, attract diverse audiences, and create memorable experiences that blend storytelling, place, and celebration.

Speaker: Annareth Bolton, Freelance Event Organizer and Project Manager, Destinate (South Africa)

- **Masterclass 3 - Spaces that Speak: Culture, Museums and the Power of Place in Wine Tourism** (Bishop's Basilica of Philippopolis)

Explore how cultural spaces—such as museums, interpretive centres, and thoughtfully designed wineries—play a vital role in showcasing local identity, honouring the terroir, and offering immersive experiences that attract both domestic and international visitors. This session will highlight how architecture, storytelling, and cultural programming can elevate a wine destination's appeal while reinforcing its authenticity and sense of place.

Speaker: Ana Gallego Palacio, Marketing, Communications & Wine Tourism Leader Bodega ENATE (Spain)

- **Masterclass 4 - Lights, Camera, Terroir: Audiovisual Storytelling in Wine Tourism** (City Art Gallery)

Explore how wine tourism experiences can be brought to life through powerful storytelling, creative interpretation, and engaging cultural narratives. This masterclass will highlight how wineries and destinations use a range of tools—from visual arts and design to immersive experiences and digital content—to convey the identity of a place, celebrate its terroir, and connect emotionally with diverse audiences. Learn how thoughtful communication strategies can inspire visitors, elevate local heritage, and position wine tourism as a meaningful cultural experience.

Speaker: Emanuele Trono, President, Enodigital (Italy)

17:30

Transfer back to official hotels

19:00 *Transfer from official hotels to gala dinner venue*

Venue: Regional History Museum Plovdiv

19:30 – 20:10 **Opera and Reception** (for all participants)

20:10 – 20:30 *Transfer for all international participants to Grand Hotel Plovdiv*

Venue: Grand Hotel Plovdiv

21:00 – 23:00 **Gala Dinner** (for all international participants)

22:00 – 23:00 *Transfer back to official hotels*

Tuesday, 7 October 2025

Venue: “Boris Hristov” House of Culture

08:30 – 09:00 *Transfer from official hotels to venue*

09:30 – 09:45 **Sharing is Caring**

In this interactive session, participants will be encouraged to engage in the conversation via a live survey, contributing their views on the topics discussed in the masterclasses on the previous day, as well as current challenges and opportunities for wine tourism.

Speaker: Sandra Carvao, Director, Market Intelligence, Policies and Competitiveness, UN Tourism

09:45 – 10:45 **Panel Debate: Wine Tourism Excellence in Action**

Organized by the Great Wine Capitals Global Network, this session will feature outstanding case studies from leading wine regions around the world. Speakers will share best practices that highlight how creative strategies, cross-sector collaboration, and a strong connection to local identity and heritage have driven successful, innovative wine tourism initiatives.

Setting the Scene and Moderator: Madalena Vidigal (Portugal), Wine Consultant, Trainer, Communicator, EntreVinhas (Portugal)

Speakers:

- Francisco Bragoni, Hospitality and Wine Tourism Manager, Bodegas Salentein (Argentina)
- Jorge Alves, General Manager and Winemaker, Quanta Terra Douro (Portugal)
- Juan Jesús Valdelana, Owner and Winemaker, Bodegas Valdelana (Spain)

10:45 – 11:00 **Global Wine Tourism Trends: The Art of Understanding the Market**

Speaker: Gergely Szolnoki, Professor of Market Research, Hochschule Geisenheim University (Germany)

11:00 – 11:15 *Coffee Break*



11:15 – 11:30	Get Inspired! The Art of Communicating Wine Tourism Keynote by Emanuele Trono, President, Enodigital (Italy)
11:30 – 12:15	Panel Debate - Crafting the Future: The Art of the Human Touch As wine tourism evolves into a more sophisticated, multi-dimensional sector, the need for targeted education and capacity-building grows stronger. From hospitality to heritage interpretation, from digital storytelling to the arts, this session will explore how skills development and training must adapt to support the new generation of wine tourism professionals. Through an interactive format, the session will aim to identify concrete actions and recommendations to strengthen human capital across the wine tourism value chain. Moderator: Sabiha Apaydın, Wine Consultant and Founder of the "Root Origin Soil" Wine Conference (Türkiye) Speakers: - Vanina Manini Williams, Experiences Manager, Finca El Paraíso by Luigi Bosca Winery (Argentina) - Prof. Georgi Toskov, University of Food Technologies (Bulgaria) - Elisa Ucar, Director, EDA Drinks & Wine Campus (Spain)
12:15 – 12:30	Conclusions Sandra Carvao, Director, Market Intelligence, Policies and Competitiveness, UN Tourism
12:30 – 12:45	Closing Ceremony
12:45 – 13:15	<i>Transfer to technical tours</i>
13:15 – 18:00	Technical Tours (lunch and visit to selected wineries) (for international participants) <i>*Participants will choose their preferred option during online registration. First-come, first-served basis. Participants may be re-located if maximum capacity is reached.</i> Option 1: Starosel Winery and Wine & SPA Complex Option 2: Midalidare Estate
18:00	<i>Transfer back to official hotels</i>
Venue: DoubleTree by Hilton Plovdiv Center	
20:00 – 22:30	Farewell Dinner (<i>for international participants</i>)