**Title**
A new oenological odyssey: has the growth of Greek luxury tourism contributed to growth in Greek wine appreciation and market?

**I want to submit an abstract for:**
Conference Poster Session

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**Keywords**
Greek wine; Greek wine market; luxury consumption; wine tourism; Greek wine exports

**Research Question**
Has the growth of recent Greek luxury tourism contributed to growth in Greek wine appreciation and market?

**Methods**
Analysis and literature review; survey; qualitative interviews

**Results**
The Greek wine market has benefited from new definitions of luxury travel and tourism that is based on experiences, cultural sustainability and appreciation of the local.

**Abstract**
Greece has continuously been cultivating vines and making wine since antiquity, often in the same geographical regions that exist today. Greek history and mythology have also contributed to concepts we integrate in global wine culture; Dionysius/Bacchus is found in every wine region on every continent, as shorthand, metaphor, or inspiration for the pleasure of wine. However, whereas other non-French, European wines, say Italian and Spanish, began to grow in consumer popularity in the 1970s, with many achieving premium and luxury status, Greek wine, despite its tourism industry, was disregarded as unsophisticated and low-quality.

However, recent shifts in definitions of luxury in hospitality to encompass experiential elements of what is consumed and where it is experienced has benefited the entry of Greek wine into this market and shifted perceptions of its quality wine. How have such marketing methods for luxury consumption also helped this recent perception and growth of Greek wine from the post-sovereign debt crisis (2009) to today? This research explores the factors and drivers that have contributed to a new demand of Greek wines, examining the consumer responses to a new understanding of luxury to include environmental and cultural sustainability, heritage and craftmanship inputs into wine, interest in indigenous grapes and production, and seeking new, authentic wines to experience.

Newer, progressive definitions of luxury include experiences, rather than consuming for just price and to signal social status. Luxury now incorporates emotional connections for consumers. The localised is favoured, and understanding provenance, history, and cultural authenticity of a product are deciding factors for consumers. Concurrently, a new generation of innovate Greek winemakers have transformed winemaking by invested in...
methods to create sought-after wines, reflected in pricing and scarcity. Despite the outlook for Greek wine production as continuing to grow, according to the Eurostat (climate change withstanding), Greek wine is only now gaining popularity and appropriate brand positioning among luxury consumers. In 2021 Greece exported $165m of wine, making it the 20th largest exporter in the world, and 79th most exported domestic product (source: Observatory of Economic Complexity/MIT). Indigenous grapes such as Assyrtiko, Xinomavro and Agiorgitiko are increasingly found on wine lists in high-end restaurants and hotel bars, as well as wine clubs. My research includes methodology with an analysis and review of recent wine tourism and marketing literature, a survey amongst merchants and luxury consumers, and qualitative interviews with 40 modern Greek winemakers from all regions of Greece on changing winemaking and branding methods and subsequent consumer perception of their wines.

My research has examined how the increased numbers of Greek tourism at all income levels post-2009 has boosted consumer interest and spending on Greek wine. Even luxury tourists are drawn to the country in search of authentic Greek experiences, with tastings and vineyard visits as much a draw as beaches and island hopping (Santorini, the most visited island is equally famous for wine). As with other luxury consumables, affluent consumers are shifting towards more experiential outlets to spend income. Instead of solely buying wine for investment and storage, appreciating wines in the present, sharing it with others, has also risen. New frameworks for experiential luxury extending to travel, such as the Skift’s 5 characteristics of travel (Culture, Cuisine, Community, Content, and Customization), have also benefitted uptake of Greek wine (the largest export markets are Germany (30%), the USA (18%) and the UK (8%) according to Enterprise Greece (government body); in parallel, the largest tourist numbers come from Germany (39%), United Kingdom (28%), USA (18%), (according to the National Bank of Greece figures and INSETE).

The changing definition of luxury benefits the acceleration of the Greek wine industry and affluent consumers travelling to Greece can become ambassadors for the wines in their native countries. Preliminary conclusions of this project include: a breakdown in the dominant hegemony of winemaking regions and brands allows new entrants into the markets; wine tourism contributes to luxury travel based on localisation and personalisation of luxury based on experiences; equally, luxury tourism becomes credible and supporting cultural sustainability by including stories of Greek wine. Finally, recent interest in Greek wine makes up for lost time in the evolution of the ‘wine cannon’ and can create a new market for luxury visitors who feel an emotional connection to sustainable, localised winemaking.

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