



Unique landscapes: how online travel reviews reveal the Lavaux visitor experience

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If people drink less wine, the question is probably no longer how to sell bottles—but how to design experiences worth travelling for...

Wine consumption is changing. The industry hopes new trends will help it survive

PUBLISHED TUE, MAR 4 2025-6:18 PM EST | UPDATED THU, AUG 7 2025-4:46 AM EDT



Vivi Vitalone

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KEY POINTS

- Global wine production last year is expected to have slipped around 2% to hit its lowest levels since 1961, while consumption has also fallen.
- Organic and orange wines, non-alcoholic options and high-end fine wines are all seeing increased demand as consumer habits change.
- “I think people are much more educated about what they’re drinking. They are having better developed palates, they are learning a bit more about complex wines, possibly higher-level wines, rather than buying more of simple, lower-end wines,” Tatiana Fokina, CEO of Hedonism Wines, told CNBC.



News >

Swiss switch to local wines as market declines



The Swiss again drank less wine last year, but consumed 2.3% more domestic brands, according to the Federal Office for Agriculture.

Wine tourism

Wine tourism is a form of tourism that focuses on the consumption and appreciation of wine, often involving **experiences** related to wine production, **cultural heritage**, and **sensory pleasures** associated with visiting wine regions. [1]

A **multidimensional** form of tourism **experience**, combining elements of **gastronomy**, **culture**, **landscape**, and interaction with natural settings. [2]

[1] <https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/social-sciences/wine-tourism>; [2] Albuquerque, H., Silva Lopes, H., Ramazanov, M., Vaz de Freitas, I., Remoaldo, P., Gardner, G., & Robinson, D. (2023). Wine landscape and climate change: the state of art. *Journal of Wine Research*, 34(4), 272-290. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09571264.2023.2267014>

Wine tourism: facts from a recent study

Food travelers from Switzerland are interested in: [1]

- 80% trying wine *specialties*
- 75% tasting *new wine*
- 68% increasing their *knowledge* about wine
- 63% doing wine-related experiences, like guided tours

[1] Mele, E., & Balet, S. (under progress). Segmenting food tourists according to their motivations: a cross-cultural perspective. HES-SO Valais-Wallis



37%

of food travelers from Switzerland who declare consuming NA beer or wine **at least 2-4 times a month.**

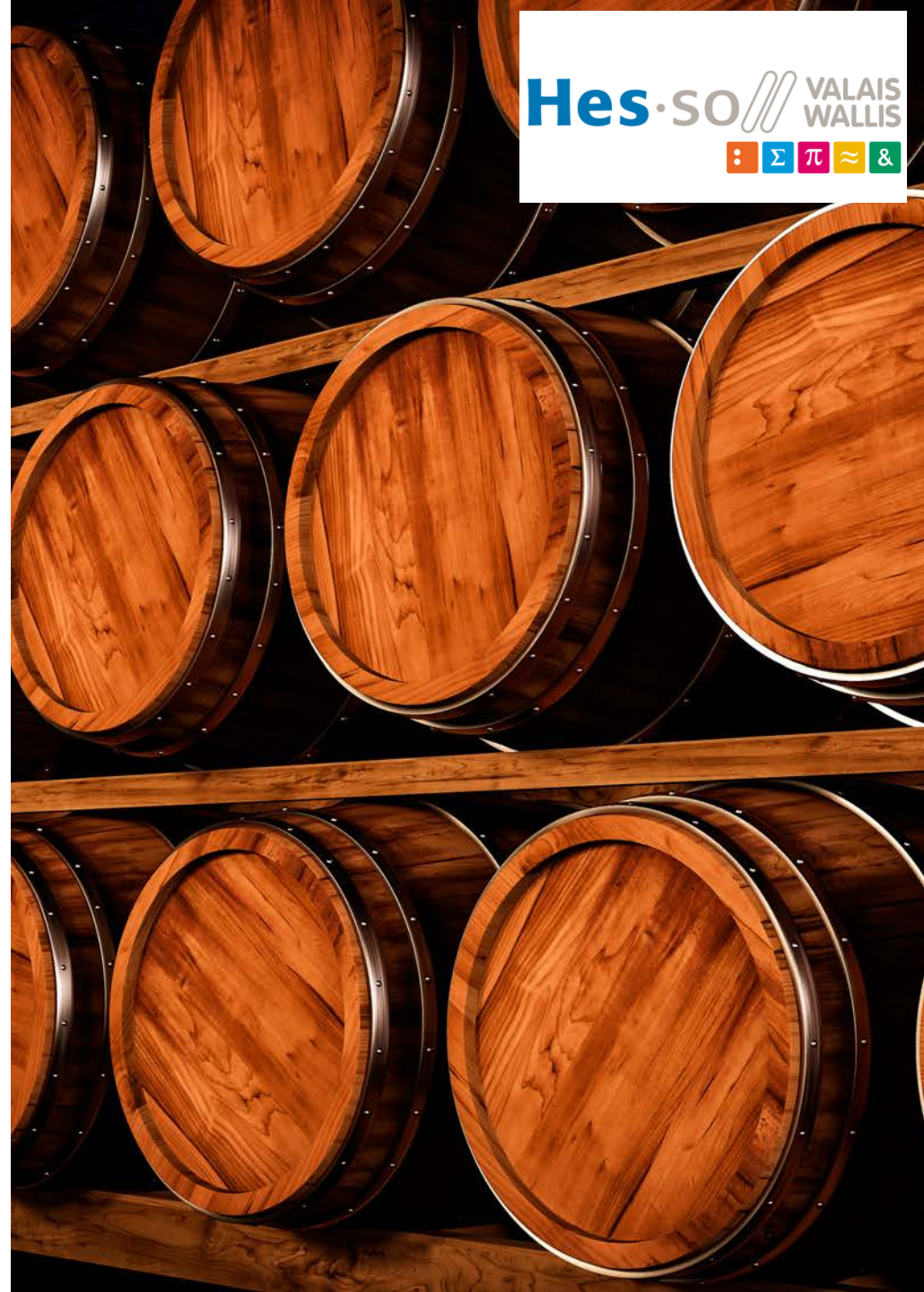
50% of food travelers from UK do the same [1].

[1] Mele, E., & Balet, S. (under progress). Segmenting food tourists according to their motivations: a cross-cultural perspective. HES-SO Valais-Wallis

Study objectives

How Online Travel Reviews (OTR) contribute to a better understanding of the **visitor experience** in Lavaux, with a particular **focus** on the role of **landscape**:

1. **Identify key themes** emerging from online reviews of wine tourism experiences in Lavaux
2. **Assess how visitors emotionally evaluate these experiences**, with particular attention to landscape-related aspects



Data collection

The empirical analysis is based on a dataset of OTRs related to wine tourism experiences in the Lavaux region, collected from the **TripAdvisor** platform through a web scraping process.

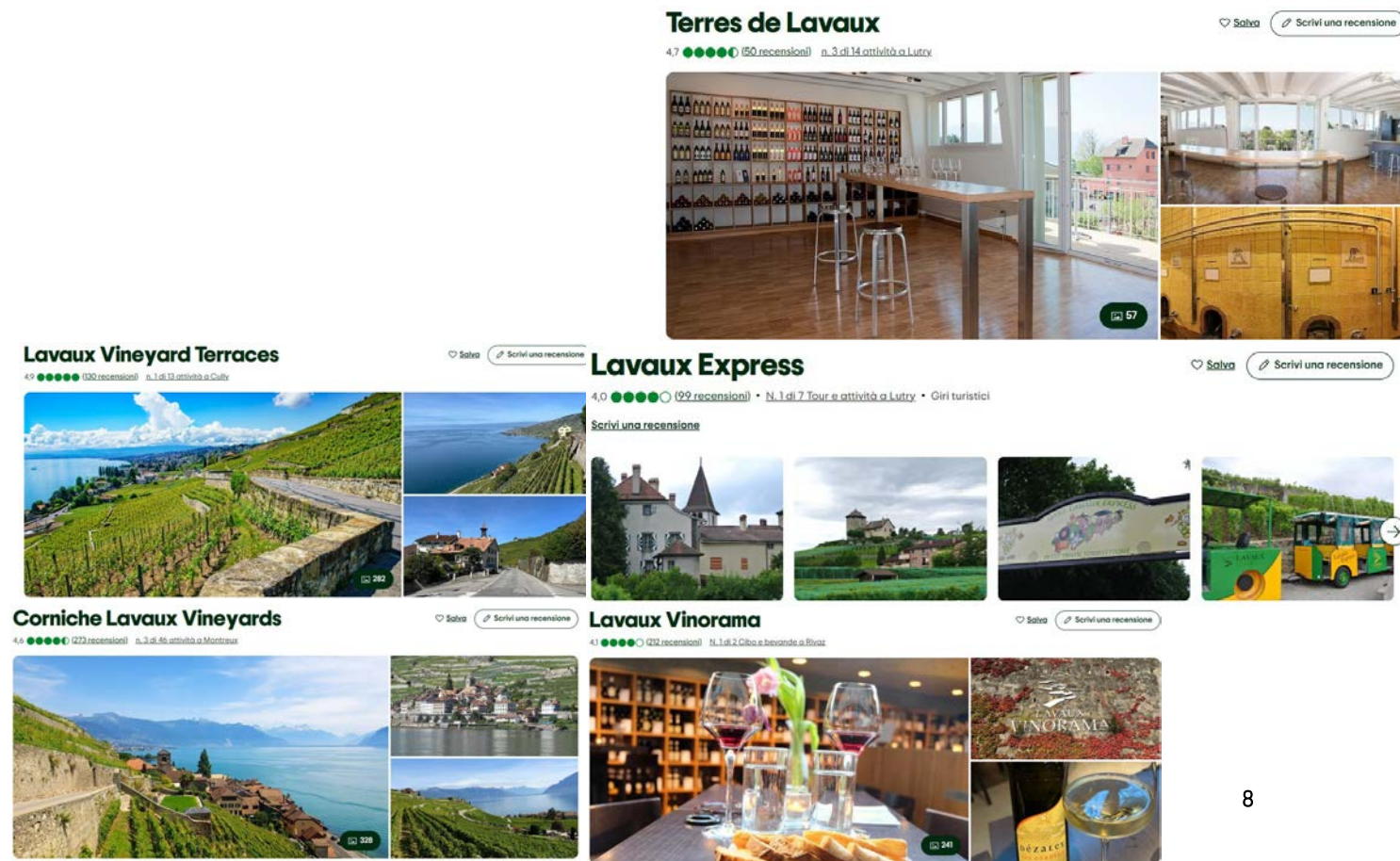
The data extraction focused on the **most reviewed points of interest** (POIs) within the region, including vineyards, panoramic viewpoints, and wine-related attractions.

Given the quantitative nature of the study, to reduce heterogeneity, **restaurants and hotels** were **not** included in this exploratory sample.

Study sample

761 reviews from 2005 to 2026, to capture visitor experiences over multiple tourism seasons:

- Corniche Lavaux Vineyards (n = 272)
- Lavaux Vinorama (n = 212)
- Lavaux Vineyard Terraces (n = 129)
- Lavaux Express (n = 99)
- Terres de Lavaux (n = 49)



Data cleaning

Prior to analysis, the dataset underwent several preprocessing steps to ensure data quality and consistency, including:

- Identification of country from self-reported geographical origin of reviewer
- Merging of review title and main body
- Translation in English of all textual content



James S

Ginevra, Svizzera • 91 contributi



Super balade et dégustation

lug 2022 • Per affari

Super balade dans les vignes avec Manon qui en nous baladant nous abreuve d'histoire et de son savoir en vin avant une dégustation très intéressante.

Je recommande!!



Scritta in data 14 luglio 2022

Identifying topics

To identify the main topics present in the dataset, we adopted a semantic topic modelling approach **with Python language**.

Reviews were transformed into a **numerical** embedding using a pre-trained transformer language model (SentenceTransformer), which captured the **overall meaning** of the text rather than relying on simple word counts.

These embeddings were then **grouped into clusters** of semantically similar reviews using BERTopic [1]

[1] Grootendorst, M. (2022). BERTopic: Neural topic modeling with a class-based TF-IDF procedure. *arXiv preprint arXiv:2203.05794*.
<https://maartengr.github.io/BERTopic/index.html#citation>

Sentiment analysis of OTRs

Using Python language on the full dataset, we performed a **sentiment analysis** of the OTRs.

Sentiment was computed using the VADER (Valence Aware Dictionary and sEntiment Reasoner) **algorithm**:

- A score ranging from -1 (very negative) to $+1$ (very positive)
- Each review was analyzed individually
- Empty or missing texts were explicitly excluded from scoring to avoid introducing artificial neutrality into the results

Origin and sentiment

Main origin of visitors: CH, followed by USA, France, Italy, UK, Germany, and Brazil.

Sentiment analysis revealed a **mean of 0.79** and a **median of 0.92**. The minimum value registered was -0.905, while the maximum was 0.996:

- **Negative**: frustration linked to **organization, staff behaviour, accessibility issues**, and a mismatch between expectations and the actual experience
- **Positive**: a breathtaking UNESCO **landscape**; the pleasure of **walking, hiking, cycling, combined with wine tastings** featuring a wide selection of local wines, supported by informative films and knowledgeable staff

Identified themes

- Sensory and gastronomic experience
- Landscape and aesthetic appreciation
- Cultural heritage landscape
- Mobility and modes of discovery
- Locality and sense of place
- Overall evaluation and recommendation framing

Sensory and gastronomic experience

Sensory and gastronomic experience (n = 196) describes wine tasting as the central element of visitors' engagement with the Lavaux region.



JoshChui
Singapore, Singapore

📄 151 🍷 49

Simply at a lost

Recensione di [Lavaux Vinorama](#)



Recensito 24 settembre 2017 📱 da dispositivo mobile

The wine collection at this place is out of this world. More than 300 types of wine on sale from all the vineyards in this region. Dezaaley possible has the best white wine producers in the region. Worth trying the wine from here.

Data dell'esperienza: settembre 2017



Landscape and aesthetic appreciation

Landscape and aesthetic appreciation (n = 142) emphasizes the visual and emotional impact of the Lavaux region, particularly the combination of terraced vineyards, Lake Geneva, and the surrounding mountains.



beatrizm115
 Düsseldorf, Germany
 📄1649 🍷3770

Must do

Review of [Corniche Lavaux Vineyards](#)

●●●●● Reviewed January 17, 2021 📱 from mobile device

The vineyards are beautiful even in winter; it's worth a visit if you're in the Montreux region. My friend drove me there, and we had a beautiful view of the lake and the vineyards. I'm sure it's even more beautiful when the weather is clear and they're greener. It was the first week of January.

Date of experience: January 2021



Cultural heritage landscape

Natural-cultural heritage landscape (n = 132) frames Lavaux as a landscape shaped by a long and continuous interaction between human activity and natural features.



Rocio C
Lutry, Switzerland
✍️ 18 🍷 40

Wonderful walk through the wines of Lavaux

Lavaux Express Review

●●●●○ Reviewed October 7, 2019

The LAVAUX EXPRESS tourist train took us along the hills of this wonderful wine-growing region. Terraces that have been cultivated with different styles of grapes by its passionate inhabitants over generations. Lavaux has been declared a Human Heritage Site.

Simismo enjoys magnificent views of Lake Le Lemman.

Date of experience: August 2019

Mobility and modes of discovery

Mobility and modes of discovery (n = 120) highlights the diversity of ways visitors access, traverse, and experience the Lavaux region, emphasizing movement as a key component of the overall experience



Jan M

112 135

Not only for wine lovers

Recensione di [Lavaux Vineyard Terraces](#)

Recensito 22 luglio 2021 da dispositivo mobile

It is great that it takes just a few minutes by train from Lausanne to get to this amazing place with magnificent views of Lac Léman.

Once you get off the train it is up and only up. You will be rewarded with great views, though. And it is only up to you how high you will climb. The network of roads and paths is varied and winding and the views get better around every corner.

If you visit in summer, wear head protection, the trees are scarce and it does get hot out there.

Great as a half-day or a day trip. If you come by car or on an electric bike, it is not that physically hard an activity.

Data dell'esperienza: giugno 2021



Locality and sense of place

Locality and sense of place (n = 110) emphasizes Lavaux as a mosaic of distinct villages, paths, and everyday practices that collectively shape a strong feeling of local identity.



barbt201

Bonita Springs, Florida

31 23

In a word--stunning

Recensione di [Lavaux Vineyard Terraces](#)

Recensito 8 agosto 2022

Our concierge lives up in these hills. She suggested starting at Chexbres, above Vevey and following the corniche road all the way down to Lutrie. The views at every turn were spectacular—Lac Lemman is very blue, and sometimes even aqua. What a backdrop to these endless vineyards on the hills. Across the way is the drama of the French Alps. A must see. We had a car, so we drove this route—very easy driving, despite the hills. We actually started at the Charlie Chaplin museum in Vevey, interesting even if you know very little about him. Then up to Chexbres and taking the corniche all the way down. Ends at the small town of Lutry, near Ouchy. A rather charming small town reminiscent of many French towns and placed right on the lake with cafes and a marina.

Data dell'esperienza: luglio 2022

Overall evaluation and recommendation

Overall evaluation and recommendation framing (n = 61) reveals that visitors frequently articulate their experiences in explicitly evaluative terms, combining praise, comparison, and advice directed at future visitors.



Guide559561



Do not miss this top!

Recensione di [Lavaux Vinorama](#)

●●●●● Recensito 16 agosto 2024

You will not find more accommodating or nicer hosts! They did a lovely tasting for us, quickly giving an overview since we were traveling through with kids. The wines were all wonderful. Don't miss this gem as you drive through this amazing place!

Data dell'esperienza: agosto 2024

Recommendations

Following our findings, **two** main recommendations from a tourism marketing viewpoint are proposed:

1. From text-based website results (see below) to **narrative content** from blogs and social media (e.g., Instagram), including **videos and pictures** *showing farmers and visitors (social proof)*:
 - <https://www.swisswine.com/en/news/a-day-in-lavaux>
 - <https://www.lausanne-tourisme.ch/en/the-lausanner/articles/enchanting-lavaux/>
 - <https://www.myswitzerland.com/en-ch/destinations/lavaux-vineyard-terraces/>

Recommendations

2. Creation and (stronger) promotion of **guided experiences** that combine education with entertainment and conviviality through **storytelling** to go beyond the sole *aesthetic* value of the landscape.

destination des jeunes viendra tordre le cou à ce cliché moderne : «les jeunes n'aiment pas le vin» . Ils seront une trentaine à s'atteler à cette dure tâche, à l'heure où la Gen Z semble s'orienter plus facilement vers la bière et les alcools forts, comme le ressent Daphné Chave du domaine participant Yann Chave. *«Les jeunes ont une image guidée du vin. Mais lorsque l'on organise des événements avec une approche accessible, ils en boivent beaucoup !»*, témoigne la jeune vigneronne.

Thanks for your attention



Wine tourism is not just about wine.
It is about landscapes, people, stories and emotions.
Understanding them is the key to a resilient and desirable future.



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