



MASTER THESIS

**THE POWER OF A GOOD STORY: HOW TO EFFECTIVELY
COMMUNICATE A WINE TOURISM EXPERIENCE TO THE MEDIA**

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ABSTRACT

As an experiential good, wine tourism experiences gain substantially, both in value and customers' willingness-to-pay, with focus on the storytelling of its producers and production location. Non-specialist media, and specifically daily newspapers, have a valuable part to play in marketing efforts of wine tourism experiences. In an attempt to trace how these experiences are pitched to and portrayed in the media, this research was developed during a professional internship at Público, one of Portugal's most influential newspapers, and specifically at Fugas magazine, where there is consistent wine and wine tourism coverage. Both content analysis and interviews with Fugas' journalists were employed to trace how wine tourism experiences are portrayed in the media, what mistakes can be avoided when pitching a story and how to effectively communicate wine tourism products and experiences to non-specialist mass media outlets.

Keywords: wine tourism; Público; mass media; wine; content analysis

List of Abbreviations

Wintour: International Masters on **Wine Tourism** Innovation

PDF: Portable Document Format

D.O.: Denomination of Origin

USP: Unique Selling Proposition

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1. INTRODUCTION

After having completed three semesters of the International Masters on Wine Tourism Innovation (Wintour), and being required to develop a project during a professional internship, it has been the researcher's understanding that this present thesis would provide a good opportunity to delve into a side of wine tourism that was mentioned in passing during the course: its relationship with the media. The present work was developed during 600 hours of journalistic work carried out at *Público*, a Portuguese newspaper that circulates nationwide with two daily editions (for Lisbon and Porto). Moreover, the internship was carried out at a specific sub-section of the newspaper, *Fugas*, a weekly magazine that is distributed on Saturdays along with the daily edition of *Público*.

The internship took place between the months of February and April 2020; thus, being severely impacted by the COVID-19 induced pandemic (El Zowalaty & Järhult, 2020). Although the work at a news company never stops, the pandemic has altered work dynamics, the physical place in which the internship took place, and the scope of the subjects that were prioritized for publishing during the period studied. Its impacts on the methodology for this thesis and on the results obtained will be detailed further on.

1.1. Description of the Company

After completing 30 years of its first edition, in 1990, the newspaper *Público* is one of the most important and most well-known national newspapers in Portugal (Rebelo, 2008). The newspaper has two different offices, located in Lisbon and Porto, and publishes two daily editions (one for each office, with the local news being the only differing characteristic between the two). It is subdivided by sections, which are comprised of different teams, and focuses on themes such as Politics, Economy, Sports, and so on. It also contains three different weekly magazines: '*Ípsilon*' on Fridays, covering cultural products such as visual arts, music, plays, and cinema; '*Fugas*', on Saturdays, covering tourism, gastronomy, automobiles and wines; and '*P2*', on Sundays, which is dedicated to long-form articles, covering current subjects with greater detail than a pure news piece would (*Público*, 2017).

According to data compiled by Rebelo (2008), over 80% of *Público*'s readers have at least 10 years of schooling. As shown on figure 1, even though *Público* does not have the largest amount of readers, they are by far the most educated amongst its competitors. That does not mean that these readers are older: over 70% of them are under 50 years old, and almost 97% are under 64 years old. Amongst all the prominent national newspapers, it is the most balanced between the two self-declared genders (51,3% male and 48,3% female). It is also worth noting that, amongst all newspaper readers in Portugal, the 'Culture and Education' news category (where most of the Wine and Tourism coverage falls under) is the fourth most frequently read, ahead of 'Economy and Work' and even 'National and International Politics'.

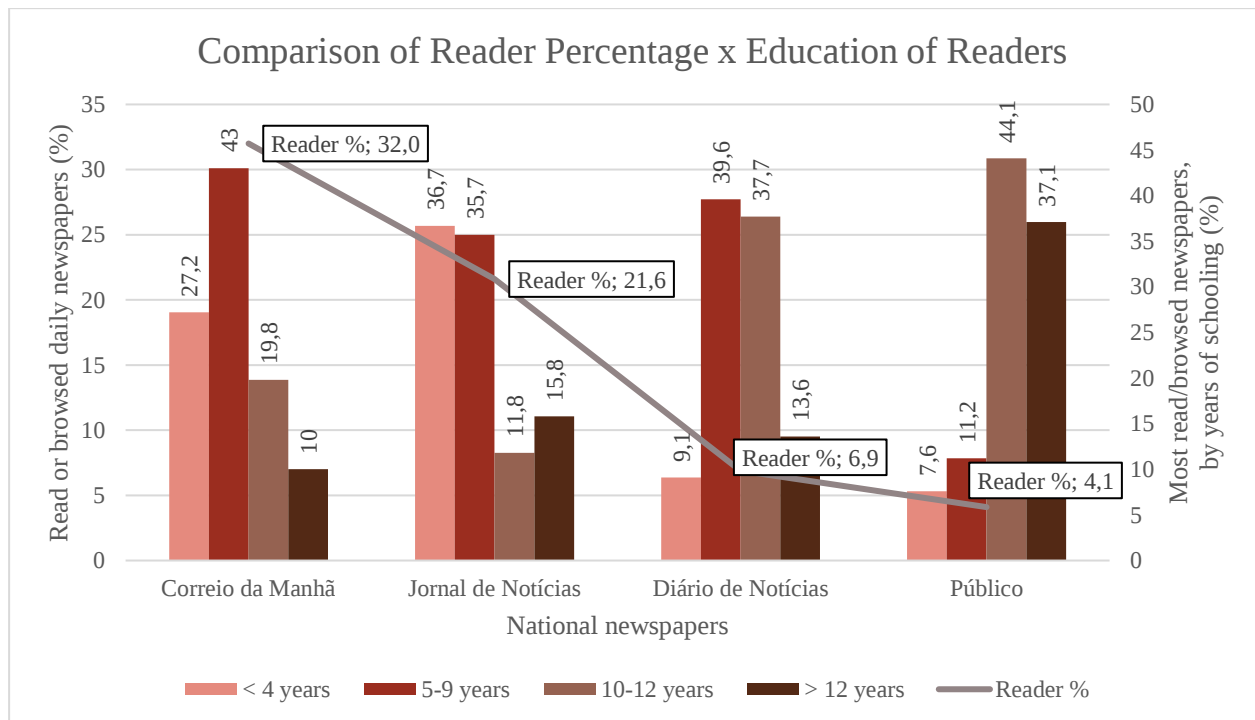


Figure 1: A comparison between the percentage of daily newspaper readers and said readers' education levels, measured by number of schooling years. Adapted from *Os Públicos dos Meios de Comunicação Social Portugueses*, by J. Rebelo (Ed.), 2008, Entidade Reguladora para a Comunicação Social (ERC).

In order to complete an internship that focused on wine tourism, the natural path within *Público* was to be assigned to *Fugas* magazine. As a section of the newspaper, it has a main editor, Sandra Costa, and an online editor, Luis Jesus Santos, who also served as the Professional Supervisor as Mrs. Costa worked from the Porto office. For the entire duration of this professional internship, there were no other interns allocated at *Fugas*. The rest of the team consists of two fixed reporters in each office, who write the bulk of the articles, and external contributors from other sections and from outside the newspaper.

1.1.1. Wine at Público

1.1.1.1. Wine at Fugas

One of the external contributors, as it were, is the main wine writer for *Fugas*. Pedro Garcias is a journalist and also a winemaker in the Douro Valley and contributes with a weekly opinion piece. In it, he covers varied topics regarding the wine industry – always in a personal tone and reflecting his own personal views. His pieces sometimes focus on specific regions, or specific wines, but they rarely touch upon wine tourism services and experiences – instead, his writing is predominantly directed towards the wine industry at large.

The other prominent wine figure at *Fugas* is the newspaper's current director, Mr. Manuel Carvalho. He is the sole in-house wine critic, and his ratings are displayed along with Mr. Garcias' in the other dedicated wine page that runs every week. In it, usually 3-5 wines are reviewed, and one is

considered the ‘weekly choice’, with a short accompanying text for each review. The third wine critic, José Augusto Moreira, is another external contributor who often has pieces featured in the magazine. Those two pages (Mr. Garcias’ opinion piece and the wine reviews) make up the entirety of the fixed wine content¹ – but not all of it. From week to week, different articles by any of the staff might feature wine or wine tourism, and, twice a year, there is an entire issue dedicated to wine (summer-themed in May, winter-themed in November).

1.1.1.2. Loja P

However odd it may seem for a dedicated wine reviewer, *Público* also sells wine. In its ‘Loja P’ [P Store], the newspaper has a variety of goods for sale, which include wine and food items. Coordinated by the marketing department, this in-house store was created in order to better concentrate and display the products that were distributed along with the newspaper for special targeted promotional campaigns (A. Carvalho, 2020). According to Carvalho (2020), the newspaper saw a huge demand for wine to be available with the newspaper at the sales points, and even though there was an initial resistance because of the delicate nature of the product (e.g. bottles could easily break if distributed in the same way as the newspaper), the sales were “good”². Whenever there is a special campaign involving wine, a different reference is offered each week during an average of three months.

One thing that was reiterated by both A. Carvalho (2020) and the Professional Supervisor, Mr. Santos, is that the commercial operations involving wine at Loja P are run completely separate from the editorial decisions and the wines that are featured in *Fugas* – both because they serve different purposes and also to avoid ethical conflicts. According to A. Carvalho (2020), “it may happen that a wine in the store is mentioned at *Fugas*, or vice-versa, but one thing never happens because of the other”.

1.1.2. Duties and Activities During the Internship

In consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic (El Zowalaty & Järhult, 2020) and the measures taken by both Portugal and *Público* after its outbreak (M. Carvalho, 2020), the nature of the internship was radically altered. For this reason, the duties and tasks performed will be outlined separately for the period before and after *Fugas* adopted the work-from-home strategy to enforce social distancing and limit unnecessary transit for its employees.

1.1.2.1. February

During the month of February, the internship included almost every aspect of classical journalistic work, from pitching story ideas at weekly meetings; to debating the content of landmark issues that were fast approaching (the magazine’s 20th anniversary and the summer edition of the Wine

¹ An example of the weekly wine section on *Fugas* can be found on Annex A1.

² The marketing department was not willing to share revenue and other financial data related to wine sales, even under the possibility of a non-disclosure agreement.

issue); to attending events and awards ceremonies, interviewing sources by e-mail, telephone and in person; and writing articles for the webpage of *Fugas*. In order to start identifying how wine tourism was handled at *Fugas*, informal face-to-face talks with the reporters and the Professional Supervisor also took place during this month.

A special, long-format series of articles developed by the researcher about wine tourism was planned, with publication estimated for May/June. This series was supposed to investigate cultural programs and experiences held at wineries that involved other cultural activities rather than just wine tasting, and for this purpose one interview (of many that were planned) was held. However, this and other planned wine tourism long-form articles were dropped in the face of the changing circumstances of the wine tourism industry – and the world as a whole.

1.1.2.2. March and April

From March 13th onwards, all the work developed for the professional internship was done under quarantine, in home-office. The pitch meetings were moved to a digital platform, and the nature of the content produced vastly changed to accommodate the subjects that were more relevant to the broader public during the pandemic. As the COVID-19 pandemic caused “global fears, psychological distress, economic losses and negative impacts on several human activities including industry and mobility” (El Zowalaty & Järhult, 2020), *Fugas* had to reinvent itself so as not to promote leaving the house to experience travel, gastronomy and wine tourism. From that point on, an active effort was taken so that nothing was written that could be read as ‘out of taste’ or ‘elitist’, while encouraging people to be safe and keep their curiosity active.

So as to keep up with the pandemic-dictated subjects, the four fixed reporters were assigned to different topics (hotels, gastronomy, airlines and Portuguese travelers in need of repatriation), with the beverages category being assigned to the researcher, because of their field of expertise and previous experience with the subject. Each journalist, then, had the responsibility to monitor their respective topic, producing all the articles related with the subject and keeping the magazine’s website up to date with the most current happenings. Because of the fast-evolving nature of the pandemic, most of this work was not published in the weekly magazine – seeing that numbers and measures taken were constantly evolving and the magazine needs a few days to be edited, designed and printed, rendering those articles outdated by the time it got to the readers.

The bulk of the work produced was on the topic of social initiatives, charitable efforts and compilations of online shopping offers by beer, wine, and spirits companies. The intent behind these articles was to show how the beverages sector was facing the COVID-19 pandemic, the changes it implemented and the options available to consumers who were under quarantine.

1.2. Wine (Tourism) Journalism

At *Fugas*, during periods of normalcy, wine coverage is usually accompanied by food and its setting – in other words, gastronomy and tourism. And that is for good reason: for most consumers, it is inseparable from its origins, as Frost *et al.* (2020) explained. Unlike most other agricultural products, it gains appeal based on the individual story and lineage of its producers, along with the winescape and the methods used for its production – notions that can be linked to the feeling of authenticity of a wine product. According to Uriely (2005):

Displayed objects are considered to be authentic not because they are inherently so but because of their construction as such by tourists or service providers in terms of points of view, perspectives, or powers. Therefore, authentic experiences and the authenticity of displayed objects in tourism are considered to constitute one another. (p. 207)

This further highlights the interconnectedness of wine, wine tourism, the winescape, and all the agents that participate in creating that experience, be it visiting the winery or drinking the wine at home.

Not only that, but the World Tourism Organization (WTO, 2005) classifies wine tourism as a “crucial component of gastronomy tourism”, which in turn has been found by Fusté-Forné and Masip (2018) to be one of the relevant thematic categories in their Food and Gastronomy content analysis of *The New York Times*, one that highlights the “geographical areas” related to gastronomic experiences. Because of its prominence as a topic, and the interest taken in it by the consumers, “wine, as a cultural and aesthetic product, has come to attract more and more media attention over time” (Rössel *et al.*, 2016).

Although part of gastronomic culture, wine (and later wine tourism) have carved some space for themselves in the media – particularly in specialist trade and specialist consumer magazines, but also in “generalist magazines, local and national newspapers, websites and specialist wine books” (Adams, 2013). So much so that there is a whole category of journalists who dedicate themselves exclusively to wine. As Adams (2013) explained, those can learn their craft in one of two ways:

Which did come first? The trained journalist who later on discovers a passion for wine, then specializes in wine writing, or the life-long wine buff who accidentally falls into journalism through writing a small weekly or monthly column at the request of, say, a local newspaper or regional magazine, or guesting on a regular slot for a local radio station? Rather than dwell on the dilemma, it is useful to understand that in the world of wine journalism, both species of journalist exist, and co-exist together comfortably. (p.192)

And as such, begins a process of fine-tuning one’s journalistic abilities in order to correctly communicate on the vast world of wine knowledge. Adams (2013) points out a few key characteristics: knowledge of wine varieties, regions, and production methods; extensive tasting and technical visits;

and interacting with other specialists and players of the industry. As Otton (2016) summarized: “Wine writing is like any other form of technical journalism, involving two fundamental elements; the general ability to write in a meaningful and engaging manner, and a specialist’s knowledge and understanding of the subject at hand”.

However, unlike other subjects of technical journalism, wine and wine tourism are experiential goods, which as defined by Holbrook & Hirschman (1982) are products whose appreciation is “phenomenological in spirit” and involve “symbolic meanings, hedonic responses, and esthetic criteria” – and so, the responsibility of the wine journalist is even bigger. Experiential goods cannot have their value be evaluated by the consumers based on previous knowledge or experience, it must come from information from an outside source, such as critical reviews or articles (Horverak, 2009).

This is made all the more complicated when you take into account how it is virtually impossible to reach a consensus about the quality (as measured, usually, by scores or points) of any given wine, even amongst expert critics (Horverak, 2009). So how does one go about writing about something as subjective as wine, especially in a scenario where a robust marketing campaign, favorable review, high score or even just some detailed information can drastically influence the consumer’s choice and willingness-to-pay (Eustice, *et al.*, 2019; Canovi & Pucciarelli, 2019; Rössel *et al.*, 2016; Lecocq *et al.*, 2005)?

Lamont (2012) brings some insight into how categorization plays a part in it, by means of analyzing, examining and assessing “broader characteristics or properties” in order to locate a product in a category and, subsequently, a hierarchy. This categorization, according to Rössel *et al.* (2016), is how “the transformation of fermented grape juice into cult wine is also likely to take place” in mass-media rather than field-specific media, because the media serves as a categorization device to assign different levels and qualities to wine. Robinson (2019) has a slightly different approach to what makes the wine writer of the present: “in a way, you could say that anyone who ever takes a sip of wine is a potential wine communicator. [...] All someone who takes a sip of wine has to say is, I do, or I don’t, like this and they have communicated about wine”. But even then, not everyone that takes a sip can become an authority on the subject:

The new up and coming wine authorities will have to prove that they can do something more than just write about wine. They’ll probably have to be able to be good wine judges and wine tasters. They’ll probably have to be able to speak well because there’ll probably be more and more events (Robinson, 2019).

Another completely different, yet intriguing take is that of Hartsock (2018):

I have long said that wine is one-third science. The second third is art. [...] the last third, I have always said, is bullshit. [...] A narrative literary journalism can be helpful for making accessible

such a nature so often mystified by the wine snob who raises his pinky while holding the stem of his wine glass as if to make a profound public pronouncement. (p. 666)

The ability to communicate clearly and to engage with consumers is a potent tool in order to promote not only wine but also wine tourism experiences – by definition, “visitation to vineyards, wineries, wine festivals and wine shows for which grape wine tasting and/or experiencing the attributes of a grape wine region are the prime motivating factors for visitors” (Hall *et al.*, 2000). Such experiences, because they have a symbiotic nature with wine production itself, will inevitably find themselves being the subject of media coverage – not only that, but they also are heavily dependent on such coverage in order to gain value prior to its happening:

Motivations and perceptions combine to construct each individual’s image of destinations and attractions and the associated series of expectations regarding the experience at the destination. The image created is of utmost importance because the appeal of attractions arises largely from the image conjured up, partly from direct or related experience and partly from external sources and influences (Hall *et al.*, 2000).

There is also a point to be made for wine-related experiences to be included in travel segments, rather than just food (and wine) specialized media. Wine is an important factor of attraction and a major motivator for tourist destinations (Hall *et al.*, 2000), and it can be viewed as “a part of or enhancement of a holiday experience” (Bruwer & Alant, 2009). For the most part, even tourists who are going on a wine-related trip will partake in other lifestyle activities (Bruwer & Alant, 2009).

It is also worth noting that the value of wine tourism experiences does not lie only in the product itself, but also the place where it is situated. In Mitchell *et al.* (2012), it is shown how intrinsic not only the landscape is for wine tourism, but also the cultural systems attached to that landscape (comprised of knowledge, techniques, beliefs, and space), which can shape this so-called ‘winescape’ and inevitably the touristic experiences available there. Bruwer & Alant (2009) also point out how important it is to highlight the elements of the natural environment in order to attract first-time visitors to wine tourism experiences.

Ultimately, wine writing and wine tourism writing can also be seen by the wine industry as a part of a successful marketing campaign – even though, ethically, the journalistic service should be independent and not rely on the information made readily available by wineries and their usual intermediates, press relations agencies, as is summarized on *Público*’s (1998) style guide:

Any information with commercial characteristics or originating from a Public Relations service (such as press releases, briefings, and other such meetings) must constitute only a hint upon which an independent journalistic work will ensue. The hidden advertising, in any of its commercial or political forms, is unacceptable at *PÚBLICO*.

The pure copying/republishing of advertisement or press releases notwithstanding, it is very useful for the wine industry to be mindful when planning their marketing efforts to include producing and promoting relevant content for the general press – after all, wine is indeed a sector that is growing increasingly reliant on marketing strategies (Jernigan, 2009). That care is even more relevant for small- to medium-sized wineries, who, in order to stand out in a very fragmented industry, have to rely on ways to promote their products and services that do not involve costly advertising campaigns (Bruwer & Reilly, 2006).

Finally, there are a few key topics that should be taken into consideration for wine tourism promotion in the media. As the experiment developed by Roberts & Sparks (2006) identified, the set of characteristics that can enhance a wine tourism experience, according to the visitors themselves, are:

- Authenticity: a broad term for having an experience that ‘feels’ real and unique, and can encompass local products, exclusive wines, events and even the location itself.
- Value for money: does not indicate the desire for cheap products, but rather experiences that match up the expectations set by the price.
- Service interactions: interactions with the winemaker and having a good first contact with the winery upon arrival.
- Setting/surroundings: how scenic is the region itself and the facilities of each winery are, but also having regional maps or leisure-oriented spaces.
- Product offerings: having something other than just wine tastings, such as restaurants for meals or local products in the shop.
- Information dissemination: having previous contact with the winery through the media, visitor centers or word-of-mouth.
- Personal growth: having an educational aspect to the tourism product/experience.
- Indulgence/lifestyle: getting away from the stress of daily routines, rewarding yourself with a nice experience as a ‘treat’.

These are types of information that can be easily broadcast in a well-planned marketing effort on the part of the service providers and should be relayed consistently and continuously to the media or any other promotion agents.

1.3. Objectives

In a scenario where all the guidelines are followed perfectly, the communication between wine tourism providers and the media should flow effortlessly, with the mutual benefit of promoting engaging experiences and delivering engaging content to the general public being met as a norm. Yet, there are some barriers that routinely interfere with this cycle. Canovi & Pucciarelli (2019) have outlined some roadblocks for effective promotion on social media, which can also be paralleled with other forms of content production: agricultural mentality, in which old players in the wine industry are resistant to marketing efforts, and the time-consuming nature of content production, especially for smaller operations where the process of grape-growing and wine-making already takes up most of the companies’ time and effort capabilities.

This professional internship was conceived as a way of understanding exactly what type of wine tourism related information arrives to the general media (in which format, with which frequency); how this information is treated by journalists; and, finally, how this information reaches readers and potential consumers. The selection of the newspaper, outlined previously, was judicious and tried to pinpoint a field-specific public sphere (Rössel *et al.*, 2016) that had some reputation amongst consumers (Rebelo, 2008) and consistent coverage of wine tourism products and experiences (S. Costa, 2020).

In keeping consistent with the objectives of the International Masters on Wine Tourism Innovation, this research was geared towards outlining the wine tourism coverage in *Fugas*³, interviewing its authors in order to glean insight from their perception of how the information reaches the newspapers; and then deriving a series of good practices that can make the promotion of wine tourism experiences easier, more effective, and, most importantly, more enriching to the readers and final consumers.

2. METHODOLOGY

In order to properly assess the output generated by the journalists at *Fugas*, and the resources used to create those articles, a few methods were planned. Although some version of all three of these methods was ultimately implemented, not all of them were carried out in the way they were originally intended to, as will be outlined below.

2.1. Field practice

Perhaps the central part of the internship, field practice was anticipated to make up the core majority of the research done for the newspaper. Receiving and/or finding out about new facts or happenings, investigating them and subsequently reporting them in written form is the main activity of a newspaper's journalist, and for the purpose of this professional internship, it was discussed previously with the Professional Advisor and the *Fugas*' team that the articles related to wine and wine tourism would count, preferably, with the researcher's involvement in an auxiliary or leading capacity. *Público*'s style guide shares some insight on the posture required in order to successfully inform the newspaper's readers: "to obtain and to share firsthand everything that is news is the first professional obligation of the journalist. However, to obtain news, it is important to be well-informed. That takes, amongst other characteristics, initiative and professional curiosity" (*Público*, 1998). That is why, in order to communicate about wine and wine tourism, it is important to first acquire the minimum necessary knowledge about it and situate yourself with the state of the industry.

³ While originally intending to utilize the wine tourism content produced during the timeframe of the professional internship, this research was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic which led to a drastic change on the content usually published at *Fugas*. In order to maintain its relevance and thematic cohesiveness, the timeframe of analysis was moved to reflect a period of normalcy for the magazine.

This is done by monitoring on all available means (social media, press releases, technical visits, word-of-mouth, and so on) what experiences and services are currently offered, which in turn requires some time spent inside the industry itself (L.O. Costa, 2020) – at awards ceremonies, wine fairs and events, and by contacting or visiting producers directly. Having the name of a big media company behind one is certainly of big help in order to obtain this type of access: producers and communications agencies have the tendency to view positively those working in recognized mediums as potential vectors of the information they want to pass to consumers.

Yet, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, most tourism and wine tourism activity ceased completely – apart from that which was carried out digitally. That meant that there was practically no ‘news’ related to the wine tourism industry for most of the professional internship, and thus, the field work happened but was limited, thematically, to other fields of interest of the newspaper’s readers. For the purpose of this research, therefore, it was important to shift the analysis not to the work being produced during the internship, but the work already produced before the pandemic hit. The chosen window of analysis was the year of 2019, and the chosen method to process this material was a content analysis.

2.2. Content Analysis

By principle, content analysis “entails a systematic reading of a body of texts, images and symbolic matter, not necessarily from an author’s or user’s perspective” (Krippendorff, 1989). Its objective is to derive meaning not only from the events that inspired the content in study, but also from those who produced or carried it – and the subsequent consequences for all the elements involved in the exchange of that information. As Bardin (1977) points out, there are plenty of ways to perform a content analysis, which can involve a number of different techniques. The analysis should strive to shed light on different aspects of the communication process:

Although conventional conceptions of content (what) and communication contexts (who says it to whom) are common in content analysis, the formal definition encompasses other communicative circumstances and contexts, such as psychoanalytical (psychological conditions that explain a particular statement), institutional (socio-economic interests that underlie a particular television program), and cultural (functions that particular rituals serve). (Krippendorff, 1989)

The most utilized form of content analysis, though, is the analysis by categorization (Bardin, 1977): “It works through operations of separating the body of text into pieces, and then into categories by analogous themes. Between different forms of categorization, the thematic analysis is quick and effective in which it lends itself to direct and simple discourse” (p. 153). For the purpose of this research, the body of text is all 52 editions of *Fugas* in 2019. They were categorized according to the parameters shown in figure 2:

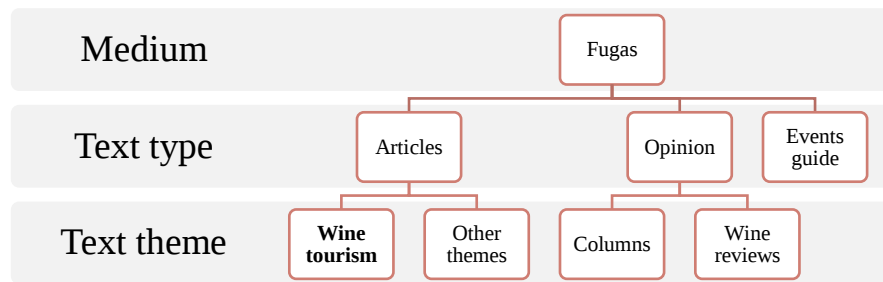


Figure 2: Categories used for *Fugas*' content analysis.

In order to consider an article as having been about wine tourism, it had to encompass the definition according to Hall *et al.* (2000), but also taking in consideration that “while much wine tourism occurs in a winescape, some wine-motivated travel [...] will occur in urban areas”. This has caused the analysis to categorize as wine tourism content some articles that did not highlight a wine tourism experience that fits in the classical definition, but were wine-related in nature and consisted of a touristic activity (such as an article on a prominent wine bar, for example).

Lastly, the content analysis did not take into consideration the many articles in *Fugas* that highlight a certain wine or certain producer but make no mention of touristic experiences linked with the product or its place of production. As it is a magazine from a wine-producing country, the content about wine is often intertwined with the local culture or practices, but the articles were not considered for this research unless they pointed out specific leisure activities. The reason for that was to assess, specifically, the portrayal of wine tourism experiences at *Fugas*.

2.3. Interviews

The final research method for this work was a series of interviews conducted with select authors from the articles analyzed. Although the content itself already gathered much insight on the state of wine tourism communications, it was vital to understand the process of creating that content – namely, how the information first arrived to the journalist and how they processed it in order to create the output of content in the analysis. Because of the systematic routine of the in-house journalists, they were the ones selected for the interview process – the external contributors, although having produced valuable wine tourism content, will work on a pitch-by-pitch basis and would not have the consistency when dealing with wine tourism players that the fixed reporters have.

The interviews were conducted according to the basic principles outlined by Gillham (2005):

1. Questions asked, or topics raised, are 'open' with the interviewee determining their own answers. [...]
2. The relationship between interviewer and interviewee is responsive or interactive, allowing for a degree of 'adjustment'. [...]
3. There is structure and purpose on the part of the interviewer even when the context, like informal questioning in real-life settings, is 'natural'. (p. 3-4)

Although the initial plan was to conduct face-to-face semi-structured interviews for their flexibility and high quality of resulting data (Gillham, 2005, p. 70), the quarantine rules ordered by the Portuguese government during the COVID-19 pandemic rendered this modality impossible. Still, to maintain the semi-structured interview and because interviewees will usually give more insight and frame better answers while talking, rather than writing (p. 102), a video conference software was utilized in order to obtain a hybrid face-to-face/distance interview⁴.

In accordance with the semi-structured methodology, all the interviewees: received a briefing beforehand on the context and topic of the interview; were sent the articles that were being analyzed in order to reacquaint themselves with the subject; were asked to search for the first point of contact with the subject; were asked the same questions⁵, which were previously prepared to ensure their thematic cohesion; received additional prompts and/or supplementary questions when the answers did not completely cover the topic posed by the pre-planned question; were asked open questions; and, finally, had an equivalent time allotted to the interview⁶ (Gillham, 2005, p. 70-72).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Before the authors were contacted, however, the content analysis took place. Fifty-two issues of *Fugas* were analyzed, in total, through Portable Document Format (PDF) online versions of the magazine which are available in *Público*'s website for anyone with a subscription. The PDFs contain the issue in its full form, with the same graphic design, text and numbering as the print version. It was not possible to utilize the printed magazines for this analysis because the full physical archive is at the newspaper's offices, which were inaccessible for non-essential journalists during the COVID-19 pandemic. Those issues were catalogued and systematically reviewed in order to categorize the articles published within.

Throughout the year of 2019, there were a total of 547 articles published in *Fugas*. With 52 issues and 32 pages per issue, the magazine has had an average of 10,5 articles published weekly, not including events guides, user-generated content⁷ and opinion articles. Out of those 547 articles, only 15 were identified as having wine tourism as its central subject, as shown in table 1.

⁴ Interviews were held in Portuguese because it was the native language to all interviewees. Notable excerpts used on this research can be found, translated, on Annex A3.

⁵ The full set of pre-planned questions posed in all of the interviews is available on Annex A2.

⁶ Time measured by individual articles. Some authors had more than one article analyzed, and thus had longer interviews because the same set of questions was asked twice.

⁷ A floating non-regular page, 'InstaFugas' and 'Fugas dos Leitores' [Reader's Escapes] feature, respectively, social media posts and travel journals sent in by the magazine's readers.

Table 1: All articles published in Fugas during 2019 with wine tourism as their central subject.

<i>Issue</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Author</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Detailed subject</i>	<i>Def.⁸</i>
16/03/2019	Para levar o vinho a sério, uma Donna descontrai	João Pedro Pincha	Bar	Donna Taça, a wine bar in Lisbon.	No
11/05/2019	Por este Douro acima (e abaixo) ao ritmo da vela	Andreia Marques Pereira	Activity	2-day Sailboat tour w/ winery visit and vineyard trail on the Douro Valley.	Yes
25/05/2019	Essência de uma região distinta	José Miguel Dentinho	Region	Wine tourism options in the Santar region.	Yes
25/05/2019	Enoturismo em Lisboa e no Porto? Sim, também é possível	Andreia Marques Pereira	Region	Wine Hotels in Porto and Lisbon.	No
15/06/2019	Roteiros Vínicos, provas e um grande festival	Maria José Santana	Region	Wine tourism options in the Wiesbaden - Rheingau region.	Yes
22/06/2019	Douro Vineyards, o resto é paisagem	Luis Octávio Costa	Hotel	Vila Galé, a hotel situated in the Douro Valley.	Yes
20/07/2019	Vevey estava há 20 anos à espera da festa	Sousa Ribeiro	Event	Fête des Vignerons, a wine festival in Vevey.	Yes
03/08/2019	Aqui só se bebe vinho nacional — e pouco convencional	Sara Pires	Bar	Tua Vinharia na Póvoa, a wine bar/shop in Póvoa de Varzim	No
17/08/2019	Portugal à mesa (e no copo) na Uva da Cávem	Sandra Silva Costa	Restaurant	Uva by Cávem, a restaurant at Adega Cávem in Vila Nova de Gaia	No
14/09/2019	O vizinho americano	João Pedro Pincha	Bar	Black Sheep, a wine bar in Lisbon.	No
05/10/2019	À beira do Douro, pisando uvas ao luar	Alexandra Prado Coelho	Hotel	Quinta dos Murças, a hotel situated in the Douro Valley.	Yes
30/11/2019	Maçanita abre as portas do seu paço Alentejano	Alexandra Prado Coelho	Winery	Wine tourism options in Fita Preta, a winery in the Alentejo Region.	Yes
30/11/2019	A Arte contemporânea ajuda a vender vinho em Itália	Isabel Salema	Region	Wine tourism options in the Piemonte region.	Yes
28/12/2019	Os vinhos da Sogevinus atravessaram o rio	Sandra Silva Costa	Store	Sogevinus' tasting room/shop in Porto.	No
28/12/2019	Cultivar a paz e colher laranjas numa quinta minhota	Abel Coentrão	Winery	Wine tourism options in Casa Lata, a winery in the Minho.	Yes

⁸ Does the main subject fit the wine tourism description by Hall *et al.* (2000)?

3.1. Wine Tourism in *Fugas*

From the 15 articles that were singled out for analysis, 7 (47%) were written by journalists who are part of *Fugas*' team full time (Andreia Marques Pereira, Luiz Octávio Costa, Alexandra Prado Coelho and the magazine's managing editor, Sandra Silva Costa). The remaining 8 (53%) were written by external collaborators and journalists from *Público*'s other sections.

The process of determining whether or not a subject will be covered in the magazine usually starts in the pitch meetings, held weekly with the entire team. Any article idea starts out in one of two ways: it can be an observation/idea made by the journalists which will then be investigated (Pereira, 2020); or – most of the time – it will be a press release/agency pitch that one of the journalists or the editor received (S. Costa, 2020). In either case, the editor will assign a journalist to the article⁹ and give them a rough estimate for the publication date. The journalist is then tasked with doing the research and the field work (visits, interviews, and more) required for the article, followed by writing the actual text and submitting it for editing before final publication.

In the case of wine tourism articles, some will be thought out as having this as its thematic focus from the start, such as Coelho (2019a), and some will end up having it as its theme because of the setting, but weren't initially planned on being specifically about wine tourism, as is the case with Pereira (2019a). Either way the articles are often divided in two main sections: the text itself and, at the end, a summary with the contact information or a list of experiences available and their respective prices. At *Fugas*, because of its nature and its purpose, that last block will often read 'drier', more matter of fact, than the text before it. That is because the writers will frequently deviate from the recommended journalistic format of fitting in the very first paragraph the 'what, who, when, where, how and why' principle which is a part of the newspaper's style guide (*Público*, 1998). Instead, the texts will often read like very short novels, with some pieces taking almost two paragraphs to set the scene for the topic at hand. This will often afford the reader to follow along the touristic experience almost as if they were there, which helps bridging the gap between the experiential goods and the willingness to purchase them despite not being able to try them beforehand.

Not all articles reflect purely touristic experiences, though. As shown in figure 3, wine bars and restaurants comprised the main subject of 27% of articles analyzed. In order to be considered a wine tourism article, those that held bars or restaurants as their main subject had to feature prominently either the wine list or be about a wine-themed establishment. Articles about restaurants that offered pairing menus or had an extensive wine list that did not focus on the wine as the main topic were not considered.

⁹ If the article was a pitch from an agency or a press release, the journalist assigned will usually be the one who first received the material – except when that journalist is already 'fully booked', with many projects at once or unavailable.

The location of the bars and restaurants was also taken into account – after all, restaurants and bars with difficult access from traditionally touristic regions may not receive as many tourists.

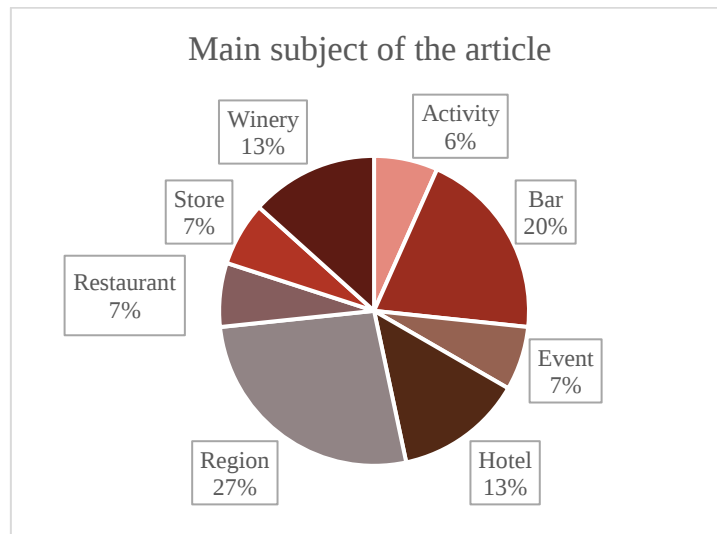


Figure 3: Percentage of different main subjects found in the articles analyzed.

It is worth noting that the articles that featured bars and restaurants also contributed to a fairly balanced distribution between rural and urban wine tourism articles, as shown in figure 4.

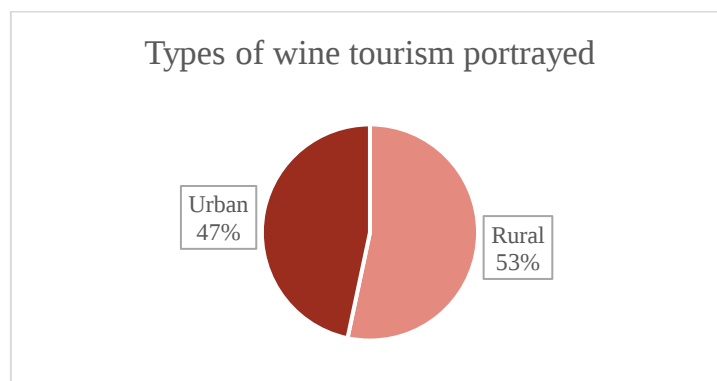


Figure 4: Percentage of different types of wine tourism found in the articles analyzed.

The figures for rural and urban wine tourism closely resemble those of the articles that did or did not fit the classical wine tourism definition by Hall *et al.* (2000) who, as shown before, consider to be wine tourism the activity happening in or around winescapes and in urban settings only if the travel itself is wine-motivated (for wine fairs, for example), as shown in figure 5. Although the majority of the subjects covered at *Fugas* met the classic definition, it can still be seen that 40% of the articles talked about wine tourism outside of the traditional winescape or wine-related travel. This holds especially true in a country like Portugal, where wine is a major part of the country’s history and heritage (Cardoso & Silva, 2007), but also speaks of new habits of wine consumption and wine tourism – which are intertwined with other forms of tourism, be it gastronomic, leisure or culture-oriented.

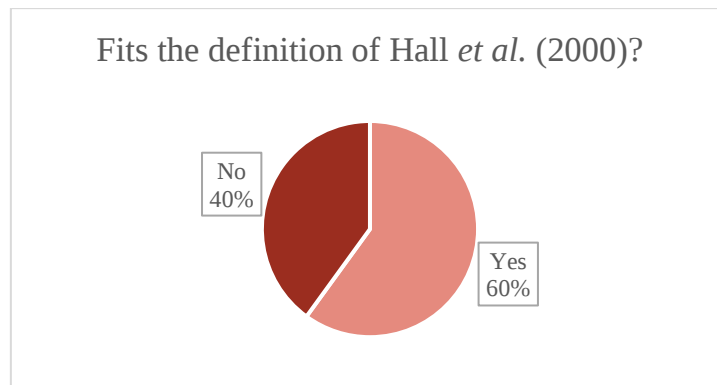


Figure 5: Percentage of articles analyzed whose main subject fits the wine tourism definition by Hall, *et al.* (2000).

Finally, the vast majority of the articles covered tourism experiences/locations in Portugal (80%), with the exception of 3 (20%), which talked about Germany, Switzerland and Italy – in all three cases penned by external collaborators, and in two of those as an aftermath of other articles that were also written about those regions. This is a reflection of the magazine’s readers, on one side, but also the fact that the articles that cover foreign cities or regions tend to be broader and talk about all aspects of those regions, rather than focusing just on wine tourism. Even then, it can still be done – as was seen on Salema (2019a), a journalist from Ípsilon magazine who went to Turim, Italy, in order to attend Artissima, a contemporary art festival, and ended up writing two separate pieces, one for her own magazine centering on the art (Salema, 2019b) and one for *Fugas* which talked about the relationship between the art and the wine from the Piemonte region, highlighting touristic activities.

The data compiled during the content analysis provides valuable insight into what this specific team at this newspaper is writing about when they decide to write an article on wine tourism – however, there are a number of factors that go into penning a piece that don’t necessarily show up in the finished result. In order to take a closer look into what exactly influences the production of a wine tourism article, the professional internship presented an opportunity – in a very journalistic fashion – to go straight to the source.

3.2. Insights From the Field

Robinson (2009) said that the most important thing when writing about wine is finding the story behind it, and the second most important thing is how you tell the story so that it doesn’t get boring, that is, the quality of the writing that frames that story. That sentiment was echoed all throughout *Fugas*. Although none of the resident journalists consider themselves wine experts, all have written about wine at some point in their careers, and so had to find ways to communicate about it that drew their interest in, personally, but also produced a non-repetitive, unique outlook on every article (Coelho, 2020; L.O. Costa, 2020).

When talking specifically about the articles written in 2019, some were intentional in their wine tourism coverage and some others were ‘accidental’. Pereira (2020) was investigating sustainable touristic experiences by boat when she found an experience that lets the visitor sleep in a sailboat in the Douro River, with an included visit to a winery (Pereira, 2019a). As she explained, “it is impossible to talk about the Douro without mentioning their wines and their wine tourism, because that is what the Douro mainly is”. In the other article analyzed (Pereira, 2019b), for the summer wine edition, her intention was specifically talking about wine tourism in an urban setting – according to her, “I’d written about the wineries, I’d written about all of it and it was all played-out, honestly, so what could we do that was different?”.

From her own observations she knew there had been a few openings of wine-related hotels in Porto and Lisbon, which are not rural wine zones – although Porto and its neighboring city, Vila Nova de Gaia, have a historic connection with Port wine (Cardoso & Silva, 2007) – and decided to investigate it further. The result was a piece that listed a few hotels that had wine as their central feature, even if they were not technically located in wine regions, which is still a modality of wine tourism that is often overlooked, even being left out of the definition by Hall *et al.* (2000).

Porto and Vila Nova de Gaia featured, specifically, in two other ‘urban wine tourism’ articles by S. Costa (2019a; 2019b). Both of them were pitched by the same company, Sogevinus; although they had different subjects: a showroom for Sogevinus in Porto (2019, December 28) and a restaurant opening in the Cálem Port aging warehouse in Vila Nova de Gaia (2019a). Curiously, the restaurant article is still not considered by S. Costa (2020) to be about wine tourism, even though it has details about the winery itself and her experience featured prominently the wines from the company. This is mostly because, according to both Pereira (2020) and L.O. Costa (2020), wine is such an undercurrent of tourism in general, in Portugal, that sometimes an activity can be a wine tourism activity without one even noticing.

Such was the case for L.O. Costa (2020), when going to visit Vila Galé’s (then) new hotel in the Douro Valley. The drive for the article was “the scenery, the comfort, the gastronomy, the space, and all that with wine tourism too. Of course, with it being an article for *Fugas* and with the hotel being in Douro, the wine gains another weight, another dimension”. He goes on to say: “a lot of the articles we write will have a wine tasting attached or require some wine knowledge. I’ll usually try to pinpoint the story of the family, and I’ve done a lot of wine tourism articles that way”. That was the case for this particular piece, in which the main goal was communicating about the new hotel’s opening, but that mentions along the way the new brand of wines developed specifically by Vila Galé with the vineyards surrounding the hotel, a wine tasting led by the hotel staff and a wine cellar that is available for guests at the hotel.

However, there are some cases in which the articles will have the clarity and purpose of talking about wine tourism from the start. *Fugas'* specialist in gastronomy, Alexandra Prado Coelho, says she often receives wine-related invitations that stem from her restaurant visits or her many years on the field, having been working at *Público* since its foundation and focusing on food and gastronomy since 2011. In the case of Coelho (2019a), the invitation to visit Quinta dos Murças' recently opened hotel came first in an e-mail but was solidified when talking with the Quinta's enologist, José Luis Moreira da Silva, in a wine event in Brazil (Coelho, 2020). The article was meant to speak about the hotel itself and the wine-related experiences one can have while staying there, but the author pointed out that "often in these scenarios we will use the wine tourism as a pretext to also talk about the wine, so it also serves as an entryway to that subject".

In the final result, the article delves into the geography of the winery, their different soils and terroirs, things that were punctuated by two different touristic activities: a boat tour to observe the vineyards and a guided tasting with the enologist, dedicated to showing the effect of different terroirs on the property's wines. Both of these activities, along with a video outlining the extension of the property and the experience of grape stomping with the property's workers, made for a richer and more informative article: "There is this kind of information which is not even utilized on the text, but gives us a global vision and a deeper context" on the experience (Coelho, 2020).

This has played out even in the researcher's limited experience working in the field, in the first few weeks of the internship when wine tourism was still occurring naturally. While attending an event that unveiled the new brand of the Algarve region's Denomination of Origin (D.O.), the journalists present witnessed a group of Algarvian female singers who harmonized *a capella*, along with a traditional pastry maker molding by hand delicate almond truffles in various shapes and forms. These details had little to do with Algarvian wine, or the D.O. itself, but they added a layer of complexity and context to that presentation that made the journalists present have a deeper connection with the region, influencing the way it was communicated about.

Finding a deeper meaning and connecting with the journalist that is there to serve as a witness to a touristic experience is one of the key elements of wine tourism writing that the interviewees pointed out – but there is a lot more detail to a successful communications strategy that may influence the way any given experience is portrayed by the media.

3.3. How to Communicate Your Wine Tourism Product Effectively

During the course of the professional internship, although the researcher's experience reporting on wine tourism in the field was limited, they were able to work alongside and watch the methodology and work ethic of their journalist peers at *Fugas*. These journalists have also elucidated what calls their attention to a wine tourism experience, and what kind of information they like to be given in order to

take on an article. There are a few key strategies that can be utilized to maximize the attractiveness of an experience to the media, as presented below.

3.3.1 Finding a Unique Selling Proposition

As Costa (2020) pointed out, journalists receive new information every day. Sometimes, they even receive old information that is new to them (Coelho, 2020). In order to filter through all the content vying to be published, journalists latch onto certain details that make an experience stand out – rather than just relying on newness. This is why it is important for the providers to have a clear Unique Selling Proposition (USP), and have it stated straight away on any promotional material sent out to the media.

In the case of Coelho (2019b), she was dealing with a wine project that had already existed for a while, but who had just decided to open up for tourists after discovering a rich history of the property before it was bought by the current owners. She explained: the history was the determining factor “because I wouldn’t have gone there if they’d just said ‘this project has been running for a while but you haven’t been there yet’. You need a pretext, and in this case the pretext was good”.

S. Costa (2020) has also pointed out how having been consistent in the projects one presents to the media can lead to a better success rate in future projects – in this case, the USP is having developed this relationship of trust:

It is essential that the subject is one in which we have put on a stamp of excellence, of sorts. Sometimes we take risks in order not to leave out the smaller projects which we don’t know as well, but then comes in the part of press agencies.

Lastly, a good USP may be having a little something extra to go with the pure ‘wine tasting in a winery’ model (Pereira, 2020). She adds: “usually the tastings for tourists aren’t very flexible, and I always try to grab some extra information”. A point of interest can involve local produce or empirical examples to explain what is so special or unique about the wines: “They’d usually say this wine goes well with this cheese, and I’d go, ‘okay, but where’s the cheese?’ I’d like for them to elaborate a bit more”.

3.3.2 Framing the Experience Creatively and Correctly

Even then, having a USP is not enough on its own. In order to make waves and grab attention amongst the wide offer of touristic experiences that a newspaper receives, it is advisable to craft the right message to put the touristic product in the best possible position to be investigated and written about. First and foremost, it is important to have all the relevant data at hand and readily available. Pereira (2020) points out: “sometimes we have to do an enormous amount of research, before and after visiting a touristic offering, because there was information missing to piece the article together”. Coelho (2020) has also faced the same problem:

The information we receive must be easily transmissible. Sometimes we have to chase the information, it's missing a contact e-mail, a price... If the information arrives and it's all very clear and organized, almost like a datasheet, that's already a lot of help.

Another crucial detail, which often goes overlooked, is good grammar and creative writing. S. Costa (2020), as the magazine's editor, pointed out how she is always noticing how things are written:

I immensely value how things are presented and written. When something shows up and it's badly written, ugly, unkempt, it immediately drains your motivation... You think to yourself 'damn, if they're presenting it to me like that, it's because it's not even worth to go and see what's behind this'. Of course, you risk making a wrong call, but in journalism you learn to weigh out these things.

Good graphic design and a catchy, well-written and engaging text go a long way in calling a journalist's attention amongst a sea of e-mails. The thing that helps even more, whenever possible, is personalization.

3.3.3 Knowing Your Recipient

After figuring out a product's USP and crafting a well-curated message that will promote it, one of the final steps in order to get ahead with media promotion is to – much like journalism itself – know exactly who your audience is. Especially in wine and wine tourism, which are narrower fields with not a lot of specialist journalists, it is very easy to tell when a pitch has been sent 'universally', without any thought or consideration for the unique characteristics of each different medium. Although not always possible, the ideal scenario would be to personalize the promotion material to each individual journalist/outlet:

Look, I love this feeling when, as they're offering a story to me, I can tell that it was thought specifically for *Público*, for *Fugas*. When they notice what the intent is behind that medium and prepare something that to us makes more sense, and it's not the same thing they sent to everybody else. Of course sometimes the visits are communal for the press, and then we'll each figure out how to make it unique, but really, when someone tells me 'this visit is just for you, I haven't offered this point of view or angle to anyone else' it is very important because it gives this feeling that we'll have a different, original work (Coelho, 2020).

More than once, while completing the internship, the researcher would pitch a story or a subject on wine tourism and the editors would then ask: 'what's the angle? What's the unique point of view?' This is an exercise that all journalists must do daily, in whatever story that they're working on – but having this unique perspective being pitched from the start by the producer or the press agency will make it all the more likely that a journalist will pick up that story to write. What makes a story unique is that it adds relevancy to the medium it was written for, and it interests its readers, but there is also

something else, an element that is elusive and cannot be engendered or created out of nothing: history, heritage and the people.

3.3.4 Looking Beyond the Wine

Storytelling does not only increase competitiveness for wine tourism products in the visitor sphere (Frost, *et al.*, 2020). Journalists are also very sensitive to the story aspects of any experience and will be greatly attuned to any additional details that are given beyond just the technical information about the wines. Small details such as the people who are cooking or tidying up the rooms in a wine-themed hotel, or the workers who are stomping the grapes to produce Port while they sing excitedly – where they came from, and why they’re there (Coelho, 2020) – can bring a story to life much more than just the varieties contained in the wines tasted.

Coelho (2020) lists a series of factors that she always looks for when writing about wine tourism:

[When the project] has a history and they can convey it convincingly. Having a heritage aspect is amazing but it must be real, and not every place has the same historical strength. [Maçanita’s] Palace had this old, romantic feel as if you were in Italy, and a lot of mysteries surrounding its construction that weren’t cleared up yet – it is very easy to tell a story about a place like that. If you don’t have that, it can be a story about the people who are helming the project. Maybe they had a career trajectory and completely changed their lives, or they had to take over from their parents and managed to turn the business around, or maybe it’s a parent-son duo, or a couple. Anything that lends a personal touch to it. Obviously, the location, the comfort, the scenery, all that is great, but I can’t write two pages saying the bed was comfortable and the view was pretty. Having a story that’s different from everyone else’s is crucial.

Pereira (2020) also pointed out how important the personal aspect is, but in relation with the region and its culture. It is always interesting to point out the general story of the village or the wine region, its traditions and its structure, rather than just the one touristic experience. L.O. Costa (2020) also puts immense value on the territory, and more specifically the *terroir*:

I can drink a wine and I can like it or not, but what surrounds this wine is what will shape my opinion on it. The same happens with my stories, the text will have more life in it if the *terroir*, the environment, the land, the people are interesting. The main thing to sell, either to consumers or journalists, is the story surrounding the wine. There’s a lot of great wines in the world, but the main differentiating factor that determines if you’ll like what you taste is this unexplainable *terroir*.

All this goes to show that establishing a good relationship with the media and using it as a tool for promoting wine tourism does not have to be a dedicated effort that is separate from all other marketing efforts. It has much of the same goals and uses much of the same strategies as cellar door

sales (Frost *et al.*, 2020), but with the added benefit that the journalist will come with a platform that has tremendous potential to surpass the reach of word-of-mouth from visitors and elevate the image of the wine tourism destination or product towards something much more desirable (Hall, *et al.*, 2000).

4. CONCLUSION

If positive touristic experiences will positively influence and provide leverage for wine brands (Correia *et al.*, 2016), and having an external referral with detailed information will also positively impact the touristic experience (Roberts & Sparks, 2006), it is only logical that an orchestrated effort should be put in place to have the best possible output of wine tourism experiences in the media. By both being out in the field, writing about wine tourism, and interviewing the journalists who do this on a regular basis, it was possible to find the underlying factors that influence this relationship and what the best possible practices are in order to maintain this link between news writers and wine tourism providers.

One thing that has been proven to increase both perceived value and willingness-to-pay for wine and wine tourism experiences is storytelling, which in this research was found to also be a powerful motivator for those who are writing about wine tourism. The wine business has this dichotomy of being long perceived as a closed-off sector for stuffy experts, while also having this rich, immense treasure of information that not even the experts can keep up with (Hartsock, 2018), but observing how journalists try to shift the focus away from the product itself, its technical descriptors and its machinery-related terminology by favoring the stories that permeate the land and the people behind it in order to create engaging tales is a very strong cue on how to communicate effectively about wine and wine tourism if one has any expectation to reach beyond the wine-specialist bubble.

The wine tourism related material analyzed has also shown important trends, such as how the focus is now more balanced between rural and urban settings for wine-related experiences, which in turn can inform how we think about wine tourism itself, seeing the classical definition by Hall *et al.* (2000) does not include wine-related experiences in urban settings when done outside of wine-related travel. It is vital to underline that wine tourism can happen anywhere, at any time, even when the consumer does not notice that that is what they're doing – this will lead them to start developing a relationship with wine consumption and in the future maybe seeking out wine-related travel.

4.1. Limitations and Recommendations for Further Research/Implementation

As was previously mentioned, the methodology and, logically, the results of this research were greatly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic that affected Portugal in March-April of 2020. Had this research been done with the possibility of visiting wine tourism providers and observing the journalists while they were working on their stories, it might have had different or more layered insights on what goes into the production of a wine tourism article.

As is expected, the place where this research took place also had a great impact on its results. As pointed out by L.O. Costa (2020), by being born and raised in Portugal the journalists at *Fugas* have an underlying knowledge on wine that other journalists from other countries might not have unless they set out to educate themselves on the subject. This has allowed more flexibility for this particular magazine to assign wine tourism articles to a varied team of professionals, rather than just one specialist who would otherwise have the ‘final word’ on all things wine tourism. With the way *Fugas* is structured, there are plenty of voices who will speak about wine tourism, and each one of those has different expectations for the kind of information they need in order to write a compelling article – thus allowing for a broader, less biased overview on what goes into that discourse.

For any researchers looking forward to better understanding the relationship between wine tourism and the media, a great next step would be to open up the window of analysis to a bigger time period and trying to determine how this relationship has evolved with the years, along with accompanying journalists in the field for a longer period of time, especially in long-format series or even journalistic books about wine tourism. Nonetheless, with the time allotted and the limitations faced, this research will hopefully have started this conversation and provided some much-needed insight on the often-overlooked field of wine tourism communication.

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A1 Weekly wine section at Fugas

26 | FUGAS | Sábado, 22 de Junho de 2019

Opinião

O Douro não pode ser uma coutada de Mário Ferreira

Mário Ferreira gosta de dizer que hoje só se move por duas razões: ou por prazer ou por dinheiro. Pelos vistos, já não terá prazer com o Douro e agora só age por dinheiro. *Pedro Garcias*



As grandes paisagens vinhateiras estão a converter-se em importantes destinos turísticos. A região do Douro, por exemplo, vive um "boom" turístico nunca visto, embora ainda muito assente nos cruzeiros fluviais. O negócio fluvial é importante, mas deixa pouco dinheiro na região e tem grande impacto sobre o rio, o espaço público e os serviços de recolha de lixo e de saneamento básico, razão pela qual devia ser criada uma taxa turística para atenuar esses custos, já nem falo em "subsidiar" o trabalho dos milhares de viticultores que mantêm a paisagem e com a qual os operadores conquistam os seus clientes. Falo apenas em pagar o básico.

Ninguém tem ganho mais dinheiro com o Douro do que Mário Ferreira, o dono da empresa Douro Azul. Tem feito por isso, diga-se, e de curta forma, até merece que lhe tiremos o chapéu. A revista *Exame* dedicou-lhe recentemente 12 páginas e, a acreditar nos números que a revista e o próprio divulgaram, o empresário norte-nho criou nos últimos 26 anos um pequeno império, centrado no negócio dos cruzeiros mas também com ramificações nos sectores da hotelaria e do imobiliário. Só a venda, já este ano, de 40% da sua *holding* dos cruzeiros, a Mystic Invest Holding, ao fundo americano Certares ter-lhe-á rendido 250 milhões de euros (75

milhões para reforçar os capitais da *holding* e 75 milhões para a conta de Mário Ferreira).

O recurso ao modo condicional tem uma explicação: quantas vezes já damos notícias de grandes negócios que, mais tarde, vimos a descobrir que não eram verdadeiros ou eram exagerados? Lembrem-se das notícias que Mário Ferreira conseguiu plantar em tudo que era jornal, rádio e televisão em Portugal sobre a sua viagem espacial, onde levaria uma garrafa de vinho do Porto da Taylor? Só Nunca fez tal viagem, mas nunca ninguém lhe pediu contas por ter sido enganado. A ruína, financeira e moral, de muitos grandes empresários portugueses, elevados em dada altura a génios dos negócios, obriga-nos, portanto, a ser prudentes, até porque desconhecemos muitas vezes os caminhos que levam à criação de grandes fortunas.

Desde o início que Mário Ferreira tem associado um aguçado espírito empresarial a uma notória falta de humanidade e consciência social. O empresário, como dizia, tem ganho muito dinheiro com as belezas do Douro, mas que ninguém lhe fale em taxa turística - e os autarcas locais não osam contrariá-lo. Estão cegos, porque, tirando meia dúzia de parceiros com quem Mário Ferreira, o seu negócio deixa muito pouco na região. Tas-

ta falar com os donos dos talhos, das mercearias, dos cafés, dos restaurantes, dos hotéis do Douro para se perceber que o negócio fluvial de Mário Ferreira - e dos outros grandes operadores - é umívoco. Funciona quase completamente circunscrito aos seus barcos e aos seus autocarros. O empresário controla quase toda a cadeia do negócio e deixa muito pouco para a economia local. E aí de quem o critique ou lhe faça frente! Mário Ferreira só sabe conviver com o elogio. Aos que se lhe opõem, responde duro e grosso e, tratando-se de poderes públicos, com chantagem, ameaçando cancelar ou deslocalizar investimentos.

A "guerra" que mantém com a Comissão de Coordenação da Região Norte sobre a sua pretensão de construir um hotel com campo de golfe na margem direita do Douro junto a Mesão Frio é exemplar da sua "fibra". É um projecto absurdo, mas Mário Ferreira só irá desistir quando as autoridades públicas se curvarem (a Câmara local já se curvou há muito tempo). E fará o mesmo com o hotel que quer construir mesmo em cima da margem esquerda do Douro, em Gaia, junto à ponte D. Luíz, e que também tem sido chumbado uma e outra vez.

Mário Ferreira também não convive muito bem com a concorrência. São públicas as pressões que o empre-

O empresário controla quase toda a cadeia do negócio e deixa muito pouco para a economia local

sário fez junto de várias instituições para impedir a entrada da Secnic Tours no negócio dos barcos-hotel no Douro. Sem sucesso, diga-se, mas com pesados custos mensais para a empresa australiana. E é também público o contrato leonino que o dono do Douro Azul conseguiu para a albufeira do Tua, onde possui a exclusividade da exploração fluvial. Como é possível alguém deter tal exclusivo numa albufeira pública?

Com Mário Ferreira não há imposíveis. No parque de estacionamento do cais da Brunheda, o centro da sua operação turística no vale do Tua - que inclui a exploração do ramal fer-

roviário que não foi inundado com a construção da barragem da EDP -, o empresário construiu um paredão em granito que é um verdadeiro atentado paisagístico. Quando soube desta obra, a Liga dos Amigos do Douro Património Mundial fez uma quebra junto da CCDR, pedindo o seu embargo. A CCDR deu-lhe razão e, recentemente, intimou o empresário a corrigir a obra. A resposta de Mário Ferreira foi a de sempre: criticar os técnicos da CCDR. Mais: recusa-se a pagar os custos da reposição/requalificação da paisagem original. Pelos vistos, serão as câmaras locais a assumir o encargo. Quem diz ter vendido 40% da sua *holding* por 250 milhões de euros tinha necessidade disto?

Armando Vara tinha um lema político, que diz ter herdado de Almeida Santos: "Aos amigos tudo, aos inimigos nada, aos restantes, compra-se a lei". Mário Ferreira gosta de dizer que hoje só se move por duas razões: ou por prazer ou por dinheiro. Pelos vistos, já não terá prazer com o Douro e agora só age por dinheiro. De acordo com a cartilha capitalista pode ser um bom empresário, mas está longe de ser um empresário bom - e é de empresários bons, comprometidos e envolvidos com as populações locais, que regiões como o Douro precisam. Mas o dono do Douro Azul ainda está a tempo de mudar.

Figure 1: Pedro Garcias' weekly column at Fugas, with an 'Opinião' [Opinion] header.

Vinhos

provas

Os vinhos aqui apresentados são, na sua maioria, novidades que chegaram recentemente ao mercado. A Fugas recebeu amostras dos produtores e provou-as de acordo com os seus critérios editoriais. As amostras podem ser enviadas para a seguinte morada: Fugas — Vinhos em Prova, Rua Júlio Dinis, n.º 270, bloco A, 3.º 4050-318 Porto

55 a 70 71 a 85 86 a 94 95 a 100

91

Poema Alvarinho Reserva 2016
Quinta do Louridal, Melgaço
Região: Monção e Melgaço,
Vinho Verde
Castas: Alvarinho
Graduação: 13% vol
Preço: 16€

Proposta da semana



O selo que afirma os grandes Alvarinho

Para assinalar os dois anos da criação do selo de origem da sub-região Monção e Melgaço (7 de Junho), a Comissão dos Vinhos Verdes promoveu uma prova com dezena e meia de produtores. Vinhos de uvas colhidas e vinificadas na sub-região, que não só afirmam a sua especificidade mas que mostram também que todos ganham quando o caminho é o da identidade e da qualidade.

E se dúvidas houvesse, o que mostram estes produtores é que por mais vinhos com a casta alvarinho que possam ser produzidos e engarrafados noutras regiões, maior é a afirmação - e consequente valor - da origem Monção e Melgaço. Não por acaso certamente, as vendas de Vinho Verde Alvarinho subiram 32% depois do acordo para a instituição da sub-região.

Sendo certo que Monção e Melgaço sempre nos deu grandes alvarinhos, não é menos verdade que a qualidade média deixava também muito a desejar. Pois bem, o que mostrou esta prova é que a qualidade alinha agora claramente pelos níveis superiores. Mas também em todas as marcas há uma identidade própria. Ou seja, vinhos autênticos, que se afirmam pelas características específicas, sejam do lugar, da parcela, da vinificação ou viticultura. É essa identidade e diversidade que constitui a riqueza dos grandes vinhos e das grandes regiões.

Dos produtores já consagrados a projectos mais recentes, vinhos de parcela ou de pequenas produções, como é o caso da Quinta do Louridal, de onde vem a escolha da semana. Apenas quatro hectares, vinha em socalcos numa encosta frondosa, em Melgaço, que desce até às águas do Minho. Um lugar poético que inspirou a marca.

O Poema Reserva estagia dois anos em inox, com borra finas e batonnage, e mais um em garrafa, antes de sair para o mercado. A fruta intensa, associa frescura mineral, volume e intensidade de boca que se prolonga saborosamente. Já tinha impressionado quando provamos com um bacalhau confitado e esta prova colectiva mostrou também a faceta equilibrada de complexidade, textura e elegância. Há cada vez mais grandes Alvarinho na sub-região. J.A.M.



91

QM Vinhas Alvarinho Vinhas Velhas 2017
Quintas de Melgaço
Melgaço
Castas: Alvarinho
Região: Vinhos Verdes
Graduação: 13% vol
Preço: 15,50€

A colheita de 2017 foi muito quente e precoce em todo o país. No caso das regiões mais frias e húmidas, como a região dos Vinhos Verdes, por exemplo, parece ter sido uma bênção. Em geral, os vinhos têm mais fruta e são mais ricos. Este Alvarinho é um bom exemplo. Maduro e com boa amplitude de boca, resume a fruta citrica bem atempada e é bastante saboroso, com uma acidez equilibrada mas com vivacidade suficiente para fazer realçar os sabores frutados. Uma boa escolha para peixe mais gordo. P.G.



95

Dona Matilde Branco 2018
Quinta Dona Matilde, Régua
Região: Douro - Cima Corgo
Castas: Arinto, Viosinho, Rabigato e Gouveio
Graduação: 12,5% vol
Preço: 9€

A acidez dá-lhe frescura e persistência, mas o carácter untuoso, aroma intenso de fruta madura, sensações ao mesmo tempo tropicais e cítricas conferem-lhe interessante estrutura e equilíbrio de boca. Fresco e jovem, tem também boa complexidade que lhe confere grande versatilidade. E se é capaz de surpreender pela acidez e frescura, tem amplitude gastronómica que claramente o enriquece. J.A.M.



94

Anselmo Mendes Pardusco PRVT Escolha 2015
Anselmo Mendes, Melgaço
Castas: Vinhão, Alvarelhão, Cainho, Pedral e 15% de Alvarinho
Região: Vinhos Verdes
Graduação: 12,5% vol
Preço: 19,50 euros

A melhor forma de avaliar o potencial deste vinho é prova-lo às cegas. É tão bem feito, tão fino e delicado que facilmente pode ser confundido com um grande Borgonha. Trata-se de um tinto de várias castas regionais que tenta recriar os antigos vinhos, de cor aberta, que eram exportados do Minho para Inglaterra. O que mais impressiona é a sua harmonia e frescura (não confundir com acidez excessiva) e a pureza e franqueza do seu sabor. Quem disse que não é possível fazer grandes tintos na região dos Vinhos Verdes? P.G.



98

Dona Matilde Tinto 2016
Quinta Dona Matilde, Régua
Região: Douro - Cima Corgo
Castas: Vinhas velhas com predomínio de Touriga Nacional, Touriga Franca e Tinta Amarela
Graduação: 14% vol
Preço: 9€

Aroma fresco e intenso, com notas de fruta vermelha e preta bem madura. A textura aveludada, sensação de volume, complexidade e equilíbrio mostram a personalidade domada pelos 12 meses e estágio em barricas. Polido, profundo e com final de boca prolongado. Um belo vinho e sobretudo uma excelente relação entre preço e qualidade. J.A.M.

Figure 2: weekly wine reviews at Fugas

As shown above, Fugas has two pages each week that are dedicated fully to wine – all of the news pieces written on wine or wine tourism will usually be published in addition to these two pages. The only occasions where these pages are not published as they're shown here is when Mr. Garcias' column mentions someone who requires a Right of Reply. When that is the case, the reply will be published in place of his column on the following week.

A2 Pre-planned questions for the interviews

1. How did you first receive the information/idea for the story?
2. What preliminary information did you receive before going to the experience?
3. Did the article have Wine Tourism as its main goal/theme from the start?
4. What was your main motivation to write this article?
5. How was the experience overall?
 - 5.1. Who received you/led the activity?
 - 5.2. What wine-related activities were there?
6. What information did you get that was not included in the article?
7. What information did you not get, but wish you had?
8. Which factors make you decide to take on a wine tourism article?

A3 Interviews' excerpts

Because the interviews were held in Portuguese, following are the translated notable excerpts which were used for this research. The translation was done by the author.

A3.1 Coelho, A. P.

Page 18:

Daniela: How did you first receive the information/idea for the story?

Alexandra: I'd already had a relationship with Esporão, and they sent the invite as soon as they opened the house for Wine Tourism. I said yes, but we couldn't find a date, time passed and it was only on the following year, when I interviewed Quinta das Murças' enologist in a wine event in Brazil, that I told them again that I was interested and we set a date for me to go.

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D: Did the article have Wine Tourism as its main goal/theme from the start?

A: That was the idea from the start. However, often in these scenarios we will use the wine tourism as a pretext to also talk about the wine, so it also serves as an entryway to that subject... Usually my expectations, when writing an article like this, is to be able to also talk about the wines – not only that they exist, but also give additional insight into how they're made and how they were created, which is why it was of the utmost importance having the enologist be there [at the hotel].

D: How was the experience overall?

A: [...] During the grape stomping we were watching the workers, and talking with the enologist about his experience in Douro and Alentejo, and how they were different. There is this kind of information which is not even utilized on the text, but gives us a global vision and a deeper context.

Page 19:

D: So this history of the Palace was the determining factor to get you there?

A: Totally, completely determining, because I wouldn't have gone there if they'd just said 'this project has been running for a while but you haven't been there yet'. You need a pretext, and in this case the pretext was good.

Page 20/21:

D: Which factors make you decide to take on a wine tourism article?

A: Look, I love this feeling when, as they're offering a story to me, I can tell that it was thought specifically for Público, for Fugas. When they notice what the intent is behind that medium and prepare something that to us makes more sense, and it's not the same thing they sent to everybody else. Of course sometimes the visits are communal for the press, and then we'll each figure out how to make it unique, but really, when someone tells me 'this visit is just for you, I haven't offered this point of view or angle to anyone else' it is very important because it gives me this feeling that we'll have a different, original work. And then, that it has a history and that they can convey it convincingly. Having a heritage aspect is amazing but it has to be real, and not every place has the same historical strength. [Maçanita's] Palace had this old, romantic feel as if you were in Italy, and a lot of mysteries surrounding its construction that weren't cleared up yet – it is very easy to tell a story about a place like that. If you don't have that, it can be a story about the people who are helming the project. Maybe they had a career trajectory and completely changed their lives, or they had to take over from their parents and managed to turn the business around, or maybe it's a parent-son duo, or a couple. Anything that lends a personal touch to it. Obviously the location, the comfort, the scenery, all that is great, but I can't write two pages saying the bed was comfortable and the view was pretty. Having a story that's different from everyone else's is crucial. And, finally, the information we receive has to be easily transmissible. Sometimes we have to chase the information, it's missing a contact e-mail, a price... If the information arrives and it's all very clear and organized, almost like a datasheet, that's already a lot of help.

A3.2 Costa, L. O.

Page 16:

Daniela: So you'd say that, before having wine tourism as [the article's] theme, it was mainly just tourism?

Luis Octávio: It was the scenery, the comfort, the gastronomy, the space, and all that with wine tourism too. Of course, with it being an article for Fugas and with the hotel being in Douro, the wine gains another weight, another dimension.

Page 10/17:

D: How do you try to reconcile the fact that most touristic experiences in Portugal coexist with wine history and wine tourism?

L: At Fugas we're lucky, we have wine specialists, and none of the rest will say they're wine experts – not even Alexandra, who knows a lot. Even then, a lot of the articles we write will have a wine tasting attached, or require some wine knowledge. Sometimes I don't even consider an article a wine article, but I'll usually try to pinpoint the story of the family or other such details, and I've done a lot of wine tourism articles that way. [...] One thing I don't do is reviews, because we have Pedro Garcias and Manuel Carvalho... To do reviews you have to be extremely knowledgeable. I think someone who is

really young can't do a solid review because they don't have the know-how, they haven't lived enough, tried enough wines from different countries, met enough people... But it really is natural to write about wine at almost every piece at Fugas.

Page 22:

D: Which factors make you decide to take on a wine tourism article?

L: That's easy: territory. I can drink a wine and I can like it or not, but what surrounds this wine is what will shape my opinion on it. The same happens with my stories, the text will have more life in it if the terroir, the environment, the land, the people are interesting. The main thing to sell, either to consumers or journalists, is the story surrounding the wine. There's a lot of great wines in the world, but the main differentiating factor that determines if you'll like what you taste is this unexplainable terroir.

A3.3 Costa, S. S.

Page 16:

Daniela: What wine-related activities were there?

Sandra: When we first arrived there, they offered us an aperitif in the balcony. They said 'Since we are at Cálem we'll drink a Port Tonic with a Cálem White Port'. And then during the meal, the chef was explaining the dishes and every one of them was accompanied by a wine, which was also being explained [by the Sogevinus representative].

Page 14/20:

D: Which factors make you decide to take on a wine tourism article?

S: It is essential that the subject is one in which we have put on a stamp of excellence, of sorts. Sometimes we take risks in order not to leave out the smaller projects which we don't know as well, but then comes in the part of press agencies, because most of them come through press releases. Sometimes a friend will also tell you something interesting and when you investigate, they are valid projects which are very important for us to share. [...] I immensely value how things are presented and written. When something shows up and its badly written, ugly, unkempt, it immediately drains your motivation... You think to yourself 'damn, if they're presenting it to me like that, it's because it's not even worth to go and see what's behind this'. Of course you risk making a wrong call, but in journalism you learn to weigh out these things.

A3.4 Pereira, A. M.

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Daniela: So when you were first brainstorming the article, it didn't have any wine tourism link, it was basically only the sailboat?

Andreia: Yes, that was the starting point, but once we knew we were going there we had to mention wine tourism. It is impossible to talk about the Douro without mentioning their wines and their wine tourism, because that is what the Douro mainly is. We didn't set out to talk about Wine Tourism, but at that location it is unavoidable.

D: How did you first receive the information/idea for the story?

A: I rarely work with pitches from agencies or press-releases. I needed something about wine tourism for the wine edition, but I'd written about the wineries, I'd written about all of it and it was all played-out, honestly, so what could we do that was different? I'd noticed these wine hotels opening out of the demarcated regions, especially Douro and Alentejo where there are a lot of wine hotels, so I just started asking around about what was going on.

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D: What information did you not get, but wish you had?

A: You know sometimes we have to do an enormous amount of research, before and after visiting a touristic offering, because there was information missing to piece the article together. But in this case I think it was adequate. The only thing I wish was a bit different was the tasting. Usually the tastings for tourists aren't very flexible, and I always try to grab some extra information. They'd usually say this wine goes well with this cheese, and I'd go, 'okay, but where's the cheese?' I'd like for them to elaborate a bit more.

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D: Which factors make you decide to take on a wine tourism article?

A: What interests me the most is the story, everything surrounding the wines, how the region developed, their traditions, the cities' structure, more than the touristic offer itself. I'm drawn to the people who make the wine, who work in the harvest...