



MASTER THESIS

**Exploring the Synergistic Partnerships in Wine Tourism: A Case Study of The  
Yeatman Hotel and Portuguese Wineries**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis examines the partnerships between The Yeatman Hotel and Portuguese wineries, focusing on Wine Dinners as a promotional activity. The aim is to understand the role of wine hotels in wine tourism and destination development. The research utilizes qualitative methods, including interviews and participant observations during Wine Dinners.

Guest satisfaction, wine partner benefits, and areas for improvement are analyzed thematically. Findings show that Wine Dinners offer a unique opportunity for guests to interact with producers and explore Portuguese wines. Guests express satisfaction with the wine and food pairing experience, emphasizing the value of producer interaction. Wine partners see the events as a chance to create brand ambassadors and promote Portuguese wine regions.

However, opportunities for using Wine Dinners as a marketing tool, particularly through social media, are underexplored. The lack of a systematic evaluation system and logistical challenges are also identified as areas for improvement.

Recommendations include leveraging social media for increased visibility, implementing a guest feedback system, and improving event logistics. These insights enhance guest experiences, strengthen partnerships and promote Portuguese wine regions.

This study sheds light on wine tourism partnerships and the efficacy of wine events in promoting local wine regions. The findings and recommendations benefit wine hotels, wineries, and tourism stakeholders seeking to enhance wine tourism offerings and foster industry collaborations.

**KEYWORDS:** Wine tourism, Wine Dinners, Portuguese wineries, guest satisfaction, marketing, social media.

## **1. INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVES**

The role of wine hotels in wine tourism and their impact on destination development, local companies, and cultural heritage has received significant attention in recent literature (Marco-Lajara et al., 2023). These establishments serve as influential platforms for showcasing the unique qualities of wine regions and promoting local wineries, contributing to the growth and sustainability of wine tourism (Floričić & Jurica, 2023). Collaborative partnerships between wine hotels and wineries have been recognized as essential drivers of synergy and mutual benefits, fostering the development of wine tourism destinations (Correia et al., 2014).

In this context, The Yeatman Hotel, situated by the picturesque Portuguese wine regions of Douro and Porto, has emerged as a prominent wine hotel renowned for its commitment to showcasing the best of Portuguese wines and wineries. Nestled in Vila Nova de Gaia, the hotel's architectural design artfully mirrors the captivating landscape of the Douro vineyards. Every room, as well as the bar and restaurants, provides a panoramic view of the Douro River and the city of Porto. The hotel's event rooms, complemented by access to the terrace, serve as idyllic venues for hosting a multitude of captivating gatherings. Notably, The Yeatman boasts an extensive wine list, encompassing over 1300 references, with an impressive 97% dedicated to Portuguese wines. With a resolute commitment to collaboration, the hotel fosters strong partnerships, uniting various stakeholders within the industry, in its collective pursuit to promote and celebrate the rich heritage of Portuguese wines and wine regions.

One of the hotel's signature activities is the Wine Dinners, which take place regularly and feature a Portuguese winery presenting its wines alongside a carefully curated food menu crafted by the hotel's chef. These wine dinners provide an exceptional gastronomic experience for the hotel guests and visitors and offer an opportunity to promote the partner wineries.

The objective of this thesis is to gain a comprehensive understanding of the partnerships between The Yeatman Hotel and Portuguese wineries, with a particular emphasis on Wine Dinners. The following objectives have been identified:

### **1.1 General Objectives:**

- a) Investigate the role played by wine hotels, such as The Yeatman Hotel, in promoting wine tourism and contributing to the development of destinations, local companies, and cultural heritage.

- b) Examine the concept and history of Wine Dinners at The Yeatman Hotel, including their significance in the hotel's branding strategy and the promotion of Portuguese wines and wine regions.

### **1.2 Specific Objectives:**

- a) Explore the expectations and satisfaction levels of guests attending the Wine Dinners, with a focus on their perceptions of the wine and food pairing experience, the quality of wines presented, and the overall value of the event.
- b) Assess the satisfaction levels and perceived benefits of the partner wineries participating in the Wine Dinners, identifying the advantages they derive from their collaboration with The Yeatman Hotel.
- c) Identify potential areas for development and improvement in the Wine Dinners to enhance the guest experience, strengthen the partnerships, and further promote the partner wineries and Portuguese wine regions.

By addressing these objectives, this research aims to provide valuable insights into the dynamics of partnerships between The Yeatman Hotel and Portuguese wineries, specifically through the Wine Dinners. The findings and recommendations generated from this study will contribute to the existing knowledge on wine tourism and provide practical recommendations for wine hotels, wineries, and destination management organizations seeking to enhance their collaborative efforts in promoting wine experiences.

In the subsequent chapters, an analysis of the literature on wine tourism, the role of wine hotels, and the significance of the promotion of wine experiences will be presented. The specific context of The Yeatman Hotel and its partnerships with Portuguese wineries, with a focus on the Wine Dinners, will be explored. This will be followed by an explanation of the research methodology employed, including the data collection methods and analytical approaches utilized.

The analysis of the collected data will be presented in the subsequent chapter, addressing the research objectives, and providing insights into the expectations, satisfaction levels, and perceived benefits of both guests and partner wineries participating in Wine Dinners. These findings will provide specific recommendations for The Yeatman Hotel and partner wineries to enhance the Wine Dinners' experience and maximize the benefits for all stakeholders involved.

The final chapter will summarize the key findings of the study, reiterating the significance of the partnerships between The Yeatman Hotel and Portuguese wineries, and their impact on wine tourism and destination development. It will also discuss the implications of the research and suggest potential avenues for future research in this field.

### **1.3 Description of The Company and The Internship**

#### **1.3.1 The Yeatman Hotel**

The Yeatman Hotel, located in Vila Nova de Gaia, Portugal, is a well-known wine hotel that was established in 2010. It aims to offer a blend of luxury accommodations and a strong focus on Portuguese wines and wineries. It is part of the Fladgate Group, one of the most renowned British companies established in the wine market in the region, carrying the legacy of the Yeatman family, which entered the Port trade in 1838 (The Yeatman Hotel, n.d.–a). The hotel provides a unique experience that celebrates the rich wine heritage of the region, with a special emphasis on the Douro and Porto wine regions.

One notable aspect of The Yeatman Hotel is its close partnership with Portuguese wineries. Each room in the hotel is named after a different winery, demonstrating the strong connection between the hotel and the wine producers (Cuellar, 2016). This partnership serves as a platform to promote and support the local wine industry, contributing to the overall development of the Portuguese wine tourism sector.

The hotel's dedication to promoting Portuguese wines and wine regions is evident through its wide range of initiatives. From wine-tasting sessions to grand events in collaboration with Portuguese wineries, such as The Yeatman Christmas Experience featuring over 200 wines from partner wineries, the hotel consistently showcases the best of Portuguese wine. Additionally, its wine shop, bars, restaurants, and event rooms serve as platforms to exhibit and celebrate Portuguese wines and wine regions.

A prominent event organized by The Yeatman Hotel is the Wine Dinners. These dinners offer an opportunity for Portuguese wineries to showcase their wines to guests, who can enjoy a thoughtfully curated food menu specifically designed to complement the wines (The Yeatman Hotel, n.d.–b). The Wine Dinners aim to create a unique and immersive dining experience that highlights the quality and diversity of Portuguese wines. Guests have the chance to discover new wines, learn about the winemaking process, and interact with the winemakers themselves.

Through these partnerships and events, The Yeatman Hotel plays a significant role in promoting Portuguese wines, supporting local wineries, and contributing to the development of wine tourism in the region. By showcasing wines and wineries in a luxurious and

immersive setting, the hotel enhances the brand image of both the hotel and its partner wineries.

### **1.3.2 Activities During the Internship**

The internship at The Yeatman Hotel took place from February 21st to May 12th, providing a valuable opportunity to gain practical experience in the hospitality industry. Throughout the internship period, a range of roles were assigned to the Food & Beverage department. Regrettably, the internship was prematurely concluded due to unforeseen overtime hours.

During the initial two weeks, the assignment was at The Dicks Bar, an energetic establishment within the hotel. The primary responsibility involved table and wine service, aligning with the bar's lively atmosphere. This experience facilitated interaction with guests in a relaxed setting, while also honing customer service skills. Although the tenure at The Dicks Bar was brief, it provided an understanding of the dynamic nature of the hotel's operations.

Following the assignment at The Dicks Bar, the transition was made to the Restaurant *Orangerie*, which offered a fine dining experience to patrons. The role primarily consisted of supporting the waitstaff and assisting with service. Additionally, opportunities arose to participate in wine service shifts, enhancing knowledge in wine presentation and pairing.

Simultaneously, active participation was maintained in the highly anticipated Wine Dinners, held weekly at The Yeatman Hotel. These exclusive events showcased various Portuguese wineries, featuring their wines alongside meticulously crafted food pairings by the hotel's culinary and wine team. Responsibilities within the Wine Dinner team encompassed event setup and ensuring the smooth execution of the evening. Furthermore, engagement with wine producers allowed for the exchange of expertise, insights into wineries, and explanations of wine characteristics. These interactions deepened the understanding of the collaborative partnership between The Yeatman Hotel and Portuguese wineries.

Some shifts were also dedicated to the renowned Gastronomic Restaurant, led by Chef Ricardo Costa, which holds two Michelin stars. The primary contribution at the Gastronomic Restaurant involved assisting the waitstaff to ensure the flawless delivery of exceptional dining experiences. This experience provided exposure to meticulous attention to detail and high standards upheld in fine dining settings.

While the experiences at The Dicks Bar, restaurants, and Wine Dinners were undeniably enriching, the internship also presented challenging situations. There were instances of reassignment to assist with various events within the hotel that were less directly related to wine service. These assignments necessitated flexibility and adaptability, involving tasks such as transporting tables, chairs, and other event-related logistics, as well as general



cleaning and polishing duties. Although these responsibilities differed from the initial wine-focused position, they provided a comprehensive view of the hotel's overall operations and underscored the importance of teamwork in delivering exceptional guest experiences. The internship at The Yeatman Hotel provided valuable insights into the multifaceted nature of the hospitality industry.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Wine Hotels and Destination Development**

In recent years, wine tourism has gained significant prominence as a driver of regional development and economic growth (McClain, 2022). Wine hotels play a crucial role in enhancing the wine tourism experience and contributing to the development of wine destinations. These hotels offer unique accommodations and services that cater specifically to wine tourists, creating immersive experiences centered around wine culture, heritage, and the local wine industry (Floričić & Jurica, 2023)

The positive impact of wine tourism on local economies has been widely recognized in numerous studies, emphasizing the potential for job creation, increased revenue, and community development (Correia *et al.*, 2014). Wine hotels, strategically located in or near wine regions, act as catalysts in attracting visitors to these destinations by providing comfortable accommodations and curated wine-related experiences such as vineyard tours, wine tastings, and food and wine pairings.

Furthermore, wine hotels contribute significantly to the preservation and promotion of local wine culture and heritage. Through showcasing regional wines and collaborating with local wineries, these hotels create a platform for cultural exchange and appreciation. The inclusion of wine-related amenities and activities, such as wine cellars, wine bars, and wine education programs, enhances guests' understanding and appreciation of the local wine traditions (Floričić & Jurica, 2023).

By focusing on wine hotels and their role in wine tourism and destination development, this thesis aims to shed light on the strategies employed by these establishments to enhance the wine tourism experience. It investigates the impact of collaborative initiatives between wine hotels and wineries. Through an in-depth exploration of these aspects, valuable insights can be gained to inform the development and management of wine tourism destinations.

## **2.2 Partnerships between Wine Hotels and Wineries**

Scholars have emphasized the importance of collaboration and partnerships between wine hotels, wineries, and other stakeholders in the wine industry for the successful development of wine tourism destinations (Marco-Lajara *et al.*, 2023). These partnerships involve joint marketing efforts, knowledge sharing, and the integration of wine hotel services with winery offerings. Such collaborations help create a cohesive and comprehensive wine tourism product, attracting a broader range of visitors and increasing the overall competitiveness of the destination (Rachão *et al.*, 2019).

Partnerships between wine hotels and wineries play a crucial role in enhancing the wine tourism experience and contributing to the overall success of both entities. These collaborations involve strategic alliances, joint marketing efforts, and the integration of services to provide a comprehensive and immersive wine tourism product (Festa *et al.*, 2019).

Collaborations between wine hotels and wineries also facilitate the exchange of knowledge and expertise. Wineries often share their insights on wine production, viticulture practices, and regional characteristics, enabling wine hotels to provide accurate and engaging information to their guests. This knowledge exchange enhances the authenticity and educational value of the wine tourism experience (Correia *et al.*, 2014).

Moreover, collaborative marketing efforts play a crucial role in these partnerships. Joint promotional activities, such as wine tastings, special events, and cross-marketing initiatives, help increase the visibility and reach of both the wine hotel and winery (Festa *et al.*, 2019). By leveraging their respective networks and customer bases, wine hotels and wineries can attract a broader audience and enhance their brand image.

## **2.3 Wine Dinners as a Marketing Tool**

One significant aspect of these partnerships is the organization of wine dinners, which serve as a platform for wineries to showcase their wines and for wine hotels to provide a gastronomic experience that complements the wines. Wine dinners offer guests an opportunity to interact with winemakers, learn about the winemaking process, and experience the art of food and wine pairing. These events not only enhance guests' knowledge and appreciation of wines but also create a memorable and immersive experience that contributes to overall satisfaction and loyalty (Kustos *et al.*, 2021).

Wine dinners have emerged as a powerful marketing tool within the wine tourism industry, offering a unique and immersive dining experience that combines fine cuisine with expertly

paired wines. These events provide wineries with an opportunity to showcase their products, engage with consumers, and create lasting impressions that contribute to brand loyalty and customer satisfaction (Carvalho *et al.*, 2021).

Wine dinners serve as a platform for wineries to share their story, philosophy, and winemaking expertise with an attentive audience. Through these events, wineries can educate guests about their wines, grape varieties, production techniques, and the specific characteristics that make their offerings distinct (The Yeatman Hotel, n.d.–c). This engagement fosters a deeper appreciation for the winery's products and enhances the overall wine tourism experience.

The carefully curated food and wine pairing during wine dinners not only heightens the sensory experience for participants but also creates opportunities for wineries to showcase the versatility and quality of their wines (The Yeatman Hotel, n.d.–b). The harmonious interplay between the flavors of the dishes and the wines elevates the dining experience, leaving a lasting impression on guests and enhancing their perception of the winery's offerings.

Furthermore, wine dinners facilitate direct interaction between winemakers, representatives, and consumers. This personalized engagement allows guests to ask questions, share their feedback, and deepen their connection with the winery and its wines. Such interactions build trust and loyalty, as consumers feel a sense of exclusivity and belonging, knowing that they are part of an intimate gathering that goes beyond a typical wine-tasting experience (Back, 2020).

From a marketing perspective, wine dinners offer wineries an effective platform to promote their brand, expand their customer base, and generate positive word-of-mouth. Satisfied guests are more likely to share their experiences with friends and family, and through social media, amplifying the reach and impact of the winery's marketing efforts (Gingiss, 2019). These events also provide wineries with an opportunity to collect valuable feedback and insights from consumers, enabling them to refine their offerings and marketing strategies (Brochado *et al.*, 2020).

By leveraging the unique appeal of wine dinners, wineries can differentiate themselves in a competitive market and create memorable experiences that drive brand awareness and customer loyalty. However, it is essential for wineries to carefully plan and execute wine dinners to align with their brand identity, target audience, and marketing objectives (Serra *et al.*, 2021).

In conclusion, wine dinners serve as an effective marketing tool within the wine tourism industry, offering wineries an avenue to engage, educate, and create lasting connections with consumers. The immersive dining experience, coupled with expertly paired wines, allows wineries to showcase their products, build brand loyalty, and generate positive word-of-mouth, ultimately contributing to the success of the winery's marketing efforts.

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Data Collection Method: Interviews and Observations during Wine Dinner Service**

The methodology applied in this study aimed to gather valuable insights and data on the wine dinners conducted at the hotel, considering the limitations and challenges faced during the internship period. The primary data collection methods utilized were participant observation and informal interviews with guests.

Due to concerns regarding data confidentiality, it was not possible to conduct formal interviews with guests. However, opportunistic informal interviews were carried out during service. These interactions provided valuable insights into guests' preferences, perceptions, and overall satisfaction (Adams, 2015).

It is important to acknowledge that this sampling method had limitations in terms of representativeness, as it relied on spontaneous conversations and encounters rather than a systematic and structured approach. The sample size was restricted to approximately 30%-40% of the total number of guests attending the wine dinners, mainly due to time constraints and limited personnel availability at the hotel.

To support the effectiveness of the chosen method, previous research has emphasized the value of informal interviews and participant observation as suitable approaches for gathering qualitative data (Adams, 2015). These methods enable researchers to capture spontaneous and authentic responses from participants, offering in-depth insights into their experiences and perceptions.

By acknowledging these limitations and challenges, this study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the impact of wine dinners as a marketing tool within the hotel and wine tourism context. The insights gained from the limited sample and the broader challenges faced by the industry will be carefully analyzed and discussed concerning the research objectives and relevant literature.

### 3.2 Wine Dinners Operations

This section provides an overview of the operational aspects of the Wine Dinners conducted at the hotel. It aims to describe the setup, sequence of events, and key elements of the service based on the observations made during the internship.

The Wine Dinners at the hotel offered flexibility in terms of venue, with the choice depending on the event and restaurant space availability. Three distinct rooms were typically used: the Private, Tented, and *Orangerie*. The Private room could accommodate up to 10 guests, with the main representative of the wine partner seated at the head of the table, accompanied by other representatives and the hotel's host. For larger gatherings of 10 to 30 guests, the Tented room featured a central main table for 6 to 8 people, surrounded by up to 8 tables for 2 guests each. In cases where the number of attendees exceeded 30, the *Orangerie* operations would be reallocated or, as a last resort, the restaurant would be closed for the evening. The *Orangerie* typically had tables for 2 guests on one side (up to 11 tables) and, depending on the attendees' list, the other side could accommodate a large main table for more than 10 guests or tables for groups of 4 or 6 guests, including the main table. This variety of venue options ensured a personalized and accommodating dining experience for Wine Dinner attendees.

The preparation for Wine Dinners commenced, most likely, on Mondays, when the *Orangerie* team was informed about the expected number of guests. They would then initiate the process of sorting and polishing the required glassware. On Thursdays, the dedicated Wine Dinner team took charge of setting up the designated room. This involved meticulously arranging the tables with the necessary silverware, including water and wine glasses. Each table was equipped with a bread-and-butter plate, a napkin, and a printed menu detailing the evening's offerings. Additionally, a dedicated area outside the room was organized to serve as the welcome cocktail space, featuring a small bar for wines and drinks, along with appetizer service.

Upon completion of the cocktail, the guests were guided to their assigned seats following a seating plan devised by the event supervisor. Some privileged attendees were seated at the esteemed "producer table," alongside the host, typically the Wine Director, and the representative from the winery, often the winemaker. The dinner commenced with the service of the first wine, accompanied by a warm welcome from the host and the wine partner, who introduced the winery and shared insights about the wines featured in the welcome cocktail and entree pairings.

The Wine Dinners are priced at 100 euros per person, with the main course service following, typically, a structured wine pairing sequence, wherein:

- A white wine accompanied one or two of the entrees.
- A different white or red wine complemented the fish course.
- A red wine was selected to harmonize with the meat course.
- The dessert course with a Fortified or Sparkling wine.

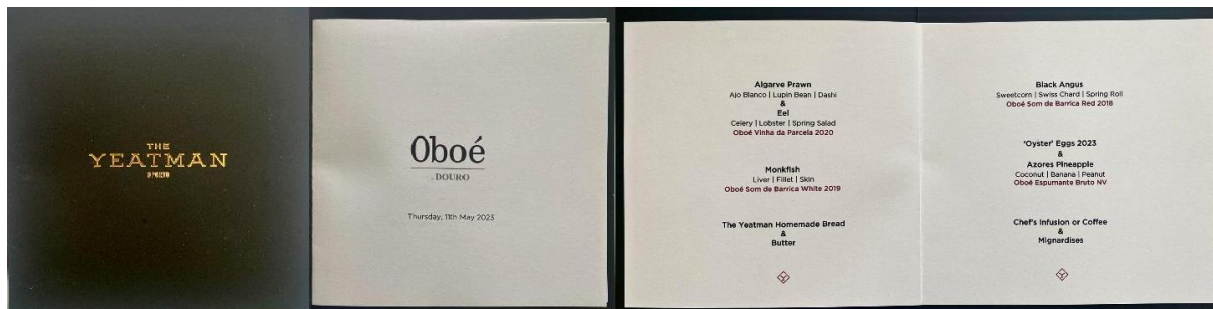


Figure 1 - Wine Dinner Menu

Prior to the meat course, a dedicated bread and butter service delighted guests with homemade bread made from the hotel's renowned "mother dough" and accompanied by butter sourced from the Azores.

Throughout the evening, there were usually two additional moments when the wine producer would address the guests, providing further insights into the wines. These instances would occur after the completion of the meat course and again following the conclusion of the desserts.

The service concluded with a coffee and tea service, accompanied by delectable *mignardises* – bite-sized sweets. A final speech was delivered by the host and the wine partner, expressing gratitude to the guests for their presence and offering closing remarks.

### 3.3 Data Collection: Guest Interviews and Observations

To obtain valuable insights from the guests attending the Wine Dinner service, a structured approach was implemented, involving interviews and observations. Given the priority of maintaining an excellent level of service during the event, it was not possible to interact individually with every guest. Additionally, to preserve the integrity of the guests' dining experience, it was crucial to conduct interviews discreetly, seamlessly incorporating questions into natural conversations. Thus, opportune moments needed to be detected to engage in dialogue and gather data without disrupting their overall dining experience. The following key moments were deemed suitable for this purpose:

- a) After serving and presenting a dish: Following the presentation and delivery of each course, an opportunity arose to engage guests in conversation. During this moment, while ensuring that the dish was presented to their satisfaction, it was possible to initiate a brief dialogue and inquire about their impressions, preferences, and overall experience regarding the food and wine pairing.
- b) While refilling a glass of water or wine: As guests' beverage needs were attended to, such as refilling their glasses of water or wine, an opportunity presented itself to initiate conversation. By subtly inquiring about their experience thus far or seeking their opinion on the wine selection, it was possible to encourage guests to share their thoughts and impressions.
- c) While retrieving the dishes: The act of clearing dishes provided a favorable moment for engaging with guests. By asking about their satisfaction with the food and service up to that point, relevant questions pertinent to the research could be posed. This interaction allowed for capturing immediate feedback and gauging their overall experience.
- d) At the end of service: Towards the conclusion of the Wine Dinner, although time constraints and operational responsibilities limited the extent of engagement, attempts were made to collect final impressions from the guests. However, it is worth noting that at this stage, some guests may have been influenced by the consumption of alcohol, potentially leading to more positive responses. Additionally, the service team's focus shifted to closing procedures, allowing for a limited time to engage in extensive conversations.

The interviews followed a preconceived guideline designed to keep the conversation focused on relevant research topics. Typically, the discussions followed a structured script that encompassed the guests' origin, whether they were staying at the hotel or not, their motivation for attending, their level of interest in wines, perceptions of the service quality, and how the overall experience contributed to their understanding of Portuguese wines. Depending on the responses and the guests' moods, the focus of the conversations would be adapted accordingly.

It is important to acknowledge the unique dynamics of a particular Wine Dinner. This specific occasion featured a smaller group of 11 guests, including the host and two wine partner representatives, and took place in the "Private" room. In this setup, the researcher was responsible for operations under the supervision of a higher authority, and the dynamic differed significantly from the usual format. All guests were seated at the same table, promoting interactions among themselves and with the service team. Consequently, data

collection and interviews varied from the norm, as individual engagement was not possible. Nevertheless, the guests engaged in meaningful discussions, often raising pertinent questions with careful absorption of the information shared being made. On occasion, was possible to participate actively and obtain specific insights. This unique Wine Dinner not only allowed for data collection from all guests but also presented the most interesting and challenging experience, given the researcher's role as the responsible party for service delivery.

By implementing this comprehensive approach to interviews and observations during the Wine Dinner service, valuable data was collected, providing insights into the guests' perspectives, preferences, and experiences related to the event.

In addition to the specific limitations of data collection, it is crucial to consider the broader challenges faced by the Portuguese tourism industry concerning the availability of a qualified workforce. The industry has encountered difficulties in recruiting and retaining skilled personnel, resulting in staff shortages and increased workloads (Carrilho, 2023). This situation impacts the quality-of-service delivery and may limit opportunities for extensive guest engagement and research activities.

## **4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **4.1 Analysis of the Interviews with Guests**

This section provides an analysis of the data collected from the wine dinner events, shedding light on the motivations, preferences, and experiences of the attendees. It is important to note that certain guideline questions, as outlined in Annex 1, were utilized to ensure the researcher's focus during interactions with the guests.

The attendees exhibited a range of motivations for attending the wine dinners. Some participants were driven by their interest in specific wine producers, having previously attended wine dinners and returning due to their positive experiences. Others aimed to enrich their wine tourism experience and sought recommendations from the hotel's front desk or even travel agencies.

A significant number of guests expressed a desire to enhance their overall stay experience at the hotel. These individuals, who were wine curious, saw the wine dinners as an opportunity to explore and indulge in new wine experiences. The positive feedback received from these attendees highlights the effectiveness of the wine dinners in meeting their expectations and providing a memorable experience.



These findings shed light on the motivations and experiences of the wine dinner attendees. The positive feedback and the variety of motivations expressed by the participants highlight the effectiveness of the wine dinners as a marketing tool to enhance guests' stay experiences.

Overall, the analysis of the collected data provides valuable insights into the attendees' motivations, preferences, and experiences related to the wine dinner events. These findings contribute to a better understanding of the role of wine dinners as a marketing tool and their impact on guests' overall stay experiences.

Figure 2 presents the gender distribution of attendees at the Wine Dinners hosted by The Yeatman Hotel. This information is particularly interesting as it provides insights into the gender dynamics of wine dinner participation.

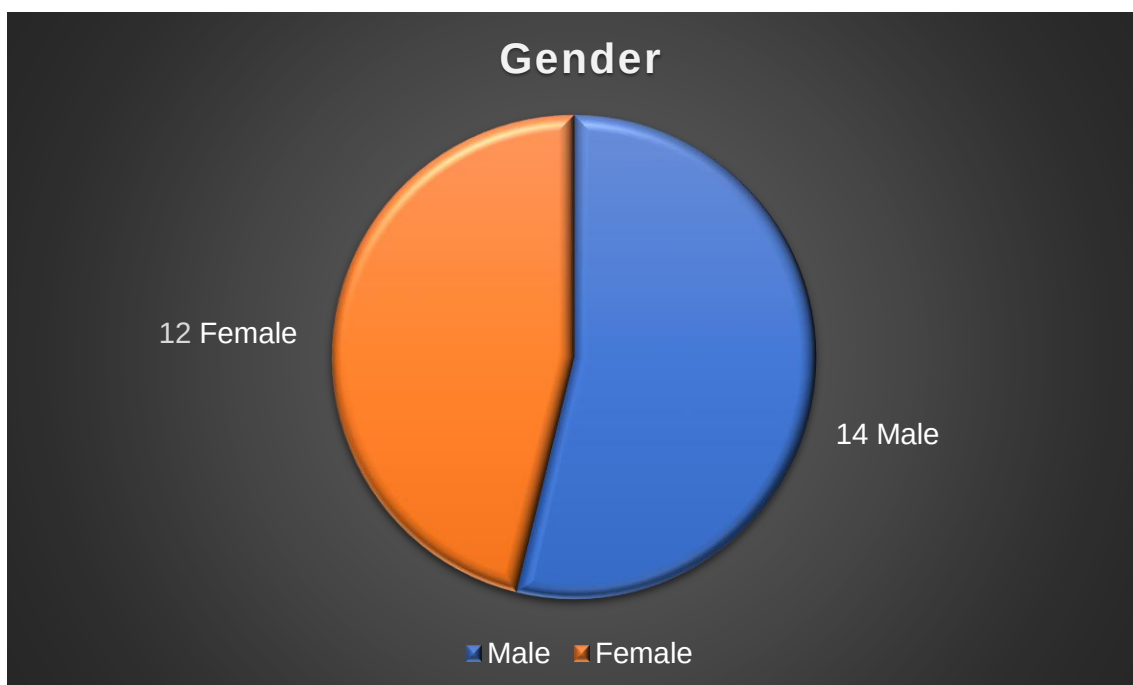


Figure 2 - Gender Distribution of Wine Dinner Attendees

The nearly equal representation of both genders indicates a balanced interest and engagement among male and female guests in these wine-related events. Understanding the gender composition of attendees helps to assess the event's success in attracting a broad range of individuals, fostering a welcoming environment for wine enthusiasts of all genders.

Figure 3 illustrates the distribution of attendees' nationalities at the Wine Dinners hosted by The Yeatman Hotel. The data reveals a diverse representation of nationalities among the attendees.

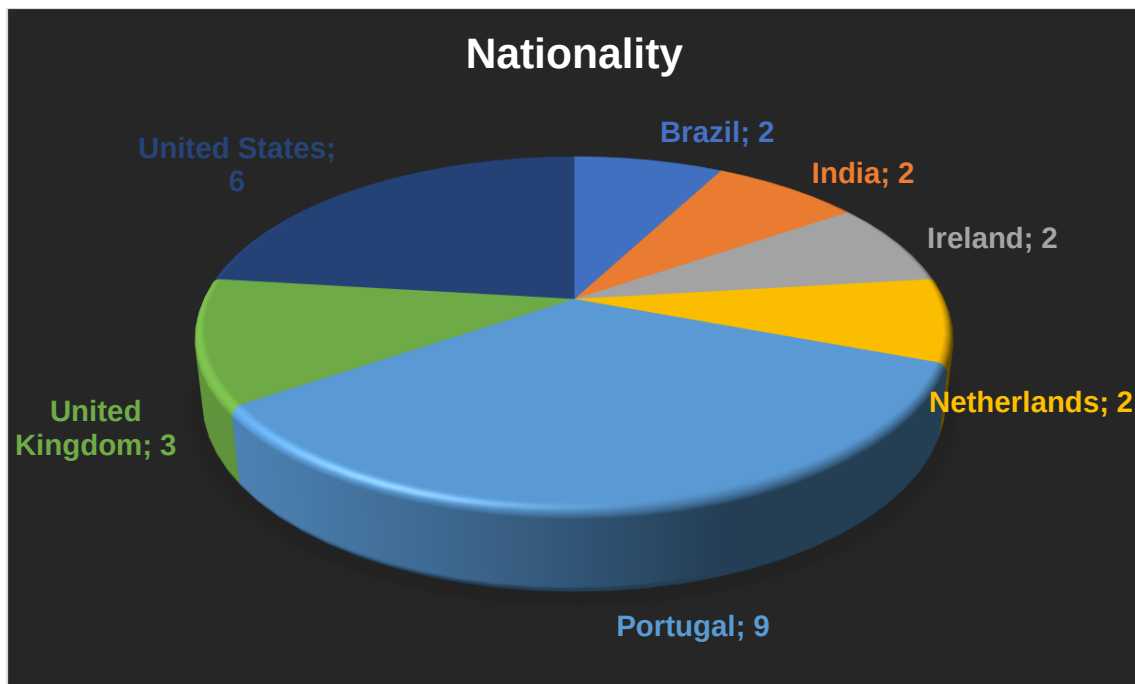


Figure 3 - Nationality Distribution of Wine Dinner Attendees

This information is intriguing as it highlights the international appeal of The Yeatman Hotel's Wine Dinners. The presence of guests from various countries demonstrates the reputation and allure of Portuguese wines on a global scale. The diversity of nationalities contributes to the cultural richness and exchange of perspectives during the events, enhancing the overall experience for all attendees.

Additionally, understanding the nationality distribution of wine dinner attendees is significant for assessing the hotel's success in attracting international visitors and promoting Portuguese wine tourism. It underscores the hotel's ability to position itself as a destination of choice for wine enthusiasts from different parts of the world. The findings also suggest the effectiveness of the hotel's marketing efforts in reaching and engaging a diverse international audience.

Overall, Figure 3 emphasizes the multicultural nature of the Wine Dinners, highlighting the hotel's ability to create an inclusive and globally appealing wine tourism experience.

Figure 4 presents the distribution of guests based on their accommodation status at The Yeatman Hotel during the Wine Dinners.



Figure 4 - Accommodation Status of Wine Dinner Attendees

This information is of particular interest as it provides insights into the dynamics of the Wine Dinners and the hotel's ability to attract both in-house guests and external visitors. The presence of guests who are not staying at the hotel indicates that the Wine Dinners have gained a reputation and appeal beyond the hotel's resident clientele. This suggests that the events serve as an attraction for both local wine enthusiasts and visitors from other accommodations in the region.

Furthermore, the balance between staying and non-staying guests demonstrates the hotel's ability to draw a diverse audience to its Wine Dinners. This diversity can enhance the exchange of ideas and experiences during the events, fostering a vibrant and engaging atmosphere. It also highlights the hotel's success in promoting the Wine Dinners as a stand-alone experience, independent of the guests' accommodation arrangements.

Understanding the accommodation status of Wine Dinner attendees is crucial for assessing the hotel's ability to leverage the events for guest engagement and revenue generation. By attracting guests who are not staying at the hotel, The Yeatman Hotel expands its reach and potential customer base, ultimately contributing to the promotion of wine tourism and the hotel's overall brand image.

In summary, Figure 4 sheds light on the accommodation status of Wine Dinner attendees, showcasing the hotel's ability to draw both in-house guests and external visitors. The findings underscore the inclusive nature of the events and highlight the hotel's success in positioning the Wine Dinners as an attractive and distinct experience for a diverse range of attendees.

Figure 5 displays the various sources through which the attendees learned about the wine dinner they attended.

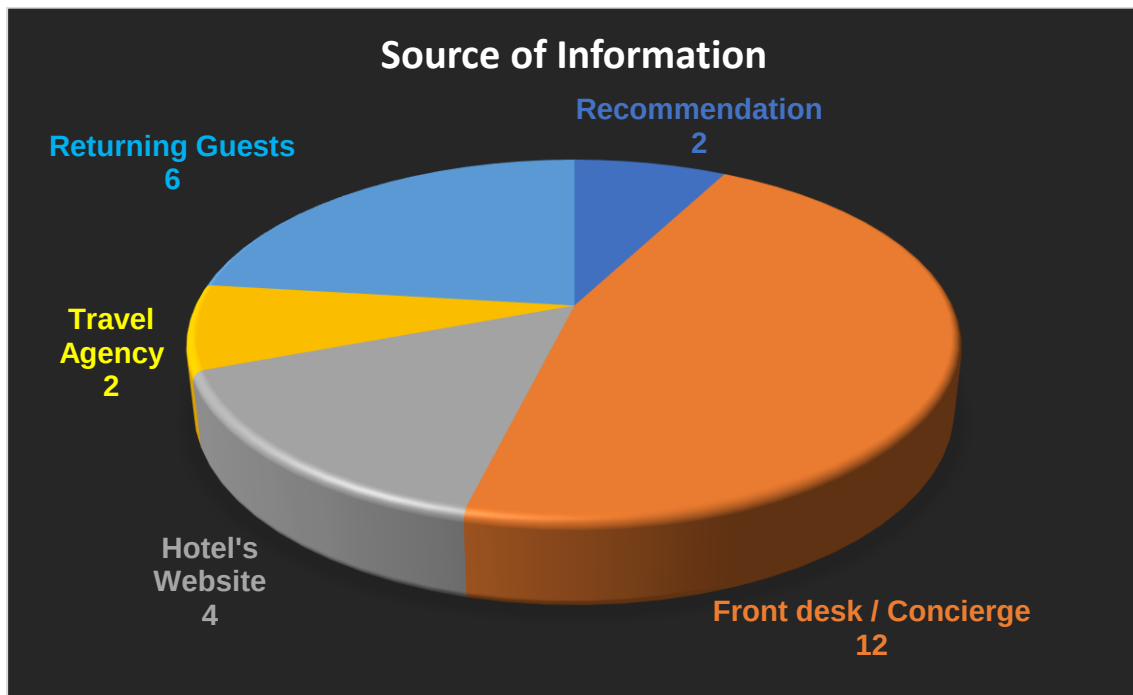


Figure 5 - Source of Information for Wine Dinners Attendees

The information presented in Figure 5 is intriguing as it highlights the diverse channels through which guests became aware of the wine dinner. The significant number of attendees who learned about the event through the hotel's front desk or concierge indicates the hotel's effective internal communication and the staff's role in promoting and informing guests about the wine dinners. This finding suggests that the hotel's front desk and concierge staff play a vital role in engaging guests and encouraging their participation in the wine dinner experience.

The presence of returning guests among the attendees is noteworthy as it indicates a level of customer loyalty and satisfaction. The fact that these guests have attended previous wine dinners showcases their positive impression and memorable experiences, motivating them to return and explore subsequent events. This finding highlights the importance of delivering exceptional wine dinner experiences that leave a lasting impact on guests.

The inclusion of the hotel's website as a source of information demonstrates the effectiveness of online platforms in reaching potential attendees. By providing comprehensive and engaging information on the website, the hotel successfully attracts guests and encourages them to participate in the Wine Dinners. This finding emphasizes the significance of a well-designed and informative online presence to promote and communicate details about the events.

The recommendations from travel agencies and other individuals further contribute to the diversity of attendees. These external sources play a crucial role in expanding the reach of the wine dinners and attracting guests who may not have been previously familiar with the hotel or its events. It underscores the importance of partnerships and word-of-mouth marketing in driving attendance and generating interest in the wine dinner experiences.

In summary, Figure 5 illustrates the varied sources from which wine dinner attendees learned about the event. The data reveals the hotel's front desk/concierge, returning guests, the hotel's website, travel agency recommendations, and recommendations from other individuals as influential channels. Understanding these sources of information provides insights into the hotel's effective communication strategies, customer loyalty, online presence, and external referrals, all of which contribute to the success and popularity of the wine dinners.

#### **4.2 Analysis of Wine Partners' Participation**

This section delves into the analysis of the wine partners' participation in the Wine Dinners and their perception of the event. A key highlight for the guests is the opportunity to interact with the producers themselves, enabling them to gain insights directly from the source regarding the wines being showcased. However, due to the limitations mentioned earlier, the analysis is based on the feedback provided by the wine partners during the event.

For the wine partners, these events represent a unique platform to showcase their products to a distinct audience. The overall sentiment expressed by the wine partners was one of satisfaction and contentment with their participation in the Wine Dinners.

The wine partners emphasized that participating in the Wine Dinners offered an excellent opportunity to create brand ambassadors. This was identified as the primary anticipated return from their involvement. By directly engaging with guests and explaining their wines, the partners could establish a personal connection and foster a deeper appreciation for their brands. This aspect was viewed as vital in cultivating long-term relationships with consumers and influencing their future purchasing decisions.

Additionally, the wine partners acknowledged the importance of partnerships with esteemed entities like The Yeatman, recognizing that such collaborations significantly contribute to the promotion and strengthening of the Portuguese Wine Regions. The association with a luxury hotel and its reputation added credibility and prestige to their wines, elevating the overall perception and market positioning of their brands.

However, it is noteworthy that it was not observed the wine partners actively capturing photographs or videos to share on social media or other marketing channels. This observation raises the question of whether they fully leverage Wine Dinners as a marketing tool. While this aspect was not explored in-depth due to limitations in the researcher's role, it suggests a potential opportunity for the wine partners to enhance their brand visibility and reach by utilizing visual content to showcase the events and their participation.

On the other hand, it is worth noting that the absence of active photography or videography from the wine partners during the Wine Dinners could be seen as a positive aspect. This lack of camera exposition allows guests to fully immerse themselves in the dining experience and enjoy the Wine Dinners with a sense of privacy and comfort. Without the distraction of cameras and the pressure to be captured in photographs or videos, guests can focus on savoring the food, engaging in conversations, and appreciating the wines being presented. This creates an intimate and relaxed atmosphere, fostering genuine interactions and a deeper appreciation of the culinary and oenological delights offered during the Wine Dinners. While it may limit the immediate exposure of the event on social media or other marketing channels, this aspect enhances the overall guest experience and reinforces the exclusivity and uniqueness of the Wine Dinners at The Yeatman Hotel.

The analysis of the wine partners' perceptions and feedback provides valuable insights into the significance of their involvement in Wine Dinners. The events serve as a unique platform for them to establish connections, create brand ambassadors, and promote their wines to a discerning audience. By further exploring the marketing potential and encouraging wine partners to harness digital media channels, Wine Dinners can become even more effective in showcasing the brands and driving awareness in the broader market.

#### **4.3 Analysis of Wine Dinners Performance**

This section goes into the analysis of the overall performance of the Wine Dinners and their perception among stakeholders. The longevity of the event, which has been a part of the hotel's offering since its inception, highlights its significance, particularly for the Wine Director, who consistently tries to be present at every Wine Dinner. However, it is important to note that the researcher's impressions are based on his limited time of participation, as the hotel has a successful history of over a decade of partnerships in Portuguese Wine Tourism.

Overall, the Wine Dinners have been deemed a successful event. The guests' positive experiences and the consistent demand for the dinners attest to their popularity. It is evident that the level of service provided by the team, equipped with expertise from the systems implemented in the Gastronomic Restaurant, contributes to the overall success. The team

diligently caters to guests' specific dietary restrictions and requests, ensuring a seamless dining experience. Even last-minute requests are accommodated to the best of their abilities, demonstrating a commitment to guest satisfaction.

However, one area that appears underexplored as a marketing tool is the promotion of Wine Dinners, both by the hotel and the wine partners. The absence of a robust social media presence and limited visual content shared on digital platforms suggest an untapped opportunity to enhance brand visibility and reach a wider audience. By leveraging social media channels, the hotel and wine partners can amplify their marketing efforts and further elevate the prominence of Wine Dinners in the wine tourism landscape.

Furthermore, a missed opportunity lies in the absence of a comprehensive follow-up system to evaluate guest satisfaction regarding the Wine Dinners. Implementing a feedback mechanism would provide valuable insights for continuous improvement and could even extend to gathering feedback from the wine partners themselves. This proactive approach to gathering feedback would not only enhance the overall guest experience but also foster stronger relationships with both guests and partners.

One of the main challenges faced in organizing the Wine Dinners revolves around the uncertainty of the event spaces. The venue for the Wine Dinners can remain undecided until the day of the event, causing planning and logistical difficulties. Depending on the availability of skilled personnel, the set-up and closing procedures can be exceptionally demanding. This often results in extended working hours for the team, with at least two hours of overtime becoming the norm.

In conclusion, while the Wine Dinners have established themselves as a successful event, there are areas for improvement and untapped marketing potential. By leveraging social media platforms, implementing a robust feedback system, and addressing operational challenges, the Wine Dinners can further elevate their prominence, enhance guest satisfaction, and strengthen partnerships within the Portuguese Wine Tourism landscape.

## **5. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The set of recommendations proposed in this thesis is designed not only as suggestions for The Yeatman Hotel and its Wine Dinners but also for wine hotels in general. These recommendations aim to strengthen the role of wine hotels in promoting wine tourism, elevate the wine dinner experience, and foster fruitful partnerships with wineries. Based on the findings and objectives of this thesis, several recommendations can be made to further enhance the role of wine hotels, exemplified by The Yeatman Hotel, in promoting wine

tourism and contributing to the development of destinations, local companies, and cultural heritage.

## **5.1 Enhancing the Contribution of Wine Hotels to Wine Tourism Promotion**

Based on the researcher's internship experience and thorough bibliographic research, the following recommendations are put forth to enhance the role of wine hotels in promoting wine tourism. These recommendations aim to maximize their impact and engagement with visitors by exploring effective strategies and approaches.

### **5.1.1 Fostering Collaborations**

Drawing upon the research of Correia *et al.* (2014), Festa *et al.* (2019), and Rachão *et al.* (2019), the following recommendations are proposed to enhance the collaborative endeavors between Wine Hotels and Portuguese wineries:

- a) **Foster Long-term Partnerships:** Establish long-term partnerships with wineries to cultivate strong relationships that can contribute to mutual growth and success. This approach will allow for deeper collaboration and shared objectives.
- b) **Diversify Winery Selection:** Explore partnerships with a diverse range of wineries from different regions and appellations in Portugal. This will not only showcase the breadth and depth of Portuguese wines but also attract a wider audience of wine enthusiasts.
- c) **Highlight Terroir and Wine Identity:** Emphasize the unique terroir and wine characteristics of partner wineries during the Wine Dinners. This can be achieved through educational presentations, engaging storytelling, and showcasing the wineries' distinct features.

### **5.1.2 Amplifying the Promotional Impact**

In order to optimize the promotional influence of the Wine Dinners and make a substantial contribution to the growth of wine tourism, the following recommendations are put forth, drawing upon the research of Gingiss (2019), Brochado *et al.* (2020), Carvalho *et al.* (2021), and Serra *et al.* (2021):

- **Leverage Social Media:** Utilize social media platforms to increase the visibility and reach of the Wine Dinners. Regularly share captivating visual content, including photos and videos, to generate excitement and attract a broader audience.
- **Engage Wine Partners in Marketing Efforts:** Encourage wine partners to actively participate in marketing initiatives related to the Wine Dinners. Encourage them to



document their experiences and share them on their social media channels, thereby expanding the reach of the events and creating a buzz around Portuguese wines.

- Collaborate with Tourism Authorities: Strengthen collaboration with local tourism authorities to jointly promote the Wine Dinners and position them as key attractions within the destination's wine tourism offerings. This can be done through joint marketing campaigns, collaborative content creation, and participation in wine tourism events.

## **5.2 Enriching the Wine Dinner Experience for Guests**

In order to elevate the guest experience during wine dinners, drawing insights from The Yeatman Hotel case and the research of Kustos et al. (2019) and Back (2020), the following recommendations are put forth:

### **5.2.1 Personalized Service and Attention to Detail**

- Guest Preferences and Dietary Restrictions: Collect comprehensive information on guest preferences and dietary restrictions well in advance. This will enable the team to tailor the food and wine pairing experience, accordingly, providing a more personalized and enjoyable experience for each guest.
- Seamless Service: Streamline the service process by ensuring effective communication and coordination among the service team members. Emphasize the importance of attentiveness and promptness in fulfilling guest requests throughout the evening.

### **5.2.2 Continuous Evaluation and Feedback**

- Guest Satisfaction Surveys: Implement a post-event survey to gather feedback from guests regarding their overall satisfaction with the Wine Dinners. This feedback will provide valuable insights for identifying areas of improvement and enhancing the guest experience at future events.
- Ongoing Dialogue: Maintain open lines of communication with guests, both during and after the event, to gather real-time feedback and address any concerns or suggestions they may have. This will foster a sense of engagement and further strengthen the relationship between the hotel and its guests.

### **5.3 Strengthening Partnerships and Wine Dinners Evaluation**

In order to enhance the partnerships with wine partners and optimize the evaluation process of Wine Dinners, drawing upon the research of Correia (2014), Festa et al. (2019), and Rachão et al. (2019), the following recommendations are suggested:

#### **5.3.1 Cultivating Wine Partner Relationships**

- **Communication and Collaboration:** Foster effective communication channels between The Yeatman Hotel and the wine partners to ensure shared goals and objectives. Regular meetings and discussions can help build stronger relationships and align strategies for future collaborations.
- **Partner Engagement:** Encourage wine partners to actively participate in the planning and evaluation of the Wine Dinners. Solicit their input on event logistics, wine selection, and overall guest experience to create a sense of ownership and mutual investment in the success of the events.

#### **5.3.2 Evaluation Framework**

- a) **Guest Feedback on Wine Partners:** Integrate guest feedback on wine partners as part of the post-event evaluation process. This will provide valuable insights into the guests' perceptions of the wines presented, the wineries themselves, and their overall satisfaction with the wine partner's participation.
- b) **Performance Metrics:** Develop performance metrics to assess the effectiveness of the Wine Dinners in achieving the desired outcomes. This could include measuring the impact on brand visibility, the number of return guests, and the level of satisfaction among wine partners.
- c) **Continuous Improvement:** Regularly review and analyze the feedback received from guests and wine partners to identify areas for improvement and implement necessary changes. This iterative approach will contribute to the ongoing enhancement of the Wine Dinners and ensure their long-term success.

By implementing these recommendations, The Yeatman Hotel can further solidify its position as a key player in promoting wine tourism, strengthen its partnerships with Portuguese wineries, enhance the guest experience during the Wine Dinners, and contribute to the overall development of the wine tourism industry in Portugal.

## 6. CONCLUSION

This thesis has provided a comprehensive understanding of the partnerships between The Yeatman Hotel and Portuguese wineries, with a particular focus on the Wine Dinners. The findings highlight the important role wine hotels play in promoting wine tourism and their contribution to the development of destinations, local companies, and cultural heritage. The Wine Dinners have proven to be a successful branding strategy for The Yeatman Hotel and a platform for promoting Portuguese wines and wine regions.

Throughout the research process, various challenges were encountered, particularly in the performance of the data collection and analysis. The limitations of engaging with the producers directly and the constraints imposed by the operational aspects of the wine dinner service posed difficulties in obtaining a comprehensive understanding of all perspectives. Nonetheless, the insights gathered from the guests, wine partners, and personal observations have provided valuable insights into the overall performance of the Wine Dinners. While it would have been desirable to engage in activities more directly related to wine tourism, such as working in the wine shop, conducting wine tastings, or assisting with concierge services, the diverse experiences gained during the internship were instrumental in understanding the operational dynamics of a luxury hotel.

It is evident that the Wine Dinners have met guests' expectations, with positive feedback regarding the wine and food pairing experience, the quality of wines presented, and the overall value of the events. The personalized service and attention to dietary restrictions have been appreciated, highlighting the hotel's commitment to guest satisfaction.

Furthermore, the wine partners participating in the Wine Dinners have expressed high levels of satisfaction, recognizing the opportunity to create brand ambassadors and the importance of collaboration with The Yeatman Hotel in promoting Portuguese wine regions. However, there is room for improvement in fully leveraging Wine Dinners as a marketing tool, particularly in terms of social media promotion and capturing the events' visual appeal.

To enhance the guest experience, strengthen partnerships, and further promote the partner wineries and Portuguese wine regions, several recommendations have been proposed. These include refining guest preference gathering, customizing wine and food pairings, implementing post-event surveys, and fostering closer collaboration and communication with partner wineries.

Despite the challenges faced, the research has provided valuable insights and recommendations for the continuous improvement and future success of Wine Dinners. By implementing the suggested actions, The Yeatman Hotel can further solidify its position as a

leader in promoting wine tourism, contributing to the growth and recognition of Portuguese wines and wine regions.

As the wine tourism industry continues to evolve, ongoing evaluation, adaptation, and innovation will be crucial. The commitment of The Yeatman Hotel, its partners, and stakeholders in addressing these recommendations will ensure the sustained success of the Wine Dinners and their contributions to the promotion of Portuguese wines and the overall wine tourism industry.

Considering the insights gained from this study, several potential avenues for future research can further expand our understanding of partnerships between wine hotels and wineries, as well as the impact of wine events on wine tourism.

Firstly, conducting a comparative analysis of wine hotels in different regions can provide valuable insights into the varying approaches and strategies employed by these establishments in promoting wine tourism and supporting local wine industries.

Additionally, exploring the perspectives of wineries that have not yet partnered with wine hotels can shed light on their motivations and perceived benefits in engaging in such collaborations.

Furthermore, investigating the influence of social media and digital marketing strategies on the success of wine events, including the Wine Dinners, can offer valuable insights into enhancing their marketing potential and reaching a wider audience.

Lastly, examining the long-term effects of wine events on guests' wine preferences, purchase behavior, and loyalty toward wine brands and regions can contribute to the understanding of the lasting impact of these experiences. These potential future research directions can further enrich the knowledge of wine tourism and contribute to the continued growth and success of the industry.

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## **ANNEXES**

### **A1X. Guideline Questions for Guests Interview**

1. Where are you from and what brings you here tonight? Are you staying at the hotel?
2. Have you attended any of The Yeatman Wine Dinners before, or is this your first experience? What made you decide to attend tonight's event?
3. Are you particularly interested in wines? Do you have any favorite wine regions or grape varieties?
4. How would you describe your overall experience at the Wine Dinner? What aspects stood out to you the most?
5. Did you enjoy the wine and food pairing? Were there any specific combinations that you found particularly delightful?
6. What are your impressions of the service provided during the event? Did the staff meet your expectations in terms of attentiveness and professionalism?
7. Has this Wine Dinner enhanced your understanding and appreciation of Portuguese wines? Are there any specific wines that you found intriguing?
8. Is there anything in particular that you would like to highlight or share about your experience tonight?
9. Would you consider attending future Wine Dinners or recommend them to others based on your experience tonight?
10. Is there anything else you would like to add or any suggestions you have to further improve the Wine Dinner experience?



## **A2X. Wine Dinner Interviews Results**

### **1. Group of Friends (4 individuals):**

- Nationality: 2 Portuguese females, 1 Portuguese male, 1 British male
- Age: Around 25-30 years old
- Stay: Not staying at the hotel, live in the region
- Awareness: Found out about the Wine Dinner on the hotel website
- Motivation: Attended due to the featured producer
- Overall Experience: Enjoyed the experience and would return if another preferred producer is featured.

### **2. Couple (Indian):**

- Nationality: Indian (male and female)
- Age: Around 70 years old
- Stay: Not staying at the hotel, live in the United Kingdom
- Awareness: Discovered the Wine Dinner as a recommendation from their trip agency
- Motivation: Aimed to enrich their Wine Tourism experience
- Overall Experience: Loved the experience and would recommend it.

### **3. Couple (American):**

- Nationality: American (two males)
- Age: Around 60-70 years old
- Stay: Staying at the hotel, living in the United States
- Awareness: Learned about the Wine Dinner at the front desk/concierge
- Motivation: Attended as a special event for one individual's birthday
- Overall Experience: Loved the experience and would recommend it.

### **4. Friends (Irish):**

- Nationality: Irish (two females)
- Age: Around 50-60 years old
- Stay: Staying at the hotel, living in Ireland
- Awareness: Learned about the Wine Dinner at the front desk/concierge
- Motivation: Attended to enrich their stay experience
- Overall Experience: Loved the experience.

### **5. Couple (British):**

- Nationality: British (male and female)

- Age: Around 60-70 years old
  - Stay: Staying at the hotel, living in the United Kingdom
  - Awareness: Learned about the Wine Dinner at the front desk/concierge
  - Motivation: Attended to enrich their stay experience
  - Overall Experience: Loved the experience.
6. Friends (Brazilian):
- Nationality: Brazilian (two females)
  - Age: Around 40-50 years old
  - Stay: Not staying at the hotel, live in Brazil
  - Awareness: Booked the Wine Dinner via the hotel webpage
  - Motivation: Wanted to share the experience with a visiting friend
  - Overall Experience: Loved the experience with the first Wine Dinner and would have returned if available.
7. Couple (American):
- Nationality: American (male and female)
  - Age: Around 40-50 years old
  - Stay: Staying at the hotel, living in the United States
  - Awareness: Learned about the Wine Dinner at the front desk
  - Motivation: Attended to enrich their stay experience
  - Overall Experience: Amazed by the event and enjoyed the experience.
8. Couple (Portuguese):
- Nationality: Portuguese (male and female)
  - Age: Around 50-60 years old
  - Stay: Not staying at the hotel, live in the region
  - Awareness: Learned about the Wine Dinner through family recommendations
  - Motivation: Attended out of curiosity
  - Overall Experience: Enjoyed the experience and would recommend it.
9. Friends (Portuguese):
- Nationality: Portuguese (four males)
  - Age: Around 30-40 years old
  - Stay: Not staying at the hotel, live in the region
  - Awareness: Attended a Wine Dinner before
  - Motivation: Attended again due to the winery connection

- Overall Experience: Loved the experience, especially the connection with the winemakers.

10. Couple (Dutch):

- Nationality: Dutch (male and female)
- Age: Around 50-60 years old
- Stay: Staying at the hotel, living in the Netherlands
- Awareness: Learned about the Wine Dinner at the front desk
- Motivation: Attended to enrich their stay experience
- Overall Experience: Enjoyed the experience.

11. Couple (American):

- Nationality: American (male and female)
- Age: Around 60-70 years old
- Stay: Staying at the hotel, living in the United States
- Awareness: Learned about the Wine Dinner at the front desk
- Motivation: Attended to enrich their stay experience
- Overall Experience: Loved the experience.