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VITICULTURE AND WINE TOURISM IN UKRAINE, THE ART OF SOMMELIER IN TIMES OF WAR

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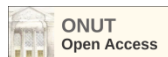
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Abstract. Ukraine is considered a European country with a developed grape growing and wine producing complex that produces a variety of wine products. However, our wine products are progressing slowly in European and global markets due to a number of objective political and economic reasons, including: the military conflict that has lasted for the past three years, insufficient funding for winemaking from the state, a reduction in vineyard area, the absence of tax benefits, high excise rates, and volumes of wine material production. Despite this, the development of ethnotourism significantly affects the level of socio-economic development of winemaking regions and the country as a whole, and is an important component of Ukraine's agro-industrial complex. Among the many benefits that ethnotourism brings to wine producers, the emergence of tourists (wine consumers) having an affinity for a specific type of wine produced in a particular place deserves special attention. This contributes to the growth of wine sales and, accordingly, to the increase in producers' income, provides an opportunity for direct contact between tourists and producers, and allows for the gathering of important information from tourists regarding the evaluation of the offered wine. Treating guests with national drinks, mainly wine, is an element of hospitality in almost all peoples of the world. Wine specialists and tourism business organizers are united by the fact that wine is an art that can rightfully be considered cultural heritage and must be preserved for future generations. Support measures for the development of ethno-tourism in various regions of Ukraine have been considered. Based on the studied material, an evaluation of the achieved results has been conducted, and recommendations have been provided to improve the effectiveness of entrepreneurship through the implementation of wine tours and the use of sommelier art to ensure the further development of this business (development of quality educational programmes for training specialists, etc.). The promotion of Ukrainian wine products in global markets needs to be stimulated through various methods, including wine tours that will broaden the understanding of Ukrainian wine products for both domestic and foreign tourists. Ethnotourism as an innovation in tourism and the hospitality industry can become an additional source of income for Ukraine's budget.

Keywords: viticulture, winemaking, ethnotourism, art, cultural heritage, sommelier.

Introduction. Formulation of the problem

Strategic sectors of Ukraine's agricultural sector that provide significant revenues to the state budget include viticulture and winemaking. A number of negative development trends in the production and consumption of grapes and wine products have been observed in recent years, and after the onset of hostilities and the declaration of martial law in Ukraine, a significant part of the business has been severely paralyzed, yet it has not ceased operations. Grape wines, with a small share of fruit and berry wines, are the main commodity segment of the Ukrainian wine market, which is explained by existing consumer preferences and traditions of homemade winemaking. The culture of wine consumption in Ukraine compared to Western European countries is not very developed, although the production and consumption of wine has always been traditional for Ukraine. The production potential of the industry can be increased by orienting efforts from both large industrial production and small farmers' wineries towards implementing innovative development directions by integrating agricultural enterprises with winemaking companies and businesses in the hospitality sector, as well as distribution companies specializing in ethnotourism. The tourism and hospitality industry remains one of the fastest and simplest ways to attract foreign investment into the Ukrainian economy and is considered one of the most profitable and dynamic sectors of the global economy. There are many examples around the world where countries quickly recovered and welcomed guests again after large-scale conflicts, and the share of foreign tourists only grew.

Analysis of recent research and publications

There are several well-known example countries – Israel, Cyprus, Croatia. Israel, which continues to maintain its tourist status during a constant war with Palestine. The tourism business in Israel has adapted to the ongoing military conflict and is a key sector of the country's economy [2]. Croatia, where tourism practically ceased in the 1990s during the war, launched a massive advertising campaign for the islands and beaches of the country after its end, which attracted major chain hotels, international tour operators, and cruise companies. After the interethnic conflict between the Greek and Turkish communities, Cyprus became one of the most popular locations for tourists. Its path was similar to that of Croatia: conducting massive advertising in other states after identifying key tourist preferences. A clear long-term policy of the Ukrainian state towards overcoming the crisis and its sustainable development is currently necessary.

Thus, among the promising areas for the restoration of the hospitality sector in Ukraine are the development of business, educational, sports, wine, medical, green, and military tourism, both domestic and international; the development and implementation of

programmes (national and international) to support businesses; increasing foreign tourists' interest in post-war memorials and symbolic sites; and ensuring close cooperation between countries and producers for mutual support in tourism activities [3]. It should be noted that currently internal tourist flows in Ukraine have understandably decreased, due to the impact on the economy and social sphere of the country and the reduction in citizens' purchasing power as a result of the military conflict. However, despite the consequences of the military conflict, Ukraine's tourism potential must be restored and significantly increased through the activation of domestic and international tourism in the near strategy [2]. To ensure the post-war recovery of viticulture and winemaking, the hospitality sector, and ethnotourism, it is advisable to promote Ukraine's tourist potential in both domestic and foreign markets (creating advertising content and information portals, maintaining interest in Ukraine's wine potential on the international market, promoting unique Ukrainian brands, etc.) [4]. So, in the context of rebuilding the hospitality and tourism sector in Ukraine, it is worth relying on the experience of other countries that have rebuilt their industry after crisis situations.

As wine becomes increasingly popular and consumers more knowledgeable, the role of sommeliers in identifying the best drink to meet customer needs continues to play an important role. In this regard, it is essential to understand that the value and role of sommeliers is quite relevant to the development of the ethno-tourism sector in Ukraine. Today, the restaurant business is experiencing a period of uncertainty, adapting to customer demands and forming new innovative projects aimed at improving production and other processes, creating new competitive advantages, services, and products to meet the growing market needs, which allow for the effective operation of establishments, preserving jobs and loyal customers, and promoting the further innovative development of the restaurant business.

The Aim and Work Tasks. The purpose of the article is to substantiate the methodological and practical aspects and directions of development in viticulture and winemaking, as well as to reveal its connection with the field of ethnotourism in Ukraine, to justify the value and role of sommeliers as professional wine sellers in hospitality establishments and the restaurant business in conditions of intensified competition during martial law.

To achieve the set goal, it is necessary to complete the following tasks:

1. Conduct research on the state of viticulture and its connection to the development of ethnotourism in the world and Ukraine, and identify the reasons for the formation and development of a profitable resort and recreational and tourism sector.

2. To identify trends in the development of the volume of services rendered, in millions of UAH, in the

provision of food and beverages, including restaurant activities, mobile catering services, supply of ready-made meals, and beverage service, which explain the absence of sommelier services in the restaurant business.

3. To determine the format of service offerings and the type of service in hospitality enterprises related to the activities of sommeliers and the conditions for the functioning of tasting rooms for conducting sensory analysis of products.

Research materials and methods

Materials and methods of research. The following methods were used in the research process:

- monographic – when highlighting best practices in the development of the wine industry, as well as related industries of tourism and hospitality;
- abstract-logical – for theoretical generalizations of the results of the research, in summarizing and forming conclusions;
- statistical-economic – when identifying obstacles to the implementation of the sommelier profession in the Ukrainian winemaking, tourism sectors, hospitality industry, and restaurant business.

Research materials and methods

The issue of effective management of the development of enterprises in the wine industry, regulation of the activities of these market entities to pull the country out of crisis and ensure its sustainable development, as well as studying the formats of sommelier service offerings, has been addressed by domestic and foreign scholars such as Pemartin M., Sanchez-Marin G., Munuera-Aleman J.L. [1], Lau T., Cheung M.L., Pires G.D., Chan C. [2], Velikova N., Canziani B., Williams H. [7], Ruiz-Molina ME, Gil-Saura I, Berenguer-Contorri G. [8], Festa G., Cuomo M.T., Metallo G., Festa A. [9], Wadell O, Bengtson A. [10] and many others.

According to the report of the International Organization of Vine and Wine (OIV), global wine production in 2023 reached its historical minimum of 237 million hectoliters, the lowest production volume since 1961. This trend of decline has been observed for two decades, and specialists say that this is happening due to lower yields, which are caused by rains, floods, fires, and grape diseases. The International Organization of Grapes and Wine (OIV) has 50 member countries that account for 75% of the world's vineyard area. It confirms that among the top ten producing countries in 2023, only France (+4% or 28 million hectoliters), the USA (+9% or 24.3 million hectoliters), and Portugal (+10% or 7.5 million hectoliters) increased their wine production, while all others decreased production. Vineyard areas decreased by 0.5% to 7.2 million hectares. And although it is reported that the market is in balance, consumption has dropped by approximately

12% from the peak level of wine popularity in the world in 2007. There is no shortage, as both production and consumption have decreased [5]. Research conducted by Deloitte in March 2023 showed that only 55% of respondents dine in establishments the same number of times as before the pandemic in 2021 or more often. 69% of respondents indicated that they choose takeout and food delivery services as much as a few years ago or more often. In this context, the modern hospitality and restaurant industry requires constant modernization. The European experience of operating wine hotels may be beneficial for Ukrainian hoteliers, especially since, according to forecasts by some specialists in this field, wine tourism in Ukraine is beginning to spread and, under favorable conditions, could reach a competitive level with Europe in a few decades [6].

Currently, due to the full-scale invasion, the tourism sector has been significantly affected, especially with the disruption of food-trade, financial, and energy connections between regions and rising inflation. Commercial tourism has practically collapsed under these conditions in the eastern, southern, and central parts of Ukraine. Considering this, the economy as a whole, as well as Ukrainian owners of tourism businesses, face the challenge of restructuring and preserving tourism flows and capacities in light of the current challenges and threats [7–9]. With the increasing interest in the historical and cultural heritage of Ukraine, gastronomic tourism is becoming more relevant, as it can best reveal the uniqueness of each individual region, particularly regional gastronomic tourism, which allows one to get acquainted with the local flavor [10]. According to the CEO of «Ukroboronprom», Volodymyr Kucherenko, Ukraine has the potential to become a leading exporter in the European and global wine market, although this is a complex task that requires significant state support. [11]. Noting the volume of Ukrainian wine exports at \$9 million in 2023 to key countries such as Estonia, the United Kingdom, the USA, Sweden, Norway, and Japan, his words are confirmed by «Wines of Ukraine» [12]. But the winemaking industry needs significant help in development and modernization. Thus, most domestic scientists [2, 4, 13–15], those who studied this issue emphasise the appropriateness of developing wine tourism through a cluster approach: based on the creation of a territorial voluntary association of entrepreneurs and organisations that will closely collaborate with one another, involving other economic entities in the value creation chain for the purpose of exporting products to foreign consumer markets, which will contribute to the economic development of the region, as well as increase the competitiveness of the product being produced or promoted. Such a development vector seems to be particularly successful and relevant, considering the mass relocation of production and vineyard areas to 'non-wine producing' regions, such as Kyiv, Chernihiv, Lviv, and Ternopil

[12]. Mihailuk and Khumarov [15] note that the cooperation of wine and rural tourism is the most successful form of combining different sectors in the light of ethnotourism. Although some tourists who engage in culinary and event tourism for educational purposes and improving professional skills remains unaddressed. These can be restaurateurs, tasters, chefs, sommeliers, and bloggers. And Ukraine has something to show. In 2023, the first Ukrainian "platinum" was awarded by the Decanter Worldwide Awards for Muscat Ottonel Limited Edition 2016 from the SHABO winery. In general, that same year, wines produced in our country received 150 international awards from tasting competitions [12].

For some regions of viticulture and wine production in France, the significance of ethno-tourism is a crucial aspect of the region's development: in Burgundy, 12% of the wine produced is purchased by tourists, while in Alsace, this figure is around 23%. Similar trends are observed in other countries. Studies conducted in Italy have shown that 80% of vineyard owners allow tourists to purchase wines produced on-site, with 95% of cases allowing tourists to buy other products alongside the wine. The rapid development of ethno-tourism is seen in Lombardy, a region of Italy that has organised 15 wine routes. These routes connect 207 wine restaurants with a specially prepared "cultural-gastronomic" programme for tourists, and also provide the opportunity to stay overnight at 275 agritourism enterprises specialising in grape growing and wine production. In the province of Verona, wine tourists can visit 78 vineyards and 13 wine restaurants in the Valpolicella area, as well as 24 agritourism farms, which specialise in viticulture and wine production in the famous wine region of Soave. In all of them, you can buy oil, cheeses, vegetables, etc., in addition to purchasing wine. The above examples indicate that wine tourism is not limited to just wine consumption and has a multiplicative effect. Tourists are offered not only to visit wine cellars and conduct tastings of various wines but also catering services, accommodation, purchasing souvenirs related to the visited places and vineyards, various food products and their processed goods, and sometimes bicycle rides through the vineyards, horseback riding, and other excursions. As a result, tourists at wine estates spend a significant portion of their funds on tourism and recreational services rather than on purchasing wine products and their tasting. There is also a possibility of forming tourists' attachment to a certain type of wine produced in a specific location, which establishes direct contact between producers and tourists and significantly increases the income of wineries. A significant impact of ethnotourism is also noted on the local market, which promotes the development of other types of services and consequently increases tax contributions [16–20].

Let us consider what is currently observed in the winemaking enterprises of Ukraine and how it affects

the quality and range of products. The domestic winemaking industry has around 70 wine producers, of which only 28 have production volumes exceeding 300 thousand dal. The main regions for wine material production in Ukraine before 2014 were the Odesa, Mykolaiv, and Kherson regions, as well as the Autonomous Republic of Crimea. In 2013, the share of Odesa, Kherson, and Mykolaiv regions in the total production volume was 72.5%. By 2014, the share of these regions reached 97.3% due to the occupation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea. When examining the winemaking sector of Ukraine in terms of the percentage of wine produced in the pre-pandemic era, it can be determined that the main winemaking enterprises are located in Odesa (50%), Zakarpattia (20%), Kherson (15%), and Mykolaiv (9%) regions. As noted by the authors, these regions are considered the most promising for the development of ethnotourism, as they are centres for the development of wine tourism in Ukraine is best suited for its development and promotion, with the necessary tourist infrastructure and a well-developed winemaking complex featuring local producers, brands and labels.

Among the intersectoral agro-industrial complexes of Ukraine, winemaking occupies a distinct and specific place. The selection of new grape varieties aimed at enhancing production potential and more efficient use of natural and economic factors, which are important components of the innovative development of the industry. The main producers of sparkling wines in Ukraine include: LLC 'PTK Shabo', PJSC 'Odesavinprom' (TM French Boulevard), PrAT 'Shustov' (Odesa Brandy Factory), PJSC 'Koblevo', PJSC 'DMK Tavria', PrAT 'Artemivsk Vainery', LLC 'Vin-Agro', PrAT 'Victoria', Agricultural Firm 'Bilozerskyi', PrAT 'Izmail Wine Factory', PJSC 'Prince Trubetskoy', LLC 'Mykolaiv Brandy Factory' and others. The functioning and development of powerful winemaking enterprises occur through the integration of agricultural enterprises with winemaking companies and distribution firms [2,22–25].

An important modern tool for the innovative development of the wine industry is wine tourism, which is widely developed in EU countries, where the formation of national wine tourism is determined by the development of regional wine routes, namely: specially laid tourist routes that involve visits to vineyards, wineries, wine festivals combined with entertainment, recreation, and the purchase of premium products [26].

The formation and development of a profitable resort-recreational and tourism sector in the Odessa region can be ensured by a high level of infrastructure and tourism development in the region. Despite the presence of over 350 tourist and cultural sites of historical, cultural, and entertainment significance, the main problems of sustainable socio-economic development of the Odessa region, according to [19], Remaining are: insufficiently effective use of

recreational and tourist potential, low number of innovation-oriented high-tech productions, as well as poorly developed transport infrastructure. In this context, it is appropriate to analyze the wine tourism market in the region more deeply. In Ukraine, there are over 450 enterprises engaged in grape growing, of which 205 (i.e., 45% of the total) are located in the Odesa region. There are 3 macro-zones and 16 micro-zones identified within its territory. The Odesa region holds a leading position in terms of the number of winemaking farms in Ukraine. The highest concentration of these farms is observed in the Tarutyn district (43 farms) and the Bolhrad district (35 farms). On average, one farm in Ukraine cultivates 173 hectares of vineyards, while in the Odesa region, this figure is 162 hectares [27]. In the structure of the winemaking industry in the region, private enterprises prevail in terms of ownership forms. Out of 205 farms in the Odesa region, only three are state-owned: two of them are located in the Ovidiopol district – the State Enterprise "Trofimov Research Farm of Odesa State Agrarian University" and the State Enterprise "Tayirove Research Farm", while the other one is in the Bolhrad district, which is the State Enterprise "O.V. Suvorov Research Farm".

The active development of wine tourism in the Odessa region began twenty years ago in 2005, when the first wine tour was organized to local wineries to familiarize visitors with the rich winemaking experience of the region. By 2007, the Institute of Tourism, in collaboration with the sommelier school 'Master Class', initiated ethnological tourism programs called 'Wine Pearls of Ukraine'. These programs included 12-day tours to wineries and brandy enterprises of the Black Sea region. The itineraries included visits to establishments such as the 'Odessa Champagne Wine Factory', 'Koktebel', 'Inkerman', 'Massandra', 'Tavria', 'Shustov Odessa Brandy Factory', 'New World' and others. The average cost of a tasting in the Odessa region is 500 UAH. (for example: 'Shustov' – 400 UAH, 'Shabo' – 720 UAH, 'French Boulevard' – from 350 UAH, 'Tairov' – from 350 UAH). From an economic perspective, winemaking is and will remain a significant source of budget revenue. For further active development of wine tourism both in Ukraine as a whole and in the Odesa region in particular, a necessary step is the implementation of a State Program for the strategic development of the industry. Within such a program, it

would be advisable to foresee a set of state support measures, in particular: increasing the levy for the development of viticulture and horticulture from 1% to 1.5%; abolishing the excise tax on table wines, which are products of high dietary and food value; implementing programs to promote and advance national brands 'Ukrainian Wine' and 'Wine of Odesa region' both in domestic and international markets. [24–25, 28].

There is a prospect of transforming the Odesa region into a leading center of wine tourism in Ukraine thanks to the activities of the 'Shabo Wine Culture Center' complex and the industrial and trade company 'Shabo'. The development of excursion programs and tourist routes, the provision of basic, additional, and related services form the foundation of the tourist service technology, that is, the creation of a tourist product that meets the consumers' demands in this area. The proposed routes are thematic in nature, with an emphasis on the excursion and cognitive component. By seasonal characteristics, these tours fall into the category of year-round (off-season).

For effective planning of a tourist product, it is necessary to take into account the behavioral characteristics of the target audience, their preferences regarding the content of the tour, and to focus on the services that generate the greatest interest among potential consumers. To this end, respondents were offered various forms of wine tourism with a request to choose the types of activities that are most appealing to them. The summarized results of the choices are presented in Table 1.

Consumers mostly choose comprehensive wine tours because many tourists wanted to participate in an ethno-gastronomic dinner, as well as visit vineyards and wineries. A large number of consumers prefer lectures – tastings with comments from an experienced sommelier. The least interest is shown in master classes on ethno-gastronomy, wine festivals, and celebrations [8].

The impact of military actions in 2022-2023 has dealt another serious blow to the food service sector after the pandemic. Establishments had to adapt to new realities: operating under conditions of power outages, supply chain issues, and staff shortages. Despite this, in 2023, the market demonstrated significant growth, indicating the resilience of the industry and a gradual recovery of business activity, especially in relatively safe regions of the country.

Table 1 – Distribution of respondents' answers regarding forms of wine tourism [4, 9]

The form of wine tourism	Frequency	Percentage, %
Comprehensive wine tour	178	24
Ethno-gastronomic dinner	148	20
Tour of the vineyards and wineries	126	17
Wine tasting with a lecture by an experienced sommelier	118	16
Visiting wine festivals and exhibitions	89	12
Master classes on ethnogastronomy	81	11
Total	740	100

During the state of war, the food service sector underwent significant changes, and one of the most vulnerable categories became beverage service, particularly the activities of sommeliers. By 2020, this sector had a stable, albeit small, market segment; however, the pandemic caused the volumes of services sold to almost halve. In 2021, a gradual recovery took place, but in 2022, the full-scale war dealt another powerful blow to this segment.

Sommelier traditionally work in the restaurant business and wine culture, which was threatened during the war. [29–31]. The closure or relocation of many restaurants, the decrease in the purchasing power of the population, and the overall reduction of events where professional tasters are typically involved have led to a decline in demand for such services. Many establishments have been forced to switch to simplified operational formats, reducing costs which included the cutting or complete elimination of the sommelier position. In 2023, beverage service began to recover, but this process is happening more slowly compared to other segments of the hospitality industry. Restaurant visitors in safer regions have started to return to the culture of consuming wine and other beverages, gradually contributing to the revival of the sommelier profession. However, their role under current conditions has transformed: instead of traditional restaurant service, there is now a focus on private tastings, online courses, and consulting on wine selection for home consumption. Another interesting trend has been the

increase in demand for Ukrainian wines, which has led to the necessity of developing a local wine culture. Sommeliers who continued to work focused on promoting domestic products and adapting them to new realities. In the context of war, when import supplies are complicated, this aspect has gained particular importance. Despite all the challenges, the profession of sommelier has not disappeared but has transformed. The restoration of a full-fledged restaurant business and drinking culture depends on the overall stabilization of the economic and security situation in the country. At the same time, the flexibility and adaptability of representatives of this profession allow them to find new opportunities even in the most challenging conditions. Figure 1 shows the dynamics of changes in the volume of services provided, million UAH, in the activities of providing food and beverages, including restaurant activities, mobile catering services, ready meals supply, and beverage service from 2019 to 2023 [32]. In 2019, the total volume of services provided in the restaurant business amounted to 21.5 billion UAH, demonstrating a stable development of the industry. However, in 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this figure sharply reduced to 12.8 billion UAH, which was reflected in the closure of restaurants, restrictions on the operation of establishments, and a decrease in the population's purchasing power. In 2021, the market began to gradually recover, and the volume of services provided increased to 20.7 billion UAH, which almost reached the pre-crisis level.

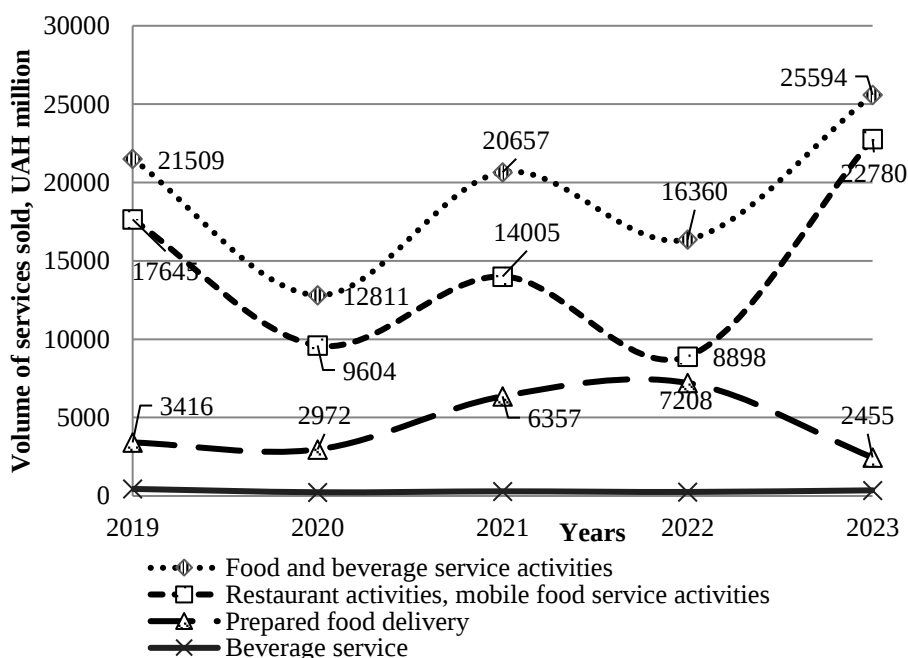


Fig. 1. Dynamics of changes in the volume of services rendered, million UAH in food and beverage provision activities, including restaurant activities, mobile catering services, ready meal supply, and beverage servicing for the years 2019–2023

However, in 2022, the military actions that began in February seriously affected the industry. A significant portion of enterprises had to suspend operations, and due to the mass evacuation of the population, consumer demand sharply fell. As a result, the volume of services provided decreased to 16.4 billion UAH. The impact of the war manifested not only in reduced revenues but also in logistics issues, staff shortages, and the destruction of some businesses.

The restaurant business and mobile catering suffered the greatest losses. In 2019, their volume was 17.6 billion UAH, but in 2020 it shrank to 9.6 billion UAH due to the pandemic. Recovery in 2021 brought an increase to 14 billion UAH, but in 2022 there was again a sharp drop to 8.9 billion UAH due to the full-scale war. Many establishments in areas of active combat were destroyed or closed, and the overall level of attendance significantly decreased. In 2023, the situation improved, and the volume of services grew to 22.8 billion UAH. This may indicate a partial adaptation of the market to the conditions of war, the reorientation of establishments to new working formats, and an increase in demand in safer regions.

The segment of ready-made meal delivery showed steady growth in 2021-2022, which could be attributed to the development of delivery services. If in 2019, the sales volume was 3.4 billion UAH, then in 2020 it decreased to 3 billion UAH, but already in 2021, it doubled to 6.4 billion UAH. In 2022, despite military actions, the market continued to grow and reached 7.2 billion UAH. This is explained by the fact that many Ukrainians began to prefer food delivery due to difficulties with restaurant operations. However, in 2023, the sales volume in this segment fell to 2.5 billion UAH, which may indicate a decrease in purchasing power and increasing competition from other food formats.

The beverage service remained the smallest segment and experienced a significant decline in 2020. In 2019, this figure was 448 million UAH, but in 2020 it decreased to 235 million UAH, and in 2021 it only increased to 295 million UAH. In 2022, during the active phase of the war, there was a new decline to 254 million UAH, as bars and cafes operated in a limited capacity, and the demand for such services decreased. In 2023, the market gradually began to recover, reaching 359 million UAH, but the level of 2019 was still not surpassed. In 2021-2022, the net turnover in the beverage distribution sector significantly increased in most European countries. This indicates a gradual recovery of the restaurant and bar business after the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as an increased demand for services in the HoReCa sector (Fig.2) [33].

The largest growth in net turnover was recorded in Latvia (+116.3%), where the figure more than doubled, which may be related to the active development of the tourism sector and the easing of quarantine restrictions. A high increase was also observed in Estonia (+90.7%) and Germany (+89.3%), which may indicate a rapid

return of customers to food service establishments after previous crisis years. Significant growth in net turnover was also recorded in Norway (+79.4%), the Netherlands (+74.1%), and Austria (+68.4%). In these countries, the recovery of the gastronomic sector contributed to the revitalization of the market and an increase in consumer spending on the services of restaurants and bars. Growth of more than 50% was also observed in Croatia (+61.6%), Lithuania (+57.6%), and Slovakia (+56.5%), which may be related to the return of international tourism and an increase in domestic demand. Overall, the data indicates a substantial growth in the beverage service sector in Europe in 2022, which could have positively affected the development of businesses in the restaurant industry, increasing the income of business owners and creating new opportunities in the field.



Fig. 2. Net turnover – million euros from beverage distribution activities in 2022.

The graph in Fig. 3 reflects the share of the restaurant business and mobile catering in the economies of various EU countries in 2023 [34]. In countries with a developed gastronomic culture, such as France, Italy, and Spain, this share is significant, indicating a high demand for restaurant services, particularly for professional beverage pairing provided by sommeliers. In these countries, the culture of wine consumption is an important aspect of gastronomy that stimulates the development of professional wine service. Germany, Ireland, Greece, and the Netherlands also have a significant share of the restaurant business, but their beverage consumption structure may be different. For example, in Germany and Ireland, beer and strong alcoholic beverages are more popular, so the demand for sommeliers may be less pronounced compared to wine-producing regions.

In countries with less developed restaurant industries, such as Latvia, Lithuania, and Bulgaria, the share of the restaurant business is relatively small. This may indicate a lower demand for highly qualified specialists in the field of beverage service, such as sommeliers, as consumers in these regions may prefer more affordable formats of food service.

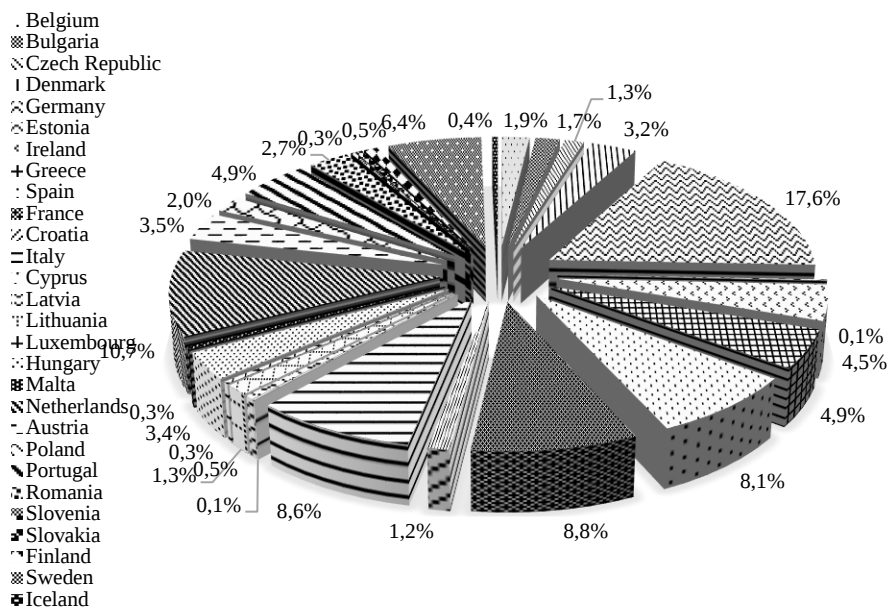


Fig. 3. The share of restaurants and mobile catering services in rapidly developing EU countries and the related employment in beverage distribution in 2023

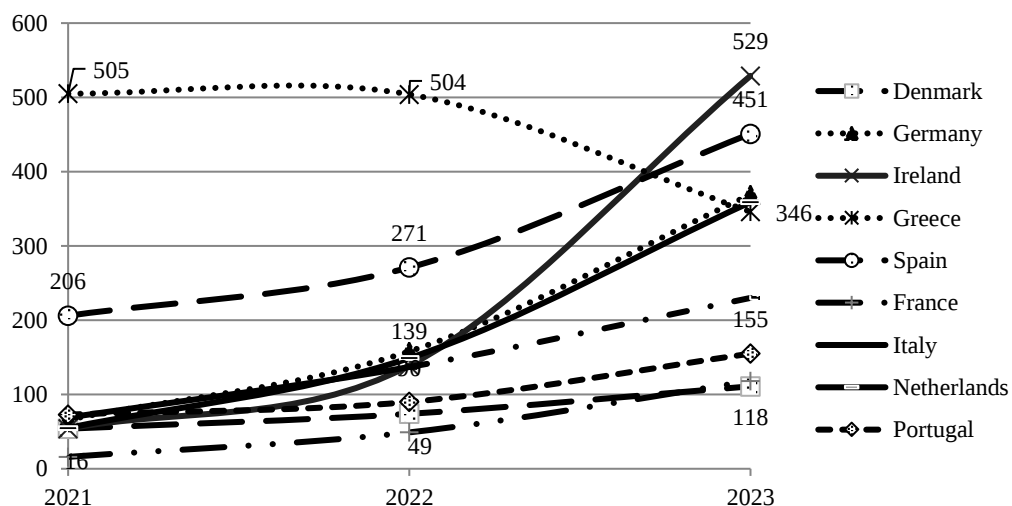


Fig. 4. Dynamics of changes in the number of employees in enterprises engaged in activities related to the restaurant business and mobile services

The change in the number of employees in the restaurant business and mobile catering from 2021 to 2023 is demonstrated in Fig. 4 [34]. In 2021, the sector was still feeling the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, which led to low employment levels and job cuts in the hospitality industry. However, by 2022-2023, there was a noticeable recovery in the industry.

The largest increase employment has been recorded in France, Italy, Spain, and Germany. This is explained by the increased demand for restaurant services and the return of tourists, which has also positively impacted the sommelier services market. High-end restaurants have started to expand their staff again, which has increased the need for experts in wine

selection and other alcoholic beverages. In countries like Greece and Latvia, recovery has been slower. The reasons could be both economic factors and the gradual return of tourist traffic. This, in turn, could have hindered the development of the sommelier services market, as restaurants and bars did not always have the financial ability to maintain specialized personnel. Overall, both charts confirm that the recovery of the restaurant business after the pandemic contributed to the overall growth of employment and beverage consumption volumes. However, the demand for sommelier services depended on regional characteristics: in wine regions, it was more stable,

while in countries with less developed wine culture demand might have been limited.

Today, quality service is a mandatory standard in the hospitality industry, so to function successfully in the market, it is essential to constantly surprise and impress clients. Traditionally, tasting rooms were created directly at the enterprises engaged in production, such as wineries, breweries, dairies, etc. However, with the growing interest in gastronomic tourism and the popularization of gastronomic tours, tasting spaces are increasingly organized separately from production sites – based in establishments of the restaurant and hotel industry [35–37]. For consumers, this creates conditions for more diverse and engaging tastings, during which they can simultaneously try products from several regional producers, as well as participate in comprehensive tastings that combine, for example, wines and cheeses. The introduction of tasting programs in the hospitality industry opens up new opportunities for producers: brand promotion, enhancement of consumer culture, additional profit, increased tourist attractiveness of the region, and an elevation of the cultural level of visitors [38]. Such initiatives can also stimulate the development of gastronomic hotels in the regions. Tastings continue to play a key role in shaping the brand of the winery, and they are increasingly serving as an effective channel for direct sales, especially for small producers who do not have wide distribution. By eliminating intermediaries and selling expensive wines directly, tasting rooms provide higher margins compared to wholesale channels [39]. According to the results of an industry study, tasting rooms account for 43% of the sales volume of wineries in the states of California, Washington, and Oregon, and up to 68% in other states. Additionally, they contribute to the growth of wine clubs by 85% and are an important component of consumer-oriented business (B2C) [40].

For consumers, visiting tastings within the hotel complex is quite an attractive opportunity, as being on vacation, they can order a tasting without the need to leave the establishment. The knowledge gained during such events helps them better navigate product selection and provide informed recommendations to others.

The process of designing tasting rooms within the hospitality industry should begin with defining the format of service offerings and the type of service. There are several formats for tasting activities: tasting lectures, tastings as corporate events, and tastings in the form of promotional actions [40–41]. In the hotel and restaurant business, it is advisable to use all the mentioned forms. In the case of promotional activities, it is necessary to provide for the presence of a retail space, such as a wine shop, which will help to increase the sales volumes of the represented brands' products. Tastings are also categorized by the type of product. The most common are wine, beer, whiskey, and cheese tastings. However, new tasting formats, such as bread, coffee, or chocolate tastings, are gradually gaining

popularity. An analysis of the sources allowed to identify a list of service offerings that can be provided in tasting rooms:

1. Sales of products.
2. Implementation of inventory and tasting utensils (including branded glasses and wine accessories).
3. Sale of gift certificates for tastings.
4. Formation of gift product sets.
5. Sale of subscriptions for tasting series.
6. Selection of exclusive tasting sets.
7. Conducting gastronomic dinners.
8. Organizing private tasting events, such as movie nights.
9. Hosting product presentation events for various manufacturers.
10. Thematic seminars, such as wine lectures.
11. Conducting team buildings.
12. Inviting famous sommeliers.
13. Organizing gastronomic tours.
14. Conducting off-site tastings.
15. Creating a club system for regular customers.

In addition, within the wine tasting hall, various tasting formats can be implemented: blind tasting, varietal tasting, and vertical tasting of wines.

Let's take a closer look at the service offerings. *The detailing of service offerings in tasting rooms of hospitality industry enterprises.* The sale of products being tasted, as well as related inventory, tableware and branded accessories, can be carried out both directly in the tasting room and in a separate retail space – a specialized store or wine boutique. For the effective functioning of such a format, in addition to the staff conducting the tastings, the presence of a salesperson responsible for product sales is necessary. The key success factor for the tasting room is the quality of informational support for the event. Visitors expect not only interesting product characteristics but also stories about its production history, technological features, consumption culture, tasting rules, as well as recommendations for gastronomic pairings. In this regard, it is advisable to involve highly qualified sommeliers who possess not only in-depth knowledge of the product but also developed communication skills, friendliness, and a sense of humor. The sale of gift product sets should ideally be organized in a wine shop, where a qualified salesperson will be responsible for the selection. Additionally, it is recommended to introduce plastic gift cards for individual tastings, which will make such an event an exclusive gift. Their sale can be conducted both in the tasting room and in the shop.

Organization of gastronomic evenings. Gastronomic evenings using local products, particularly wines from the Odessa region, can be dedicated to festive events or seasonal festivals. The sommelier and the chef together create the menu and select drinks to accompany the dishes. The date, time, and cost of the event are determined. Advance advertising is placed on the establishment's website and on social media.

Participants submit applications and leave a deposit. Waiters from the restaurant, under the guidance of the sommelier, are engaged in the service, setting the table and serving the dishes. During the evening, the sommelier talks about the wines and dishes, after which they complete the service, including receiving change and assisting with cleaning [42].

The invitation to renowned sommeliers can take place in the format of both a gastronomic evening and an exclusive tasting for a limited number of guests.

Conducting themed seminars and team buildings. Conference halls of the hotel complex can be used for organizing such events. Team buildings include interactive games aimed at developing team interaction through joint tasting activities. Examples of games: 'Red or White' – participants have to guess the type of wine; 'Wine Secret' – each team receives a set of aromas to identify; 'Aroma Seminar' – players study the basic nuances of the wine bouquet. Such activities focus not on rational thinking, but on sensory experiences and emotions, contributing to both team cohesion and an enhanced product consumption culture. As a result, well-organized services in tasting rooms not only improve the economic efficiency of the establishment but also create a unique cultural atmosphere, promoting the development of wine tourism and the gastronomic appeal of the region [43].

Private parties in tasting rooms can take place in the format of a small banquet using a tasting program and sensory games. This format provides not only gastronomic pleasure but also interactive engagement between participants, creating a unique visiting experience. Organizing events dedicated to the presentation of products from various winemakers is beneficial with the participation of both large producers and small "garage" wineries that are interested in expanding their audience. Such events contribute to establishing business connections, creating partnership programs, promoting local products, and generally increasing the culture of wine. The provision of mobile tasting service is possible within various events: receptions after presentations, exhibitions, seminars, corporate celebrations, or private parties. This opens up new opportunities for promoting products outside of the main establishment, shaping the company's image as mobile, flexible, and open to new formats of interaction with clients. A tasting room integrated into a restaurant or hotel can become a source of stable additional income through: tasting fees; direct sales of products to consumers; subscriptions of new members to the tasting club; organization of public and private events; sale of gift products (sets of wine, beer, whiskey, sake, branded accessories, etc.).

Tasting program managers should use modern technologies to maintain guest interest and stimulate repeat purchases. After-sales service is an important factor in building long-term relationships with customers. Sending personalized messages, informing

about new tastings, and participating in club events all contribute to retaining loyal guests and creating a positive image of the establishment.

Managing customer databases, purchase history, and contacts requires the implementation of specialized software, reliable servers, and accounting systems. Modern CRM systems allow for: creating lists of VIP guests; forming multi-tier tasting clubs; sending electronic invitations and newsletters; tracking customer behavioral patterns. Thus, the digitization of processes in tasting rooms not only optimizes staff operations but also significantly increases the effectiveness of product promotion, strengthens customer connections, and builds long-term loyalty. Professional tastings require a clearly defined spatial and technical setup. Tasting rooms for conducting sensory analysis of products usually consist of two isolated areas: a working room for tasters (sensory analysis laboratory) and a storage area for sample preparation, utensils, and auxiliary materials. The main requirements for these rooms are aimed at creating a maximally neutral environment that allows for objective, unbiased evaluation of the product. *Conditions in the tasters' working room:* the room must be clean, isolated from foreign odors and noise, well-ventilated, with an air conditioning system that maintains the temperature at 19–22°C (some sources indicate 15–16°C) and humidity at 60–75%. It should be aesthetically neutral: walls and ceilings painted in light, calm colors (white, cream, light gray), without decorative elements that may distract tasters. Mandatory presence of a ventilation system without creating drafts [44].

To deodorise the air, it is recommended to use ozone generators or quartz lamps. Smoking in the tasting room is strictly prohibited. Studies confirm that elevated room temperature negatively affects sensory perception: in a hot environment, sensitivity to salty, sour and bitter tastes decreases, leading to distorted tasting assessments [45].

Lighting of the premises. The light regime plays an important role in sensory analysis. Recommended conditions: natural lighting, evenly diffused; lighting intensity at workstations – at least 500 lux; window area – approximately 35% of the floor area, which provides a sufficient level of illumination; light sources should not change the natural color of the products. Light has a sensitizing effect on the sensory organs. Staying in a dark room for 30 minutes can reduce sensitivity to all basic taste sensations by 40–50%, which significantly affects tasting results [45].

Organisation of space and equipment. The recommended area for the tasting room is 15–20 m², which allows for the comfortable accommodation of 5–9 workstations. Workstations may be communal (a long table for all tasters) or individual, equipped with partitions or special devices for isolation. Each workstation must be equipped with a carafe of drinking water, a container for drink remnants, a spit bucket

(located under the table), tableware, and tasting tools. The room should also have cabinets with the necessary inventory: tableware, napkins, indicators, supplementary materials, etc. Tasting rooms are mainly found in enterprises that produce various products (wine, cheese, beer, cognac), so it is recommended to include a bar counter with built-in dishwashers and wash basins, display cabinets for storing the necessary inventory, as well as additional equipment depending on the type of product (Fig. 2).

Unlike a professional tasting room, a typical tasting room serviced by a winery or brewery, where the main processes of production, bottling and distribution are concentrated, is usually located separately from the main production facilities – in a separate room or building. Such rooms typically have their own parking, landscaped areas or specially equipped spaces, often with picnic zones, designed for the convenience and relaxation of guests. One of the main tasks of a sommelier is to create a wine list that reflects not only the style and concept of the restaurant but also meets the preferences of the clients. The sommelier must understand which wines pair best with the dishes served in the restaurant, as well as keep track of the variety of wines on the list, presenting drinks from different regions and price categories. The wine list should be harmonious, balanced and at the same time diverse, including wines of various styles, regions and price categories. Creating a wine list is an art., which requires deep knowledge of winemaking, gastronomy, and market needs [47]. One of the most important aspects of a sommelier's work is direct interaction with clients. The professionalism and skills of the sommelier often determine the overall impression of the dining experience. The sommelier acts as a consultant, helping guests choose wine based on their taste preferences, budget, and pairing with dishes. This process involves the ability to quickly assess the client's wishes, accurately interpret their requests, and suggest the most suitable options [48–49].

Individual recommendations are a key element of the professional activity of a sommelier in their

interaction with visitors. Thanks to their deep knowledge of winemaking, the characteristics of wines, and the nuances of pairing them with food, a sommelier is able to choose a drink that best matches the guest's taste preferences. At the same time, he performs an important presentation function – it introduces clients to the history of wine, its origins, production features, and organoleptic properties. This adds additional depth and elements of cognitive interaction to the wine consumption experience [38, 50].

A sommelier is not only an expert in their field but also an integral part of the restaurant team, shaping a unique atmosphere, ensuring a high level of service, and contributing to the establishment's reputation and commercial success. Their professional activity combines knowledge of wine, communication skills, and a fine understanding of gastronomy. The work of a sommelier has a direct impact on the restaurant's image, its competitiveness, and its ability to satisfy the most demanding clients. A modern sommelier is a specialist working at the intersection of cuisine, culture, and entrepreneurship, enriching the dining experience and contributing to the formation of culinary heritage. Their mission is to make the world a little better. There is a saying: 'Even the worst day can be changed by one good person' – and undoubtedly, this refers to the sommelier. After all, a true professional is capable not only of improving the mood but also of transforming an ordinary evening into an unforgettable one. However, the war has changed our lives. It has also affected the representatives of the wine industry. The life of a sommelier has undergone transformations – both in professional and social dimensions. Nonetheless, regardless of the circumstances, a true specialist always remains one, participating in volunteer, cultural, or industry initiatives. Despite all the difficulties, we confidently march towards victory, and the world is returning to life. The sun will sparkle again in our glasses. And when we ask the sommelier in the restaurant, 'What wine is this?', we will hear proudly in response: 'This is Ukrainian.'

Table 2 – Additional Equipment for the Tasting Room

Type of tasting by product type	Additional equipment	Inventory
Wine	Wine coolers, wine racks	Tasting wine glasses, decanter, wine thermometer, temporary corks for champagne and wine, sommelier knife, sommelier towels
Beer	Cooling unit for beer	Tasting beer glasses, coasters
Cheese, brynza	Chilled cheese display	Cheese knives, wooden boards, kerler
Bread	Bread rack	Bread knife, wooden boards, wooden trays for transporting and temporarily storing bread, plates
Coffee	Coffee machines of different types, coffee grinder, roaster	Coffee utensils, cezve, tamper, pitcher
Strong alcoholic drinks	Shelves for storing alcoholic beverages	Tasting glass suitable for the type of alcoholic beverage

Conclusion

In summary, it can be concluded that one of the promising areas of modern investment is the development and promotion of Ukrainian winemaking. Key measures that will contribute to the further establishment of the wine tourism market include:

- improving the mechanisms for promoting the tourist product in the field of ethnotourism by tourism companies and winemaking enterprises; the expansion of the range of tourist services, the creation of new routes that would combine visits to tourist attractions with tours to wineries; establishing systematic cooperation between representatives of the tourism sector and wine producers to develop a joint strategy for the development of wine tourism in Ukraine;
- the integration of wine tourism elements into other types of travel experiences;
- the release of promotional informational materials that emphasize the uniqueness of Ukrainian winemakers' products;
- the creation of virtual wine tours for tourists and industry professionals with translation into key European languages (English, German, French, Hungarian) to attract an international audience.

Ukraine has significant potential for the development of wine tourism, possessing the necessary

natural, historical-cultural, and economic resources. In order to effectively implement this direction at the state level, it is advisable to:

- to address legislative aspects, in particular regarding the quality of wine products, their compliance with international standards, as well as to review the tax policy concerning excise duties for winemakers;
- to create multilingual informational resources – maps, brochures, guides to wine routes and leading wineries – for further distribution through diplomatic representations, tourist offices, and within the country;
- to promote the culture of wine consumption among the population;
- with the participation of the state, taking into account the experience of leading countries in the world, to develop and implement regional and national programs for the development of wine tourism;
- to organize educational events – seminars, workshops, tasting events – aimed at enhancing the qualifications of participants in the tourism and winemaking sectors.

The implementation of the above-mentioned initiatives will stimulate the development of ethnotourism, ensure economic growth in wine-producing regions, enhance the efficiency of industry enterprises, and contribute to the formation of a modern cultural environment in Ukrainian society.

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ВИНОГРАДАРСТВО ТА ВИННИЙ ТУРИЗМ В УКРАЇНІ, МИСТЕЦТВО СОМЕЛЬЄ У ЧАСИ ВІЙНИ

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Анотація. Україна вважається європейською державою, що має розвинений виноградарсько-виноробний комплекс, який виробляє різноманітну виноробну продукцію. Проте наша виноробна продукція просувається повільними темпами на європейський і світовий ринки в силу низки об'єктивних політичних і економічних причин, серед яких: військовий конфлікт, який триває останні три роки, недостатнє фінансування виноробства з боку держави, скорочення площ виноградників, відсутність податкових пільг, високі акцизні ставки та обсяги виробництва виноматеріалів. Незважаючи на це, розвиток енотуризму суттєво впливає на рівень соціально-економічного розвитку виноробних регіонів і країни у цілому та є важливим складником агропромислового комплексу України. Безлічі вигід, які несе енотуризм виробникам вина, на особливу увагу заслуговує виникнення у туристів (споживачів вина) прихильності до певного виду вина, виробленого в конкретному місці. Це сприяє зростанню продажу вина і, відповідно, зростанню доходів виробника, дає можливість виникнення безпосереднього контакту між туристом і виробником, можливість отримання від туриста важливої інформації, що стосується оцінки пропонованого вина. Пригощання гостей національними напоями, передусім вином, є елементом гостинності практично в усіх народів світу. Фахівціввиноробів та організаторів туристичного бізнесу об'єднує той факт, що вино – це мистецтво, яке по праву можна вважати культурною спадщиною і необхідно зберігати для прийдешніх поколінь. Розглянуто заходи підтримки для розвитку енотуризму в різних регіонах України. На підставі вивченого матеріалу проведено оцінку досягнутих результатів та надано рекомендації щодо покращення ефективності функціонування підприємництва шляхом впровадження винних турів та використання мистецтва сомельє для забезпечення подальшого розвитку цього бізнесу (розробка якісних освітніх програм для підготовки фахівців тощо). Просування української виноробної продукції на світові ринки необхідно стимулювати різними методами, у тому числі за допомогою винних турів, які розширюватимуть уявлення про продукти українського виноробства як для вітчизняних, так і для іноземних туристів. Енотуризм як інновація в туризмі і індустрії гостинності може стати додатковою статтею доходів для бюджету України.

Ключові слова: виноградарство, виноробство, енотуризм, мистецтво, культурна спадщина, сомельє.