

Tourism and coexistence between branded and natural wines: the case of Calonge i Sant Antoni

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ABSTRACT

Fascination with wine, as well as its culture and production, has contributed to the recent boom in the economic and tourism sectors. This research analyzes, from a supply-side perspective, the territorial development strategies underlying wine production and commercialization in the form of a case study of the New Wine Festival and the Farmer Wine Festival, two events that are held every November in the town of Calonge i Sant Antoni (Catalonia), once that year's first wine has been produced. Primary data is collected via direct observation and 15 semi-structured interviews with local (branded) winegrowers, farmer wine agribusinesses, and representatives of administrations and associations that are actively involved in the organization of these festivals. The findings underscore the collaboration between coexisting quality-certified winegrowers and agribusinesses, which together support the town's wine identity and culture. The public administration's interest in leveraging cultural events to promote economic and socio-cultural synergies between the local population and visitors is also highlighted. This paper contributes to the literature by acknowledging the need to create networks among all wine producers to promote the local identity and make the town more competitive by offering authentic and unique experiences. The findings should also help the public sector to identify the strengths and weaknesses of local wine producers, in order to bolster their authenticity, socio-cultural value, financial profits, and status as tourist destinations.

1. Introduction

The growing popularity of wine tourism, coupled with efforts to develop new sources of revenue and growth, has sparked competition as towns, cities, and regions strive to offer appealing locations for wine consumption. The goal is to boost economies by not only promoting wine but also leveraging the local culture, identity, lifestyle and traditions, all of which play such central roles in modern-day social, economic, and political discussions. In this sense, the current trend is to focus on sensory, experiential, symbolic, and hedonistic elements of the tourism experience (Crespi-Vallbona and Mascarilla-Miró, 2020; Schäufele et al., 2018; D'Amico et al., 2016; Combris et al., 2009). As Saviano et al. (2018) point out, wine-based travel itineraries serve as catalysts for the revitalization of rural areas and foster their sustainable development. They create new business opportunities and generate stronger connections between wine producers, local residents, and tourists, enhancing the overall appeal of their regions, in alignment with the hybrid and more pragmatic neo-endogenous approach to

development (Ray, 2006; Stotten and Froning, 2023). This framework conceptualizes regional and rural development as being driven by locally initiated, bottom-up projects aimed at enhancing community well-being and strengthening territorial capacities (Ray, 2006).

But it is not just about economic benefits, but also preserving rural heritage (Di Fazio and Modica, 2018; Buonincontri et al., 2017; Hampton, 2005). Indeed, there is currently rising global interest in wine festivals and events, driven by their perceived positive impacts on wine-producing towns, cities and regions (Strickland et al., 2024). The crucial need for sustainable, neo-endogenous governance of these potential tourist attractions has frequently spawned partnerships between public authorities and the private sphere aimed at ensuring the finance, development, management and maintenance of infrastructures and services (Cambrils, 2016; Crespi-Vallbona et al., 2017), underscoring how local initiatives are most effective when supported and complemented by extra-local institutions, collaborative networks, and effective policy frameworks.

Our study explores regional development strategies related to wine

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production and marketing from a supply-side perspective. It entails in-depth analysis of the New Wine Festival and the Farmer Wine Festival (in Catalan, La Festa del Vi Nou and La Festa del Vi de Pagès, respectively), that are held each November in a small town on the Catalan coast called Calonge i Sant Antoni. The New Wine Festival was established in 2003 and serves to welcome the 'first wine' of the season. The parade of barrels through the historic center to the castle is one of the highlights, offering the opportunity for attendees to taste the wine. This festival is complemented by viticulture-related activities, such as conferences, exhibitions, concerts, wine-related cookery workshops, visits to vineyards and wineries, and a wine market on Sunday morning. Furthermore, since 2008, Calonge has also held the Farmer Wine Festival, organized by the Remença XXI Foundation, which has its own specific program, separate from the New Wine Festival. At this complementary event, different farmers and wineries, all of whom belong to the aforementioned foundation, organize activities, such as guided tours and food and wine tastings, to promote their wine and its associated culture.

This paper begins with a review of the academic literature, analyzing the role of wine as a tourist attraction and as a driver of rural development. Following a description of the case study and the methodology, the findings are presented and discussed in relation to the research objective and the conceptual framework. The paper ends with the conclusions, theoretical and practical implications, limitations and opportunities for future research.

2. Literature review

2.1. Wine as a tourist attraction

The current trend in tourism is a shift towards more frequent, shorter trips, with travelers increasingly looking for fresh and unique experiences beyond traditional sun-sea-and-sand destinations (Martínez-Falcó et al., 2024). More authentic places and experiences provide exclusivity, privilege, and social recognition through the consumption of cultural products (Dwyer et al., 2009; Okumus et al., 2013; Noguer-Juncà and Fusté-Forné, 2023). Food and wine tourism are excellent options in this regard, as they are such a distinctive way of engaging with a destination's local culture (Gu et al., 2020; Crespi-Vallbona and Mascarrilla-Miró, 2020; Fusté-Forné and Noguer-Juncà, 2024).

As various authors have argued, such tourism can generate two main benefits for wineries: (a) it serves as a strategic marketing tool to showcase their produce, enhance brand image and foster customer loyalty (Getz and Brown, 2006; Marzo-Navarro and Pedraja-Iglesias, 2021); and (b) it offers immediate financial returns through increased direct sales and the generation of additional revenue streams (Alonso and Liu, 2012; Marzo-Navarro and Pedraja-Iglesias, 2021; Getz and Brown, 2006; Camprubi and Gonçalves, 2025).

Wine tourism also serves an educational purpose, offering insights into grape varieties, winemaking techniques, and the socio-cultural identity of a region (Bodiroga et al., 2024). It promotes regional authenticity and helps strengthen competitive advantage (Hall et al., 2000). By combining production knowledge, leisure, entertainment, education, and aesthetics, wine tourism creates richer experiences (Madeira et al., 2019), while also helping to reduce seasonality, boost visitor numbers, increase engagement in local events, and open up new professional opportunities.

However, although winery visits, vineyard tours, and workshops offer memorable experiences on their own, to enhance competitiveness and create more holistic wine tourism, destination managers have developed initiatives that go beyond traditional vineyard and cellar visits (Martínez-Falcó et al., 2024; Hindjou and Dixit, 2025). What has been deemed the "tertiarization" of wineries (Torres and Kunc, 2016; Smyczek et al., 2020; Brochado et al., 2021) includes the use of virtual reality (Bartoli et al., 2025), tastings of wine and other local products (Fucile Franceschini et al., 2025), cycling tours (Mundet et al., 2022),

wine pairing classes, picnics in vineyards (Chen and Zinola, 2025), corporate events and weddings (Depetris Chauvin, 2025) and wine festivals (Ferreira and Hunter, 2017; Martínez-Falcó et al., 2024), the latter being the primary focus of this paper.

2.2. Rural development models

Rural areas are undergoing significant transformation due to globalization (de San Eugenio-Vela and Barniol-Carcasona, 2015), marked by shifts from traditional livelihoods towards a new economy focused on the commodification of rural spaces (Fløysand and Jakobsen, 2007; Woods, 2019). There has also been an increasing drive to develop new and more engaging place-based narratives that highlight natural landscapes and cultural traditions (Privitera, 2010; Santini et al., 2013; Khartishvili et al., 2019; Cruz-Ruiz et al., 2020), such as wine, to attract new tourist markets (de San Eugenio-Vela and Barniol-Carcasona, 2015).

From a destination governance perspective, the goal is to stimulate the local economy by leveraging culture and identity. This discourse can be framed around two general models, namely exogenous and endogenous regional development (Lowe et al., 1998; Gkartzios and Lowe, 2019). The former is a top-down model that assumes that there is a clear distinction between urban, industrialized and developed areas and the rural, frequently agricultural, periphery, which is deemed to be underdeveloped (Gkartzios and Lowe, 2019; Klimczuk and Klimczuk-Kochanska, 2023). This categorization has been criticized for contributing to the marginalization of peripheral regions (Willett and Lang, 2018; Gkartzios and Lowe, 2019) and failing to adequately account for the inherent complexity of territorial dynamics (Klimczuk and Klimczuk-Kochanska, 2023).

In contrast, bottom-up or endogenous development engages with the intricacies of structural heterogeneity and varying levels of human capital across regions (Gkartzios and Lowe, 2019) from a multi-scalar perspective, wherein local and regional scales are recognized as primary spaces of agency and innovation, while also incorporating the influence of broader national and global dynamics. Endogenous development is conceptualized as a holistic strategy that emphasizes the inherent socio-economic interdependencies of rural contexts, while explicitly integrating environmental sustainability into its framework (Tödtling, 2010; Frick and Rodríguez-Pose, 2025).

Recognizing the limitations of both models, academics have advocated for hybrid frameworks that balance local agency against external influences (Gkartzios and Lowe, 2019). This approach recognizes rural transformation as a dynamic interplay between internal capacities and globalized networks, moving beyond simplistic geographical binaries. This is exemplified by **neo-endogenous development, with its emphasis on territorial embeddedness, multi-scalar governance, and networked innovation** (Ray, 2006; Bock, 2016; Chatzichristos et al., 2021). **Territorial embeddedness anchors** development strategies in local socio-cultural and ecological contexts while maintaining external connectivity (Stotten and Froning, 2023). **Multi-scalar governance fosters** collaborative decision-making between local actors and broader institutions (Marango et al., 2021). Finally, **networked innovation** blends both traditional knowledge and external expertise through participatory processes (Dias et al., 2021).

Wine tourism is a fine example of territorial embeddedness, as it encompasses both tangible elements such as wine itself and its associated vineyards, cellars, tools and architecture (Johnson and Bruwer, 2007; Correia and Brito, 2016), and the intangible component related to the region's traditions, atmosphere, vibe, authenticity, and culture (Santos et al., 2019; Correia and Brito, 2016). As a whole, wine tourism clearly generates a uniquely authentic, and personalized experience for visitors, along with the opportunity to foster economic, social and environmental prosperity (Oltean and Gabor, 2022).

Regarding networked innovation, territorial branding has a key role to play as a driver of the economic and socio-cultural development of a

region (de San Eugenio and Ginesta, 2020). Effective branding showcases a region's distinctive qualities, shaping perceptions and attractiveness within a highly competitive global market (Cristòfol et al., 2024) and helping territories to stand out from their competitors (Zimmerbauer, 2011; Rajput and Riaz, 2019) and as a result attract visitors and investment, and also reinforce the sense of belonging among local residents (Paasi, 2002; Ollé and Riu, 2009; Bonazzi, 2021). Territorial branding is not just about promotion and reputation (Kavaratzis, 2012), but also serves as a symbolic link between residents and non-residents and the cultural, economic, and natural landscape (Zimmerbauer, 2011; Paasi, 2013).

A good strategy to promote local identity is the organization of special events (Crespi-Vallbona and Noguer-Juncà, 2024), such as festivals, which not only encourage tourism, but also have significant economic and sociocultural impacts on local communities (Picard and Robinson, 2006; Weidenfeld and Leask, 2013; Getz and Page, 2016; Pérez and Bernal, 2017), serving as identity markers (Atsuko and Telfer, 2008; Bennett and Woodward, 2016; Lin and Bestor, 2020; Gautam, 2022) and playing a crucial role in preserving and promoting local tangible and intangible heritage (Fontefrancesco and Zocchi, 2020; Ascione and Fink, 2021). By generating knowledge and shaping destination management and marketing, festivals can drive niche tourism activities, such as food tourism (Yang et al., 2020). They help construct symbolic and referential identities that serve as cognitive and hedonistic attractions for both residents and visitors. The aim is to beautify and landscape the area to make it appealing for tourism (Duncan and Duncan, 2001; Mitchell, 2003; Lübben and Crouch, 2003), selecting material or immaterial images that visitors wish to see and encouraging them to admire something that has been specifically molded for that very purpose (Maccannell, 2003).

The final aspect is **multi-scalar governance** (Marango et al., 2021), which plays a critical role in aligning public and private stakeholders in the creation of customized products. In the specific case of wine, Protected Designation of Origin (DO) and Protected Geographical Indications (PGI) play a key role in recognizing the differentiated product quality of specific wine-making regions (Blanco and Gomà, 2006; Gomez et al., 2015), helping to raise awareness, supporting local development and reinforcing identities (Santini et al., 2013; Horlings and Marsden, 2014) through strategic governance of tourism channeled through collaborative public-private networks (Ivars-Baidal et al., 2019). Such cooperative decision-making goes hand-in-hand with a shared awareness of value and interests, helping to ensure sustainability, a coherent response to evolving demands, and the preservation of cultural heritage (Serra-Cantallops et al., 2021; Ginés-Ariza et al., 2022). Effective networks foster social and cultural innovation (Blanco and Gomà, 2006), as highlighted by the 10th European Conference on Sustainable Cities and Towns (ESCT)¹ which advocates for co-governance to support circular, resilient development (Local Governments for Sustainability, ICLEI, 2024).

In sum, the rise of wine tourism reflects growing demand for richer tourist experiences, prompting greater specialization and new opportunities for both commercial and regional branding. Experiential events now play a central role in conveying place-brand values, while sustainability plays a key role in effective brand development by supporting the preservation and promotion of heritage, culture, traditions, and landscapes (Cristòfol et al., 2021).

Although previous studies have explored the potential of branded wines as a tourist experience (e.g. Dias et al., 2024; Santos et al., 2022a,

b; Swanson, 2017; Alant and Bruwer, 2004), there has been little research on the similar potential of farmer wines (e.g. Robinson, 2021). Our research addresses this gap from the perspective of neo-endogenous development. This framework has been applied in the past to numerous other contexts. For example, evidence from LEADER programs in France and England (Ray, 2001; Bosworth et al., 2020) shows how it is a continuous process of negotiating responsibilities and power relations among local and extra-local public and private stakeholders; Georgios et al. (2021) highlight interregional networking and the promotion of social innovations in governance; and Marango et al. (2021) underscore its value as a framework for analyzing community-led local initiatives within the context of multi-level governance structures in English nature conservation programs.

The neo-endogenous approach has also been addressed regarding organic agriculture. For example, Stotten and Froning (2023) took Valposchiavo Valley in Switzerland as a case study to show how locally adapted regional development strategies have become normative through the adoption of a neo-endogenous trajectory that revitalizes rural-urban linkages and fosters social innovation, thereby reinforcing the region's capacity for sustainable and context-specific development.

Our own study examines supply-side territorial development strategies associated with wine production and marketing, specifically in the context of the two aforesaid festivals held annually in Calonge i Sant Antoni in Catalonia, Spain.

3. Materials and methods

3.1. Study area

Calonge i Sant Antoni is a municipality of 33,57 km² with 12,043 inhabitants in the Baix Empordà area of the Costa Brava. It is divided into two distinct areas. Sant Antoni is a modern, seaside town, while Calonge is a medieval town that grew around the castle, and since 2023 has been designated as Catalonia's first 'Book Town', hosting numerous literary events and activities, mainly on weekends (Fig. 1).

The municipality is part of the Wine Itinerary in the region of the Empordà Designation of Origin (DO), which is administratively divided into the Catalan regions of Alt and Baix (Higher and Lower) Empordà. Its wine-making tradition dates back to the Greek settlements of the 6th century B.C. (Molleví Bortoló, 2011). Today, Calonge i Sant Antoni is known for two forms of wine production, (i) farmer wine (vi de pagès in Catalan), a traditional, handcrafted wine made using 18th and 19th century methods that have been passed down the generations (Alegret et al., 2005); and (ii) DO recognized wines based on modern, mechanized production processes (Callís et al., 1998). Hence, the town offers two different production models and consequently two different narratives to sell to tourists (Angelo Cazzaro Menini, 2023).

In Spain, DO status is a mark of both origin and quality, similar to the French AOC or Italian DOC systems. O wines are those produced in a specific region and using locally-sourced grapes under strict regulations established by a local governing council to control everything from grape varieties and cultivation methods to yields, harvesting and aging, thus ensuring quality and authenticity. Only wines that satisfy these standards are permitted to bear the label.

Farmer wines, in contrast, are produced by small-scale, independent grape growers who manage every step from vineyard to bottle. They tend to shun the chemical additives and processing agents that are common in mass-produced wines, making for a more natural product that reflects hands-on farming, traditional methods, and the producer's individual philosophy, generally resulting in more authentic products.

Despite their differences, both DO Empordà and farmer wines share strong connections to the local soil, climate, and ecosystem, a concept known as *terroir* (Van Leeuwen and Seguin, 2006). Farmer wines are all about authentic vintage heritage, while the far more industrial DO wines prioritize consistency and volume. But rather than compete with other, the two varieties coexist harmoniously in the town, and are celebrated

¹ The 10th European Conference on Sustainable Cities & Towns (ESCI) was held on 1–3 October 2024 in Aalborg, Denmark. The objective was to contribute to the sustainable transformation of town, cities and regions, exploring initiatives around key issues such as climate resilience, circular economy and social equality (Local Governments for Sustainability, ICLEI, 2024).

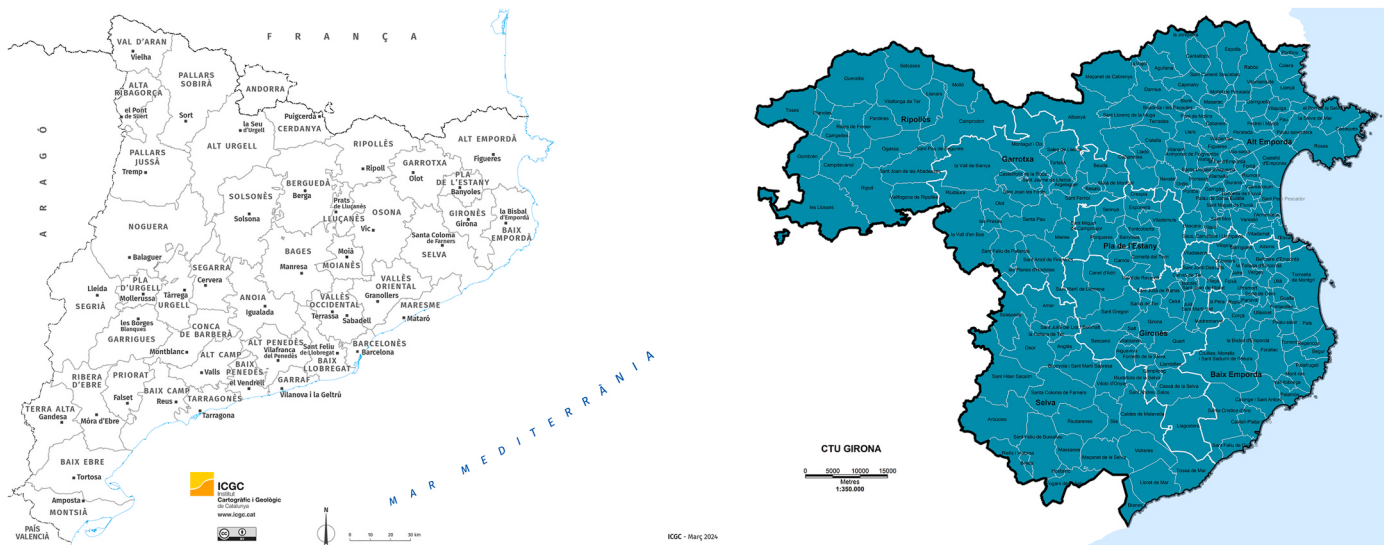


Fig. 1. Location of Calonge i Sant Antoni
Source: Institut Cartogràfic Geològic de Catalunya.

jointly each November when the first harvest coincides with the festivities in honor of St Martin, to which the New Wine Festival and the Farmer Wine Festival now form a central part (Table 1 and Figs. 2 and 3).

4. Methodology

This study employed a qualitative research design based on in-depth interviews and direct observation (Snape and Spencer, 2011; Ritchie, 2013) by the authors during the aforementioned events.

Table 1
Summary of wine festivals in Calonge.

	La Festa del Vi Nou (The New Wine Festival)	La Festa del Vi de Pagès (The Farmer Wine Festival)
Dates	November 01, 2024–November 03, 2024	November 15, 2024–November 17, 2024
Organization	Calonge town council	Remença XXI Foundation
Participants	Celler Clos d'Agon Celler Mas Eugeni Celler i l'Hort de Can Ribot Vinfric	Mas Molla Mas Ponjoan
Activities	Pairing of wine and poetry Guided tours + wine tasting Street entertainment Wine tasting in the old convent of Collet de Sant Antoni. Children's show with dancers, clowns, and puppets Showcooking Wine market Art workshop Guided tour of Calonge old town Live music Conferences (sommeliers, journalists, chefs, researchers and writers)	Projection of the film "La contra etiqueta" (The seal) + tasting of Calonge farmer wines. Colloquium with Clara Isamat, director of "La contra etiqueta" and star of the film "Mas Ponsjoan league" contest Guided tour of Calonge vineyards
Event's location	Wineries Centre Calongí cultural space Bookshops Streets of the old town of Calonge Calonge Castle	Wineries Calonge Castle

Source: The authors



Fig. 2. Poster for the New Wine Festival.
Source: Calonge city council.

Using a non-probabilistic sample, fourteen semi-structured interviews were conducted, covering almost the entire population of winegrowers (8/15 with tourism interest) as well as representatives of the local administration and cultural and wine associations responsible



CALONGE 15,16 i 17 DE NOVEMBRE DE 2024

Fig. 3. Poster for the Farmer Wine Festival.Source: Remença XXI Foundation.

for the organization of the two festivals (Table 2). The sample was designed to capture all stakeholders in the events to provide a more robust picture of how wine production intersects with tourism and cultural promotion in the town.

The interview guide was designed based on a review of the existing academic literature. Questions focused on reasons for participating in the event in the past and present, assessments of public management and

Table 2
Interviewee backgrounds.

Interviewee	Position	Type of stakeholder
I1	Micro-entrepreneur	Winery
I2	Guided tour manager	Winery
I3	CEO and vice-president of Remença XXI Foundation	Winery
I4	Micro-entrepreneur	Winery
I5	Personal sommelier	Sommelier
I6	Town Councilor of Tourism, Agriculture, Trade and Mobility	Public administration
I7	Micro-entrepreneur	Winery
I8	Micro-entrepreneur	Winery
I9	Micro-entrepreneur	Winery
I10	Micro-entrepreneur	Winery
I11	Wine tourism specialist	Highest tourism promotion body in the province of Girona.
I12	General manager	Non-profit tourism trade association
I13	Member	Calonge traders' association
I14	President	Vinyataires Lliures Association
I15	Member	Remença XXI Foundation

Source: The authors

local engagement, the expression of local identity, and visions for the future.

Data were collected between November and December 2024. Five interviews were carried out face-to-face, and four were conducted using virtual platforms due to scheduling difficulties. The interviews were held in Catalan and translated into English, and lasted approximately 45 min. Credibility and validity were achieved through detailed reporting of participants' responses (Tracy, 2010).

The data were analyzed via content and thematic analysis, with selected quotes used to illustrate key findings. In line with the research goals and the literature review, the results were structured around two core themes: a) Past, present, and future of the two festivals and the coexistence of DO wines and farmer wines; b) the role of the New Wine Festival and the Farmer Wine Festival in creating and reinforcing the town's touristic brand and territorial identity.

5. Results and discussion

- a) Past, present, and future of the Festa del Vi Nou and its coexistence with farmer wines

Calonge i Sant Antoni's New Wine Festival, which now includes the Farmer Wine Festival, is celebrated together within the Festival of Saint Martin, the local patron saint, in November, reflecting the two different types of wine production that coexist in the town.

As I6 explains: "The town council supports and promotes both festivals. In the case of the New Wine Festival, we create the program, and, in the case of the Farmer Wine Festival, it is the Foundation Remença XXI that organizes the event. Therefore, we collaborate economically with both events ... for example, we have funded two projects about 15 grape varieties that are unique to Catalonia and, also, the town council and the Foundation have a plot of land that is a reservoir for these special grapevines."

I3 adds that: "The Farmer Wine Festival is paid entirely by our Foundation, for the moment we do not need financial support from the town council."

The interviewees generally note that both events coexist without problems.² As I4 and I10 respectively remark: "There is a very good atmosphere among us and we respect each other" and "It seems that there is conflict but there is not." Aligning with Hall et al. (2020), the main goal of both events is to promote authenticity and generate competitive advantage, and in that regard both events complement each other, despite representing very different wine cultures.

In line with Martínez-Falcó et al. (2024), these events are a good opportunity for wineries to promote and sell directly to visitors and showcase local products. In the case of the New Wine Festival, all interviewees agree that they participated in the festival to promote Calonge's wine and to engage in local activities. As I1 comments: "We participate basically because the town needs to be helped by the inhabitants and local businesses and because wine culture needs to be promoted ... If we want to be a wine village, we all have to participate ... it's a win-win."

Of the six wineries that participate in the event, five have been doing so for many years. For example, I8 says, "we have been participating for more than twenty years ... since the first year." Some have joined more recently, such as I10, who says, "we have been participating since 2023. After all, I didn't have facilities before because I started in 2010."

The response to the events is almost unanimously positive, the general mood being that they bring economic dynamism to the village, and boost social and cultural life. As I13 concludes: "We love our town; we must participate actively in its events."

Six interviewees had stands at the New Wine Festival on Sunday

² Note that in small municipalities where everyone knows everyone else, good manners are part of coexistence. Therefore, if there are conflicts tend to be latent and not revealed, because people opt for political correctness, as in this case study.

morning and also organized different activities in their wineries. Says I2: “We have a stand and we created a guided tour of our winery,” while I9 says, “we prepared a guided tour that started in the orchards, then the vineyards and olive groves, the winery and the cellar and finally a wine tasting.” So, the New Wine Festival is evidence that wine tourism not only encompasses tangible factors like vineyards and cellars (Correia and Brito, 2016; Johnson and Bruwer, 2007), but intangible factors too, such as personalized experiences around the culture and ambiance of wine-making and consumption (Oltean and Gabor, 2022; Santos et al., 2019; Correia and Brito, 2016). Ultimately, the aim is to introduce visitors to the cultural identity of Calonge i Sant Antoni and make them feel part of the community, especially people who only spend time in the town at the weekend (as I15 notes).

Regarding the festival’s audience, all interviewees speak along similar lines to I7, who says: “At the Sunday market you see local people and outsiders but the people who come on my guided tours are people who have a second home here in Sant Antoni.” However, I2 claims that: “During the festival, some local people come to visit our facilities because we’re a little unknown and people associate our company with expensive wine ... and also because the owners are Swiss.” Hence, the New Wine Festival reflects a growing interest in local culture and local products (Gu et al., 2020), a trend that has also been observed in other sectors (e.g. Noguer-Juncà et al., 2021).

Regarding the future of the New Wine Festival, as I2 explains, “currently there is a lot of knowledge about the local product and its importance ... ten years ago only a few people appreciated local food and wine.” Generational renewal is another issue that gets raised, with I8 pointing out that, “Compared to other products, there are still many producers who have young people beneath them who want to continue the business, not 100 % of the producers but 60 %-70 %.” And I11 makes the useful observation that, “In the world of wine, lack of generational renewal is not a problem ... I think that’s because wine is both an agricultural product and a luxury item with a romantic image. Young people are attracted by wine, and have adopted the role of stewards of the landscape. This gives wine an added value that isn’t present in the production of other foods.” As more people take an interest in wine consumption and culture, younger generations view this primary sector as a viable career path, which is not the case with other sectors such as fruit (Crespi-Vallbona and Farran-Plana, 2023) and potatoes (Noguer-Juncà et al., 2021, 2025; Crespi-Vallbona et al., 2024), which unfortunately do not have the same glamour or interest, and are therefore more vulnerable to generational continuity issues.

However, not everything is positive in the wine trade, and the interviewees mention four main challenges that need to be addressed. The first is the decrease in production of ‘young’ (unaged) wine, which according to I1 is because, “it’s a very cheap wine and isn’t well-received by customers ... we produce other types of wine that are more profitable.”

The second challenge is ensuring the participation of all wine-growers, which is essential for keeping the event sustainable. Here, I9 explains: “The future of the festival depends on ensuring that none of the 5 or 6 participating wineries drop out ... A festival with, for example, only 3 wineries would be very sad.”

The third challenge is climate change. While wine production may be economically viable and desirable at the moment from an environmental and cultural perspective, increasing temperatures and extreme weather events pose a threat to its future sustainability. I4 articulates this concern: “Climate change means that each year there is less production, and therefore, less income. But it also has effects on our health since the heat makes it difficult for us to pick grapes and other products, including peaches, at the right time. I also think twice about planting new grapes since I have no guarantee that my children will be able to pick grapes on this land in 30 years time and still be able to produce good wine.”

The final issue concerns the possibility of combining the New Wine Festival and the Farmer Wine Fest. On this topic, there is a disparity of opinions. Some interviewees think along the lines of I9 and I11, who point out respectively: “Joining the two festivals would be the best thing ...

but I understand that it’s difficult and might take a generation or two” and “combining both into one could be a good opportunity to showcase the wealth of Calonge’s wine diversity because the event’s narrative could be about its two different production processes ... which is an added value of and for Calonge.” But two other interviewees disagree, feeling that the two events should be kept separate. I3 states: “Since 2008 the events have been separated because we [the Farmer Wine Festival] have nothing in common with the industrial wineries that participate in the New Wine Festival.” This division is largely driven by the older generation, with younger producers generally more inclined toward collaboration, networks and synergies rather than division, barriers and enmity. Both methods require production, sales and marketing, and hence should strive to complement, not undermine, each other, a view voiced by I14, and also echoed by the documentary film “*La contra etiqueta, el que es veu i el que es beu* (The counter-label, what is seen and what is drunk)” by Clara Isamat.³ Indeed, aligning with Ostapenko et al. (2025), merging the two events adds value by offering a greater variety of wines and a richer cultural experience.

- (b) The role of the festivals in creating and reinforcing the touristic brand and territorial identity.

It is evident, as other researchers have shown (e.g. Noguer-Juncà et al., 2025), that one of the main objectives of the tourism agents is to hold different events to boost competitiveness (Rajput and Riaz, 2019; Zimmerbauer, 2011), increase tourist flows and address seasonality issues (Bonazzi, 2021; Ollé and Riu, 2009; Paasi, 2002). This is echoed by I8: “We promote both wine events and a lot of other events related to books, culture and leisure because we want activities every weekend because it means income for local businesses.” However, an over-proliferation of events could be counter-productive, as I12 points out: “The public administrations have to redefine their strategy because there should be fewer events, and we should concentrate on the ones linked to authenticity and territorial identity because some events make no sense, are generic and aren’t linked to the local identity.” In other words, although such events are an important means to express a destination’s identity (Bennett and Woodward, 2016; Gautam, 2022; Atsuko and Telfer, 2008; Lin and Bestor, 2020), they only really work when they are closely linked to the community.

Views differ regarding the management of the festival. Some interviewees are positive, such as I2, who says “From my point of view, the role played by the town council is good. If you have questions or requirements while preparing the festival or if you have logistical problems, there’s always someone who answers and helps you.” But other interviewees agree that the festivals could be managed better, citing four main reasons. First, the change of date for the latest edition. Traditionally it has been held to coincide with the Saint Martin Festival on the weekend before 11th November, but in 2024, the New Wine Festival was moved to All-Saint’s Day. Many regular visitors were unaware of the date change, which moreover was to a time when there are a number of other events going on in the region. As I8 comments: “Changing the date is a big mistake ... I have been doing festivals for 20 years and changing the date is a mistake! A lot of people didn’t realize it had changed.”

Secondly, the relocation of the Sunday market from its traditional site in the Main Square. In 2024, it was moved to the High Street, where all the bookshops are. I6 explains the reasons for the switch: “Our goal is to promote all sides of the town. So, we decided to hold the market in the High Street to promote our ‘Book Town’ status.” None of the stallholders

³ Clara Isamat’s film offers a closer look at this side of the wine world that vindicates craftsmanship as an expression of the region’s diversity, enriching the wine landscape beyond the constraints of designation of origin regulations. The film premiered at the 13th edition of the Most Festival in 2023, which presents the best audiovisual productions related to the culture of wine and cava.

appreciated the change, with I9 stating: *“The street is narrow and not pleasant to walk along. For me, it went well because I was at the beginning of the street, but I know of some other stallholders who were at the end of the street, and business didn’t go very well, lots of visitors didn’t walk the full length of the street.”*

The wineries are also all agreed that the event needs to be promoted better, with the council investing in broader communication than just locally. As I7 pointed out: *“It might be interesting to reinforce the promotion ... There is only coverage on TV Costa Brava [the regional TV channel] but nothing else ...”* And I2 comments: *“I think there is a lack of promotion ... The festival needs to be promoted on social networks and they should invite influencers.”*

The final challenge that the interviewees mention concerns the typology of the Sunday market. Three interviewees felt specializing in wine helped strengthen Calonge’s image as a wine town. I1 says: *“I think it has to be like this, otherwise we lose the essence of the event”* and I7 adds: *“If it’s a wine market, we have to focus on wine or else it will be a generalist market with no identity.”*

According to Ascione and Fink (2021), events need to focus on the local tangible and intangible heritage., and three winery owners echo that view when saying they would prefer the market to be opened up to other produce, as was the case until a few years ago. I9 says that: *“Right now the market is poor because there are only wine stalls before there were jams, cheese and fresh meats stalls and the market was richer”* while I7 adds that *“the number of stalls has been reduced ... I know that cheese and bread stalls compete with local businesses, but an intermediate solution should be found.”* However, I11 raises an important point when saying: *“This type of market mirrors other events, such as the ones in the Beaujolais region in France”* that also focus solely on wine.

6. Discussion

This paper has explored the coexisting New Wine and the Farmer Wine Festivals in Calonge i Sant Antoni, two separate events that represent the mix of modern (branded) and traditional (non-branded) wines that are so distinctive of a town that is otherwise principally known for sun-sea-and-sand tourism. Analysis of the interviews confirms that by showcasing the tangible and intangible heritage (Ascione and Fink, 2021; Cristófol et al., 2021; Fontefrancesco and Zocchi, 2020) in the form of local wine culture and authenticity (Hall et al., 2000) and wine-related experiences (Gu et al., 2020), these festivals boost the local economy by attracting tourism outside of the summer season.

These festivals shift the focus toward the identity of the local *terroir*, boost the economic value of both DO Empordà and farmer wine, and, following Hindjou and Dixit (2025), align with current demands for holistic wine tourism experiences that go beyond typical visits to wineries by offering visitors the chance to be active participants rather than mere spectators (e.g. Bartoli et al., 2025; Chen and Zinola, 2025).

The coexistence of two different production and commercialization methods aligns with the neo-endogenous model of territorial development (Ray, 2006), a hybrid approach that transcends the exogenous-endogenous dichotomy, and which is the integrated outcome of “various combinations of participants interacting with the local level” (Ray, 2001:9).

Both traditions have been maintained thanks to the perseverance of farmers (and especially those from the older generations) and local wine producers, who could be considered stewards of the territory. However, in contrast to the current scenario of depopulation of rural areas, generational renewal is less of an issue in this case, with younger generations actually having revitalized the sector by introducing new concepts such as the art workshop at the New Wine Festival, where attendees create and take home a painting and the “Mas Ponsjoan League” blind tasting contest at the Farmer Wine Festival.

However, we observed a number of ways in which the festivals might be further enhanced. Since one of the main audiences of both events is second-home owners, the town council should focus on organizing more

cultural events to promote greater interaction of this population in the economic, social and cultural life of Calonge i Sant Antoni. Many of these visitors are blessed with considerable purchasing power, are close to retirement age and often have ample free time, and are thus able to make a valuable contribution to the stimulation of economic and commercial activity in a town that is threatened by the loss of population and businesses.

However, the New Wine Festival program could benefit from greater diversification. For example, introducing family-friendly experiences would make the event more inclusive. The local government, in liaison with winegrowers, should explore options such as offering non-alcoholic drinks during tastings and organizing parallel activities for children and parents.

The participation of all winegrowers is essential for the continuity and sustainability of the event. The strong understanding and collaboration among winegrowers integrated in the DO Empordà and those who produce and sell farmer wine must be maintained, as the coexistence of two different ways to produce wine is a peculiarity that needs to be leveraged. It is no coincidence that the well-known sommelier Josep Roca includes both varieties on the wine list at the prestigious Cellar de Can Roca restaurant. In fact, producers from both camps often participate in both festivals, creating more opportunities for visitor engagement and connection.

Calonge i Sant Antoni’s status since 2021 as the first *Book Town* in Catalonia and the second in Spain is another factor worth highlighting. This has led to the opening of seven general and specialized bookstores, reflecting the ongoing commitment of local tourism stakeholders to diversifying cultural offerings and reducing seasonal dependency, an example that wine producers need to follow.

7. Conclusions

This paper examines the views of supply-side stakeholders regarding how wine functions as a significant driver of regional economic development and tourism through the creation of authentic, place-based experiences that require collaboration between public and private stakeholders. Our findings support the need to develop neo-endogenous territorial development strategies, in this case by forging cooperative, multi-stakeholder networks between quality-certified winegrowers and agribusiness producers to ensure robust agrifood supply chains. These must ensure the continued sustainability of the local identity, local wine production, and authentic, exclusive tourism experiences.

This aligns with the local council’s goal of providing a weekly calendar of authentic, identity-based activities as part of the sustainable transformation of the municipality, a challenge addressed at the 10th European Conference on Sustainable Cities & Towns. However, this requires stronger networking between the local administration and all sectors, including accommodation and gastronomy, to create strategies that ensure that the whole town receives visitors permanently, not only during the summer season.

Wine tourism in Calonge i Sant Antoni needs to be promoted to a broader audience, moving beyond local residents and second-home owners to include young people, families with children, digital nomads, and visitors from other regions. This could be achieved by a stronger and more consistent communication strategy targeting social networks and traditional mass media such as radio and television.

7.1. Limitations and further research

A limitation of this study is that it focuses exclusively on wine events in Calonge i Sant Antoni, and the findings are not necessarily generalizable to other regions with different wine cultures. However, the paper has focused on the majority of the producers in the town, underlining its relevance and representativeness. Future research could analyze other similar wine festivals in Catalonia, Spain, and Europe to compare the organization, stakeholder engagement, promotional strategies, target

audiences, and current debates around the challenges for branded wines versus non-branded wines. Further research could also include other verifiable data, such as income generated by wine stallholders and the relationship between public and private investment.

Another limitation is that the paper exclusively focuses on the supply-side. Future research could also use quantitative methods to examine the views of visitors and tourists to further enhance our knowledge of the New Wine Festival and the Farmer Wine Festival. It could also analyze how the two categories of wine are integrated into the menus of restaurants in Calonge i Sant Antoni, thus providing a more holistic view of wine as a tourism asset.

7.2. Implications for theory and practice

The findings offer practical insights for local policymakers and authorities to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the synergies between public and private sectors in the present and future of the New Wine Festival and the Farmer Wine Festival. We have particularly noted that the public sector needs to promote and reinforce both events simultaneously as key expressions of the town's tangible and intangible heritage.

This paper contributes to the literature by evidencing the relevance of neo-endogenous regional development that leverages internal and external networks among local and non-local private and public stakeholders to foster social innovation. We have shown that both events in combination help to showcase the region's wine culture and identity by offering authentic visitor experiences that advance the social, economic, and environmental sustainability of both the events themselves and of the destinations.

CRediT authorship contribution statement

Ester Noguer-Juncà: Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Visualization, Validation, Supervision, Software, Resources, Project administration, Methodology, Investigation, Funding acquisition, Formal analysis, Data curation, Conceptualization. **Montserrat Crespi-Vallbona:** Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Visualization, Validation, Supervision, Software, Resources, Project administration, Methodology, Investigation, Funding acquisition, Formal analysis, Data curation, Conceptualization.

Declaration of interest statement

The authors Ester Noguer-Juncà and Montserrat Crespi-Vallbona of the research *Tourism and coexistence between branded and natural wines: the case of Calonge i Sant Antoni* declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in the aforementioned article.

Data availability

No data was used for the research described in the article.

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