



2023 TOP 100 GOOD PRACTICE STORY

Title: Welcome to Brežice - where bread, wine and salami have their own event

Destination, Country: Brežice, Slovenija

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In the category: Destination Management Environment & Climate Thriving Communities
 Nature & Scenery Culture & Tradition Business & Marketing

The Story in a picture:

The Bread, Wine and Salami Day is a sustainable event in Brežice. The event is great importance for the preservation of the cultural heritage of the destination. Through the bread baking competition, it preserves the long-standing culinary and bread baking traditions of the locals. The Mayor's Wine Selection is a special form of encouragement and promotion for local wine-growing associations and individual winemakers, who have the opportunity to promote their work and their wines at the event, thus preserving the culture of viticulture that has been present in the area for centuries. We want to continue this tradition and prevent the trend towards abandonment and overgrowth of vineyards, which have a unique importance for the local landscape of our destination. The salamis are also made from the only surviving indigenous Slovenian breed of pig, the Krškopolje pig, which developed in the area of our destination and is thus part of its history. The Bread, Wine and Salami Day event brings all this together by bringing the local community together in the form of wine-growing, tourist and cultural associations and local musicians. The event raises awareness of the importance of preserving our culture among tourists and locals alike (photo by Luka Rudman).





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GOOD PRACTICE STORY

Summary: Brežice is a sustainable destination in Slovenia with a rich natural and cultural heritage, full of folk traditions and customs. The relief and climate of the area have historically provided ideal conditions for the development of viticulture, which has thus become part of our culture. In recent years, interest in preserving this tradition among young people has waned. Many vineyards throughout Slovenia have begun to wither away, left to become overgrown or even cut down by their owners. At Destination Brežice, we want to see sustainable management of our destination, which includes preserving the image of the local landscape, which is largely represented by vineyards, and preserving the culture of growing grapes and processing them into wine. To help achieve this, we have launched the Bread, Wine and Salami Day event to encourage young people to preserve their family vineyards, join wine-growing societies and thus bring local communities together. Over the years, the event has become a tradition and is well attended by both participants (winegrowers, wine-growers' associations, tourist boards, bread bakers, local music and dance groups) and visitors from near and far.



Good Practice Story:

Destination description

Brief background of the destination.

Tourism is an important part of the economy, with one in 10 people working in tourism, and its sustainable development is essential for the economic and social well-being of the region. Good practices in sustainable tourism development focus on local cuisine and wine production, storytelling in tourism and the organisation of local culinary events. These activities help to attract tourists to Brežice, making it a popular wine destination.

Brežice, a town in the Posavje region in south-eastern Slovenia, is known as a meeting point of different worlds. The destination is known not only for its beautiful scenery, but also for its rich culinary and wine culture. The region has a long history of viticulture and winemaking, and the local community, in cooperation with decision-makers at Destination Brežice, is working hard to preserve this tradition by introducing sustainable practices in the viticulture and wine industry. As a result of these initiatives, local wineries have adopted environmentally friendly production methods, reducing their carbon footprint and preserving the environment. All efforts to promote wine-growing culture, preserve rural traditions, promote organic farming and rural tourism have led to the sustainable development of the destination. By adopting a sustainable tourism model, the region has created a balance between economic development, environmental preservation and cultural heritage. The region's commitment to sustainable development has been recognised by the Slovenian Green Tourism Scheme, which ranks Brežice among the most sustainable Slovenian destinations with the Slovenia Green Platinum title.

The region's commitment to preserving its cultural heritage through tradition, local artists and winemaking is reflected in the collective brand "Brežice Selection". The purpose of the collective brand is to promote the sustainable development of the region and the exploration of the natural beauty and local cuisine of the area by the local community and visitors. Before joining, applicants are offered free advice on developing the product, developing the story behind it, redesigning the corporate identity and marketing the product. In this way, the collective brand allows providers to focus on the quality of the product itself, while saving time on other aspects of a successful product through expert advice. The collective brand providers use sustainable materials in their work, 70% of which are locally sourced, thus promoting a circular economy within the destination area and, as a result, enabling local entrepreneurs to participate and break into the market. The suitability of a product for inclusion in the collective brand is objectively assessed by an external expert panel, which is made up of experts from the various fields involved.

Issues faced

Problems/issues solved with the Good Practice Story.

Local intangible heritage is closely linked to gastronomy and wine production, as culinary traditions have evolved over time to reflect unique local ingredients and cultural influences. The wine and culinary culture of Brežice is a testimony to the rich history and traditions of the region and is a source of pride for the local people. Winemaking is not just a commercial activity, it is a way of life. Many families have been making wine for generations, and their knowledge and experience has been passed down from one generation to the next. The vineyards also have cultural significance, contributing to the sustainable development of tourism in the region. The wine routes attract tourists interested in learning about local wine-making traditions, and the vineyards provide a wonderful backdrop for wine tasting and other activities. The local speciality of the Brežice destination area is the beetroot, which cannot be found anywhere else. These are caves dug in hard

quartz sand, which were used in the past to store crops. They were often used to store turnips, which gave the caves their name.

In recent years, the tailings have become an important wine tourism destination, with visitors from all over the world coming to explore the repnice cave and taste the local wines. The combination of cultural heritage and wine tourism has created a sustainable tourism model that benefits the local economy and the environment. One of the most important sustainable aspects of the tailings is the preservation of the cultural heritage associated with the caves. The local community has worked hard to protect and restore the tailings ponds, ensuring that the traditional ways of producing and storing wine are preserved for future generations. On the other hand, wine tourism in the tailings has also had a positive impact on the local economy, as the tailings are managed by local family businesses.

For centuries, Slovenia's population has been predominantly agricultural. In recent years, however, small farms have started to collapse. Young people are looking elsewhere for opportunities, getting an education and moving to bigger cities to find work, while small farms are left to decay after the death of their elderly owners. Part of agriculture, especially in our region, is viticulture, which is also not immune to changing trends in life. Vineyards have begun to be abandoned, overgrown or cut down by new owners, leaving only the wine barn, the wine cellar, as a weekend retreat from the city.

Destination Brežice is determined to prevent this and is encouraging winemakers to preserve rural traditions in the form of wine-growing districts. The latter are specific areas defined by their unique terroir - favourable climate, soil composition, soil, location and slope - and a long tradition of viticulture. These areas have been cultivated for generations and their preservation is essential to the cultural heritage of the region. By preserving these areas, winegrowers ensure that traditional winemaking methods are passed on to future generations. The Posavje region, of which Brežice is a part, is home to excellent wines that play an important role on the oenological map of Slovenia. Two wine roads lead through the sun-drenched hills: the Podgorjanska Wine Road and the Bizeljsko-Sremiška Wine Road, along which there are numerous wineries and wine bars to visit. The Podgorjanska Wine Route is famous for its production of *cviček*, a sour red wine made from red and white grapes, while the Bizeljsko-Sremiska Wine Route is famous for its production of red and white Bizeljčan. In addition to the above-mentioned wine routes, Brežice is also famous for its annual events celebrating the local gastronomic heritage.

Methods, steps, and tools applied

Solutions implemented to address the sustainability problems or issues.

To preserve the wine-growing culture in the destination, Destination Brežice has organised an event that is one of the most famous events in the destination and takes place every year in June. It is the Bread, Wine and Salami Day. The event attracts visitors from all over Slovenia and beyond and showcases local gastronomic culture, especially bread, wine and salami combined with local wines. For several months prior to the event, a wine evaluation is held to select the Mayor's Wine. The wines are selected by an expert wine evaluation committee from wine samples submitted for the evaluation by members of wine-growing associations within the Brežice destination. Three types of wine are selected for the Mayor's Wine, namely two types with a specific traditional designation, *cviček* and white Bizeljčan, and a selected type determined by the expert panel on the basis of the vintage year, which in 2023 was yellow Muscat. The main purpose of the Day of Bread, Wine and Salami is to promote local wine culture and raise awareness among the local community and visitors of the importance of the latter.

On the day of the event, the traditional bread is judged. The Municipality of Brežice gives 2 kg of flour to all participants as an incentive to participate in as large a number as possible. A jury of

several members assesses the bread for its appearance and taste, and after the judging, the bread is displayed and available for visitors to see. Later in the day, the bread is served at the stands of the tourist boards. Any leftover bread is distributed among the visitors as a sign of respect for food and to raise awareness of the problem of food refusal.

The event organiser, Institute for Entrepreneurship, Tourism and Youth Brežice invites all tourist associations within the municipality of Brežice to participate. The municipality financially supports the preparation of the stalls, where the associations serve traditional dishes in addition to bread. Particularly popular among visitors are the apple strudel and the buckwheat cake from Bizelj, which is a traditional Slovenian dish made from buckwheat flour and cottage cheese and originates from the Brežice destination area. Through their participation, the tourist boards promote places around the destination and invite the local community to join the board's activities, with the aim of bringing together members of the local community in projects that define the destination as a whole. In addition to the dishes prepared by the local tourist boards, visitors can enjoy stalls selling dried meat products from local producers. The latter include cured meat products made from the Krškopolje pig, an indigenous breed of pig native to this part of Slovenia.

All six local wine-growing societies are represented at the event, with their members' wines on the stands. At the entry point of the venue, visitors can buy a glass tasting glass with the logo of the event, which is reusable and can be a useful souvenir of the destination. When buying a glass, visitors can also buy vouchers to be redeemed at the wine stalls. The vouchers are used to pay the organiser for the wine on tap, which is distributed among the members. For the duration of the event, caterers are not allowed to sell wine in order to promote the wines of local wine producers and the activities of the wine-growing societies. Participation in the stalls is an opportunity for wine growers to expand their sales market and promote themselves to visitors.

In addition to promoting and raising awareness of local gastronomy, the organisers also strive to preserve local culture and traditions, which is reflected in the choice of participants in the event's entertainment programme. In the past years, the participants of the Bread, Wine and Salami Day have included the Kapele Wind Orchestra, which was founded in 1850, and the Loče Fire Brigade Wind Orchestra, which has a tradition of more than 100 years. Both orchestras are listed in the Register of Intangible Cultural Heritage, so their performance in the local environment is crucial to raise awareness among visitors and the local community, which plays a key role in the existence of both orchestras, through its membership or its support. The Folklore Group of KUD Oton Župančič Artiče and the Folklore Group of Pišece were also invited to participate in the programme. The latter performed traditional Slovenian dances in costumes typical of this part of Slovenia. The performances help to preserve and keep alive the folk traditions - songs, dances and traditional costumes, and to bring the community together. All the performers of the music programme come from Slovenia. In order to reduce the carbon footprint, the organiser chooses mainly local performers of folk music, which flows through the veins of Slovenians from generation to generation. Such events allow visitors from other cultures to get to know Slovenia, while awakening national consciousness and belonging in the local population.

Among those invited are the current Princess of Cwick and the Wine Queen of Bizeljsko, who raise awareness at events about the importance of preserving wine-growing traditions and the culture of drinking. All technical and other staff come from the Brežice destination, which enables the organiser to contribute to the economic well-being of the local population. In previous years, the event has been held in the courtyard of Brežice Castle in order to include an important cultural monument, but this year's event will be held in the old town centre of Brežice, which is the centre of the Brežice destination. The organiser moved the venue due to the high number of visitors and the desire to revitalise the old town centre. In the past, Brežice was known for its trade, crafts and

handicrafts in the town centre, and as a result, all the action took place there. The organisers are keen to revive the tradition of gathering in this area, while at the same time preserving the local flavour by offering local wine and salami producers and locally made bread.

The VICE model is being followed in the organisation of this and other events in the Brežice destination in order to reconcile the needs of the community, the environment, visitors and, last but not least, the tourism industry, on which the economy depends.

Key success factors

Critical elements that led to successfully solving the issues.

The event encourages the participation of the whole local community in the destination. It involves wine growers and wine-growers' associations, local bread-baking residents who wish to take part in the competition, local tourist boards, various folklore and music groups active in the destination. For winemakers in particular, participation in this type of event brings them into contact with tourists, potential wine buyers and visitors to their wineries. Tourist boards present the sights and special features of our destination, while cultural associations preserve traditions and old customs through their programmes.

All participants in the competition for the best Mayor's Wine receive a certificate of participation, while the best-rated wine receives the title of Mayor's Wine. The latter is then served at events organised by the Municipality of Brežice and given as a protocol gift. A financial prize is awarded to the association whose member receives the title of Mayor's Wine, the purpose of which is to encourage the active involvement of the association in the local community. The Mayor's Wine title of honour opens up new business opportunities for the winemaker who receives the prize, as well as extensive promotion of the winning winemaker and his wine, as well as of the wine-growing society of which he is a member and of all the varieties of wine taking part in the competition.

On the day of the event, there is also a bread exhibition, where visitors can see and taste the bread of the competitors who have brought their bread to the competition. The best breads are awarded prizes. If there is any bread left over, it is distributed among the visitors as a sign of respect for food and to raise awareness of the problem of food waste..

Lessons learned

Challenges faced while implementing the Good Practice and their solutions.

Viticulture, as part of agriculture, is largely dependent on the weather. The grape harvest, and consequently the wine, varies from year to year, which can present challenges for our winemakers. As a result, in a year when the vineyards are affected by frost or hail or disease, we see a lower turnout of winemakers at the Bread, Wine and Salami Day. Another major challenge for our winemakers and for the destination was the COVID-19 pandemic crisis, when we could not organise the event and they had to find other ways to promote and sell their wines. Some people found their way during that period and started selling their wine online. The municipality organises various training courses for wine-growers, but despite this, there is little interest among young people - because successful wine-growing requires a lot of knowledge, effort and hard work.

Achievements and Results

Direct and indirect results of the Good Practice.

Cooperation and networking are the keys to success. A successful sustainable destination must ensure that all stakeholders in the destination - local initiatives, the public and private sectors and our tourists - interact in a fruitful way. Our Bread, Wine and Salami Day event brings together all the stakeholders of our destination to preserve our culture of viticulture and gastronomy by baking bread accompanied by a cultural programme of local musicians and dancers from folklore groups, all within the walls of our mighty castle or, from 2023, on the bustling streets of our beautifully preserved old town.

Tips for other destinations

Your suggestions or recommendations for other destinations facing the same issues or implementing similar solutions

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Recognitions and Additional references

Recognitions and awards the Good Practice received and supporting evidence.

<https://www.visitbrezice.si/dogodki/dan-kruha-vina-in-salam-23>

<https://www.posavskiozornik.si/panorama/dan-kruha-vina-in-salam-ponovno-napolnil-grajsko-dvorisce-97176>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w_6edeKnMX0

https://www.dolenjskolist.si/2022/06/23/263157/novice/posavje/Dan_kruha_vina_in_salam_ponovno_napolnil_grajsko_dvorisce/

<https://vimeo.com/346901232>

Platinasti znak Slovenia Green <https://www.slovenia.info/si/zgodbe/slovenia-green-destinacije>