

## **The relationship of wine store customers with the areas of production, considering provenance and tourism**

### **La relation entre les consommateurs de vin dans les œnothèques et les zones de production du vin, en rapport avec leur origine et le tourisme**

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#### **Summary**

This work aims at identifying the most appropriate marketing strategies to inform consumers of the global market about the added value of the wines of Friuli Venezia Giulia. In view of agricultural products, wine very often assumes an added value resulting from ties with local production and its excellence. In order to analyze the relationship between the typicalness of wine and its exploitation on the local and international markets, one must identify the limits and strategies for the sale of this product-service. Consumers choose or express a preference based on a supposed gratification they achieve with the purchase and subsequent use or consumption of goods. We must take into account that this gratification depends on intrinsic quality of the product and elements that determine the extrinsic quality. In particular for wine, intrinsic and extrinsic quality are strongly influenced by the characteristics of the territory. The binomial “quality product-territory”, therefore, multiplies the growth processes of endogenous forces, such as human capital, the environment and nature, the quality of public administration and the culture of enterprise.

**Key words:** wine, territory, consumers, typicalness

#### **Introduction**

Wine producers are moving towards products characterised by a strong link with the territory of provenance, which may be marketed together with the natural, landscape and cultural resources. This could represent a way in which to approach a habitual consumption of good quality wine. The strategy for promoting wines is based on the ability to link the culture of the product to the culture of the territory by means of a homogeneous introduction of the wine production system into the territory and the use of a rural development model aimed at promoting the quality.

#### **Material and methods**

The survey interviewed a sample group of wine consumers in wine stores. As well as aspects concerning flavours and choices, questions were also aimed at clarifying the relationship between consumer and territory.

The sample group consisted of 150 people - 103 men (68,7%) and 47 women (31,3%) - who were interviewed in wine stores in northern Italy. Almost three quarters of the respondents (72%) were aged between 19 and 40 and the most common age group (30%) was that of the 25 to 30 year-olds. In order to simplify processing of the collected data, the sample group was subdivided into four different age categories: young adults, middle age, mature and elderly (Table 1).

Age group	% of total	Category
16-18	0,7%	Young adults
19-24	22,7%	
25-30	30%	Middle age
31-40	19,3%	
41-50	16%	Mature
51-60	8,7%	
61-70	2,7%	Elderly
Older than 70	-	
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	

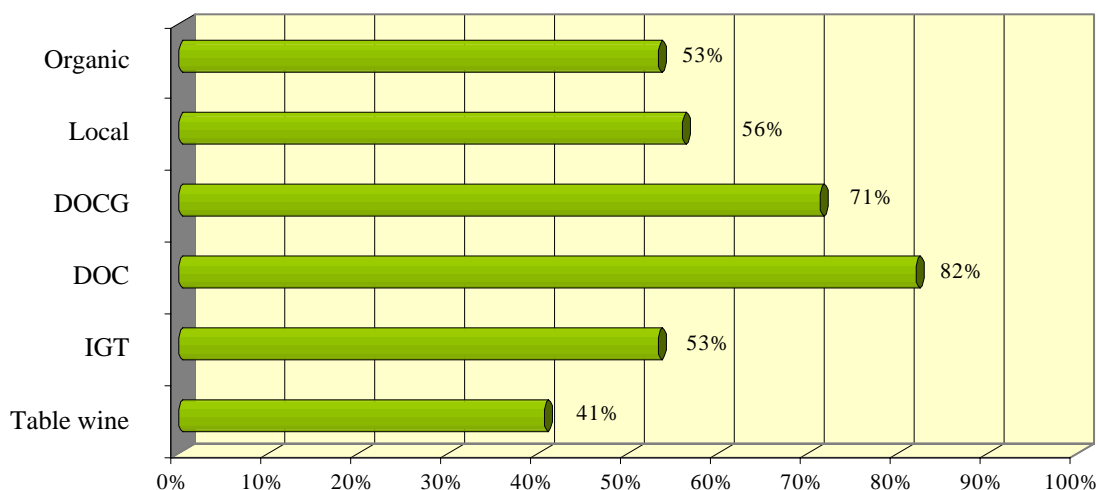
**Table 1** Ages of respondents

## Results and Discussion

### *Knowledge of the “language” of wine*

The survey studied how the choice of a wine takes into consideration the geographical origin and provenance from a particular production area. Since the characteristics of the final product are also perceived in relation to the territorial origin of the wine, the aim of the survey was to determine the level of knowledge of the respondents with regard to certain commonly used terms: local, organic, table wine, I.G.T., D.O.C. and D.O.C.G.. The majority of the sample group merely indicated the “translation” of the individual letters for the last three designations, without precisely explaining the meaning of the words. It was decided to consider these replies as correct, even though it may conceal a certain lack of knowledge of the exact concept implied by the designation.

The meaning of the I.G.T. designation was not known by approximately half the sample group (53%). The meanings of the D.O.C. and D.O.C.G. designations were, on the other hand, known by 70-80% of the respondents (Diagram 1).



**Diagram 1** Degree of knowledge of certain terms used in the wine industry

More than half the persons interviewed said that they were aware of the meaning of “organic” and “local”. With regard to the first term, it should be noted that part of the replies were incomplete (e.g. “cultivation with few chemical products” or “treatment of the vines with natural products”), but they were still considered acceptable for the purposes of the survey. The percentage of respondents who provided a correct definition (53%) might appear to be rather low, but it should be noted that answers were not accepted when the respondents merely declared that they were aware of the meaning without actually describing it in detail.

The term “local” was correctly defined by 56% of the respondents. In this case, there were only a few vague definitions or an inability to provide an answer. So the percentage faithfully reflects the degree of knowledge of the sample group.

A smaller percentage (41%) was able to provide the correct definition of “table wine”. The remainder of the sample group associated this product with a low level of quality, unaware of the fact that it is basically a wine which does not have a specific territorial identification. This definition does not, therefore, imply a low quality or lack of naturalness of the product.

Table 2 shows the percentage of correct definitions provided by each of the age categories.

	Table wine	I.G.T.	D.O.C.	D.O.C.G.	Local	Organic
Young adults	48,6%	51,4%	88,6%	77,1%	65,7%	71,4%
Middle age	40,5%	59,5%	81,1%	74,3%	55,4%	44,6%
Mature - Elderly	34,1%	43,9%	78,0%	61,0%	48,8%	53,7%

**Table 2 Percentage of positive replies provided by individual age groups regarding certain terms used in the wine industry**

The D.O.C. designation was defined correctly by a high percentage of respondents (78-88,6%) in all three age categories. This was followed by D.O.C.G. with a slightly lower percentage (61-77,1%). The level of knowledge of the other terms (organic, local, I.G.T and table wine) decreased in the same manner for the young adults and the mature-elderly respondents, but with completely different percentages. On the other hand, the middle age respondents showed a certain awareness of the I.G.T. designation, but were not very clear on the meaning of “organic”, with only 44,6% providing a correct definition. The exact meaning of “table wine” was not well known for any of the three age categories. However, the young adults showed a greater degree of knowledge, with almost half providing a clear explanation.

### ***Relationship with the territory***

The survey analysed the relationship that wine store customers have with the area of production of the wine, in the widest sense of the term. Specifically, the aim was to evaluate:

- active participation in visits to wineries or vineyards;
- diffusion of wine tourism, not merely awareness of the meaning of the expression, but, above all, active participation in the phenomenon;
- opinion on typical regional wines, especially with regard to their importance for tourism in the area and for the qualification of wine outlets;
- behaviour of the sample group during visits outside the home region concerning the choice of wines to be tasted.

The 23,3% of the sample group said that they had never visited a winery or vineyard, whilst the remaining 76,7% often visited wineries or vineyards by themselves. The use of guides was extremely limited<sup>1</sup>

A study of the behaviour on the basis of the age of the respondents did not highlight large differences between the categories; visits to wineries and vineyards were made by 80,5% of the mature-elderly respondents and by approx. 75% for the other two categories. However, there was a great difference in behaviour between men and women: 85,4% of the men often visited wineries and vineyards, compared with 57,4% of the women. The young adults who visit wineries or vineyards prefer to use guides, whilst the other two categories show a greater degree of self-sufficiency, preferring “*independent*” visits. This latter behaviour could be partly explained by the desire to put previously acquired experience to the test or by a greater desire to demonstrate independence in the selection of wines.

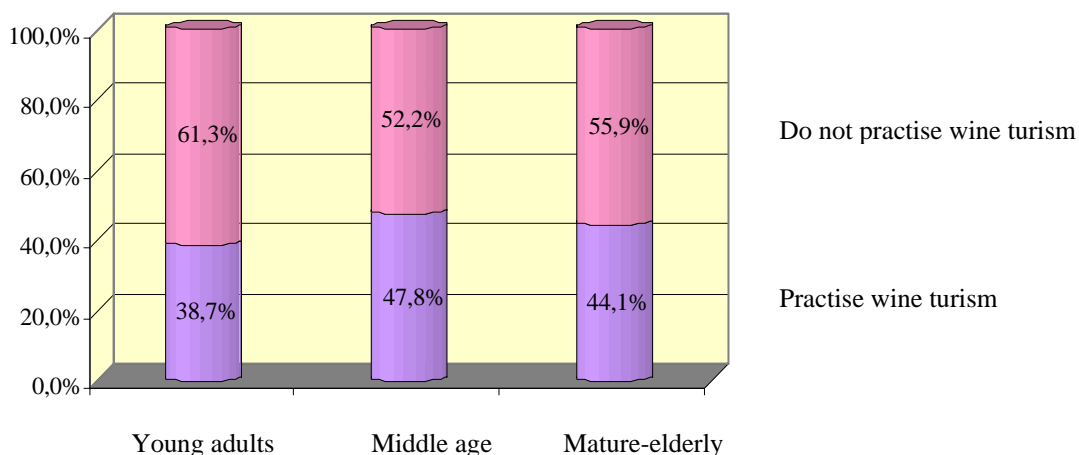
An analysis of the replies on the basis of sex shows how men have a more independent position, with 73% opting for “*independent*” visits compared with 40% preferring “*guided tours*”, whilst the preference is just the opposite for women.

<sup>1</sup> The results are expressed as percentages because in the case of a positive reply (“yes”) it was requested that the condition be specified (“*independent*” or “*guided visit*”), with the possibility of multiple answers.

Only 12% of the sample group were not aware of the wine tourism phenomenon. Almost half of the remaining 88% were true wine tourists (44,7%), whilst the remaining 55,3% were aware of the meaning of “*wine tourism*” but had not yet practised it.

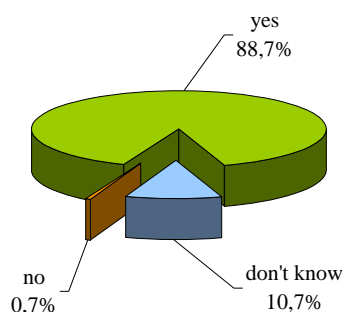
By analysing the replies on the basis of the age of the respondents it may be seen that more than 90% of the middle age respondents knew of the wine tourism phenomenon. This percentage is similar amongst the young adults (approx. 89%) and drops to approx. 83% amongst the mature-elderly respondents.

Attention was paid to the part of the sample group which gave positive replies, and the weight of two reply options was evaluated: “*I am aware of wine tourism phenomenon and I have practised it*” (the true wine tourist) or “*I am aware of wine tourism phenomenon but I have not practised it*”. In all the three age categories, and especially amongst the young adults, the majority was aware of the phenomenon but do not “actively” participate (Diagram 2).



**Diagram 2 Component of the sample group aware of the wine tourism phenomenon: percentage who have practised/not practised it, based on the age**

The male component was found to have the greatest awareness: 91,3% of the men said they knew of the wine tourism phenomenon, compared with 80,9% of the women. The behaviour of the two sexes with regard to participation in wine tourism was different: the majority of men were aware of the phenomenon but do not practise it (57,4%), whilst the female component was subdivided exactly in half. Almost 90% of the sample group believe that the typical regional wines represent an asset for tourism in the particular area (Diagram 3), whilst 10,7% was unable to express any opinion in this respect.



**Diagram 3 Replies to the question “Do typical regional wines represent an asset for tourism in the area?”**

Bearing in mind the very small number of negative answers, only the percentage of “yes” and “don't know” replies were analysed. In all three age categories the majority of the respondents (from approx.

85% to 93%) were convinced that the typical regional wines are a good asset for tourism in the particular area. Negative opinions (“no” answers) were only found amongst the young adults. An analysis on the basis of the male and female respondents shows how both categories were convinced that typical regional wines represent an asset for tourism in the particular area. There was a higher percentage of “don’t know” answers amongst the women, but there were no negative replies.

More than 90% of the sample group agreed on the fact that the presence of an extensive list of regional and local wines plays a fundamental role in the level of qualification of a wine outlet (restaurant/bar/wine store): 8% did not express any opinion in this respect and only a mere 1,3% gave a negative reply. In all three age categories the majority considered it important for a wine outlet to have a large range of regional and local wines. The mature-elderly respondents were the ones who had most doubt: 12% were unable to reply to this question but, at the same time, did not provide a negative answer. The analysis carried out on the basis of the sex of the respondents showed that, in both categories, the majority of replies were “yes”. The percentage of respondents who were unable to express an opinion in this respect was highest amongst the women (14,9%), but there were no negative replies.

Visits outside the home region are characterised by the tasting of wines which were typical for the area in question. Recommendations by the manager of a wine outlet are often taken into consideration and guides or magazines are used much more rarely. The consumer rarely asks to taste wines from the home region when in a wine outlet outside the home region, and prefers to sample local wines, thereby demonstrating a degree of curiosity aimed at extending his/her knowledge of the wine sector.

During a visit outside the home region, all three age categories are more likely to taste the wines of the area visited. This behaviour is more pronounced amongst the young adults and less so amongst the mature-elderly respondents. The latter are quite willing to listen to the recommendations of the manager, unlike the younger persons. In general, the fact that they are outside their home region results in a reduced interest in tasting wines of their home region. This behaviour is more evident amongst the young adults, whilst older individuals show a certain attachment to the wines of their home regions. The use of guides or magazines to help in the selection of wines in other regions is not at all common. The young adults were the most likely to do so whilst it was much less common with the mature-elderly respondents. During visits outside the home region, men and women attribute the same importance to the tasting of local wines. They are most likely to take into consideration the recommendations provided by the manager of the wine outlet and the behaviour of the two sexes is very similar in this case. It is interesting to note how men maintain a certain link with the wines of their home region even when they are in another region, whilst women make alternative choices, taking into consideration suggestions provided by specialist guides or magazines.

## Conclusion

It has emerged from the survey that the demand for wine is evolving. The consumer requests diversity and tipicity, an expression of the provenance of the wine itself. It is necessary to set up a direct relationship with the territory, not in a random manner without objectives, but with the awareness of an intelligent consumption, the consumption of good quality wines, and with the desire to experience a more intense relationship with the territory. The culture of the “wine product” is therefore inseparably linked to the “territorial product”.

The decision to strengthen the link between territory and wine represents the only successful manner in which to enter the global market and, at the same, satisfy the needs of the consumer which are increasingly orientated towards wines which bring together the history and the vocation of the production area.

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