

“Here I feel out of place”: how to overcome young people’s fear of wine

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A Wine Meridian survey reveals that many young people, particularly Gen Z, shy away from wine due to fear of not feeling knowledgeable enough or making social blunders. The article advocates for a shift towards more inclusive, accessible, and less intimidating wine experiences. It emphasizes using simple language, offering interactive sessions, and fostering an environment where young consumers feel welcomed rather than judged.

There’s a word that often comes up when listening to young people talk about wine. And it’s a word that should never be part of a pleasant experience: fear.

You don't need a special vocabulary. You need to feel at home.

The wine you like is the right wine. Period. There's no need to justify yourself, to talk like a sommelier, to quote notes of leather or dried fruit. Instead, too many winery experiences, even today, seem designed to intimidate, not to welcome. **We at Wine Meridian have experienced this firsthand.** Working closely with schools and young people – thanks to our courses and training sessions – we had the opportunity to listen to them, interview them, ask them direct questions about their relationship with wine. And what emerged is a recurring feeling of fear. “I never know what to say,” “I’m afraid of looking bad,” “I feel judged if I can’t talk like an expert.” **And when there's fear, pleasure doesn't arise. Distance arises.** And it's that distance we must strive to bridge.

Inclusion is the new buzzword

If we really want to bring Generation Z closer to wine, **we need to become more inclusive.** This means:

- Using simple and direct language
- Offering short, interactive, light experiences
- Making them feel welcome, not judged
- Proposing emotional, not technical, content It's not an impoverishment of wine, it's its evolution.

The beauty of wine also lies in its ability to adapt to those who drink it, not just those who produce it.

Have you ever been boring? Maybe so.

Many tastings are perceived by young people as too long, all the same, too theoretical. So the question every winery should ask itself is: “Have we ever designed an experience just for

young people?" An experience that respects their time (short), their channels (digital), their style (music, friends, sociality), their emotions (lightness, freedom, recognition). Social media isn't enough if there isn't a new, authentic, engaging idea behind it. And above all: **you don't need to change everything. Just adjust the right details.** Here's the final provocation, but also the most concrete fact. If you have a budget for an event, perhaps today it's more worthwhile to invite 20 young people from your area than 10 renowned journalists. **Because a young person who feels welcomed, involved, pampered... Will come back. And they will talk about you!**

Key points

- **Young people often fear wine**, feeling judged or inadequate.
- **Wineries must prioritize inclusion** and welcoming experiences for Gen Z.
- **Simplify language** and offer short, interactive, emotional wine content.
- **Tailor experiences to young people's digital habits** and social needs.
- **Engaging local youth can be more impactful** than traditional media.