

Great concern in the USA for the interest decrease in wine among young generations

scritto da Fabio Piccoli | 18 Settembre 2023



To all the producers and managers that I met in this tiring yet extraordinary USA Wine Tour, I asked the same question: "What is the main concern for the business future?". Almost all of them gave me the same answer: "The interest decrease in wine among young generations".

"Without Boomers – as many protagonists of the American wine production chain underline – we will struggle to make the economy of our businesses sustainable".

It is a deeply felt problem in the USA, surely more than how

it is perceived in our old Europe; maybe because we got used to the aging trend in all its meanings and in all its economic compartments.

Yet, American producers are right to be worried because without the youngers interest towards wine there'll be trouble for everyone, and the first signals can already be seen in a light decrease in consumption even in a market in constant expansion (in terms of value) such as the USA which, with its 34 hl, keeps the first place stable among the countries that consume wine.

Until a few years ago we were deluded in believing that the sector's growth would always be constant and incessant, since, among the alcoholic beverages, the wine consumption had a market share a little over 12% at a global level.

The actual data do not give us these certainties and the alarming signal comes directly from the so-called Gen Z (those born between 1996 and 2010) which surely does not see in wine the main option among the alcoholic beverages. And if this tendency remains constant even when those 20-year-old today will be older, then the situation would appear to be difficult.

Sure, we always have the "Asian hope", which potentially represents an extraordinary basin of new consumers, but we are indeed talking about hope and the decline of the Chinese market in the last five years is not entirely encouraging.

For this reason, I think it is fundamental to make the young generation interest decrease in wine a priority. It is important to stop considering this trend as something inevitable about which we cannot intervene in any way.

If we consider, for example, the constant aggression of the Institutions (starting from the WHO – World Health Organization) against the consumption of alcoholic beverages, we should not be too happy.

Although, and I will say this honestly, I have the sensation that these aggressions, this “new Prohibition”, is generating the exact opposite of its goals. It was enough seeing those “flocks” of young people in many Las Vegas clubs while gulping down cocktails made with vodka, to truly understand that the main street against the abuse is only the education to consumption. The culture tied to wine consumption goes exactly in this direction and I do not care if I seem biased.

But I still believe that to be strong we need an alliance between producing systems at a global level, and I fear that we need something more than just the noble community project by “Wine in Moderation”, for example.

It is necessary to study communication , events, education models that are much more in tune with languages and the young generations lifestyles.

But we already have an answer and the USA, in this direction, is a great example: the wine tourism development. Form our observatory during the USA Wine Tour, we can confirm that we saw many young people in the companies that we visited.

“Wine Tourism is a precious lever to attract young people towards wine, to let them know this sector in the best way – said Greg, small producer from Idaho – because this Gen Z is strongly sensitive to the environment topics, they love open air life in the least polluted places”. We came across many American cellars that started a rich program to attract young generations in their reality, starting from concerts and other party typologies.

If the winery is inserted in an “healthy” environment, it can also represent a determinant factor to find a new alliance model between wine and young consumers.

This represents another “responsibility” in the hands of wine tourism, but also the umpteenth demonstration of how important it is to develop it at best.

In the USA they are rocking it, we have room for improvement, but this I great news.