

I tasted low alcohol wines and I didn't like them

scritto da Fabio Piccoli | 6 Aprile 2022



I've been wanting to do it for a long time, but I always found an excuse to avoid tasting low alcohol wines. After the umpteenth article about the actual success of the low alcohol wines, however, I decided that I, too, had to have a personal opinion on this category.

One necessary foreword on low alcohol wines

I tried 5 of them, but before giving you my opinion I want to give a foreword.

Firs of all, I would like to start by reporting all the articles I read recently about the best low alcohol wine you can find in the market ratings. These ratings talk about naturally low alcohol wines, like for example some types of **Moscato D'Asti, Brachetto, but also sparkling wines that swing**

between 10° vol.

This is misleading because when we actually talk about low alcohol wine, we should mean a category of wines in which the lowering of the alcohol proof is determined by specific enological interventions, which are also pretty invasive.

As Donatella Cinelli Colombini remarked on a post a few years back, in Australia for example, they used yeasts such as the non-Saccharomyces which are able to produce wines with a lower concentration of ethanol. The inoculate of the *Metschnikowia pulcherrima* AWRI1149, followed by the *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* allow to lower the alcohol of 1.5-degree percentage.

The experiment has varied many of the external and volatile acid concentration with a significant result different from the original one. In other terms, at the end a new wine is born.

“The goal to reduce the alcoholic proof”, wrote Donatella, “it produced different attempts: from the very much forbidden water down, to **the mechanic implant of de-alcohol**, which unfortunately ruin the wines aroma, to the most recent osmosis and dwarf seepage which, however, are very different practices that determine profound modification to the tasting (aroma) characteristics of a wine”.

The wines I tasted were a part of this last category, where the lowering of the alcohol proof was induced by specific enological admitted practices (or at least I wish they are admitted).

Always a part of the foreword, I would like to underline that I have nothing against the low alcohol wine but I think it correct for every wine category to be well defined in order to avoid dangerous confusions. In other occasions I underlined that **I think it proper for this wine typology to remain a “fortune” of our compartment, instead of being dealt with by the drinks industry**.

My experience with low alcohol wines

So, dealing with the tastings I did, I must underline now that, substantially, they were wines that were not even far relatives from the origin vineyard.

The great reduction of the alcohol brought them to be substantially idro-alcoholic drink with low (if none) sensations that may push back not only to the origin vineyard, but to what we define today as a "Normal" wine.

So, we are talking about a category that surely enters the wine compartment (in the end, it all starts from the grapes fermentation) but that does not reflect some base characteristics regarding the tasting aspects.

I must admit that I thought, for example, that they may very well be some sort of "wine-ish drink" where the fruity could emerge in some kind of pushed way; in reality I was in front of wines with a great level of water down, with all the aromas turned off or decisively faded.

For some aspects, this negative judgement made me breathe a sigh of relief because I was a bit worried to find simple wines that were also not that unpleasant.

If this is the medium level, of this wine typology the producers of "true wines" have nothing to worry about, if there is in fact a reason to worry on this front.

Then I asked myself two questions: to whom is this wine typology meant for?

May this be some kind of entry level for new potential wine consumers?

It is not easy to answer the first question, even if I would like to highlight that this is not a wine typology that attracts wine lovers.

May they be interesting for those that like take care of their daily diet without renouncing to wine? If those know and love

wine even a little bit, I do not think they will be interested in compromising.

So, sincerely, it may be a **much more affordable choice for those that do not have a real knowledge and pleasure about wine**. But, if that is not the case the, unfortunately, I fear approaching to wine entering from the low alcohol door may transform in the worst baptism for the **wine consumers of the future**.