Is wine a drink for old people?

scritto da Fabio Piccoli | 17 Aprile 2023



Is wine a drink for old people? If we read the Wine Industry Status analysis in the USA – edited by the Silicon Valley Bank wine division – the answer should be inexorably yes.

The oldest wine drinkers in the United States (and the situation is not that different from Italy, even if we do not have such an efficient observatory on consumers like the SVB) **are having a beneficial influence on wine sales, with consumer amounts increasing also in the 70-80 age group.**
The demarcation line between the consumption amount's increase and its decrease is at the age of 60, with the segment above this age growing while the one under the segment sees consumption decreasing.

The good news is that **American boomers aren't giving up and**

keep demonstrating to be the most affectionate to wine and if, as Rob McMillan – Silicon Valley Ban Wine Division founder – nicely writes, "their pension will not be mangled by taxes. They will be able to keep being determinant for the wine business for a little while yet".

The problem is precisely that "a little while yet". **But the countdown has already started considering that the boomer consumers in the USA are replaced by younger buyers at a rhythm of 10.000 per day.**

It is useless to move around it: us boomers, who gave a determinant contribution to the quality wine consumption evolution in the world, are inexorably destined to extinction.

There would not be anything bad about it (so to speak) if the wine industry had found, in the meantime, new marketing and communication strategies to approach younger consumers, **but this is not happening and we highlighted it many times in our articles.**

McMillan underlines that this difficulty of evolving in the wine sector reminds him **great success challenges (General Elctric, Kodad, Blockbuster, etc.) which were not able to understand the winds of change objecting to different stimulations**: "this is what we do and it has always worked". Even if it is not expressed, this is exactly the sentence that is constantly perceived by the greater part of the wine companies and by many institutional subjects that operate inside the wine sector.

I do not want to be brutal or unfair, but if I were to be asked which are the communicative (or commercial) innovations that I see inside our wine sector, I would honestly answer: nothing.

Events are all the same, businesses copy one another's communications, and **digital innovation only exists in theory.** I do not want to seem nostalgic, but the news today are those

that some visionaries had already written and defined more than 20 years ago.

It is true that **sometimes there is some innovative breath**, but if it does not enter in the mainstream of the "usual companies" or in the good graces of the institutional-politic favor, it is almost impossible for this innovation to see the light and develop completely.

Speaking of which, **there are not just a few young realities born during these years that to survive were forced to be inserted and/or corroborated by some institution or association.** According to me, this is one of the reasons why even the digital innovations struggle to give their contribution in the wine world: because instead of being spread freely, stimulating the companies to more focused, open, illuminated choices, they are always subjected to the so-called "institutional imprinting", by some community measure to cover expenses.
Otherwise…

Almost every day, **young professionals or societies are consulted to suggest some ideas to better Italian wines' images, sales, export.** There are often some interesting ideas, but the greater part of them dies because nobody wants to invest (hoping that the company will be incorporated by some association capable of attracting public funding; in this way, what could have been private virtuous realities are transformed in the usual category organ).

It is as if our sector feared any kind of novelty and **considered replicating the same action mode in eternity as some kind of serious surviving guarantee.**

With one outdated communication modality that governs old enterprises and organizations that represent the old wine sector, **it is hard to have fresh ideas, inventive initiatives, and appealing marketing methods for younger clients.**

We cannot by amazed if, to the question: “which beverage would you bring to a party or a dinner among friends?”, **49% of the participants, with an age superior to 65-year-old in the USA, would choose wine** (in contrast to the younger ones between 21- and 24-year-old, of which only 15% would take wine into consideration).

Are we truly sure they will change their mind when they’ll get older?