

# And what if, in addition to not voting and not going to church, young people don't drink wine either?

scritto da Fabio Piccoli | 24 Maggio 2024



I read with interest the interview conducted by the very talented Aldo Cazzullo with the well-known Roman singer Ultimo, which appeared in the Corriere della Sera on Sunday, May 19th.

In particular, Ultimo's statement struck me: **"Being young today is terrifying. Because you're without any points of reference. I don't know any young people my age who go to vote, and none who go to church."**

There's so much to reflect on in just two lines, and today I

am not particularly concerned with how “statistically” reliable Ultimo’s observation might be.

Of course, generalizations are always dangerous and in many ways incorrect, but it’s equally true that **youth** malaise, if it can be called that, is now a well-established and recognized fact by far broader observers than the young Roman singer-songwriter.

I certainly do not want to arrogate the right to pose as a sociologist, but I think it is interesting and useful to ask the following question: “But have young people, in addition to not voting and not going to church, also stopped **drinking** wine?”

Current data on wine consumption in our country, and elsewhere, unfortunately affirmatively answer the aforementioned question.

And if this decline is evident, it is important to ask for the reasons and thus the possible, assuming there are any, **solutions**.

I am frankly not at all convinced by the consolation offered by some observers, industry insiders who, with respect to the topic of “declining interest of young people in wine,” minimize it by stating that “when they are older, they will drink more.” Apart from the fact that we have no certainties in this regard, it seems to me to be a simplistic and also dangerous answer, in light of an issue of great strategic importance for the future of our sector.

I then tried to reflect on whether there might be a link between not voting, not going to church among young people, and their lesser wine **consumption**.

Sure, it’s a bit of a risky exercise, but if you don’t take risks in such revolutionary phases, I wonder when would be the time to do so?

I take a cue from another response by Ultimo on who would have the responsibility for this disenchantment of young people towards, for example, politics: **"Politics**. Politics is poor. It doesn't speak to young people and doesn't even try. It doesn't speak to me at 28; let alone to an eighteen-year-old. We are tired of this split between right and left. Imagine the effect of a politician who said: I choose neither right nor left. I choose up."

Ultimo's answer is not demagogic but a realization that at least compels serious reflection.

And does our wine industry manage to speak to young people, to be **interesting**?

I am over sixty years old and am certainly not the best person to give a correct answer, but I have a good memory of my twenties, and honestly, this way of communicating wine would have bored me to death.

And I was not an indifferent young person or dedicated only to fun, nights out at discos, and daily boredom; I might even venture to say I was a "committed" twenty-year-old.

As I believe there are many committed young people today, probably in greater numbers compared to my generation. It is not by chance, for example, that a twenty-year-old today has a significantly greater sensitivity than a boomer on issues such as sustainability, health, gender equality, and respect for diversity.

Ours was a generation much more tied to ideologies, but often it was the "party" that gave us directions, whereas today young people's choices are much more "free" and decidedly more "heterogeneous" and difficult to catalog.

And it is precisely because of this heterogeneity, the complexity of the young world, that it is incomprehensible to understand the current reasons for such a monotonous wine

## **communication.**

The world of wine, that of the industry insiders, behaves in much the same way as the politics that still today catalog people as either right or left.

Yet, if there is one product that could speak many languages, with many different nuances, it is indeed **wine**.

Taking inspiration from music, recently I was dragged by my twelve-year-old daughter to a Mahmood concert. I feared I might be the oldest there, yet to my great and pleasant surprise, I found myself facing an absolutely heterogeneous audience where teenagers mingled with quite a few boomers much closer to my age than theirs.

I then asked myself what could bring so many different generations together around an artist like Mahmood?

The answer came easily to me: the truth in his lyrics, thus being credible, authentic, **unique**.

All things that, unfortunately, are lacking today in the communication of wine, of wine businesses, of wine regions standardized in a repetitive litany, similar to the same format that has emptied the churches.

But if I think about how many true stories our wine businesses could tell and that could truly be attractive to both young and older people, then I feel optimistic and think that writing the new communicative contents of wine under the banner of truth is the most beautiful and exciting challenge that can be faced.