

# Many valid wines, but for whom? The question too many producers avoid asking

scritto da Fabio Piccoli | 30 Ottobre 2025



*Our Wine Summer Tour of 200 Italian wineries revealed a major disconnect. While intrinsic quality is high, producers are failing to question if their wines suit modern consumers. This article explores the gap between traditional production and current market demands, urging the sector to innovate beyond its “we do it well” comfort zone.*

This summer, our usual Wine Summer Tour once again took us to visit over 200 wineries around Italy. It was, as always, an extraordinary opportunity to gain insight into the current state of the national wine sector: a journey of listening, discussion, and direct observation. We met small family businesses, large private companies, and cooperatives; we

gathered concerns, hopes, requests for support, and even concrete strategic suggestions for tackling new challenges.

And yet, amid so many reflections, what was almost entirely missing was a serious, concrete discussion on the topic of product quality. I don't mean the intrinsic quality, which is now almost taken for granted and universally high, but quality understood as *suitability for new consumption models*.

Today, it seems that every producer starts from the assumption that their wines are excellent and "suitable for everyone." One rarely witnesses an objective self-analysis, capable of questioning which real consumers might appreciate that wine, in which contexts, and in what volumes. During the tour, I tasted many valid wines, but in front of some, I asked myself: *who could really drink this wine?*

It is true that the wine market is fragmented into countless niches, and that in theory, there is room for everyone. But that is only in theory: because when aiming for higher volumes, say from 100,000 bottles upwards, the question becomes inevitable: **do these wines really have the characteristics to win over today's consumers?**

When I asked many producers which were the best-selling wines in the wine bars, restaurants, and large-scale retail (GDO) in their area, the answer came quickly: always the same 3-5 brands. But when I asked how much their wines differed from those winning types, or what the reasons for their success were, the answers became vague, unconvincing. **This, in my opinion, demonstrates a real difficulty in the sector: not only measuring the quality of what is produced but, above all, understanding if that quality is coherent with the market and the target consumers.**

The Italian wine industry has enormous potential: we can produce very high-quality wines that are also contemporary, capable of speaking to different targets and at interesting

volumes. There are concrete examples of product lines that, even in difficult times, are seeing significant growth: **proof that the right product at the right time works, regardless of the economic climate.**

The problem is that too often, people take refuge in the idea that what is produced today is sufficient. It is not. **We need more courage and a greater ability to question production choices and oenological styles.** Because while it is true that wine remains deeply linked to tradition, it is equally true that without innovation, it risks speaking only to traditional consumers, an audience that is inevitably shrinking.

The real challenge for the future of Italian wine is this: **combining tradition and innovation, intrinsic quality and market suitability.** To get out of the “we do it well, so it’s fine” comfort zone and seriously question how to intercept the consumers of today and tomorrow. Only in this way will quality, from a given value, return to being the true competitive factor of our wine.

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## Key points

- **The Italian wine sector ignores if its “quality” matches modern consumer tastes.**
- **Producers wrongly assume their wine is suitable for everyone in today’s market.**
- **Many wineries fail to understand why top local brands succeed and theirs don’t.**
- **The industry must innovate or risk losing relevance as traditional consumers decline.**
- **True quality means combining tradition with suitability for today’s (and tomorrow’s) market.**

