

Branding remains the most powerful weapon wine continues not to use

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Most wine companies talk about branding constantly but rarely practice it, leaving a vast identity heritage unused. From the human factor to technical storytelling, this article explains why consistency, courage, and method, not aesthetics, are what turn a list of features into a recognizable, valuable wine brand able to compete beyond price.

Preparing the webinar on branding for wine businesses over the past few days brought me back to an observation I already know well, yet one that surprises me every time for how true it still is: **branding is, in all likelihood, the least practiced activity among the majority of wine companies.** Not the least known, since brand is talked about everywhere, at conferences,

in interviews, in marketing plans, but the least acted upon. And there is an enormous difference between evoking a word and truly building what that word should mean.

Once you look closely, in fact, you realize that most wineries hold in their hands an impressive amount of identity related material that they simply do not use. Identity factors, the name, the company's origin, the production philosophy, the vineyard, the soil, the climate, the varieties, the vinification, the aging, the packaging, the markets, the hospitality, the suppliers, are the potential protagonists of a story that, in the vast majority of cases, is never told all the way through. **They remain a list. And a list, on its own, is not a brand.**

The human factor: the most strategic, and the most wasted

If there is one factor that strikes me for how often it is overlooked, it is precisely the one I consider the most strategic of all, the human factor. It is the only truly inimitable one. **No one can copy the way a producer thinks about their wine, why they do it, how they position themselves in this historical moment, what excites them and what irritates them about the world they live in.** Yet it is also the element that is most often hidden, smoothed over, made neutral out of fear of exposure.

And this is where the biggest mistake lies. Staying neutral is not caution, it is anti-branding. A winery that takes no position, that offers no vision, that limits itself to making good wine gives up the one lever that would make it recognizable and, above all, gives up building a community around itself. **Because branding, in the end, means exactly this: creating a community of people who recognize themselves in what you say and in what you are.** It is not done through silence.

Technical factors: they exist, but are told poorly

Then there is the other side of the problem, the one concerning the so called technical factors. Here wineries, paradoxically, talk too much, but almost always in the wrong way. Volcanic or limestone soil, vineyard altitude, aging in wood or amphora, vinification choices: everything gets rattled off as technical data, as a fact sheet, as a list of characteristics. **And the consumer, faced with a fact sheet, feels nothing and remembers nothing.**

The point is that soil matters to the extent that you know how to explain its effect on the wine; otherwise it remains mere geology. A winemaking technique becomes identity only when it carries a meaning that can be told, when behind every gesture there is a reason why. The problem, then, is not that wine companies lack technical elements to showcase, they have plenty. It is that they explain them poorly, leaving them raw, without turning them into a story. **And a factor that does not become a story is a missed opportunity.**

Why now

One could object: it has always been this way, so why worry about it today? Because today the context has changed. **Never before has the wine market needed brands that are more focused and more recognizable.** Competition is enormous, consumer attention is increasingly contested, and above all the price war is becoming harsher, that spiral which erodes margins and devalues the work of entire companies.

Branding is the healthiest way out of that war, because it shifts the conversation from price to value. A recognizable brand aligns image with sales goals, makes companies stronger toward buyers, distributors and consumers, and restores centrality to what a company truly is. It is not an aesthetic

cost, not the polish added on top of the label at the end of the process: **it is a strategic lever with a measurable economic return.**

It is also work that relies more on method than on inspiration. A good brand is not born from a flash of genius, but from a process: you list the factors, select the protagonists, check that they do not resemble those of everyone else, combine them into a brand idea that only that winery could sign, and finally verify that every point of contact, label, website, social profiles, commercial materials, hospitality at the winery, tells the exact same thing. Because **it is consistency, ultimately, that turns a list of elements into a brand: without consistency, even the best built castle collapses.**

Raw material, in Italian wineries, is almost always there. Stories, people, territories, production choices: an identity heritage that many international competitors envy. What continues to be missing is the decision to work on it seriously, with method and with the courage to expose oneself. **As long as branding remains the activity that gets talked about but not practiced, we will keep competing with an unloaded weapon.** And that would truly be a shame.

Key points

1. **Most wineries talk about branding but rarely practice it,** leaving valuable identity assets unused.
2. **The human factor is the most strategic yet most hidden element** in wine branding today.
3. **Technical details fail to connect because they are listed as data** instead of told as stories.
4. **Branding shifts the conversation from price to value,** protecting margins from the price war.

5. Consistency across every touchpoint, not inspiration alone, is what truly builds a strong brand.