Italian wine in Germany: what does the German consumer look for?

scritto da Isabella Lanaro | 20 Marzo 2024

What is the perception of Italian wine in German restaurants? One of the best ways to find out is to listen to the firsthand account of a significant player in the German dining scene.

We thus interviewed **Mathias Brandweiner**, owner and sommelier of the well-known Berlin restaurant Hafenküche.

Located in the popular Rummelsburger Bay area of Berlin, the place offers a relaxed atmosphere combined with fine dining, interpreted in both **classic and creative ways**. The cuisine is complemented by an interesting selection of wines, including a careful selection of Italian wines.

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What is the perception of Italian wine in Germany? How well-known is it?

Italian wines enjoy a considerable level of fame and appreciation in Germany, especially in southern regions like Bavaria. On the other hand, **Berlin** is definitely a **key market** for Italian wines, where they compete on equal footing with wines from France, Austria, and Germany.

It should be noted that, unlike wines from other countries, Italian wines are associated with **holiday memories** by most people. Moreover, they belong to a lower price range.

In casual and budget restaurants, the most common wines are **Grillo, Primitivo, and Chianti**. Meanwhile, in mid to high-end restaurants, we find **Barolo, Brunello di Montalcino, and Lugana**.

What is the perception of wines from other major producing countries (France, USA, Australia, etc.)?

Let me start by saying that Germany is a very vast and complex market and, consequently, each region follows different **trends**. If we focus on Berlin, a modern, international, and rapidly changing city, the wine world certainly reflects these characteristics. In general, it can be said that Berliners are greatly influenced by their vacation experiences, which means that French, Spanish, Italian, Austrian, and, of course, German wines are very much appreciated. The same cannot be said for New World wines, which are not as well-known in Germany. While France remains particularly renowned.

Moreover, German consumers' attention is evenly split between **classic wines and "natural" wines**.

What criteria do you consider when choosing wines for your restaurant’s selection?

For us, it’s important to have a **good variety of regions and terroirs**, and our attention in selecting Italian wines is primarily focused on red wines.

We look for sustainable and small-scale wine producers, with a story to tell and a personal approach; these are among the crucial characteristics for choosing our wine list.

A balanced price is also important: it shouldn’t be too **expensive but also not too cheap**.

What is the German consumer looking for today?

It’s a complex question considering that Germany is a country of 84 million people. Personally, I believe that “aristocratic” wines will struggle to gain new consumers here. Generally, Germans today are looking for:

- Wines with **less alcohol**.
- **Sustainable wines**.
- **Good aesthetics** and packaging design.
- **Medium-low prices**.
- I**nteresting stories**