

Wine is less and less a “habit” and more and more a “choice”

scritto da Fabio Piccoli | 19 Agosto 2025



The Nomisma Wine Monitor 2024 survey highlights a major shift in Italian consumption: wine is no longer a habit but a conscious choice. Consumers are drinking less, driven by wellness and a preference for quality. They seek wines with strong territorial identity and sustainability, valuing transparency over brand fame, a stark contrast to the brand-centric U.S. market.

As promised in my last editorial – [Revolution in the world of wine: provocative insights from the Envisioning 2035 summit](#) – I return to what emerged from the recent “Envisioning 2035” summit organized by Freedl Group in Milan on June 11th. Before the talks, a report on the current Italian wine scenario,

prepared by Nomisma Wine Monitor, was presented. Within this report, I found two graphs particularly interesting, resulting from the Consumer Survey Nomisma Wine Monitor 2024, which help to better interpret the ongoing changes among Italian wine consumers and offer a comparison with U.S. consumers. Two graphs, two complementary landscapes. On one hand, **a snapshot of the motivations behind the reduction in wine consumption in Italy**. On the other, an updated map of the characteristics most appreciated in wines by consumers today. Together, they outline a clear message: consumption is transforming and, for those working in the sector, understanding these signals is crucial to remaining relevant.

Drinking less, but not necessarily giving up

The first striking fact is that over 50% of consumers who have reduced their wine consumption in the last five years have not done so for economic reasons, but for choices related to health and lifestyle. Specifically:

- 40% cite a general reduction in alcohol consumption as the main reason
- 30% claim to drink less but better, signaling a more selective approach
- Only 18% mention price as a cause
- 12% speak of disaffection with the product **These figures debunk the idea that the decline in volume is mainly due to the economic crisis or competition from other beverages.** The phenomenon is deeper: wine is less and less a “habit” and more and more a “choice,” integrated into a value system that includes well-being, moderation, and consistency with one’s lifestyle. In my opinion, though I am not a sociologist, I believe that, especially for us Italians, admitting we buy less of a certain product because we have less money is more

difficult than for other cultures. For this reason, it is likely that lower purchasing power still counts for more than the declared 18%.

The new value of wine: identity and quality

The second survey focuses on what Italian consumers appreciate most in a wine today. Here, important signals emerge for those involved in production, marketing, and communication:

- 61% state that they consider perceived quality as the decisive element
- 52% look for identity-driven and territorial wines that tell an authentic story
- 45% appreciate the environmental and social sustainability of the product
- 43% prefer well-designed packaging, a sign that aesthetics also matter
- Only 19% choose based on brand fame **The picture that emerges is clear: the consumer rewards consistency and transparency.** They want to know what is inside and behind the bottle. And in this context, elements like origin, production method, environmental impact, and packaging are no longer accessories, but integral parts of the perceived value.

A new lexicon for Italian wine

These two surveys offer a dual lens: that of disenchantment (less wine, more attention) and that of re-evaluation (more meaning, less banality). **It is not a crisis of wine, but a demand for evolution.** For the Italian wine sector, the challenge is twofold:

- Accepting that a portion of the public is choosing a more moderate and wellness-oriented consumption;
- Investing in what truly matters today: quality, identity, sustainability, packaging, and authentic storytelling. Communication can no longer be based on labels and awards. **It must speak of values, relationships, and territories.** And above all, it must do so with honesty and transparency.

Italy vs. USA: two worlds, two perceptions of wine

But perhaps the most strategic data is contained in the second graph attached to the survey: the direct comparison between the preferences of Italian and U.S. consumers. **Here, clear and relevant differences emerge, highlighting how risky it is to apply a single communication strategy across different markets.** What does this comparison tell us?

- In Italy, wine is strongly linked to cultural values such as identity, tradition, and sustainability.
- In the United States, wine fits more easily into a logic of brand and packaging: tangible elements, quick to communicate, often decisive in large-scale retail or e-commerce. On this front, for example, while in Italy the brand's reputation is valued by 19% of respondents, in the U.S. this figure rises to 34%.
- Sustainability is also a factor more sought after by Italian consumers than by American ones (45% vs. 26%).
- Quality is appreciated in both markets, but it is the cultural context that determines its definition: in Italy, it means finesse, origin, history; in the USA, it often means awards, scores, or reputation.

Italian wine must learn to translate itself

This Italy-USA comparison should be a permanent reminder for the national wine sector: **every market has its own emotional and decision-making vocabulary**. Those who think it is enough to translate their website into English or replicate the storytelling designed for an Italian audience are mistaken. Instead, a strategic adaptation is needed for each country, taking into account different expectations, values, and purchasing habits. All things, of course, that have been known for some time but which today become crucial if one wants to launch a communication strategy consistent with the new expectations of consumers in different countries.

Key points

- **Italians now drink less wine** due to health and lifestyle choices.
- **Quality, territorial identity, and sustainability** are the new value drivers.
- **Brand fame is becoming less important** for Italian consumer choices.
- **Italian and U.S. consumer priorities are fundamentally different.**
- **Wine communication must be culturally adapted** for each international market.