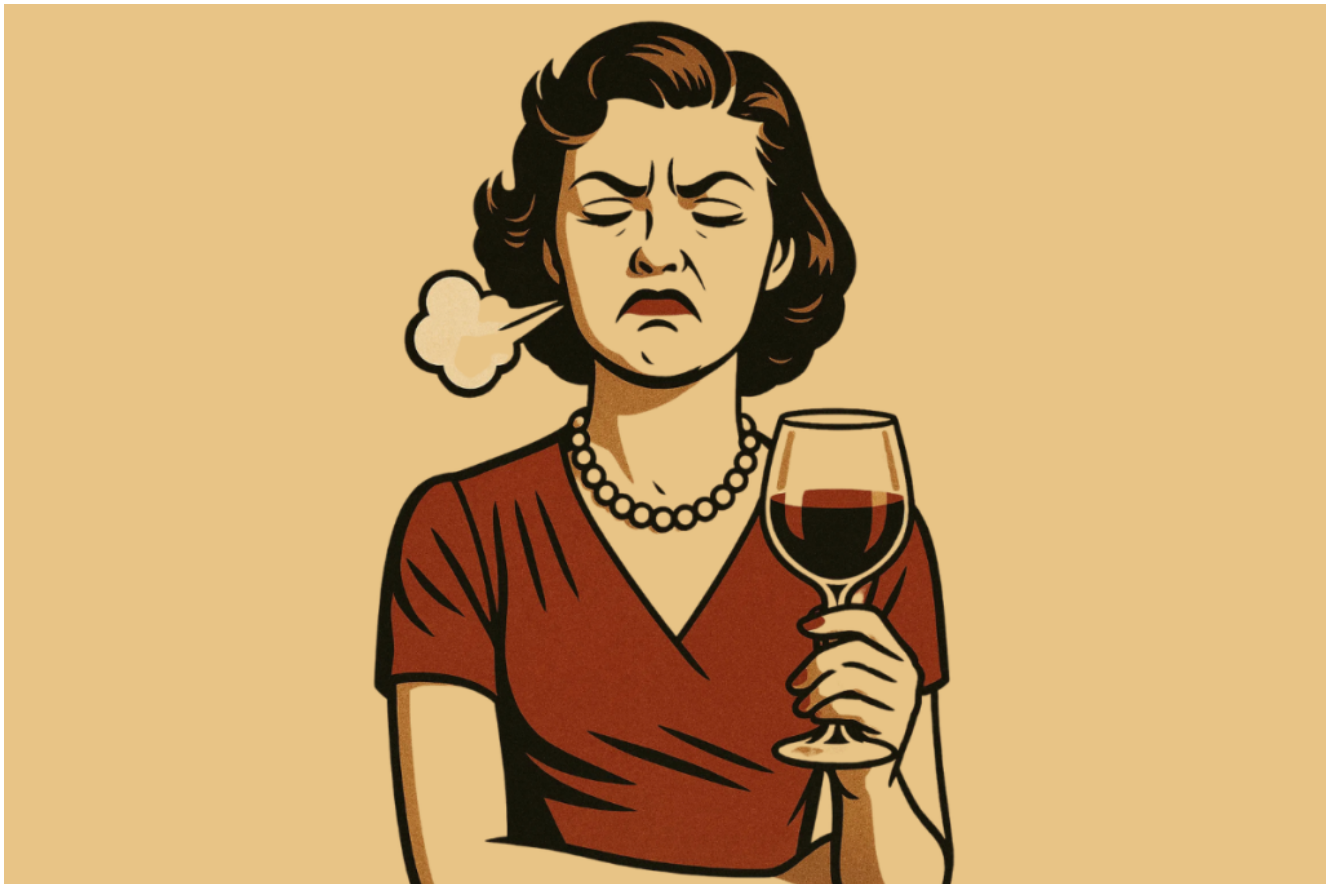


I'm tired of hearing that markets are saturated and that wine is no longer interesting

scritto da Fabio Piccoli | 10 Giugno 2025



The belief that the wine market is saturated is a dangerous excuse that stifles innovation. Instead of accepting decline, the wine sector must invest in consumer communication and professional resources. This editorial argues that the solution lies not in shrinking expectations, but in daring to explore new markets and opportunities – much like modern explorers.

Many wine producers and professionals feel more at ease when told to just be patient and wait for a miracle.

When I speak with wine producers, restaurateurs, distributors, importers, wine shop owners, export managers, and sales agents, many of them (though thankfully not all) lose it or get upset if you tell them that the wine markets are not actually saturated, or that wine is still very much in style.

Saying wine is no longer trendy or that global consumers are maxed out is pure nonsense.

Sorry for the blunt expression, but these two statements have become the biggest “bullshit” now widely accepted as truth across too many sectors of our wine industry.

Even the hard facts don't seem to change anyone's mind.

It doesn't help to show that less than 10% of the world's adult population drinks wine regularly. Or that Asia, in its entirety, consumes less than 1 liter per capita, with Japan barely reaching 3 liters per capita. Or that the U.S., the largest wine-consuming country (34 million hl), barely hits 10 liters per capita.

Why do we keep repeating these stats? Because they contain both the problem and the potential solution.

Our loyal readers have seen these numbers countless times, perhaps too many. But we insist because they are essential to understanding what's wrong and how to fix it.

No one seems willing to explore new “waters” to find consumers.

I wish someone would convincingly explain to me why the small pond we're fishing in is the only one that can yield wine drinkers. Or why looking in bigger lakes or even oceans is considered a foolish endeavor.

Sometimes I feel like a modern-day Columbus trying to convince skeptics to explore unknown lands.

Columbus didn't reach India, but he discovered the Americas, proof that expanding your horizons, especially in business, is a risk worth taking.

I already hear the objections buzzing in my ears.

"But Fabio, don't you see we have too many vineyards? Too many meaningless denominations? Too many producers in Italy and worldwide? Don't you realize people are afraid to drink wine due to health concerns or DUI laws? Don't you know young people see wine as an old man's drink?"

Yes, these are all valid objections, but they don't lead us anywhere.

I've said it many times: if we accept these problems as unsolvable and simply hope for a miracle, we'll end up uprooting half of our vineyards and watching many wine businesses fail.

Some believe this collapse is inevitable, or even desirable. I don't.

Maybe I'm naïve, but I reject this notion. While some natural selection of businesses and denominations may be necessary, **it's a grave mistake to believe we're powerless in the face of current market dynamics.**

Yes, the wine market is complex right now, but pretending there's no way out is dangerous.

We need solutions, and I'd like to offer two essential ones:

- 1. We must invest seriously in communication aimed at final consumers.**

Just look at how much Italy's wine consortia spend communicating only to insiders, almost none of it reaches the actual consumer. We complain about a shrinking audience, but do nothing to expand it. Easy

answer: we do nothing!

2. We must invest in capable, open-minded, and brave human resources.

Thanks to Wine People, we have a clear view of recruitment in wine businesses. I'll elaborate soon, but for now I'll say this: despite all the talk, most companies spend far too little on hiring real professionals, expecting miracles instead.

Key points

- **Saying the wine market is “saturated” is a harmful and inaccurate alibi.**
- **Global wine consumption remains extremely low per capita, even in major markets.**
- **The sector must stop focusing only on insiders and start targeting final consumers.**
- **Human capital investment is still scandalously low in most wine businesses.**
- **Expanding into new markets is not a fantasy, it's a strategic necessity.**