“The product will take care of it”

scritto da Fabio Piccoli | 19 Maggio 2026



Five international wineries — including Gassier, Bodegas Lan, and Gamble Estates — recently achieved remarkable sales growth through strategic rebranding. Their results challenge a widespread belief in Italian wine culture: that product quality alone drives market success. In 2026, recognizability, clear identity, and defined audiences are the real competitive advantages.

There is a belief, deeply rooted in Italian wine entrepreneurial culture, that should be demolished once and for all: the idea that a good product will, sooner or later, be recognized. That the market is a fair, patient judge, capable of finding quality even when it doesn’t make itself easy to find. It’s a comforting fairy tale. And it’s an expensive one.

An article published recently on Seven Fifty Daily – "*4 Strategies Driving Successful Wine Rebrands*" by Pamela Vachon – tells five rebranding stories from the wine world worth reading not as industry news, but as an operational manual for any business that still deludes itself into thinking it can delegate to the product the task of speaking for itself. Bodegas Montecillo (Rioja, 150 years of history), Gamble Estates (Napa Valley), Gassier (Provence, six generations), Bodegas Lan (Rioja), Badger Mountain (Washington): five wineries with no quality problems whatsoever. **They had a recognizability problem. They addressed it. They grew. Gassier closed 2025 with a +40% increase in sales. Bodegas Lan recorded the best year in its fifty-year history. Badger Mountain projects +20–25% in 2026.**

Three lessons emerge from the article, and none of them are comforting for those who keep putting things off.

First lesson: the courage to change is not an option – it's a cost only those willing to disappear can afford to avoid

"We don't have a crystal ball," says Tom Gamble in the article, "but we were seeing our numbers and knew a radical change was needed." This sentence contains everything. It contains the rare acknowledgment that what worked for twenty years can stop working. It contains the idea that waiting is not neutral: it is, in fact, the riskiest decision of all. How many Italian companies, faced with a contracting market, choose the opposite strategy – cutting precisely on brand, on communication, on recognizability – because "it's not the right moment"? **It's never the right moment, for those who confuse caution with inaction.**

Second lesson: identity doesn't mean

saying everything. It means choosing

Here lies perhaps the most widespread misunderstanding. Many Italian businesses talk about their identity as if it were an inventory: the history, the founder, the third generation, the territory, the method, the awards, the certifications, the passion. Everything, simultaneously, on every available surface. Bodegas Lan did the opposite: it removed technical information about grape variety and aging from the front labels. “We didn’t want to fill people’s heads with technical data,” explains Alberto Saldon. “We were trying to evoke emotion and attitude.” It’s a decision many Italian entrepreneurs would experience as an amputation: remove information? But it’s exactly the opposite. **It’s understanding that recognizability is born from subtraction, not accumulation.** Gassier chose a hexagonal bottle and built everything else around it. Bodegas Montecillo resurrected a historical mint green and abandoned the chromatic codes of Rioja. One strong, singular, coherent choice. Try to summarize ninety percent of mid-sized Italian wineries in a single image: you won’t be able to. Because they haven’t chosen.

Third lesson, the most uncomfortable: without a target, you’re not communicating. You’re spending

Bodegas Lan worked for two years with an emotional impact agency before its relaunch. It identified a precise segment — enthusiasts between 30 and 50, foodies, not experts but curious, with spending power — and built three distinct lines for three distinct audiences. Gamble Estates commissioned a survey of 600 people in 2021, four years before the relaunch. “Nothing is random,” says Saldon. “Everything responds to the results of our research.” **Compare this method with the common practice in many Italian SMEs: the website gets redone because the old one “didn’t feel right anymore,” the label changes**

because the owner’s cousin suggested it, a social channel opens because “everyone’s doing it now.” All without a single serious preliminary question: who are we talking to? The answer “everyone” is not an answer. It’s an admission that serious thinking hasn’t started yet.

Some will say: we’re talking about foreign wineries, different markets, different structures. It’s a convenient objection, and largely a false one. What these five companies did requires no extraordinary budget. It requires method, and above all it requires accepting something culturally difficult for many Italian entrepreneurs to digest: **the brand is not the company’s Sunday best. It’s the way the company exists when no one is there to explain it in person.** And no company today can afford to be present everywhere explaining itself.

Italy’s narrative heritage — history, territory, family, authenticity — is extraordinary. But a heritage that goes unselected, unordered, untranslated into signs, and undirected toward a defined audience is not a heritage: it’s a warehouse. And warehouses, on their own, have never sold a thing.

Punti chiave

1. **Quality alone is no longer enough**: market recognition requires deliberate brand strategy
2. **Rebranding drove up to +40% sales growth** for wineries with no quality issues
3. **A strong brand identity means choosing one clear message**, subtracting rather than accumulating
4. **Audience research — not intuition — must drive every communication** and positioning decision
5. **Italy’s narrative heritage is powerful only when selected**, translated into signs, and targeted