

# Without the human factor, wine remains just a product

scritto da Fabio Piccoli | 20 Febbraio 2025



*The wine industry often focuses on product-centric communication, missing the power of human storytelling. Highlighting the lives, struggles, and ambitions of winemakers can make wine more engaging and appealing to a wider audience. This article explores how shifting the focus from technical details to personal narratives can enhance the wine experience and foster deeper consumer connections.*

In recent years, I have written extensively about the need for our wine sector to renew its **communication**.

Looking back at what I and many other colleagues have written, I realized that we have mostly analyzed the problem: a wine communication strategy that struggles to resonate with consumers, especially younger ones, but not only them.

Much has been said and written about a **repetitive** communication style, overly focused on the product, burdened with excessive technicalities.

However, I also noticed that while this model of communication has been widely criticized, few alternatives have been proposed, and even fewer suggestions have been offered on how to move forward and overcome this communication impasse.

Simply stating that we need a more **empathetic** and emotionally engaging communication is a nice statement, but it lacks concrete solutions.

So, I asked myself: what practical suggestions could we offer to producers and wine communicators to make their message more appealing and, possibly, to expand the audience of wine enthusiasts?

I found an answer the other evening while watching the TV show *Belve*, hosted by the witty and beautiful Francesca Fagnani. A **program** that continues to grow in audience ratings with each episode.

I asked myself: what makes this show so attractive? The answer is quite simple: it puts people at the center— their emotions, vulnerabilities, ambitions, flaws, and strengths.

Some might simplify it further by saying that it is, in essence, a **gossip** show, but elevated culturally thanks to Fagnani's intelligent irony.

But beyond personal tastes and opinions, what makes *Belve* unique is its **focus** on people—men and women of varying degrees of success who open up, sometimes even too much.

Following this reflection, I looked up TV audience data and realized that the most successful programs are those that center their narratives around **stories**—both of well-known

individuals and of lesser-known people.

Consider the long-standing success of shows like *Che tempo che fa* or *La vita in diretta*, just to mention two of the most popular and enduring ones.

I then asked myself: how often does the wine world actually **communicate** the stories of people?

The answer, unfortunately, is quite simple once again: very little. Almost never do our producers, winemakers, agronomists, export managers, or sales directors emerge from behind their bottles.

On the rare occasions that they do, it is still to talk about wine, vineyards, or terroir—but never about themselves, their **lives**, their fears, or, why not, even their limitations.

And yet, every wine business is filled with human **stories**—of men and women, of sons and daughters who have made bold, complex, or sometimes necessary choices.

Every wine producer, before being a **producer**, is a person—a man or a woman.

So, the question naturally arises: why is there such reluctance, such difficulty in going beyond the wine itself and telling personal stories?

I can't count how many times my articles have been rejected or underappreciated by producers who reprimanded me for emphasizing the **human** aspect too much, instead of making their wines the focal point.

*"Fabio, please, talk about my wines, how I make them. Forget about that story of my struggles, of missed dreams, of courage—it takes attention away from my wine."*

I believe that this constant, exclusive **exposure** of wine, its production systems, and vinification techniques—although

important and understandable—is at the heart of today's struggle to make wine a more attractive and inclusive product.

Placing people at the center does not mean relegating the product to a **secondary** role—on the contrary, it helps to better understand that producing wine is, first and foremost, a life choice. A choice that, especially for the many small and medium-sized enterprises, involves putting their very existence at stake—and, in many cases, that of entire families.

In over thirty years of **journalism**, I have collected thousands of stories about the men and women of wine, and I regret having told far too few of them—driven by the anxiety and pressure to showcase how good Italian wine was, and still is today.

But it is so **good** precisely because it is made by real people, with real stories that extend far beyond the vineyard and the cellar.

From now on, I don't want to **cancel** these stories anymore, and our magazine *Wine Meridian* wants to be increasingly a space to share them.

Read also: [De-alcoholized wines: from indifference to obsession](#)

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## Key points

1. **Wine communication is too product-focused**, neglecting human stories.
2. **Personal storytelling makes wine more relatable** and engaging for consumers.
3. **Successful TV shows highlight personal narratives**—wine marketing can learn from them.

4. **Winemakers should share their struggles, ambitions, and choices.**
5. **Wine Meridian aims to feature more human-centered storytelling.**