

Wine must cope with the pursuit of well-being and variety

scritto da Fabio Piccoli | 30 Settembre 2021



It has always been difficult to comprehend the so-called **consumer sentiment** towards wine. And this is especially true now, when we are dealing with a pandemic that is still exerting its influence and making the future difficult to predict.

In this case, all that's left is to **observe what's going on right now** to see if there are any fascinating and relevant indicators that might help us understand any new wine-drinking habits. Without a doubt, the American market continues to give the most important data since it is not only the world's largest (with over 33 million hl consumed), but it is also the most active in terms of alcoholic beverage consumption

patterns growth.

The information provided by the **Wine Analytics Report**, such as the August issue's examination of the attitudes that are driving the diversification of alcoholic drinks in the United States, is quite helpful.

The part that piqued my interest the most was that pertaining to the so-called "health and wellness" category, which Americans describe as "better for you." A category that includes the alcoholic beverage industry since an increasing number of customers are searching for "healthier" wines, spirits, and beers. And when we speak about health in the context of alcoholic beverages, specifically wine, we mean **lower alcoholic strengths and fewer calories. Many wines on the US market are following this trend, such as Gruet's Sauvage**, a sparkling zero dosage wine with 45 percent fewer calories than a typical sparkling wine (it is sold at a price of 20 dollars on the company website). And these are the wines that are beginning to attract the curiosity of wine experts, including some of the most authoritative, such as **James Suckling**, who gave Sauvage an exceptional grade of 91 points.

Nevertheless, **Waterbrook Clean, a range of non-alcoholic wines from Waterbrook** that are available in both Cabernet Sauvignon and Chardonnay varieties, has had a lot of popularity in the United States (at an absolutely cheap price – considering the US market – of only 14 dollars).

On this front, however, **the list would be lengthy**: we must mention **Klean**, a brand created specifically to make and market wines with minimal alcoholic and calorie content. Among them is a 9 percent alcohol Pinot Grigio produced in Chile's Central Valley; a glass of this wine (about 150 ml) has 85 calories, 3 grams of carbs, 1 g/liter of residual sugars, 0 proteins, and 0 fats, according to the producer.

The pandemic, on the other hand, had a significant impact on the occasions when alcoholic drinks were used. Being stranded at home for an extended period of time has undoubtedly caused

many individuals to reconsider their wine consumption habits. On the one hand, we have observed a growing diversification in alcoholic beverage consumption, with a steady decline in those who consume just wine, beer, or spirits; on the other hand, the options for consumption appear to be different today than in the past.

In this line, **the Wine Market Council (WMC) conducted an intriguing study** that looked at the factors that cause US consumers to consume less alcoholic beverages. First and foremost, we discover the fewest social occasions or possibilities to drink wine or other alcoholic drinks (43 percent of interviewees). If we examine the epidemic phase, this fact may be taken for granted, but it once again illustrates **the significance of socializing in wine consumption**, beginning with wine. As a result, we must not fool ourselves into believing that consumption at home can entirely compensate for the fall in spending outside the home, in company, with family and friends. Another 36% stated they didn't enjoy drinking alcoholic beverages as much as they used to (probably for the same reasons seen above).

All of the other reasons given by the interviewers, however, are related to the topic of wellbeing. In fact, "it does not reconcile with my current diet" (26 percent); "it makes me physically sick" (20 percent); "it is not part of my healthy lifestyle" (18 percent); "my medical conditions prevent me" (17 percent); "I have children and alcohol consumption is not compatible" (14 percent); "I have read or heard that drinking less alcohol is healthier (11 percent). The topic of "family" indifference in alcohol usage, in general, is only mentioned in the final position of the reasons offered.

There appear to be numerous triggers for reflection, in my opinion. The first is that the topic of wine and health should not be overlooked, but it must be handled this time by moving beyond the out-of-date notion of the so-called French paradox. We need practicality and concreteness, rather than relying on

flimsy notions. Crusades against de-alcoholized wines or those who want to list the number of calories on the label are, in my opinion, incorrect and counterproductive.

It is clear that **this is an area that need further investigation and analysis**, but there is little doubt that **the trend toward “healthier” wines with lower alcohol level is already underway** and will continue. It will almost certainly never become a dominant trend because current and future societies will be, according to authoritative sociologists, always fluid and diverse, with many trends coexisting. Wine, on the other hand, must not overlook any of them.