In recent years we had in Italy a constant evolution in the wine sector, strongly linked to the changes in habits of wine consumption, which could be related to custom in Italy.

The current EU policies for the enhancement of foods work to promote quality and help to maintain the close relationship between products and their territory of origin.

The consumer is swayed in their purchasing choice by certain characteristics that make it possible to judge a product as qualitatively better than another.

By the analysis of the data of recent years, we can note that the consumption of wine in Italy has fallen....

......and, on the other side, we had an increase of consumption of quality wine.
From this assumption came the idea of carrying out an investigation into the factors affecting wine consumption in Sicily, and we wanted to consider the consumers’ approach to wine at the time of purchase.

Methodology

We prepared a questionnaire and we gave it to a random sample of 505 people, interwied in Sicily (city of Palermo).

The questionnaire was divided into 3 sections:

Methodology

The first part asked for general informations about the consumer profile:
- age
- gender
- origin
- level of education
- employment.

Methodology

The second part was related to the consumption of wine.
In particular we asked information about:
- the main occasions for the purchase of wine;
- the preferences in buying wine;
- the place to purchase;
- the choice of quality and colour.
Methodology

Finally, in third section, we wanted to identify choice that consumers made about particular features, such as the presentation of the product or the willingness to pay for wine in several occasions.

Consumer Profile

From our investigation we found that the sample of consumers is 45% male and 55% female, with an age range between 17 and over 70.

Nearly 40% of respondents were between 26 and 34 years old, almost in possession of a university degree and looking for their first job, while the 24% of the sample was between 35 and 43 years old, in stable employment and with a certain economic disposability.

Just over half of respondents held a high school diploma.
By the comparison between age and level of education we can note that as age increases, the level of education decreases.

The results:
Times of Consumption

Regarding the time of consumption was found that 68% of respondents had a frequent consumption, equal to at least 4 times a week, only 14% claimed daily consumption and the remaining part claimed occasional consumption, especially during the weekends.

Do you know the meaning of "autochthonous vine"?

The sample was characterized by careful consumers, well informed about technical aspects related to wine. In fact, it was found that over 65% of respondents knew the meaning of autochthonous wine, nearly 90% knew the name of at least one wine and showed a preference for buying products from their own region.

Main situations of wine consumption

The main situations of wine consumption were the lunch and the dinner for over 30% of the sample, followed by various combinations, that observed carefully, point to the fact that the consumption of wine as an aperitif has been greatly consolidated.
By comparing consumption frequency with the gender of interviewees, it was found that consumption is frequent among both men and women. The favorite situations for consumption for men of all ages are lunch and dinner, while women preferred drinking wine at dinner.

Consumers prefer to buy wine in different places, with a prevalence of supermarkets. The phenomenon can be related to the limited economic disposability of most of our sample and the ease of finding good products belonging to low price ranges. Almost 25% of our sample choose to buy from specialist wine shops, drawing attention to a consumer careful of the wine’s quality and perhaps less so of its price.

The preferences regarding wine colour show that about 45% prefer red wine, 33% prefer whites, a very low percentage rosé. The remaining part of respondents gave multiple preferences. In relation to gender, more men prefer red wine, women prefer white wine.

Then, it's possible to note a preference for the purchase of DOC wines.
The product features that affect consumer choices were several. Our sample was relatively interested in the product’s region of origin, while it isn’t particularly interested in the year of production and in the shape of the bottle.

The label, was considered by over the 80% of respondents to be important.

...and the price is confirmed one of the most important factors that influence customers at the time of purchase.

For special occasions, instead, the results are opposite. In fact, 67% stated that they were prepared to pay between 7 and 10 euros.

If wine is considered a gift, more than 30% is willing to spend a value over 15 euros per bottle. This is a very important factor: today wine is considered an important gift product.

For the purchase of wine for daily consumption, nearly 80% doesn’t spend more than 3 euros.
Conclusions

We can conclude that the increase in the consumption of high quality wine confirms many of the results of our analysis.

The consumer comes to light as a person with a certain education in wine consumption, but also showing a particular attention to certain aspects of the quality of the product.

The consumption of wine is very popular among young people with a medium to high educational level and another interesting fact is that wine consumer are predominantly women.

The times of consumption are different, but apart from consumption during meals the trend is for wine consumption as aperitif; an aspect which shows that wine is considered a good catalyst for pleasant social occasions.

The attention to product quality is also demonstrated to buy their wine from specialist shops, which are no longer regarded only as the place to buy bulk wine, but where you can find a wide variety of products.

Education with regards to quality is also evident looking at the results pertaining to the purchasing preferences of quality-marked products.

These wine shops offer opportunities to accompany the wine tasting with the purchase of other products, stressing the ties of wine with the local territory.

The aspects linked to the aesthetic appearance of the product were found to influence consumers especially if carrying an attractive label, particularly rich in information.

For the consumer it is also very important the region of origin and the autochthonous vine.
The consumer pays attention to the price of the product, especially if it is for daily consumption, while showing a greater willingness to pay for wine on special occasions or as a gift, confirming that wine is today considered an important product for an important occasion.

We can therefore conclude that policies directed towards agricultural production quality and increased consumer attention to these issues, have been well received by both consumers and producers.

The producers are now able to bring to the market products that show special attention to the demands of consumers.

Thanks for attention