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How and why do wine consumers increase their product involvement?

The issue of product involvement is a central theme in the discipline of wine marketing. Almost all marketing-based decisions rely on the prospect of the degree in which consumers are 'interested, knowledgeable or enthusiastic' with regard to wine (Chaney, 2001; Lockshin & Hall, 2003; O'Mahoney, Hall, Lockshin, Jago, & Brown, 2005), and a number of researchers have stressed that, for wine, involvement level is one of the key factors influencing consumer behaviour (Charters & Pettigrew, 2006a; Goldsmith & d'Hauteville, 1998; Lockshin & Spawton, 2001). The challenge, however, for marketers is in both evaluating the level of involvement that a consumer has, how or whether this level of involvement is likely to change over time, and what can be done to increase it. Accordingly, such a challenge warrants the investigation of the 'Connoisseur's' progression over time from that of a non-consumer through each category on the way. This paper attempts to offer a blueprint for how that exploration can be achieved. First, it examines current knowledge on involvement generally and wine involvement specifically. Next it uses two short case studies to exemplify how different individuals develop a growing involvement with wine. However, as this paper is attempting to outline a research programme, rather than reach any conclusions these are examples only and no detailed analysis is carried out on them. Finally, a possible research methodology is outlined for the future.