

My first glass of wine: A comparison of Gen Y early wine experiences and socialisation in New and Old Worlds markets

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Purpose: The project was designed as a cross-cultural examination of Generation Y consumers' early alcohol socialisation, with a specific focus on wine. Comparison between the New World and the Old World was of particular interest.

Design/methodology/approach: The cross cultural comparison was conducted across five countries, comprising France, Italy, Spain, the USA, and New Zealand. The data were collected via an online survey that was distributed to eligible participants (of legal drinking age in their respective country and within Generation Y age boundaries). Descriptive statistics, Chi-square and t-tests were used to analyse the data.

Findings: Respondents in both the New and the Old World reported that they started drinking wine later than they started drinking alcohol in general. Significantly more Old World consumers had wine as their first drink. Early experiences with wine involved more red wine for Old World consumers and white wine for New World Gen Ys. Both Old and New World consumers first tried wine primarily in the presence of friends or family, but more New World consumers first tried wine in the presence of their parents and siblings. More Old World consumers first tried wine in an everyday context, as accompanying regular meal, while New World participants first tried wine mostly at a special occasion.

Practical implications: For wine marketers to reach New World younger consumers, appealing to peer influence may be less effective than accessing them through their families. Since Old World consumers were introduced to wine as a drink at meal times, bringing back the tradition of wine as an everyday drink at the family dinner table should be the key marketing strategy for the Old World.

Key words: Generation Y, Wine Socialisation, New World and Old World comparison

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, much has been written about the cohort of young consumers labeled Generation Y, Millennials, Echo Boomers, N-Geners, Nexters, or Internet Generation. This is a demographic cohort born between 1978 and 2000 (Lancaster & Stillman, 2002; Thach & Olsen, 2006) (though years may vary slightly by source). As this generation has become active in the consumer marketplace, they have assumed a role of fundamental importance for many industries, as well as for marketing researchers who are trying to understand how the needs and consumption behaviour of Generation Y (hereafter referred to as Gen Y) differ from previous generational cohorts.

Generational research is based on the notion that each generation has specific values leading to different consumer behaviour. It developed in the early 1960s when businesses started to realize that different generations often have different values, motivations, and lifestyles. These unique lifestyles determine the way consumers spend their money. Only by understanding how consuming motivations are tied to the underlying values of the generation to which they belong, will marketers be able to tailor their products or services to the needs of a specific generation of consumers (Smith & Clurman, 2010). This understanding can be a key competitive advantage in the marketplace.

There is strong evidence that Gen Y is not a homogeneous cohort. One dominant conclusion (Charters & Mueller, 2011) that resulted from a collection of manuscripts in a special issue of the *International Journal of Wine Business Research* on the Gen Y is that there are distinct cultural differences among young wine consumers across a range of countries (Durvasula & Lysonski, 2008) and even within a country (Ritchie, 2007). The current study aims to add to the existing body of knowledge on different cultural differences among Gen Y wine consumers.

2. THE WINE MARKET CONTEXT

Gen Y consumers are becoming a significant target market for the wine industry. In the special issue of the *International Journal of Wine Business Research* on the Generation Y and wine, guest editors Charters and Mueller (2011) noted that this generation represents one of the most promising new wine consumer segment and therefore, exploration of their engagement with wine is timely and vital for the industry and the academe.

Consumption of wine by younger consumers in the New World has increased in volume in the last decade. For example, the Wine Market Council (2009) attributed the growing popularity of wine in the US to the increase in Millennial-aged adults who reached the legal drinking age and have embraced wine. According to the Wine Market Council, over 50 per cent of Gen Y consumers drink wine at least once a week, thus comprising the core wine-drinking segment, compared to only 37 per cent five years ago.

In other New World markets, this generation of new wine consumers also tends to consume more wine and at a younger age than previous generations. For example, New Zealand Gen Y consumers were found to be drinking wine more frequently than Generation X at a similar age, and in more everyday contexts than their older counterparts (Fountain & Lamb, 2011a).

However, wine consumption trends in the Old World do not echo this tendency. The world wine producing leaders - France, Italy, and Spain - are seeing declining interest in wine among this generation of consumers. Italians under the age of 35 are drinking less wine than ever before. A recent study by market research firm *Unicab* reported that while 69 per cent of Italians over the age of 65 say they still drink wine every day, this statistic drops to 13 per cent among Italians between the ages of 16 and 35 (Parkinson, 2011). Experts attribute the drop to a number of factors, including the change of the role of wine; the fragmentation of Italian families and traditions and, as a consequence, the lower importance of a family meal; the competition with other beverages such as beer, other low alcoholic drinks, soft drinks, mineral water, supported by effective marketing strategies; and the cost of wine (Pomarici & Boccia, 2006; Vinitaly-Unicab, 2011)

Similarly, French wine consumption has declined to its lowest level in the past 30 years, according to a recent study by *France AgriMer* (Kakaviatos, 2012). The percentage of the French who say they drink wine ‘almost every day’ fell from 51 per cent in 1980 to 17 per cent in 2010. The study’s authors suggest several reasons for the decline, including public campaigns against the rise of “le binge drinking”, a sluggish economy, as well as increasing preferences for fizzy drinks and fruit juices. The disappearing tradition of drinking wine at meal times leads to younger generations not learning to consume wine at the dining room table. French Millennials drink considerably less wine than their parents; roughly 50 per cent of young people in France never drink wine; and less than 10 per cent identify themselves as regular wine drinkers. The rest limit their wine consumption to two to three times a month (Macle, 2008).

Spanish Millennials represent 23 per cent of the total Spanish wine consumer base, but as in other traditional wine regions, wine consumption among Spanish consumers in the 18-35 years old range is declining (Observatorio Espanol del Mercado del Vino, 2009). A recent study by de Magistris and her colleagues (2011) found that Spanish Gen Y’s associate wine consumption with social and personal events and drink wine mostly during special occasions with friends and family. The researchers also found that Old World and New World consumers attribute different levels of importance to different characteristics associated with wine. Overall, evidence from traditional European wine producing regions suggests a general declining wine consumption trend among Gen Ys.

3. EARLY WINE SOCIALISATION

The critical role of the environmental context in which a generational cohort spends their formative years has been recognized in generational theory (Lancaster & Stillman, 2002; Noble & Schewe, 2003). This environmental context determines the “defining moments” which will influence consumers’ values, attitudes, and behaviours (Fountain & Lamb, 2011a).

These formative years are termed in marketing *consumer socialisation*. Scott Ward (1974) is credited for the introduction of consumer socialisation to the area of consumer behaviour. Ward defined consumer socialisation as the process by which young people develop consumer related skills, knowledge and attitudes. Moschis and Churchill (1978) suggested several factors that influence the youth development in terms of consumer socialisation, including mass media, parents, school and peers.

While several previous studies examined the contexts and reference groups that influence wine consumption patterns (see Charters & Pettigrew, 2003; Ritchie, 2007), to date, the most substantive work on early wine socialisation experiences remains the study undertaken by Olsen, Thach and Nowak (2007). Olsen and her colleagues focused on a comparison of four generational cohorts of core US wine consumers. Relating to early wine socialisation, the researchers investigated the reasons why consumers started drinking wine. Variables included influence by a referent person (doctor, boy/girlfriend) or a reference group (family, friends, co-workers), as well as impersonal sources of information (articles about wine), health benefits, enjoyment, or the wine image. The study also examined what type of wine respondents tried as their first experience and what styles of wine they are drinking now. They concluded that generally, Gen Y started drinking wine because they felt wine fit better with food than other alcoholic beverages and they liked the taste of wine. The influence of other people ('friends, family or co-workers drank wine') was found to be more important for Gen Y than for older cohorts. Gen Y's early experiences with wine involved dry red wines, but dry white wines took a close second.

While Olsen et al.'s (2007) study has provided valuable insights into different cohorts wine socialisation and preferences, it has some limitations which the authors acknowledge. First, the main focus of Olsen et al.'s research was on a comparison among the four generational cohorts of wine consumers. Given the importance of Gen Y consumers to the industry, a more in-depth study focusing exclusively on Gen Y early wine socialisation seems useful. Also, Olsen et al.'s study was based on a US sample; so the extent to which the wine socialisation experiences of US consumers may be comparable to other markets is unknown. With an exception of a comparison Gen Y's wine socialisation in two New World markets (US and New Zealand) (Velikova & Fountain, 2011), a cross-cultural study has not been undertaken. Lastly, Olsen and her colleagues measured wine socialisation only as a type of wine consumers first tried and as a limited number of factors that might have contributed to early wine socialisation. The researchers did not focus on the way Gen Y consumers were introduced to wine, in terms of the situation in which they first tried wines, particularly the occasion and the location.

The current study was largely influenced by Olsen et al.'s (2007) research on generational wine socialisation. However, the current research took a different approach in two main areas: (1) operationalisation of the 'wine socialisation' concept and (2) a cross-cultural perspective. Furthermore, the current study included socialisation with other types of alcohol to provide insights into whether wine socialisation experiences differ from other alcohol (see also Velikova & Fountain, 2011).

Wine consumption can be both public (in restaurants, bars, or pubs) and private (at home). (Olsen, et al., 2007). Richie and Valentin (2011) suggest that exploration of public social drinking behaviour involves answers to *what*, *where*, *with whom* and *why* questions. We argue that these questions are also important for research of private consumption, especially when investigating early alcohol/wine drinking behaviour. Therefore, the operationalisation of wine socialisation was extended from previous research to include the following agents that might influence early drinking experiences: *people*; *occasion*; and *location*. The choice of these three attributes was determined by evidence from existing wine marketing literature.

There is a great deal of research on the influence of other people (reference groups) on wine consumption behaviour. A person's reference group consist of the people that have direct (face-to-face) or indirect influence on the person's consumption behaviour (Kotler & Keller,

2006) and may be tangible (people the consumer personally knows such as family, friends, or co-workers), or intangible and symbolic (a movie star or a famous wine critic). Relating to early wine socialisation, these reference groups or an individual referent person may either expose a novice consumer to a new product (wine or alcohol in general) or create pressure to conformity that may affect the young consumer's choice of an alcoholic beverage.

It is also well-established in the literature that different situations influence wine consumption behaviour differently. The scenario, in which consumption of a product takes place, is able to modify the intensity with which product attributes are perceived. Fountain and Lamb (2011b) consider the occasions as a different choice context and highlight that depending on the occasion, different generations reveal different wine preferences. Since the current study is concerned with early experiences with alcohol and wine, the occasion and the location were chosen as elements that determine the consumption situation.

4. CROSS-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

The current research has sought to provide an exploratory analysis of the wine socialisation experiences of Gen Y and to compare early drinking experiences between New World and Old World customers. Until recently, the vast majority of research on Gen Y wine consumers was limited to single English-speaking markets, with most research coming from the US. Charters and Mueller (2011) identified this as a major caveat of previous research on Gen Y wine consumers as individual studies carried out in the US are not necessarily transferable to other countries. Lately, however, a few new studies emerged that extended the scope of Gen Y wine research to other markets (see Charters et al., 2011; Fountain & Fish, 2010; Velikova & Fountain, 2011). This includes a growing number of studies conducted in the Old World, where some of these studies also pursued the cross-cultural approach (see Agnoli, Begalli, & Capitello, 2011; Charters, et al., 2011; de Magistris, et al., 2011). It stands to reason that the factors outlined above as elements of wine socialisation may be of different cultural and market developmental nature.

5. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Given the importance of early drinking experiences, consumer socialisation and cultural differences, the current study was designed to address the following research questions:

RQ₁: What have been the early experiences with wine of Gen Y in the New World and the Old World, and how do these experiences with wine differ from experiences with other types of alcohol?

RQ₂: What differences are there in wine and other alcohol socialisation of Gen Y in the New World and the Old World?

6. RESEARCH DESIGN

6.1. Sample, Recruitment, and Procedures

The project was designed as a cross-cultural examination of Gen Y wine consumers' early alcohol socialisation, with a specific focus on wine. Comparison between New World and Old World consumers was a subject of particular interest. The cross cultural comparison was conducted across five countries, comprising France, Italy, Spain, the USA, and New Zealand. These countries were chosen to be representative of a wide range of production and

consumption contexts. France, Italy, and Spain represented long-established wine producing Old World countries, the three leaders in global wine production; while New Zealand and the USA represented New World wine markets.

In terms of consumption contexts, the three chosen European markets represent traditional wine consuming markets. On the other hand, the US and New Zealand have a relatively similar cultural disposition towards wine as New World countries that have traditionally been beer drinking nations (Lamb, 2010; Newport, 2010; Stanford, 2000; Wilson, Lockshin, & Rungie, 2005). In both countries, table wine has only relatively recently entered into the domain of an everyday drink of young people who have traditionally been irregular wine drinkers (Scalera, 2002; Treloar, Hall, & Mitchell, 2004).

Given the preference of this generational group for online communication, the data were collected via an online survey, which was developed in Qualtrics. The master copy was designed in English and was later translated by bilingual individuals into the respective language of the market where it was intended to be distributed. Using the iterative process of back-translation (Brislin, 1970), the surveys in the foreign languages were translated back into English and then compared to the original English version to ensure adequate correspondence in the two versions.

A quota of 100 surveys from each market was set in order to obtain an adequate total number of responses for the comparison analysis. Recruitment for the samples was garnered through posting the URL for the survey on social media network pages. Having a posted URL that participants could forward to friends facilitated snowball sampling through word of mouth and helped exceed minimum required number of participants. In addition to posting the URL, announcements about the study have been made in universities with which the researchers were associated.

In order to participate in the study, respondents had to be of legal drinking age in their respective country (21 in the USA; 18 in the other four markets). To control for this provision, a skipping logic was built in, where if participants indicated (by providing the year they were born) that they were younger than the legal drinking age in the country they currently reside, they were automatically redirected to a thank-you message at the end of the survey.

Another criterion for participation was moderate alcohol consumption. Participants had to consume alcohol at least once a month. A screening question was developed early in the survey to control for this provision. If participants indicated that they either did not drink alcohol at all or consumed it less than once a month, they were referred to the end of the survey thank-you message.

A total of 849 completed surveys were used for analysis (349 New World and 500 Old World respondents). Table 1 shows the number of responses from each market.

Table 1. Summary of the number of respondents in each market

Country	Frequency	Per cent
France	92	10.84
Italy	276	32.51
Spain	132	15.55

USA	200	23.56
New Zealand	149	17.55
Total	849	100

6.2. Measures

Overall, the survey consisted of five parts: (1) current consumption frequencies and preferences; (2) perceived situational context for specific types of alcohol; (3) situational context for last occasion of alcohol/wine consumption; (4) early drinking experiences and socialisation; (5) consumer characteristics and demographic profiles. Since the focal point of the current manuscript is the discussion about early drinking experiences and early alcohol/wine socialisation, only specific measures and data related to the topic under investigation will be discussed in the paper.

Early drinking experiences were operationalised as two items: (1) age when respondents first consumed alcohol/wine and (2) type of alcohol/wine respondents first tried.

Measures of Early Wine and other Alcoholic Beverage Experiences	
Age when respondents first consumed alcohol/wine	How old were you when first consumed <i>alcohol</i> (a whole drink, not a sip)? How old were you when first consumed <i>wine</i> (a whole drink, not a sip)?
Type of alcohol/wine consumers first tried	What type of alcohol was it? (beer; spirits; wine; other) What type of wine was it? (red; white; rose; sparkling; other) What type of wine was it? (dry; sweet)

Consumer socialisation was measured as three influential factors: (1) people; (2) occasion; and (3) location. Socialisation for wine and other types of alcohol that participants indicated as their first drink was measured separately. Responses were coded as 0 ('no') and 1 ('yes').

Measures of Consumer Socialisation	
People	Thinking back about the situation when you first consumed alcohol/wine, who were you with?
Occasion	What was the occasion when you first consumed alcohol/wine?
Location	What was the location when you first consumed alcohol/wine?

7. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

7.1 Sample Description

The demographic characteristics tested were gender and age. The overall sample consisted of more females (56.08%) than males (43.92%). However, a comparison between the Old and the New Worlds revealed that there were more males in the Old World sample (54.33% males versus 45.67% females), while the New World sample had considerably more females (69.62%) than males (30.38%), $\chi = 38.59, p = .00$

All respondents were in the Gen Y age group (18/ 21 - depending on the market - to 34 years old). The Old World sample was younger (65% of respondents were younger than 24 years old) than the New World sample. However, this difference can be attributed to the older drinking age in the US. Overall, there was no statistically significant difference between the two samples on the age variable.

7.2. Early Wine and other Alcoholic Beverages Experiences

RQ₁ asked about the early experiences with wine of Gen Y in the New and the Old Worlds. In addition, RQ₁ aimed to compare these early experiences with wine with early experiences of other types of alcohol. The age when consumers first tried alcohol/wine and the type of the first drink were the two measures of the early experiences.

No statistically significant difference was found between the New and the Old Worlds with respect to the age when Gen Y first consumed alcohol. The average age when consumers from the New World tried alcohol first was 15.54 years old ($SD = 2.46$); and for the Old World consumers the average age was 15.28 ($SD = 2.27$), $t = -1.46$, $p = 0.92$

With respect to wine, respondents in both the New and the Old World samples reported that they first tried wine later than they first tried alcohol in general. Moreover, New World consumers started drinking wine significantly later ($M = 17.42$; $SD = 0.15$) than Old World respondents ($M = 16.05$; $SD = 0.15$), $t = -6.22$, $p = 0.00$.

Chi-square revealed significant differences in the type of alcohol that respondents consumed as their first experience ($\chi = 23.90$, $p = .00$). In both samples, beer was indicated as the most often consumed first alcoholic drink. Overall, beer (43.37%) was followed by spirits (27.90%), wine (19.20%), and other types of alcohol (9.53%), respectively. These findings support existing research which suggests early experimentation with alcohol by young people tends to primarily involve beer and spirits (Scalera, 2002; Treloar, et al., 2004).

However, further comparison revealed that more Old World consumers had wine as their first drink (22.43% compared to 14.75% in the New World); while significantly more New World consumers had spirits as their first drink (37.05% versus 21.24% in the Old World). Table 2 provides the comparison analysis for the type of first alcoholic beverage.

Table 2. Type of alcohol Gen Y consumers first tried

Type of alcohol	Old World	New World	Total	Chi-Square
Beer	46.78%	38.69%	43.37%	23.90*
Spirits	21.24%	37.05%	27.90%	
Wine	22.43%	14.75%	19.20%	
Other	9.55%	9.51%	9.53%	
Total	100%	100%	100%	

Note: *Chi-square = $p < .05$

A similar comparison of the type of wine revealed that significantly more Old World consumers first tried red wine (68.54% compared to 31.62% New World consumers). At the same time, more New World consumers first tried white wine (36.08% versus 9.72% in the Old World). This finding is contradictory to the observations of Olsen et al. (2007) who found that US Gen Y's early experiences with wine involved dry red wines. However, the difference could be attributed to the fact Olsen et al.'s study used a sample of core wine consumers. There is evidence from previous research that early drinking experiences in the US and New Zealand markets involve white and rosé wines (Velikova & Fountain, 2011).

The current study found that more New World consumers (10.65%) tried rosé more than Old World consumers (4.60%). No significant differences were found in terms of wine sweetness. Most consumers in both samples reported that they their first wine was sweet, rather than dry.

Table 3. Type of wine Gen Y consumers first tried

Type of wine	Old World	New World	Total	Chi-Square
Red	68.54%	31.62%	52.79%	109.74*
White	9.72%	36.08%	20.97%	
Blush / Rosé	4.60%	10.65%	7.18%	
Sparkling	11.00%	12.03%	11.44%	
Other	0.51%	0.69%	0.59%	
Cannot remember	5.63%	8.93%	7.04%	
Total	100%	100%	100%	
Dry	29.92%	30.24%	30.06%	0.46
Sweet	41.18%	38.83%	40.18%	
Can't remember	28.90%	30.93%	29.77%	
Total	100%	100%	100%	

Note: *Chi-square = $p < .05$

7.3. Socialisation

RQ₂ aimed to explore potential differences between Gen Y socialisation experiences with wine and other types of alcohol. Comparison between the New and the Old Worlds was of particular interest. Consumer socialisation was measured in terms of three factors that seem influential in the process of young people developing consumer related interests in wine and other types of alcohol. These three factors are: (1) people; (2) occasion; and (3) location.

With reference to *people* present, both Old and New World consumers first tried alcohol primarily in the presence of friends. Perhaps surprisingly, more New World consumers first tried alcohol in the presence of their parents and siblings; while more Old World consumers first tried alcohol around people they hardly knew. With regards to wine socialisation, considerably more New World consumers first tried wine in the presence of their parents. For Old World consumers, it was almost an equal split between friends and parents.

Table 4. Socialisation results (people)

People	Alcohol			Wine		
	Old World	New World	Chi-Square	Old World	New World	Chi-Square
Friends	54.60%	56.70%	0.38	36.20%	31.52%	1.99
Siblings	2.60%	8.30%	14.25*	8.60%	9.74%	0.33
Parents	4.40%	17.48%	39.96*	35.00%	46.13%	10.65*
Other family members	5.40%	8.31%	2.82	14.60%	14.61%	0.00
People I hardly knew	12.80%	5.73%	11.52*	6.40%	1.15%	13.97*

Note: *denotes statistical differences where $p < .05$

Columns do not total 100% due to missing data (e.g. cannot remember, don't know, other)

Findings on the *occasion* when respondents first consumed alcohol revealed that for both the New and the Old World, it was a party with friends (more so for Old World respondents). When it comes to wine, the highest percentage for New World respondents was family

gathering. Old World respondents indicated a party with friends, with family gathering being a close second for first experience with wine. However more Old World consumers also first tried wine as accompanying a regular meal, which supports previous findings that Gen Y in traditional European regions focus on traditional cues such as home-oriented consumption situations (Agnoli, et al., 2011; de Magistris, et al., 2011). New World consumers, on the other hand, first tried wine more at a special occasion.

Table 5. Socialisation results (occasion)

Occasion	Alcohol			Wine		
	Old World	New World	Chi-Square	Old World	New World	Chi-Square
Party with friends	44.40%	33.20%	10.69*	27.80%	13.47%	24.68*
Party with people hardly knew	8.40%	6.59%	0.95	3.60%	0.57%	8.19*
Family gathering	2.80%	11.10%	24.63*	21.80%	28.37%	4.79*
Just a get-together with friends	10.00%	18.90%	13.84*	6.40%	12.32%	8.95*
Special occasion	6.60%	11.70%	6.85*	8.80%	14.61%	6.99*
Regular meal	4.00%	1.40%	4.74*	16.20%	11.17%	4.28*

Note: *denotes statistical differences where $p < .05$

Columns do not total 100% due to missing data (e.g. cannot remember, don't know, other)

With regards to the *location* where Gen Y consumers first had their alcoholic drink, considerably more New World consumers first tried alcohol either at a friend's house (32.95% compared to 16% in the Old World) or at own house (15.47% versus only 2.60% in the Old World). More Old World consumers first tried alcohol at a bar or a pub (14.80% compared to only 2.01% in the New World). Comparison with regards to wine socialisation shows that both New and Old World consumers first tried wine mostly at home, with the New World sample more likely to give this response; a similar proportion of each sample referred to friend's and relative's houses.

Table 6. Socialisation results (location)

Location	Alcohol			Wine		
	Old World	New World	Chi-Square	Old World	New World	Chi-Square
At own house	2.60%	15.47%	46.85*	21.20%	33.81%	16.83*
At friend's house	16.00%	32.95%	33.38*	13.20%	16.05%	1.35
At a random place I've never been before	7.20%	6.30%	0.26	3.80%	0.86%	7.04*
At a relative's house	1.20%	3.15%	3.99	10.20%	11.17%	0.21
Restaurant	2.80%	2.01%	0.54	6.80%	5.16%	0.96
Bar / Pub	14.80%	2.01%	38.98*	4.00%	1.15%	6.09*
At a special event	2.20%	1.43%	0.65	2.60%	2.87%	0.05
Outdoors	5.80%	2.87%	4.04*	4.60%	0.00%	16.50*

Note: *denotes statistical differences where $p < .05$

Columns do not total 100% due to missing data (e.g. cannot remember, don't know, other)

8. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Previous research has shown that wine consumption patterns amongst young adults is changing; while Gen Y in the New World are consuming more wine than previous generations, their counterparts in the Old World are consuming less wine. There has been

little research, however, into the wine socialization experiences of Gen Y; that is, the people, occasion, and the location where Gen Ys first had a glass of wine. This study has examined the early alcohol and wine experiences of Gen Y in three Old World and two New World countries; the first of its kind to do so. The study found a number of similarities between respondents in the New World and the Old World regarding their early experiences with alcohol. Both cohorts reported that they started drinking wine later than they started drinking alcohol in general, although Old World respondents did so earlier than their New World counterparts. Old World respondents were more likely to state wine was the first alcoholic beverage they tried, and to state that they had first tried wine in an everyday context, as accompanying a regular meal. These findings are perhaps unsurprising, given these countries' 'wine drinking' rather than 'beer drinking' cultures traditionally.

Both the Old World and New World respondents were most likely to try wine for the first time in the presence of family members, and at their own house or a relative's house. By comparison, first consumption of alcohol for both cohorts was more likely to take place with friends, and very rarely occurred in the presence of parents. While for New World respondents, first wine consumption was most often in the context of a family gathering or special occasion, Old World respondents were much more likely to be at a party with friends. Perhaps surprisingly, New World respondents were significantly more likely than their Old World counterparts to be with parents when they first tried wine. This finding suggests parental influence may be more important to early wine socialization for Gen Y in the New World than in traditional wine drinking cultures, indicating perhaps a reversal of historical trends. Experts believe that one reason in the decline of wine consumption among young Europeans is the disappearing tradition of drinking wine at meal times. We therefore suggest that bringing back the tradition of wine as an everyday drink at the family dinner table should be a key marketing strategy for the Old World. By contrast, for wine marketers to reach New World younger consumers, appealing to peer influence may be less effective than accessing them through their families.

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