8th International Conference
June 28th – 30th, 2014 | Geisenheim, Germany

Yes Way, Rosé!
Cross-Cultural Comparison of Consumer Preferences, Perceptions and Attitudes towards Rosé Wine

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Abstract

Purpose - The project was designed as a cross-cultural examination of consumer preferences, perceptions, and attitudes towards rosé wine.

Design/methodology/approach - The study was conducted in four markets, comprising the US, New Zealand, France, and the UK. The data were collected via a structured self-administered survey through a combination of survey administration modes (pen-and-paper and online). Descriptive statistics, Chi-square and ANOVA were used to analyse the data.

Findings - One of the key findings of this study revolves around the construction of the perceived image of rosé and how this image varies in different markets. Effectively, this study presents an overview of the perceived reputation of rosé wine in four different market structures, shaped by different cultural and image management issues.

Practical implications - The most crucial implication of this research is the cultural variation in consumer attitudes towards rosé wine.

Key words: rosé wine; cross-cultural comparison; consumer perceptions

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1. INTRODUCTION

The vast majority of studies on wine consumer behaviour are focused on red or white wine, whereas research on consumption of rosé wine is virtually non-existent. However, recent market and industry trends show a growing popularity of rosé wine among consumers around the world, and thus, an increase in its production. A recent report by FranceAgriMer (2013) reveals that the world production of rosé has reached 24.1 million hectolitres, which represents about 9% of the world wine production. In 2011, 65% of world rosé production was concentrated in Europe. France is the leading rosé producer (6.5 million hectolitres in 2011), followed by Italy, the United States, and Spain. Other New World wine industries have also started positioning themselves in the rosé market.

Europeans are the main consumers of rosé. France ranks first and represents one-third of the world rosé consumption, with 11.5 litres per capita rosé consumption per annum. The United Kingdom, Germany, and Italy are also among the top rosé consumers with steady consumption rates over past years, ranging between 5-7%. In addition, markets like the UK and Germany play a vital role in importation of rosé. In 2011, 80% of world imports of rosé were made by European countries, with France and the UK alone accounting for more than half of those imports (FranceAgriMer, 2013).

There is also a growing consumer interest towards rosé in other countries, especially in the United States, which accounts for 12.9% of world rosé consumption. Likewise, there has been a substantial growth in interest in rosé amongst New Zealand consumers over the past decade. For example, in 2009, sales of rosé through supermarkets were up by 20% on the previous year (Burzynska, 2009). Additionally, FranceAgriMer (2013) reports evidence of increasing popularity of rosé in smaller countries such as Tunisia or Uruguay, where rosé represents around 60% of all wine consumption. Previous research shows that rosé wine drinkers may be especially important consumers for emerging wine regions. For example, a study of consumer attitudes towards local wines conducted in Texas revealed that the most loyal cluster of consumers are those with preferences for rosé and sweeter wines (Kolyesnikova, Dodd, & Duhan, 2008). Rosé wine drinkers thus prove a valuable market segment as local wine advocates.

Despite the global increase in consumer interest, the industry knows little about determinants of consumer preferences for rosé wine. Likewise, with the exception of one recent academic paper which focused on rosé choice drivers by Italian consumers (Corsinovi, Gaeta, & Corsi, 2013), virtually nothing is explored in the academic literature about consumer attitudes toward rosé. Although a number of previous studies reported findings concerning rosé wine (e.g., Garcia, Barrena, & Grande, 2013; Holter, 2009; Kolyesnikova et al., 2008) rosé was not the main focus of these studies, thus adding only a supplementary perspective on the topic under investigation.

The current study aims at filling this gap. The study will add to the body of academic knowledge on consumer preferences for rosé wine. At the same time, it will offer managerial-oriented results that would help wine producers develop effective marketing and sales strategies for this type of wine.

2. CONTEXT

In summarising recent trends in the world production of rosé and its increasing global popularity, the FranceAgriMer report (2013) concludes that current rosé wine drinking goes beyond the traditional consumption of wine due to the contemporary image that rosé has in today's consumer minds. The current study will consider this notion of the *perceived image of rosé wine* and will make it a focal point of the discussion that follows. We will examine public media, trade publications and the few academic studies that address different elements of the perceived reputation of rosé.

'Unsophisticated'

For several decades now, there has seemed to exist a belief in the industry that the generally lower regard for rosé wine is due to its reputation as a simple, unsophisticated, and even boring drink (Hazan, 1982). This reputation is not helped by a long-held belief that it is made by mixing white and red wines to obtain pinkish, coloured sweet wine (Corsinovi et al., 2013). Although Corsinovi and her colleagues referred to the lack of regard for rosé in the Italian market, these perceptions have been recognized in other markets as well. For example, Mateus Rosé - a lightly sparkling wine from Portugal, deliberately sweetened for the North American and Northern European markets - was extremely popular in the UK between the 1950s and 1980s (Robinson, 2006). At the peak of its popularity it accounted for 40% of all table wines exported from Portugal. It began declining in the UK market only when more fruit driven styles of red wine from New World countries such as Australia started to appear on supermarket shelves from the 1970s onwards.

A newspaper article in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* echoes the notion of the sweet and unsophisticated nature of rosé that for years has dominated perceptions of rosé in US consumers' minds (J. Wilson, 2012). There is a historic reason behind the reputation of rosé in the US. In the late 1970s, White Zinfandel - an inexpensive, sweet, low-alcohol, jug rosé wine - became increasingly popular as an unpretentious and unthreatening drink. Today, there is probably no other drink that epitomizes the popularity of sweeter cheap wines in the US market.

While White Zinfandel and sweeter so-called 'blush' wines certainly still have their loyal consumer base in the US, recently there has been a noticeable change in consumer preferences towards drier style rosé. In an article entitled '*Rosé wines overcome their zin-ful reputation*', Wilson (2012) states that an increasing number of winemakers nowadays are making their rosés in more traditional, classic, drier French rosé styles. This inclination is also supported by a visible decline in the market share of White Zinfandel dropped from 9% in 2007 to only 3% in 2012 (Beverage Information Group, 2013).

This trend is also apparent in other New World countries. While still of mixed quality, rosé wines in New Zealand are increasingly more sophisticated than in the past, with a great diversity of styles being produced. By 2009, there were more than 140 New Zealand rosés on the market, ranging from 'robust, food-friendly dry styles to light and easy drinking off-dry aperitifs' (Burzynska, 2009). It seems that winemakers are also taking the style more seriously, rather than rosés being produced from second-rate grapes, left over after the premier wines have been made (Barton, 2013).

Interestingly, while the trend in the New World markets is towards 'classier' French-style rosé wines, in France these wines also have the reputation of not being profound, rather being a wine to be drunk at anytime. In France, that does not necessarily translate as being unsophisticated however, merely more casual in what may otherwise see itself as a rather formal, ritualistic, wine consuming society. It is associated with holidays, which are significant ritualistic events in France, but lack the formality of other rituals, such as weddings, Christmas or christenings – events at which it would be much more normal to serve champagne.

'Seasonal'

Rosé wines have also been perceived as a seasonal beverage throughout hot summer months. In France for over 15 years now there has been a sustained campaign to market rosé as the wine of summer in general and the holidays in particular. Rosé wines tend to come from the south of France, which is where many French people chose to take their holidays: the marketing of the wine has therefore built on this association.

The seasonal image of rosé is not limited to France. It has also been popular in the New World markets. Back in 1963, *The New York Times* proclaimed, 'Summer and rosé go together' (Ickeringill, 1963). Since then, the US media have only been adding to the public perception of rosé as a refreshing summer drink appropriate for various casual consumption situations, such as dining at sidewalk cafes, sitting by the pool, or picnicking on New York rooftops (Bloomgarden-Smoke, 2013).

Similarly, there is a tendency in New Zealand for many rosés to be advertised as a fun, 'summer drink'; and this is the case with wines at a range of price points. Recently, however, there is evidence that the trend towards a diversity of styles has seen a reduction in seasonality in rosé wine consumption in New Zealand. According to Bernard Budel, a business analyst at Villa Maria 'Rosé sales in December are still three times higher than sales in July but these winter troughs are not what they once were' (as cited in Burzynska, 2009).

Understandably, in markets where summer months are not associated with consistently warm weather, rosé wine has less of a seasonal appeal. As Matt (2010) and the Wilson Drinks Report (2013) point out, warm weather, especially if unexpectedly hot, does increase the sale of rosé in the UK. However, as these peaks in temperature are unpredictable, they can occur in spring, summer, or autumn, thus there is no direct seasonal correlation with rosé consumption patterns in the UK market.

'Feminine'

Many products are traditionally associated with a particular gender. Wine is often referred to in the academic literature as a drink more appealing to women (e.g., Charters et al., 2011; Pettigrew, 2003) and evidence from the industry supports the notion of wine in general being perceived as a 'female drink' (Todd, 2005). Recently, one study examined whether perceived images of the wine's gender may be different for different types of wine (Velikova, Dodd, & Wilcox, 2013). The results clearly indicated that along with champagne and sparkling, rosé wine has a strong feminine association attached to it. These gender associations however may be specific to the US market where the study was conducted. The extent to which these feminine associations with rosé may be comparable to other markets is unknown.

'Regional'

Corsinovi *et al*. (2013) concluded their exploratory study of consumer preferences for rosé wine by stating that rosé is region-specific, meaning that the origin of the product is the main attribute driving the choice of rosé in retail and on premise channels. Rosé is mostly chosen locally, where it is produced and is known by consumers.

In France, a combination of holiday habits and cultural food and wine links seems to have provided the context for the current regional image for rosé wine. This has been especially significant for the Provence region in the south-east of France, where 88% of local production is now rosé, up from about 60% at the end of the 1980s (Provence Wines, 2013).
In other - especially New World - markets regional links to rosé are less pronounced, unlike

other wine styles or varieties, for example Sauvignon Blanc (New Zealand - Marlborough) or Shiraz (Australia – Barossa Valley). Nevertheless, most rosé consumed in New Zealand is locally produced (Burzynska, 2009). Similarly, most rosé consumed in the US market is also regionally produced, mainly in California (Beverage Information Group, 2013). However, rosé in New Zealand does not result in a strong consumer perspective that it is 'sweet, cheap' as in the US market.

Contrary to the work of Corsinovi *et al.* (2013), strong regional preferences for rosé are less evident in non-wine producing countries. According to the Wilson Drinks Report (2013) promotion and price (49%) are often the choice driver for rosé in the UK rather than place of origin (6%).

3. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Rosé seems to be a product with a different 'local character' in different markets. From this perspective, it is interesting to evaluate various regional/cultural aspects that may contribute to this varying image. This can lead to valuable managerial implications for effective marketing of rosé in different countries.

With this purpose in mind, the current study was designed as a multinational project and was conducted in four markets: the United States, New Zealand, France, and the United Kingdom. The choice of the countries was determined to represent the Old World and the New World; as well as wine producing and non-producing regions. These countries were also chosen to be representative of various cultures and consumption contexts.

Thus, the research study was designed to evaluate consumer preferences, perceptions, and attitudes towards rosé wine. The broader purpose of the project was to gain a wider geographic perspective by examining these preferences, perceptions, and attitudes across a range of countries.

4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Due to the investigative nature of this study and the lack of sufficient conceptual and empirical support for the specific context for rosé wine, a decision was made to state the problem under investigation as workable research questions rather than hypotheses. The following research questions were advanced:

- RQ_1: What are consumer preferences and consumption behaviour for rosé wine and how do these preferences and consumption patterns vary in different markets?
- RQ_2: What are consumer perceptions of rosé wine and are these perceptions different in different markets?
- RQ_3: What are consumer attitudes towards rosé wine and are these attitudes different in different markets?

5. METHOD

5.1. Sample and Data Collection

The population of interest was wine consumers. For a balanced perspective on the topic under investigation, it was important to include highly involved consumers who are very interested in wine, as well as consumers with a more distant interest in wine. Therefore, the study employed two separate ways to recruit participants – pen-and-paper and online surveys.

Pen-and-paper surveys were distributed to visitors at two wine festivals (one in the US and one in New Zealand). It was expected that festival attendees would yield only a partial segment of the target population. The primary motivational factors of wine festival attendees have been found to be socialisation, relaxation, entertainment, and family/friends interaction, with interest in wine not being the predominant factor (Isaykina, 2001). By contrast, online surveys using panel approaches usually attract more knowledgeable, viewpoint-orientated samples than face-to-face surveys (Duffy, Smith, Terhanian, & Bremer, 2005). Therefore, an identical questionnaire was distributed as an online survey (developed in Qualtrics) to consumers with a distinct interest in wine. Panels from databases compiled by individual researchers at various wine-related events were particularly targeted. In addition, in order to diversify the sample by including people with various levels of wine involvement, recruitment for the online survey was also garnered through posting the URL on social media network pages. Having a posted URL that participants could forward to family and friends facilitated snowball sampling through word-of-mouth.

A minimum quota of 100 surveys from each market was set in order to obtain an adequate number of responses for the comparison analysis. In order to participate in the survey, respondents had to be of legal drinking age in the country of their residence, which was verified by a screening question where participants had to provide their year of birth.

A total of 947 completed surveys were collected and used for analysis. Table 1 shows the number of responses from each market. Although the UK sample was smaller than the other three samples, the sample sizes were not extremely unbalanced to cause a problem with regards to the power of the test to detect meaningful differences between the means. According to Keppel (1993), there isn't a good rule of thumb for the point at which unequal sample sizes make heterogeneity of variance a problem. The test of equality of variance revealed that the homogeneity of variances assumption has not been violated.

Pen-and-paper surveys were collected only in the US and New Zealand. Nevertheless, the overall sample was relatively balanced in terms of the survey administration mode. Forty-five percent of the surveys were collected via pen-and-paper and 55% via an online survey.

Table 1. Number of Respondents by Market

Country	**Frequency**	**Percent**
US	250	26.4
New Zealand	355	37.5
France	217	22.9
United Kingdom	125	13.5
Total	**947**	**100**

5.2. Measures

The survey was divided into two parts – the first one included general wine preferences and consumption behaviour, along with the socio-demographic characteristics of the sampled population; the second part was geared towards assessing preferences, perceptions, and attitudes towards rosé wine. Specific measures included preferences and frequency of rosé consumption; consumption situations most applicable for drinking rosé; perception of price (compared to red and white wine); and a set of general attitudes towards rosé.

6. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

6.1 Sample Description

The socio-demographic characteristics tested were gender, age, education, and income. The overall sample consisted of more females (59.6%) than males (40.4%). However, a between-market comparison revealed that while females did represent a higher percentage in the US, New Zealand and French samples (63.2%, 63.4%, and 58.5%, respectively), the UK sample contained considerably more males (56.8 % vs. 43.2% females).

The respondents ranged in age from 18 to 87 years old, with an overall sample mean of 43 years. The UK sample again showed different from the other markets, with the average respondents' age being 51.6 years old, while the average age in the other markets was 44.7 in the US; 41.9 in New Zealand; and 39.5 in France.

With regards to participants' educational levels, no cross-national comparison was possible due to differences in the educational systems. However, individual market analyses revealed a noticeable trend of highly educated consumers, with more than half of the respondents in all samples reporting a college or post-graduate degree. Likewise, participants in all four samples had higher incomes than the general population in their respective market. Overall, the social-demographic background of the sample for this study (middle-aged, educated, with higher incomes) mirrored the profile of wine drinkers in general (Chaney, 2001; Dodd & Bigotte, 1997; Overby, Gardial, & Woodruff, 2004).

6.2. Wine Consumption Behavior

Given the nature of the data collection, which included wine festival attendees, wine database panels and people with a general interest in wine, it is not surprising that the majority of the overall sample chose wine as the most often consumed alcoholic beverage. There were differences, however, between the Old World and the New World. The New World participants favoured beer much more than the Old World participants. Again, this is hardly surprising given that the US and New Zealand have traditionally been beer drinking nations (Lamb, 2010; Newport, 2010; Stanford, 2000; D. Wilson, Lockshin, & Rungie, 2005).

Frequency of wine consumption was also slightly lower in the New World markets. Being a traditional wine region, France was represented by a sample with fairly high wine consumption. This is reinforced by the average spending per bottle, which in the French sample was considerably higher (11.37€) than the average bottle price in most of these markets. The UK market was represented by a notably high involvement sample, with 84% reporting they consume wine at least several times a week. The UK sample also consumed noticeably more bottles per month (M = 8.40), while the US market – considerably less (M = 3.29). The average number of bottles per month in New Zealand and France was similar (M = 4.71; M = 4.58, respectively). The overall ANOVA was significant $F(3, 941) = 34.63$, $p<.00$).

Higher wine consumption in the UK compared to other markets may be accounted for demographic differences. Wine consumption tends to increase with age and changes in lifestyle (Key Note, 2013; Ritchie, 2009; Ritchie & Valentin, 2011). The mean age in the UK sample was higher (M = 51.62) than the other markets, so this might be one possible reason for more bottles per month consumption in the UK sample. In addition, the UK was the only group to have a higher male response, almost reversing the ratios of the other countries. Being overtly involved with wine is often a more masculine than feminine activity in the UK (Ritchie, 2009; Ritchie & Valentin, 2011). Thus, a higher male response and above average age response would correspond to the UK profile of those who are most highly involved in wine.

6.3. Wine Preferences

Participants' wine preferences were tested in terms of colour and sweetness. The cross-tab analysis suggested significant differences in colour preferences ($\chi^2(112, N = 935) = 91.14$, p

= .00). There was a marked similarity between the UK and France, with 59% in both samples indicating preference for red wine. While the US sample showed only slightly lower (54.5%) preference for red, the New Zealand sample was notably different, with only 38.2% expressing preference for red and 41.6% indicating preference for white wine. There might be several reasons for this difference. First, Sauvignon Blanc constitutes 69.1% of the overall New Zealand wine production (New Zealand Wine, 2011). Secondly, data collection was conducted in December 2013 – summertime in New Zealand (the only market in the study with summer data collection), when people generally drink more chilled white wine than red.

The majority of participants indicated a preference for dry wines. The split between dry and sweet was most distinct in the UK market (81.2% preferred dry and only 7.2% preferred sweet wine). There seems to be a perception in the UK that to like sweet wines - other than dessert wines - is considered unsophisticated. There is also evidence that as a result of the recession, there is reduction in eating out and a move to home consumption of slightly more premium wines, especially amongst older and more educated social groups (Key Note, 2013). Given the demographic profile of the UK participants this may explain this finding.

The split was very different in the US market, where 53.3% preferred dry, while 46.7% preferred sweet wine. New Zealand and France reported similar preferences for dry (around 60%), but more New Zealand consumers favoured sweet wines (31.1%) compared to French consumers (20.7%). At the same time, the French sample had the largest percentage of participants who showed equal preferences for dry and sweet wines.

6.4. Rosé Wine

6.4.1. Preferences and Frequency of Rosé Consumption

RQ_1 was developed to examine consumer preferences for rosé and the frequency of its consumption in different markets. As a general observation, preferences for rosé wine were similar across the markets, with less than 10% in each sample reporting rosé as their favourite wine style. Nevertheless, preferences for rosé were the highest in the US sample (8.3%) and the lowest in the New Zealand market (2.6%), while France and the UK were relatively similar, with about 6% preference in each.

Oddly, while preferences for rosé were the highest in the US sample, analysis of consumption frequency revealed that 30% of US respondents claim they never drink rosé. This divergent response - with one group giving a preference to rosé but another explicitly against it - is much less marked in the other markets. This could be a reaction to the reputation that blush wines have in the US (cheap, sweet, and unsophisticated, but easily accessible to consumers who like a bit of sugar in their drink). On the other hand, a greater percentage of Americans choosing rosé as their preferred wine signifies that those who prefer blush wines do indeed like them. This is reinforced by the more obvious US preference for sweet wines. Unlike other markets, not a single subject in the US sample indicated equal preference for both dry and sweet – thus reflecting very polarized preferences. The split between dry and sweet was also more balanced in the US (53.3% dry and 46.7% sweet), while preferences in the other markets were more skewed towards dry wines.

Interestingly, while only 6% of French respondents chose rosé as their favourite wine style, they seem much more likely to drink it regularly than the other markets, with 17.5% drinking rosé once a week or more often, and an additional 28.1% about once a month. This leads to one proposition raised in this paper – rosé wine is region-specific. This finding clearly suggests that rosé is more ubiquitous in the life of French wine consumers; it is more available and more visible in France than in the other markets. Rosé has been marketed in France for many years as the wine of the holidays, with unconscious associations to Provence, the Mediterranean, southern French cuisine. There is thus a very specific locational effect, which is not so obvious in the other three countries.

6.4.2. Perceptions of Rosé Wine

RQ_2 was geared towards examining consumer perceptions of rosé wine. Participants were asked if they felt rosés in general tend to be more expensive, less expensive, or about the same price as red and white wine (see Table 2 for the cross-tabulation matrix). Results indicate that in all markets, rosés are not perceived as more expensive than reds, with France being particularly cohesive on this opinion (83%). However, rosés are seen as more expensive than whites only in the New World (by 11% in the US and especially in New Zealand, 21.3%). The diversity of rosé styles and a big disparity in the price of rosé in New Zealand (Campbell, 2013) might be the reason for this finding.

Unlike the other countries, France marginally perceived rosé as less expensive than white wine. This is an interesting finding that supports the purported cheapness in the image of rosé. The French prefer rosés on holidays and hot summer days, yet they still see them as a cheaper option than white wines. This may also be because the maximum price per bottle of rosé in a French supermarket is around 12€. Even though most white wines are cheap, some of the best may be 20€, even 40€, and consumers are aware of this disparity. Rosés are perceived as convivial and easy drinking, but not profound or sophisticated as some white wines can be. By comparison, the majority of respondents in the other countries perceived rosé being about the same price as white wine.

Table 2. Perceptions of Rosé Price Compared to Red and White Wines

Market	Compared to:	Less Expensive	More Expensive	About the same price
US	Red	50.2%	5.8%	44.0%
	White	30.6%	11.0%	58.4%
NZ	Red	36.4%	9.7%	52.4%
	White	10.2%	21.3%	67.0%
FR	Red	82.9%	2.8%	14.3%
	White	62.2%	5.5%	32.3%
UK	Red	48.8%	3.2%	48.0%
	White	26.4%	5.6%	68.0%

$\chi^2(9, N = 934) = 128.81, p = .00$

Another question that addressed consumer perceptions of rosé asked about various situations where consumers felt drinking rosé would be most appropriate. Due to paper space constraints, this question was not included in the pen-and-paper surveys, thus was answered only by online respondents. A choice set included nine consumption situations. The by-country breakdown again suggests that rosé may have strong imagery associated with it. While '*At an outdoor event*' was the top choice for all markets, followed by '*At home (or friend's house) with friends*', there were some noticeable cross-cultural differences. For example, the French were much more likely to drink rosé by itself (without a meal) in a pub or a bar. This again may be a reflection of a strong seasonal and cultural reputation of pink wine in France. In addition, the French more than the other markets perceive rosé to go with a casual meal in a restaurant or a bar.

Interestingly, more New Zealanders chose rosé as a drink for a special occasion (e.g. a wedding or engagement). Previous evidence suggests this might be due to generational differences. New Zealand Baby Boomers have been shown to be evenly split between their preference for rosé and sparkling wine, whereas Generation Y were much more likely to choose sparkling wine as their favourite (Fountain & Fish, 2010).

6.4.3. Attitudes towards Rosé wine

RQ_3 aimed at evaluating consumer attitudes towards rosé wine. A list of attitudes was developed based on the overview of literature reflecting general perceptions about rosé. Respondents were presented with a list of eight items on a 5-point Likert-type scale, anchored between 1 (*strongly disagree*) and 5 (*strongly agree*).

The by-market ANOVA revealed a significant main effect on the majority of attitudes items. Seasonality yet again played an important role in distinguishing the French market from the other countries. France had the highest mean (M = 4.20) for a statement related to the seasonal nature of rosé (‘*I would have a glass of a rosé wine on a hot summer day’*). This was also shown in a reverse statement (‘*Rosé wines are good for any season’*) where France had the lowest mean (M = 2.88), which is indicative of the French preference for rosé primarily during the hot summer time. In addition, the French agreed most that rosé is an easy drink, but at the same time they would not serve it to impress someone or give it as a gift.

Americans also expressed higher agreement that they would not serve rosé if they were trying to impress someone. This could be a reflection of the undesirable image that rosé has in the US in association with cheaper sweet rosés like White Zinfandel, especially among those consumers that never drink rosé (likely for that very same reason). It looks like those US respondents who do not like pink wines underlined that antipathy repeatedly on several measures. The other Anglophones may also claim not to drink rosé, but it does notseem to have the same negative image, so they appear more neutral on these attitudes measures.

No significant effect was found on two statements measuring occasions for rosé consumption. The attitudes were not country specific, reflecting a strong general feeling that rosé could be used for almost any occasion but the feeling was not as strong for special occasions. This correlates with earlier findings that all markets view rosé as a simpler style, easy to drinking wine that goes with outdoor events and casual gatherings with friends.

Given previous evidence of a consumer association of rosé with female wine consumption (Velikova et al., 2013), one statement addressed the alleged femininity of rosé (‘*Rosé wines are for females only’*). There was a clear distinction between the New and Old Worlds; the US and New Zealand considered rosé more feminine than France and the UK.

Although rosé has not been found gendered in the UK and France, these findings seem contrary to previous research (Ritchie & Valentin, 2011). The fact that the UK sample did not consider rosé a female drink is particularly surprising, given that the sample was skewed towards males. There was a strong indication that the UK respondents would not drink a glass of rosé on their own (in the analysis of the situations appropriate for drinking rosé), yet they strongly disagree that it is a drink for females only.

It is also important to note that although significant differences were found on the perceived femininity of rosé, the agreement on this statement was not very strong across all markets, indicating that overall respondents in all markets feel neutral about this matter. All four means were below 2.5 on a 5-point scale. Perhaps further research on the perceived gender of rosé is needed to investigate the issue more thoroughly.

Table 3. Consumer Attitudes towards Rosé wines

		Mean	*SD*	*F*
Rosé wines are easy to drink	US	3.58	1.12	6.18*
	NZ	3.78	0.87	
	FR	3.95	0.80	
	UK	3.76	0.87	
Rosé wines are good for any season	US	3.28	1.21	5.31*
	NZ	3.06	0.96	
	FR	2.88	1.10	
	UK	3.10	1.12	
Rosé wines are for females only	US	2.44	1.37	29.29*
	NZ	2.35	1.05	
	FR	1.63	0.69	
	UK	1.98	0.86	
I would not serve a rosé if I was trying to impress someone	US	3.08	1.46	11.29*
	NZ	2.71	1.19	
	FR	3.30	1.30	
	UK	2.76	1.12	
I would have a glass of a rosé wine on a hot summer day	US	3.41	1.34	19.61*
	NZ	3.80	1.12	
	FR	4.20	0.90	
	UK	3.95	1.07	
Rosé wines are good for almost any occasion	US	3.10	1.26	0.87
	NZ	3.23	0.92	
	FR	3.13	1.09	
	UK	3.21	1.02	
Rosé wine makes a nice gift	US	3.05	1.36	5.47*
	NZ	3.34	0.97	
	FR	3.00	1.01	
	UK	3.21	0.98	
Rosé wines are for special occasions only	US	2.37	1.17	3.60
	NZ	2.22	0.91	
	FR	2.18	0.95	
	UK	2.03	0.83	

Note: * $p < .01$ The mean values represent scores on a five-point Likert scale anchored between 1 *(strongly disagree)* and 5 *(strongly agree)*

7. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

One of the key conclusions of this paper revolves around the construction of the perceived image of rosé and how this image varies in different markets. Effectively, we can see four different market structures in each of the countries studied, shaped by different cultural and image management issues.

In France, rosé seems to have a reputation of an inexpensive, light, summer drink; enjoyable and acceptable for all. This image is tied into a ritualistic form of drinking, specifically summer holidays, outside eating, which is much less formal than a typical French meal. Yet this viewpoint, whilst it does not see rosés as great wines, nevertheless considers that they are acceptable for all people in the right circumstances. Dry rosé styles that go well with food are preferred.

On the contrary, sweeter style ‘blush’ wines are popular in the US, especially among new younger (often female) consumers who move from soft drinks and seek softer, fruitier, sweeter wine styles (but not willing to pay much for wine). Unsophisticated rosé wine fulfills the need of these consumers for a simple (thus unthreatening) wine in contrast to preferred dry style wines of an institutionalized ‘elite’ of educated consumers who consider the wine unacceptable in any context.

In New Zealand, rosé was less popular, perhaps at least partly because New Zealand is largely a white wine producer with abundant availability of light, fresh white wines. White wines therefore fill the segments that rosé would otherwise cover, and rosé becomes less necessary. Yet, rosé is different, and therefore seems to be perceived as special, reflected by the fact that more New Zealanders in the study chose rosé as a drink for a special occasion. There is also an increasing interest amongst winemakers in making better quality rosé in a range of styles, and by extension, increasing consumer awareness and consumption of rosé.

As a mature market, the UK seems to less likely succumb to the stereotypes of a new market and to see rosé as feminine. Proximity to France and its romance for the English lends it a certain cachet, even if it is not a profound wine. While previous research suggests that rosé sold at supermarkets is generally bought by and marketed at younger females for easy drinking (Ritchie, 2009), the current sample was dominated by older males (perhaps more involved consumers). These consumers may drink rosé but in general, they see the assortment of rosé wines available in the UK market as not aimed at them, perhaps lacking the expected quality. The wine is not anathema to them, but it does not feature so much on their radar.

There are implications from this research relevant to managers of rosé wine producing companies. Most obviously, yet worth reiterating, is the cultural variation in attitudes to rosé wine, even between countries that otherwise resemble each other (e.g. New Zealand and the US; France and the UK). Additionally, the relationship of rosé wine to sugar content and the management of the perception of that relationship is crucial. Finally, the success of French producers in shifting the perception of the context in which the wine can be consumed should be noted in other countries. There was no concerted attempt across the country to link rosé wine with holidays (there is no ‘association’ of rosé wine producers) – but that nevertheless happened. That fact that a wine’s image can be modified should be an example to producers in the New World who wish to adapt consumers’ perceptions of their wine.

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