

RIDING THE WAVE OF ROSÉ: WHEN PINK BECOMES STYLISH

Nadine Normand-Marconnet, Monash University, Australia

Introduction/Background

This study is the first to propose a transdisciplinary approach combining cultural studies with marketing in order to explore how the visual codes embedded in rosé wine labelling and packaging have recently evolved.

Long perceived as a boring, unsophisticated, seasonal, and even a purely feminine wine, the reputation and the image of rosé has dramatically changed to become a fashionable product in various circles.

Preliminary literature review

While oenological aspects of the ‘third colour’ of wine are increasingly explored, cross-cultural perceptions of rosé are still under-researched (Velikova, Charters, Bouzdine-Chameeva, Fountain, Ritchie, & Dodd, 2015).

The present study intends to contribute to this field by investigating the use of cultural cues in brand storytelling for rosé wine, with reference to works based on semiotic analysis applied to wine labelling and packaging (Ang, & Lim, 2006; Bobrie, 2010; Celhay, Masson, Garcia, Folcher, & Cohen, 2016; Morgan, & Tresidder, 2015; Oswald, 2012).

Envisaged research methodology

This research will investigate if and how the wine industry in France and in Australia is adapting storytelling and brand narratives to follow the recent popularity of rosé wines.

A qualitative approach is applied to analyse a dataset including semi-structured interviews with professionals involved in the wine industry, promotional documentation, and visual information collected in various sales environment (e.g. supermarkets, cellars, wineries, etc.)

Following principles of semiotic marketing, the research will particularly focus on strategies used to promote a new image of rosé wines.

Preliminary findings

Data collected in France during a field trip of 6 weeks in May 2018 reveal that the increasing demand for rosé is following new trends in consumption and lifestyle characterised by a desire for immediate enjoyment and conviviality.

Grounded in the mimicry of the Provence lifestyle, the change in the image of rosé relates to its fundamental characteristic: the colour. Paired with technological improvements, packaging and labelling of French brands are increasingly designed to magnify wines with beautiful pastel colours. Under the leadership of the Côtes de Provence wines, rosé wine growers and winemakers from other French regions are now often adopting the same visual codes aiming at offering a classy and stylish product.

Conclusion and managerial implications or recommendations

In France, the rise of profile for rosé wines seem to be based on a ‘less is more’ approach. Strategies to transform the ‘plonk’ image of pink wine into a chic drink are currently resulting in innovations in both packaging and labelling. Among the most noticeable evolutions is the emergence of customised glass bottles with bigger sizes offered by famous brands (e.g. Minuty, Ott), sometimes resembling perfume or champagne bottles, as well as an overall tendency towards aesthetic and light design for front labels, or even the absence of them.

Data will be collected in Australia in order to assess if there are similar trends in marketing that aim to challenge the usual perception of rosés as cheap wines with funny labelling.