

## **Communicating Terroir in a Social Media Context: An Experiment Among Wine Consumers in Italy**

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### *Abstract*

◦*Purpose* – The purpose of this study is to explore wine consumer perceptions of terroir in the social media context and how wineries could effectively communicate terroir wines to social media users.

◦*Design/methodology/approach* – The Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) approach was applied to elicit consumer preferences for alternative fictive Instagram posts including visual and textual content about terroir. A survey via questionnaire was online administered by a sample of Italian wine consumers.

◦*Findings* – Results showed that image posts were largely preferred to text posts. Among image posts, respondents preferred illustrations of the production environment rather than pictures of the wine bottle. Among text posts, posts proposing a 'terroir association' received higher priority than those explaining a 'terroir concept'. Posts representing the grape variety, a natural label and the landscape obtained the three highest importance weights.

◦*Practical implications* – The study revealed that the AHP could be a useful approach to eliciting and evaluating wine consumer preferences for digital communication. It contributed to understanding how wineries could effectively convey the different meanings of wine terroir via social media.

**Keywords:** terroir, social media, communication, Analytical Hierarchical Process, Instagram, wine consumer, Italy

