

# Reasons why people avoid wine: comparisons between consumers and non-consumers across five countries

By Linda Ovington<sup>1</sup>, Anthony Saliba<sup>1</sup>, Erica McIntyre<sup>1</sup> and Johan Bruwer<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>School of Psychology and NWGIC, Charles Sturt University, Australia

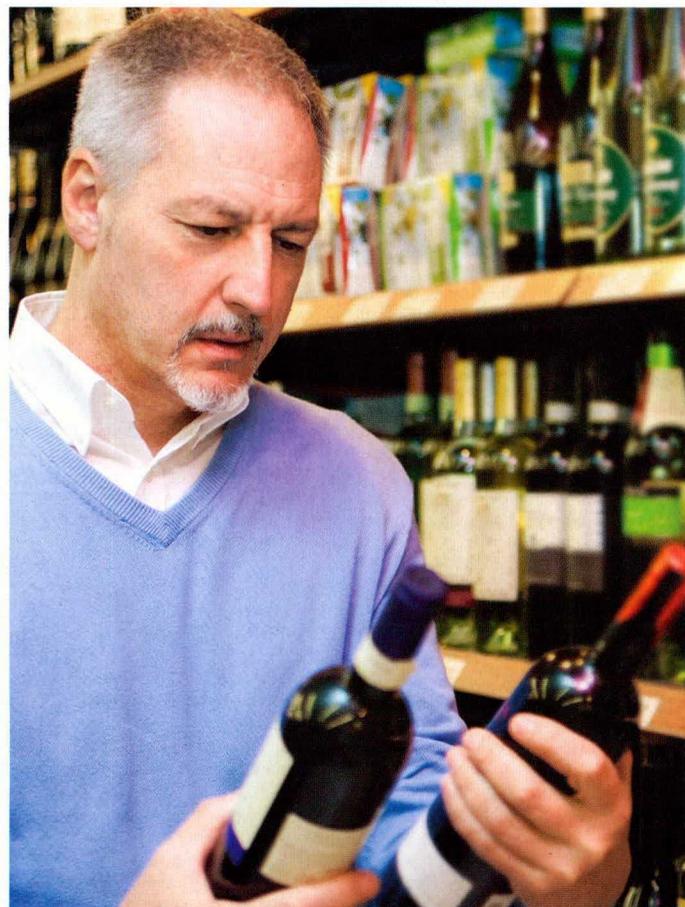
<sup>2</sup> School of Marketing, University of South Australia, Australia

\*Corresponding author: asaliba@csu.adu.au

***A survey of people of legal drinking age in Australia, the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom and India reveals the main reasons for avoiding wine.***

## BACKGROUND

Product non-users have become a recent focus for companies looking to generate new customers. For wine, an avoider must already consume alcoholic beverages (just not wine to any great extent). Those who choose to avoid alcohol altogether are not studied. Part of the Australian Grape and Wine Authority-funded project was about establishing the amount of wine that a consumer could consume and remain a wine 'avoider', given that some consumers reported some small level of wine consumption but still 'avoided' wine where possible.



**The two most popular reasons why non-wine consumers avoid wine were not liking the taste, and difficulties with selecting a wine. Photo: Luca Bertolli/123rf.com**

## STUDY METHOD

Participants of legal drinking age (N = 4432) were recruited to complete an online questionnaire in Australia, the US, Canada and the UK as established markets, and India as an emerging market. For demographic and alcohol consumption data, see the article titled, 'Wine avoiders in five countries: Potential for adopting wine as an alcoholic beverage of choice' in the May/June 2015 issue of the *Wine and Viticulture Journal*.

## THE RESULTS

For research purposes, wine avoiders (non-consumers) were defined as those who consume wine at 0-5% of their total alcoholic beverage consumption. The 5% 'rule' takes into consideration any wine avoiders who may drink a glass on a special occasion, such as sparkling wine at a wedding or if offered a glass of wine and not wishing to decline the offer. This definition was also informed by focus groups that were conducted in all the countries studied. Wine consumers were defined as consuming wine at 6-100% of their total alcoholic beverage consumption. To validate the 5% 'rule' we measured the average number of standard wine drinks on a single occasion, comparing wine avoiders with wine consumers.

A list of 26 reasons of why people avoid wine was generated based on focus groups conducted across Australia, Canada, US, UK, and India. For the results of the focus groups see Ovington, McIntyre, Saliba, and Bruwer (2014); and Saliba, Ovington, and Gunaratne (2013). The items were included as part of a larger survey on why alcohol consumers avoid wine. Using regression analysis, the most important reasons for avoiding wine were identified within each country, using significance levels (see Table 2).

The two most popular reasons why non-wine consumers avoid wine were not liking the taste, and difficulties with selecting a wine. Another significant reason include the experience of suffering from wine hangovers; in the focus groups this was compared to other alcohol types. Non-wine consumers had the perceptions that wine consumers have a pretentious image, and that their friends do not drink wine. Respondents also reported that wine is not a refreshing drink, and they could not find the wine product they wanted.

A somewhat unexpected finding was that the results showed significant reasons for avoiding wine not only among non-wine consumers, but also wine consumers.

For wine consumers, significant reasons for avoiding wine were only found for Australia, Canada, US, and the UK; the Indian results did not show any predictors of wine avoidance.

**Table 1. Reasons why non-wine consumers avoid wine - in order of importance.**

	Australia	Canada	US	UK	India
1	I don't like the taste	I don't like the taste	I find it hard to select a wine	I don't like the taste	I find it hard to select a wine
2	I find it hard to select a wine	It gives me a bad hangover	I don't like the taste	I find it hard to select a wine	
3	My friends don't drink wine	It looks pretentious to drink it	It gives me a bad hangover	It looks pretentious to drink	
4	It gives me a bad hangover	My friends don't drink wine	My friends don't drink wine	It gives me a bad hangover	
5	It isn't refreshing	I hardly ever get what I want when choosing a wine		It isn't refreshing	
6	I hardly ever get what I want when choosing a wine	It isn't refreshing			

**Table 2. Reasons why wine consumers avoid wine - in order of importance**

	Australia	Canada	US	UK
1	It has too many calories	It makes me sleepy	It has too many calories	It has too many calories
2	It makes me drowsy	It looks feminine to drink		It looks feminine to drink
3	I see others abusing it	I feel drunk too quickly		It makes me do silly things
4	It looks feminine to drink	It might be fake		
5		I can't drink it quickly		
6		I see others abusing it		

The top reasons for avoiding wine across countries these countries were: it has too many calories (except Canada), it makes them feel drowsy (except the US and UK), and it looks feminine to drink (except the US). In Australia and Canada, seeing others abusing wine was a motivation for avoidance. Not being able to drink wine quickly, and wine making them feel intoxicated more easily was also found among the Canadians. This suggests that under certain situations wine consumers may choose to drink beer or cider for the lower alcohol content and greater volume of product in a drink. Fake wine was also a concern in Canada, something that we think is due to the media focus on authentic ice-wine and the country's history with wine's actual origin, given that wine is sometimes made in Canada from grapes or must 'imported' from the US. In the UK people reported avoiding wine because, "It makes me do silly things".

## CONCLUSION

We have successfully characterised wine avoidance in all the Western countries included in this study. These findings can be used to develop new products and ways of interacting with alcoholic beverage consumers that meet their requirements around wine. Somewhat surprising was that most wine avoiders did want to consume 'some' wine; it was

just that wine did not meet their needs or they were unable to access the wine they liked. An unexpected finding was that we also characterised avoidance in wine drinkers, although upon reflection perhaps this was not too surprising as there are many factors at play that could impede the consumption of almost any product. Many regular wine consumers found that other alcoholic beverages better suited their needs in some consumption contexts, for instance, beer is considered more refreshing and therefore more appropriate than wine when the major driver of consumption is 'thirst'. However, when choosing a beverage to accompany food, wine is the better option (Bruwer and Johnson 2005).

We did not characterise wine avoidance in India, which may occur for several reasons. Further work is planned to understand consumption characteristics, particularly around wine avoidance, in that country.

## REFERENCES

- Bruwer, J. and Johnson, T. (2005) The drivers of on-premise beverage selection in Australia. Australian Wine and Brandy Corporation (AWBC).
- Ovington, L.; McIntyre, E.; Saliba, A. and Bruwer, J. (2014) Why do people avoid wine? *Wine & Viticulture Journal* 29(4):63-65.
- Saliba, A.; Ovington, L. and Gunaratne, C. (2013). Why do people avoid consuming wine? *Wine & Viticulture Journal* 28(5):79.

Copyright of Wine & Viticulture Journal is the property of Winetitles Pty Ltd and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.