

Wine Opinions research highlights threats to growth of wine consumption

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Wine Opinions, a leading wine market research company, released research findings designed to pinpoint the challenges facing the wine industry specifically in regard to 21-39 year-old consumers of alcoholic beverages.

The research showed that perceived value and rising prices are major factors inhibiting growth of wine consumption by the target age group. "While certainly not the only factor, price matters to younger consumers of alcoholic beverages," stated John Gillespie, Founder and CEO of Wine Opinions. "In fact, among wine drinkers who are drinking wine less frequently than they did a year or two ago, nearly half—47 per cent -- cite the rising prices of the wines they like as a reason for drinking wine less often."

The perceived "value for the price" of wine in comparison to beer or spirits was also seen as a weak point for wine. While 57 per cent of respondents gave ratings of "6" or "7" on a 7-point "value for the price" scale to beer, and 54 per cent did the same for spirits, wine came in last, with 50 per cent giving ratings of "6" or "7."

The Wine Opinions research, also not surprisingly, demonstrated a preference for beer as a "favourite" type of beverage alcohol among males, while preference for wine or spirits skews toward females. Preference for beer also skews significantly to those aged 30-39, while preference for spirits skews significantly to the 21-29 segment. Wine preference is equally divided between the two age segments.

A 2024 Gallup poll on beverage alcohol use highlights a trend toward abstinence among younger consumers. In the study, 59 per cent of 21-35 year-olds reported that they consume beverage alcohol, a precipitous drop from 72 per cent in a 2001 Gallup survey. The decline is in good measure a reflection of the belief by a significant majority of those under age 35 that alcohol consumption is harmful to one's health. In the 2001 Gallup survey, just 30 per cent of those under age 35 agreed that "alcohol is bad for your health." In the 2024 survey, more than twice as many respondents under age 35 (65 per cent) agreed with the "bad for your health" statement.

"Our recent study adds to the growing body of evidence that wine companies need to address multiple factors: the cost of their product, perceptions of health, and competition from other alcoholic beverages to bring young people into wine drinking culture," added Gillespie.