Consumer Countries/Markets

Premium-minded consumers split wine market, US wine execs say

California’s wine industry will continue to split most of its sales above and below the $10-dollar-per-bottle mark, enjoying a rise in overall consumption and a growing emphasis on premium, rather than economy, wines, reported wine industry leaders surveyed by UC Davis.

Challenges remain in the form of consolidation in the distribution and retail arms of the industry as well as in water and other environmental issues, the survey respondents said.

When asked how consumers have changed in the past two years, 48 percent of them agreed that wine buyers are increasingly seeking unique experiences. They also noted that consumers tend to be trading up in the value of wines they are buying, using social media to make more of their purchases, trying new varietals and tastes, and looking for authenticity in their wines.

Click here to read more

Natural / Physical Resources

Climate change threatens European wine production

The EU is the world’s biggest wine producer, but a recent publication has revealed the extent to which the sector is under threat from climate change.

The harvest is already over for many Beaujolais wine makers. Early harvests have also taken producers in many other French regions by surprise.

Some wine makers were concerned by the unusually hot summer, but the resulting high sugar content in this year’s grapes, which guarantees a high level of alcohol in the finished product, is seen by many as a good thing.

But the authors of the book "Threats to wine. The challenges of climate change", Valery Laramée de Tannenberg and Yves Leers, fear the celebrations could be short lived.

"High levels of alcohol have never meant good wine. You have to take all the factors into account,"
warned Nicolas Joly, a world-renowned organic wine maker from France’s Loire region.

Acutely conscious of changes to the natural environment, Nicolas Joly cannot hide his concern about climate change. "There is the heat, the lack of water, and then the incredibly strong winds that change three times a day. It’s very recent, and it’s due to climate change," the specialist said.

For the grapevine, which has already survived hot periods between the 10th and 14th centuries before having to re-adapt to a cooler climate, it is the speed of the current change that presents a particular threat. This is the conclusion of Valery Laramée de Tannenberg and Yves Leers.

Click here to read more