



*Toast the Great Wines of Alsace
from the Lady's Homeland*

***Regional Wine Brand Equity:
The case of Alsace Wines in the
US Market***

Mémoire écrit par : Gracie Boland
Directrice du mémoire : Nada Maaninou
Tuteur d'entreprise : Foulques Aulagnon
Directrice du Master : Coralie Haller

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INTRODUCTION

In 2019, over 1.5 million people in the United States were introduced to a positive aspect of Alsace Wines. Around 150 Alsatian wineries export to the United States and have seen a +8.9% increase in sales over the last year, continuing a positive growth trend since 2011 (CIVA, 2019). Americans consumed a total of 32,600,000 hectoliters, or 11.2 liters per person, of wine in 2019 (Wine Intelligence Compass, 2019), and have continued to be the largest wine market in the world with over twenty-five consecutive years of growth. Since 2005, there has been a +40% increase in consumption (Statista, 2019). To hold a place in this growing market, the wines of Alsace are promoted by the *Conseil Interprofessionnel des vins d'Alsace (CIVA)*, whose goal is to develop, promote, and serve the Alsatian vineyard as a regional brand of Alsace Wines. Out of the fourteen export markets invested in by the CIVA, the United States stands to be a priority market today for several reasons, including its global market position and trends that are in line with the strong points of the wines of Alsace: white and sparkling wines. While US sales of Alsatian wines have increased in the past years, there is still a need to strengthen the presence of Alsace Wines in the extremely competitive US market. We consequently came to ask ourselves *“How can Alsace Wines continue its success in the US market?”*

To conceptualize this question, we applied the theoretical frameworks of brand equity, brand identity, wine branding, regional branding, and consumer expertise. The notion of regional wine brand image, especially of appellations, in relation to regional wine brand equity, has not often been elaborated on in the literature, especially with the addition of consumer segments. In addition, the different dimensions of regional wine brand image have not been studied together in relation to regional wine brand equity. To answer the presented question and to add to this theoretical gap, the authors present three concrete research objectives: 1) to explore the regional identity of Alsace Wines and its implication in the US market, 2) to understand the impacts of a regional brand and the perception of Alsace Wines in the US market and 3) to demonstrate the importance of regional brand image in relation to the overall perceived brand value.

To achieve these objectives, we conducted three studies. Stage 1 is qualitative, with Alsatian wine producers, and aims to answer the following research proposition (**R1**): *There is a discrepancy in the regional identity of Alsace Wines among the winegrowers*. Stage 2 is qualitative as well, conducted with American wine professionals, and aims to answer the following research proposition (**R2**): *Intermediaries in the American market do not have a clear brand image of the wine region of Alsace*. Stage 3 is quantitative, with US consumers, and aims to test and validate the following hypotheses: **H1**: *Regional brand image has a positive effect on regional wine brand image*; **H2**: *Regional wine brand image has a positive effect on regional wine brand equity*; **H3**: *Regional brand image has a positive effect on regional wine brand equity*; and **H4**: *The effect of regional brand image on regional wine brand equity is moderated by consumer wine expertise*.

We first analyzed the academic literature on brand equity, wine branding, and regional branding. Then, we presented in detail our research methodology, which consists of two stages of qualitative semi-structured interviews and one quantitative survey. The subsequent results of these studies were then presented, supporting our two research propositions and three of our four hypotheses. Next, we discussed our results, integrating a comparison of the three stages which allowed us to provide recommendations for the regional brand of Alsace Wines to succeed in the US market. Finally, we conclude with a summary of our theoretical contributions, managerial contributions, and limitations to our study.

CHAPTER 1: LITERATURE REVIEW

The following literature review is based on articles from business journals ranked by the *Academic Journal Guide* by Chartered ABS (2018), *Australian Business Deans Council Ranking* (2019) or the *Liste des revues et des produits de la recherche HCERES pour le domain SHS1 "Economie et Gestion"* (2019). The articles integrated in this study that were not listed in the business rankings come mainly from wine reviews or working papers; they were used for additional information but not the basis of the literature review, which is important for the reliability of our theoretical research.

SECTION 1: BRAND EQUITY, THE PERCEIVED VALUE OF A BRAND

1.1 DEFINITION AND MOST CITED MODELS

Throughout the years, different categories of branding have been studied and elaborated on by researchers, concluding a grand consensus that brands must be managed and built (Aaker, 1996; Keller, 1993). One broad, important category of branding is brand equity, which, in simple terms, is the perceived value of a branded product. There have been two different fields of study established for brand equity, one being based on the financial market (the actual price value) (Simon & Sullivan, 1993), and the other consumer-based (perceived value) (Aaker, 1996; Keller, 1993). For the purpose of this study, the authors will use a consumer-based definition as the study is consumer, and not economic, focused. There are two main definitions of brand equity based on the consumer, both dating from the mid 1990s. Aaker (1996) established the categories of brand equity as brand awareness, perceived quality, consumers' loyalty, and brand associations, while Keller (1993) developed what is known as the customer-based brand equity (CBBE) model, a pyramid with the following categories: brand identity, brand meaning, brand responses, and brand relationships. While Aaker focuses more on consumer behavior, Keller focuses more on consumer emotions. This study will use Aaker's model as most wine literature does (Lockshin & Spawton, 2001; Moulard, 2015; Ohrth et al., 2005); apart from Perrouy et al. (2006), who based their research on Keller's definition.

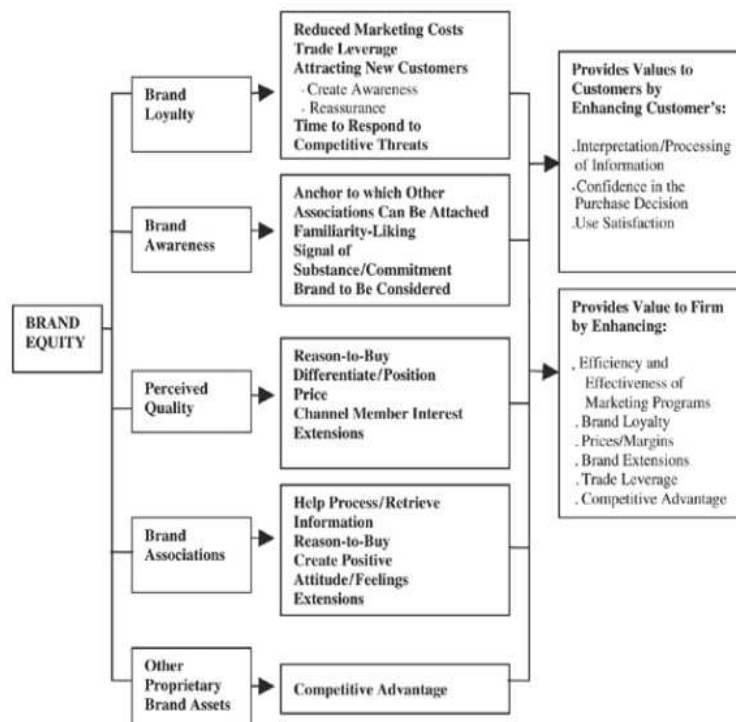
1.2 ANTECEDENTS OF AAKER'S BRAND EQUITY

Aaker proposes that the five main assets of a brand that determine brand equity are:

- brand awareness
- perceived quality
- brand loyalty
- brand associations
- other proprietary brand assets (Aaker, 1991).

Each of these assets creates value for a brand in a different way (See Figure 1). Brand awareness is the presence that the brand has in a consumer's mind and is measured by the different ways a consumer remembers this brand (recognition, recall, top of mind dominant). A brand's perceived quality is important to brand equity because it is linked to willingness to pay and reasons to buy. Brand loyalty can retain old customers and attract new ones, which has been proven to be a competitive advantage. The associations that customers give to a brand, such as their attributes, a symbol, or spokesperson, aid in establishing the perceived value. Each dimension of brand equity helps to compose the perceived value of a brand, benefitting both the consumer and the company.

Figure I: Aaker's Brand Equity Model



Source: Aaker, D. (1996) *Building strong brands*. New York: Free Press. pg. 9.

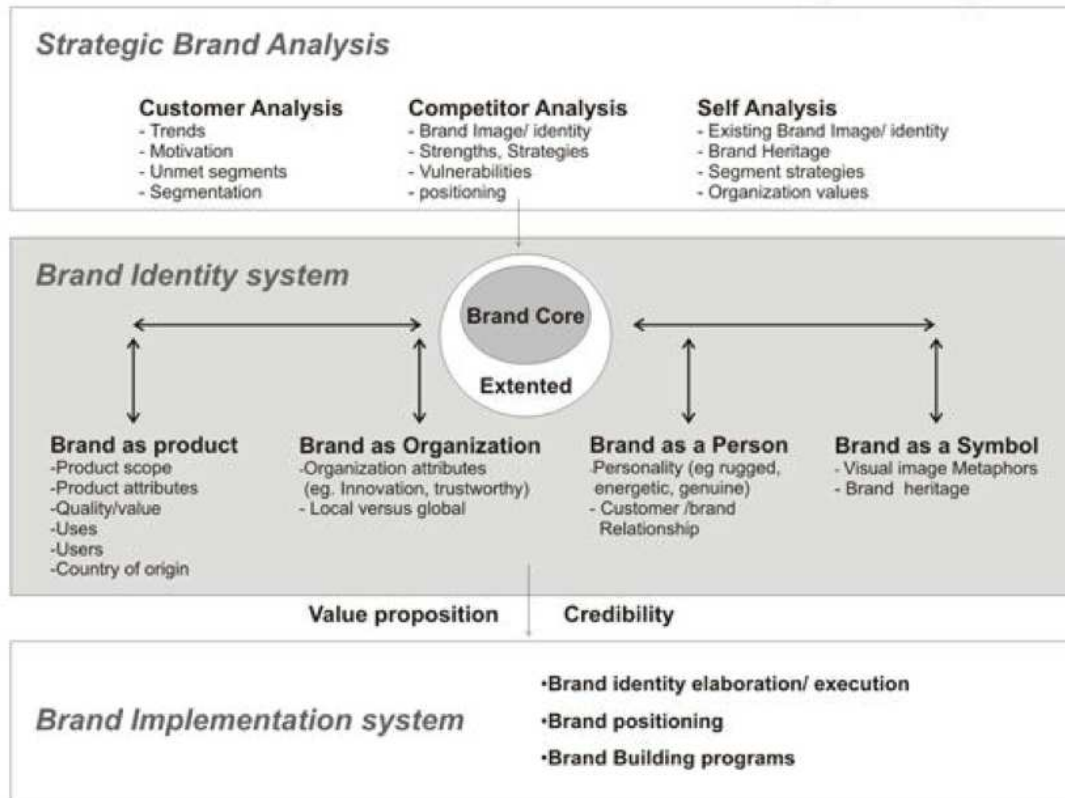
1.3 BRAND IDENTITY: THE BRAND FROM AN INTERNAL PERSPECTIVE

We have seen that brand equity is the perceived value of a brand from the consumer side; brand identity is the value that the firm aims to project, or the brand from an internal, corporate perspective. There are two main definitions and brand identity models, that of Aaker (1996) and of Kapferer (2012). Aaker presents a brand identity system that establishes a core brand identity and an extended brand identity that is made up of four perspectives: the brand as a product, an organization, a person, and a symbol. Kapferer, on the other hand, presents a prism of brand identity with the physique, personality, relationship, culture, reflection, and self-image of the brand. Aaker's brand identity model (See Figure II) from his book *Building Strong Brands* will be used as a basis for this research as it is easily measured and more pertinent for this research study. Let us then go a little more into detail of Aaker's brand identity model. The core brand identity is the timeless essence of the brand, it is central and likely to remain constant in changing markets. The extended identity elements provide "texture and completeness" to a brand (Aaker, 1996, pg. 69). The core identity is surrounded by the following dimensions of the extended identity:

- Brand as a product: product scope, attributes, quality/value, users, country of origin
- Brand as an organization: organizational attributes, local vs. global
- Brand as a person: personality, customer-brand relationship
- Brand as a symbol: visual image metaphors, brand heritage

Each of these dimensions or assets provides a value proposition and credibility for a brand. To conclude, the brand identity is "a unique set of associations that the brand strategist aspires to create or maintain" (Aaker, 1996, pg. 68).

Figure II: Aaker's Brand Identity Model



Source: Aaker, D. (1996) *Building strong brands*. New York: Free Press. pg. 79.

SECTION 2: WINE BRANDING

2.1 WINE AS A COMPLEX PRODUCT

Given both the intrinsic and extrinsic attributes of wine, it can be characterized as a complex product for the consumer (Bruwer & Buller, 2012). The intrinsic attributes are the physical attributes of the product: the taste, smell, color, and balance of flavor, among others. Besides the color, it is difficult for the consumer to use these intrinsic attributes as buying cues if they have not already tasted the wine (Lockshin & Hall, 2003). The consumers must then rely on the extrinsic attributes (Schiffman et al., 2008), such as the wine brand, packaging, price (Viot & Passebois-Ducros 2010), grape variety, ageing ability, food and wine pairing suggestions, region of origin (Johnson & Bruwer, 2007; Perrouty et al. 2006), and even appellation or terroir (Moulard et al.,

2015), among others when purchasing a wine. For wine produced in France, the official Institute for Origin and Quality states that the following information is mandatory on the wine label:

- Denomination (*appellation*)
- Name and address of producer, of bottling company, and wine merchant
- Name of the country of origin for exported wines
- Quantity of wine
- Degree of alcohol
- Presence of sulfites

and that this information is optional:

- Type of wine
- Vintage
- Grape variety
- Medals
- Recommendation of use (INAO, 2016).

There is much to consider when a consumer purchases wine and this information consequently acts as buying cues for the consumers. These cues are used to “form beliefs and evaluations about a product, which in turn influence their purchase behaviors” (Yasin et al., 2007, pg. 40). This wide variety of attributes can be confusing and is what makes wine a high-risk purchase for the consumer (Lockshin 2003; Lockshin & Corsi 2012).

These different attributes have been integrated into the definition of a wine brand by Lockshin and d’Hauteville (2004). The authors define a wine brand as a mixture of these attributes that form an identity perceived by the consumers. Huneus (2005) notes more detail on Lockshin’s definition in the eyes of the buyer: wine consumers are involved in a matrix of price, type of wine, and region of origin, while in more simple products the consumer has to focus only on the brand itself. A wine brand can therefore be an actual brand name or a perception of the other attributes (Viot & Passebois-Ducros, 2010). A name brand is considered to be another attribute of wine, like price, grape variety or region of origin, and the wine brand’s perceived quality is influenced by these other wine attributes (Lockshin ,2005; Moulard et al., 2015).

We can conclude that wine is an “information-intensive and complicated product” (Johnson & Bruwer, 2007) and that there is not just one way that consumers view a wine brand. Lockshin is one of the major authors of wine attributes and as early as 2000, he proposed that wine attributes have a hierarchical order of importance to the consumer. In a study on how brands are identified,

these are, in descending order, the country, region, domain, producer, distributor and retailer. Studies completed worldwide found that consumers in different countries value different attributes when purchasing wine. Bruwer and House (2003) found that price and grape variety were the most important for Australian consumers. However, in 2006, Lockshin empirically proved that for Australian consumers, the wine brand is the most important factor, above price and quality (Lockshin et al., 2006). Different sample sizes and consumer profiles were used for each study which leads to conflicting results, validating the fact that even in the same country, the importance of attributes can change according to the type of consumer. Americans tend to choose by the grape variety, vintage, or brand (Viot & Passebois-Ducros 2010). In France, Germany, Austria, and the UK, Perrouty et al. (2006) concluded that price, brand, and region of origin are the three most important attributes. We can conclude that the order of importance of the wine attributes changes from country to country (Viot & Passebois-Ducros, 2010) and also according to the consumer segment as we will see in the next section.

2.2 CONSUMER KNOWLEDGE: NOVICE & EXPERT

The literature shows that there are different types of consumers in regards to wine and that these different types of consumers are influenced differently by different wine attributes. (Lockshin, 2004; Perrouty et al., 2006). In addition, the multiple attributes of wine can sometimes reduce the risk to the consumer according to the type of consumer. Further research has identified which consumers are more influenced by certain aspects. Most business literature has divided the consumers into experienced, expert consumers and less experienced, novice consumers.

Bruwer and Johnson (2010) state that expert consumers seem to be more influenced by brand-based cues but not necessarily the brand itself, while other authors (Lockshin, 2004; Perrouty et al., 2006; Viot & Passebois-Ducros, 2010) confirm that novice consumers are more influenced by the brand itself. Lockshin (2006) has shown that award is an important attribute for novice consumers. The region of origin, on the other hand, has been established as an important attribute for expert consumers (Bruwer & Johnson, 2010; Lockshin et al., 2000; Perrouty et al., 2006), and Trolley (2005) states that expert consumers almost always choose wines where the region is mentioned on the label. However, Perrouty et al. (2006) and Lockshin (2004) conclude that the

region of origin is influenced by other cues. Perrouty (2006) specifies that these moderating factors for expert consumers are price and brand. Expert consumers tend to spend more on better quality wine (Trolley, 2005) and novice consumers tend to take price into more consideration.

The levels of expertise presented above are self-perceived. It is important to note that a difference has been shown between subjective and objective knowledge. In general, subjective knowledge is how much consumers think they know, and objective is how much they actually know, although research has not come to an overall agreement on an exact definition (Flynn & Goldsmith, 1999). However, subjective knowledge is more widely used as it is easier to measure with scales, including no right or wrong answers (Vigar-Ellis et al., 2015). Our study will consequently focus on the self-perceived expertise labels of novice and expert. There have been other wine consumer labels that appear, although not widely cited in the literature. These are listed as snobs, experts, modest and neophytes (Vigar-Ellis et al., 2015), which were created by combining subjective and objective results. Our study will focus on the self-perceived expertise labels of novice and expert.

SECTION 3: REGIONAL BRANDING

3.1 COUNTRY AND REGION OF ORIGIN

The notion of place is also a complex idea for the consumer, with multiple attributes (Kavaratzis, 2005; Papadopoulos & Heslop, 2002). When it comes to place-branding, on the other hand, place can help customers differentiate products in an intense market (Kavaratzis & Kalandides, 2015) and it has been shown that products associated with a place are perceived as more authentic than products not associated with a place (Moulard et al., 2015). Donner, Fort, and Vellema (2014) propose that place brand equity, the perceived value of a place, be based on the following antecedents: the stakeholders and collective character, the economic and non-economic outcomes, the socio-political and macroeconomic environment, and finally the time it takes to be established. These elements are part of what makes place a complex idea and how consumers consider these attributes form their perceived value of a brand. Spielmann et al. (2019) add that heritage is also an important component of place branding.

The country of origin is one of the most basic place-branding dimensions (Charters & Spielmann, 2014) and research on this notion has been present since the 1970s. It has already been established as a purchasing cue, having an effect on consumer behavior (Van Ittersum et al. 2003; Vrontis, Thrassou, & Czinkota, 2011) and on brand equity (Yasin et al., 2007). Lockshin et al. 's (2000) brand attribute hierarchy established the country of origin as the first most important wine attribute that has a positive effect on the consumer and therefore increases brand equity.

Just as country of origin is important for some products and brands, region of origin can be even more important for others, including wine (Johnson & Bruwer, 2007; Perrouty et al., 2006). As early as 1998, research shows that specific locations lead to higher wine brand equity than less precise locations (Thode & Maskulka, 1998). This can be explained partially because “regions are much more homogeneous in terms of human and natural factors than countries and they may provide a more consistent, tangible, unique and authentic image” (Bruwer & House, 2003, pg. 57). Research has also identified the region of origin as an important purchasing cue (Johnson & Bruwer, 2010; Lockshin, 2000; Perrouty et al. 2006) and that wine is innately linked to its region of origin (Patterson, Buechsenstein, & Freeman, 2018).

One concept that has derived from the region of origin in wine is regionality, or wine regions that specialize in a style. The drivers of regionality are, according to Easingwood et al. (2011), wines regions that: specialize in a wine style, produce significant amounts, are discussed by opinion formers, produce quality wines consistently, have a wine heritage, produce distinctive wines not made elsewhere, and produce a wine that is made possible by the region’s particular terroir. These elements enhance the need for a regional brand (Easingwood et al. 2001). Place-branding literature shows that the region of origin can indeed be considered as a brand in itself (Charters & Spielmann, 2014; Viot & Passebois-Ducros, 2010). A regional brand is when a region takes over as a brand, and in the case of wine and other products associated with a place, becomes an umbrella brand for the products, and in the case of wine individual producers, that fall within.

More recent literature has explored the definition of a territorial brand (Charters et al. 2011; Charters & Spielmann, 2014), which could be seen as one step further than a regional brand. The main difference in a regional brand and a territorial brand is that in a territorial brand, in addition

to the product not being able to be created or made anywhere else, the brand has a brand manager, co-opetition among the proprietary brands, a common story, and local engagement (Charters & Spielmann, 2014). We can conclude that territorial brands must be developed and that a regional wine brand should therefore strive to have collective character and co-opetition among the brands to build regional identities (Charters & Spielmann, 2014), along with the resources that cannot be replicated elsewhere (Thode & Maskulka, 1998). According to Charters et al. (2011), “a territorial brand may be, and usually is, a regional brand (sometimes a country brand), but not all regional brands are territorial brands” (pg. 5). Most French appellations have the possibility to be considered a territorial brand but they must work towards this (Charters et al., 2011). As these studies are exploratory and serve to develop concepts, our research will continue to focus on the established concept of a regional brand while still considering elements of a territorial brand. Based on the work of Charters et al. 2011, Thach (2016) provides 5 steps for wine regions to move from good to great in terms of being a regional brand:

- Having an icon product: one product that the region is known for.
- The cohesion of actors: wineries promoting the region before the proprietary brands.
- Willingness to accept the definition of a territorial brand: reiterates individual wineries working together as a region.
- A common story: choose what to promote as a region.
- An effective regional brand manager: being led by the regional body or some organization to encourage promotion as a region.

These are proposed steps to help wine regions become successful regional brands and have been implemented and studied in French wine regions such as Champagne (Charters & Spielmann, 2014) and Provence (Haller et al., 2016).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

The following sections combine the previously defined concepts to formulate our research hypotheses and present a conceptual model.

3.2 REGIONAL WINE BRAND IMAGE

Brand image is another widely studied branding concept, although over the years the definitions

and dimensions have changed. Generally, brand image can be defined as the associations identified with a brand (Aaker, 1996; Keller, 1993). As described before, wine is a complicated, multidimensional product which consequently makes the notion of a wine brand image multidimensional. We can conclude that a wine brand image follows the classic definition of brand image: the associations given to a wine brand. To our knowledge, there have not been sufficient studies on wine brand image apart from those of Johnson & Bruwer (2007) and Bruwer & Johnson (2010). Johnson & Bruwer (2007) provides a definition of a regional wine brand image which is multidimensional like regions and like wine:

“A held perception (or belief) about a bounded wine area space that is usually holistic and multidimensional in nature, the elements of which are “glued together” by inter-related winescape elements and/or the people and natural and physical attractions within it” (Johnson & Bruwer, 2007, pg. 277).

According to these authors, the “winescape elements” are anything that is in relation to the wine or wine making in the region, for example the style or wine producers. Region of origin has a proven effect on brand image in general (Kouba, 2008; Anselmsson, Bondesson and Johansson, 2014) and to our knowledge, there are few authors that have empirically proved that wine brand image can be created through the region of origin (Johnson & Bruwer, 2007) and that the region of origin can strengthen a wine brand image (Bruwer and House, 2003). Van Ittersum et al. (2003) state that if the general image of the region is positive, the brand image of the specific product is also positive. The authors therefore propose the following hypothesis:

H1 (direct effect): Regional brand image has a positive effect on regional wine brand image.

In addition, brand image is known to be an important antecedent of brand equity (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993) and has been moderately cited in wine brand equity literature (Johnson & Bruwer, 2007). There is in-depth literature on region of origin and brand equity, but wine brand image has not been cited in the literature as an antecedent to wine brand equity like brand familiarity, brand knowledge, and brand exposure has been (Perrouty et al., 2006). As stated above, only Johnson and Bruwer (2007) have empirically proven that the regional brand image has a positive impact on consumers’ quality perceptions, which is also a known antecedent of brand equity (Aaker, 1996). The authors therefore propose the following hypothesis:

H2 (direct effect): *Regional wine brand image has a positive effect on regional wine brand equity.*

3.3 REGIONAL WINE BRAND EQUITY

Wine branding and wine brand equity have been studied extensively (Lockshin, 2001; Perrouty et al., 2006; Viot & Passebois-Ducros, 2010). The multiple attributes of wine: price, grape variety, region of origin, and terroir, among others, make up a wine brand and have different effects on wine brand equity, because they can have positive effects on the consumer (Lockshin, 2004) and shape consumer expectations (Moulard et al., 2015).

Ohrth et al. (2005) used Aaker's conceptual model of brand equity and adapted the perceived value model from Sweeney and Soutar (2001) to establish 6 dimensions that influence wine brand equity: quality, price, social, emotions, environment, and human. These are the dimensions, according to Ohrth et al. (2005), that influence consumer behavior when purchasing wine. Farmularo et al. (2010) agree that quality is important, in addition to grape variety and style. Interestingly enough, region of origin was not listed on Orth et al. 's list, even though it had already proven to be an important factor of consumer behavior (Lockshin, 2000). For Farmularo et al. (2010), region of origin is important because it is associated with the grape variety and style. Nevertheless, region of origin has a significant positive effect on brand equity and the dimensions of brand equity (Yasin et al. 2007). Specifically, for wine, the region of origin has an effect on the perceived quality of the wine and the willingness to pay (Moulard et al. 2015). Moulard et al. (2015) additionally proved that both region of origin and the technical terroir of the land add to wine brand equity. Johnson & Bruwer (2007) do specify that regional association is stronger for less well-known brands. A brand can be replaced but a regional brand cannot, and regional brands are usually perceived as having a higher quality. The authors therefore propose the following hypothesis:

H3 (direct effect): *The regional brand image has a positive effect on regional wine brand equity.*

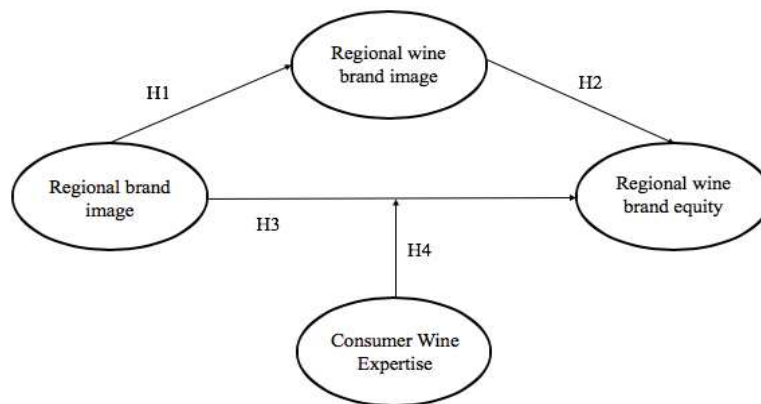
However, this might not necessarily be the case for novice consumers (Johnson & Bruwer, 2010; Lockshin, 2006). As introduced in Section 2, the importance of wine attributes and the relations between them differ between novice and expert consumers (Johnson & Bruwer, 2010; Lockshin, 2005) and between countries (Viot & Passebois-Ducros, 2010). It has been proven that expert, or

more knowledgeable, consumers are more influenced by the region of origin (Lockshin, 2006) and less by brands themselves, than the novice consumers who are more influenced by other attributes. In other words, novice, or less knowledgeable consumers, are more influenced by a brand name and less by the region of origin. The price can also moderate the importance of the region of origin (Perrouy et al., 2006). Johnson and Bruwer (2010) go even as far to say that regional branding should only be targeted to high involvement, or knowledgeable, consumers. The authors therefore propose the following hypothesis:

H4 (moderation effect): *The effect of regional brand image on regional wine brand equity is moderated by consumer wine expertise (Expert vs. Novice). Precisely, the more the consumer is expert, the more regional brand image will have a positive effect on regional wine brand equity.*

Based on the literature on wine brand equity, regional branding, regional wine brand image, and consumer wine knowledge, the authors present the following conceptual model (Figure III):

Figure III: *Proposed Conceptual Model*



LITERATURE REVIEW CONCLUSION

This review of the literature has defined the concepts of brand equity, brand identity, wine brands, and regional brands. Then, the theoretical frameworks of regional wine brand image related to regional branding and regional wine brand equity were presented, with the moderation of consumer wine expertise. From this, we presented a conceptual model based on the four

hypotheses. Combining the notions of a regional brand and a wine brand leaves the consumer with an extremely complicated product to understand and therefore to attribute an image; it is equally difficult to attribute a perceived value because of the many dimensions. The literature review aims to conceptualize these ideas and to provide a basis for our research study.

Wine and branding are not new topics of research, however as consumer preferences are continuously changing, it remains an important field of study. Wine is the most prolific product of today's society and we have arrived at a period in time where the offer is higher than the demand. Many articles studied in the review of the literature conclude that the limits of their research are the sample size or region studied, making it difficult to generalize the results. Most of the literature also focuses on either regions in Australia or the United States, or countries in general. It is therefore appropriate to apply these hypotheses to other wine regions, especially because there is a lack in the literature on specific wine regions in France, or *appellations* (Viot & Passebois-Ducros 2010), even though Provence (Haller et al. 2016) and Champagne (Charters & Spielmann, 2014) have since been studied as regional brands. Additionally, there is little work on the notion of regional wine brand image and its dimensions. To conclude, the exact notions of a regional brand in relation to wine brand image and wine brand equity have less commonly been studied all together, especially with the addition of consumer expertise.

Thus, we can formulate the two following research propositions in addition to our hypotheses, to further discover the brand image of our targeted region, Alsace:

***RP1:** There is a discrepancy in the regional identity of Alsace Wines among the winegrowers.*

***RP2:** Intermediaries in the American market do not have a clear brand image of the wine region of Alsace.*

CHAPTER 2: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

SECTION 1: RESEARCH CONTEXT

1.1 THE WINE REGION OF ALSACE

Alsace, with 15,623 hectares of vineyards and over 700 wineries, is a traditional wine-making region of France, making wine since the oldest wine was produced in the year 1472. Many wineries are now managed by the fifteenth generation of the family. The traditions, architecture, and landscapes are the foundations of this historical wine-making region. The villages of Alsace are composed of half-timbered colorful homes, surrounded by the vineyards; the villages are truly embodied by the vines.

The 742 wineries that compose Alsace are made up of *winegrowers*, who grow their own grapes and sell their wine; *winemakers*, who buy grapes and make wine; and *cooperative cellars*, where many winegrowers harvest grapes and make wine under one commercial name. For the purpose of this study, we will call Alsace winegrowers, winemakers, and cooperative cellars *wine producers* when generalizing the Alsatian vineyard and list them separately when specification is necessary.

Alsace is home to fourteen different types of soil, including granite, volcanic, clay, and limestone, which present a wide diversity and range of flavors. These soils are home to seven main grape varieties and three smaller varieties. The four noble grapes are Riesling, Gewurztraminer, Pinot Gris, and Muscat. Pinot Blanc and Auxerrois are popular for the sparkling Crémant d'Alsace production and Pinot Noir is the only red grape variety in Alsace. The smaller grape varieties are Chasselas, Chardonnay (only used in crémant production), and Klevener de Heiligenstein. Alsace also produces *Vendanges Tardives* “late harvest” and *Sélection des Grains Nobles* “noble grape selection”, which are both made from premium grapes. There are some other particularities of the Alsatian wines that are important to note: 100% of bottling is done in Alsace and the special bottle, called the “flute d'Alsace, ” is the only bottle allowed and protected by the law.

Alsace has three regional appellations: AOC Alsace, AOC Alsace Grand Cru and AOC Crémant d'Alsace. To have the AOC Alsace appellations, the wines must follow certain regulations outlined in a specifications chart established by an agricultural governing body. A Grand Cru is a special, premium wine from a small parcel of land. The region is home to fifty-one Grand Cru sites, which are ideally south-east facing small areas of land. All wine producers that produce AOC Alsace wine are required to be a member of the Alsace Wine Committee (*Interprofession des vins d'Alsace* - CIVA), the regional wine body. Members pay a yearly fee and profit from promotion, communication, and PR organized by the committee. The regional body has three pillars of communication that embody the regional wine product and environment: white wines of quality, the human side of the wines of Alsace, and the myriad types of soil.

1.2 ALSACE AND THE AMERICAN MARKET

The United States is Alsace's second highest importer in terms of value for still wines, behind Belgium, and the seventh highest in terms of volume, with 20,344 hectoliters exported in 2019 (CIVA, 2020). It is the third market in both volume and value for sparkling wines, Crémant d'Alsace. **Overall, The United States is the second market in value and third market in volume, with an increase in terms of both value (+16.3%) and volume (+12.5%)** compared to the average over the last three years (CIVA, 2020). According to the Wine Intelligence Compass, 17% of the total French wine imports are from Alsace (Wine Intelligence Compass, 2019).

The interest in the US market stems from the market dynamics and the increase of Alsatian wines sold in terms of both volume and value. A short comparison of the US market with some other markets, especially European, can be interesting. Germany, which is ahead of the US in volume, is a stagnant market that ranks high in volume but low in value, equating to buying inexpensive wines in bulk. The wines of Alsace in Germany have seen a decrease in both value (-14.8%) and volume (-11.3%) compared to the average over the last three years (CIVA, 2020). Belgium, the first export market in both value and volume, has been stagnant over the past three years, only with a slight increase in volume (+2.1%) compared to the average of the past three years (CIVA, 2020). The United States is continuously gaining in momentum and is a huge market to overcome. Another country that may be questioned because of their dynamic economy is China. Although

China is a growing market, Alsatian wines are not part of their consumption habits for the time being, as it is a “Bordeaux” market.

The United States is the largest wine consumer in the world, consuming 13% of the world’s wine production (Vin et Société, 2018). The population of the US is 330.2 million people, which includes 243 legal drinkers. In 2018, the US consumed 77.5 million cases¹ of imported wines (Wine Institute, 2019). On average, the American consumer consumes 13.6 liters of wine per person per year (CIVA 2020; Wine Intelligence Compass, 2019) and only nine states² represent almost 50% of all French wine imports. According to a study by Wine Intelligence Landscape (2018), 50% of Americans consume red wine, 34% white, and 16% rosé. There are several overall consumer trends that present opportunities for Alsace Wines, for example the increasing market of sparkling wine.

The CIVA, in collaboration with Wine Intelligence, developed a tool in 2016 that shows the potentials of the different export markets. Each element is judged on a scale of 1-10, 10 being the highest. The following list provides the potential of Alsatian wines in the US market.

- Social economic: 8.4
 - Size of the middle class, sensibility to organic products, number of wine stores, champagne imports
- Market access: 5.2
 - Business environment, market proximity, professional trade fairs, customs
- Still wine history: 5.2
 - Alsace wine notoriety, number of Alsace exporters, sales, and average price
- Still wine potential: 8.5
 - Imports of AOP EU white wines, wines from NZ and Sancerre (similar products)
- Still wine risks: 7.3
 - Business environment, exchange rate, French wine, and EU white wine price volatility
- Crémant history: 5.5
 - Alsace wine notoriety, number of Alsace exporters, sales, and average price
- Crémant potential: 7.6
 - Imports of Cava (Spain), Prosecco (Italy), and Limoux (France)
- Crémant risks: 7.5
 - Business environment, exchange rate, French sparkling wine and Alsatian crémant price volatility

¹ 1 case equals 12 bottles of wine

² Washington, Oregon, California, Texas, Illinois, Florida, New York, and Massachusetts

Overall, the CIVA and Compass Wine Intelligence predicted in 2016 that the US had the 2nd highest potential for the Alsace market and was labeled a market “to be reinforced.” (Compass Wine Intelligence / CIVA, 2016). Since this study was conducted in 2015, almost 5 years ago, the US market is now considered to have the largest market potential because of the reasons listed above, in addition to the dynamic market and increasing visibility of Alsace Wines as a region in the US market.

However, according to a study of Landscape Wine Intelligence (2019) in 2018, 18% of regular wine consumers, or consumers declaring consuming wine at least once a month know or have heard about Alsatian wines, which is a decrease from 2015, when this percentage equated 23.4% (Landscape Wine Intelligence, 2019). 10.2% of consumers had purchased Alsatian wine in the previous three months of when the survey was completed, which is only 4% higher than in 2015 (Landscape Wine Intelligence, 2019). This continuous question of notoriety and visibility provides motivation for Alsatian winegrowers and winemakers to market their wines to the large potential of the US market, and therefore presents an interest to conduct this study of Alsace Wines in the US market.

The notorious three-tier distribution system in the US is also important to point out. Wine must pass through importers, then distributors, and then retailers before finally making it to the US consumer. However, laws differ from state to state with more or less strict interpretations of the three-tier system.

1.3 REGIONAL BRANDING IN THE US MARKET

Wine branding is extremely important in the US market. An average American consumer tends to pay more attention to the brand name of wines, and most local wines are designated by their brand name and/or grape variety, similar to other new world producing countries. The region of origin has also proved to be an important attribute, historically for wine from the old world. In France, like most old-world producing countries, wines are classified by their region. How did the most popular and successful French wine brands become so popular in the United States market? By using their regional brand. Bordeaux is an “icon of regionality” (Brewer, 2007 pg. 278) and has

had ease as a global exporter because of its location near the Atlantic coast. Champagne has managed to market its product and region extremely well, exporting half of their products with the US as their primary importer, totaling $\frac{1}{4}$ of the export demand (Newton et al., 2020). It is one of the most well-promoted regional wine brands in the world. Bordeaux and Champagne have reached their level of notoriety because of their branding efforts. Alsace is now in the running to do the same and must improve its regional brand to achieve this success.

Based on the context, the authors conclude that, although Alsatian wines purchases are increasing in the US, there is still a need to strengthen the regional wine brand of Alsace Wines in the US market. This regional branding can be an effective marketing strategy (Spielmann and Williams, 2016; Viot, 2010) and increase consumer awareness of the region (Tustin and Lockshin, 2001). The focus of this study is therefore to understand how the Alsatian winegrowers perceive their regional brand identity in the US market, and how American consumers, both intermediate and final, perceive regional brands, both in general and specific to Alsace. This is why we propose two research propositions to understand the specific case of Alsace, while studying four hypotheses to determine the general importance of regional branding in the US market.

RP1: *There is a discrepancy in the regional identity of Alsace Wines among the winegrowers.*

RP2: *Intermediaries in the American market do not have a clear brand image of the wine region of Alsace.*

H1 (direct effect): *Regional brand image has a positive effect on regional wine brand image.*

H2 (direct effect): *Regional wine brand image has a positive effect on regional wine brand equity.*

H3 (direct effect): *Regional brand image has a positive effect on regional wine brand equity.*

H4 (moderation effect): *The effect of regional brand image on regional wine brand equity is moderated by consumer wine expertise (Expert vs. Novice). Precisely, the more the consumer is expert, the more regional brand image will have a positive effect on regional wine brand equity.*

SECTION 2: DATA COLLECTION

2.1 METHODOLOGY CHOICE

2.1.1 Qualitative Research

Qualitative approaches are used in research to deepen understanding and to investigate terms and concepts, and can provide richness to a study by contextualizing phenomena (Hlady Rispal, 2002). This contextualization can be achieved by interviews, observations, interventions, or archives (Conbry et al, 2012). The most common qualitative studies are through focus groups or personal interviews, and these serve to empirically investigate management theories. The limits to qualitative studies, however, include the unreliability and the complexity of the process and results, the dependence on and bias of the researcher, and the difficulty to generalize and transfer the knowledge attained (Conboy et al., 2012; Coutelle, 2005).

We chose to apply a qualitative approach to our research to broaden our understanding of two theoretical frameworks in relation to our study context: brand identity and brand image. It is important for our study to understand the importance of regionality in the eyes of both the offer and the demand. Two sets of qualitative interviews were held to achieve this. The results of the qualitative analysis provide answers to the research propositions developed in the literature review. The qualitative study also served as a base of understanding for the market before a quantitative survey was launched.

2.1.2 Quantitative Research

The objective of a quantitative approach is to measure the market: to analyze behaviors, opinions, or expectations of a targeted group. Data obtained from quantitative data collection also confirms or refutes proposed hypotheses by measuring the causal relationship between variables and gives empirical data of the targeted field. All uses of quantitative approaches are important to and will be implicated in our research project. Quantitative data can be obtained through face to face surveys, telephone surveys, online surveys, or data mining. The limits to quantitative studies can include requiring complex sampling procedures and analysis, and not being able to accurately describe a complex situation.

A quantitative approach is essential to our study because it is the way of measuring the causal

relationships among the variables of our proposed hypotheses on regional brand image, regional wine brand image, regional wine brand equity, and wine consumer expertise. The behavior and opinion data that can be achieved through quantitative data methods are also important to understand our targeted market segment, American residents and expatriates, and their expectations and eventual differences.

2.1.3 Mixed Method Approach

The theoretical frameworks of brand identity, brand image, and brand equity have many components and we chose to gather information from a number of stakeholders: the wine producers making up the offer, the intermediary clients and the final consumers making up the demand. This was possible through the choice of executing both qualitative and quantitative research. The qualitative research provides 1) comprehension of the market offer from the Alsatian vineyard and 2) the image of regional brands from American professionals, while the quantitative research allows us to gather a large amount of information on the targeted audience of American consumers and to confirm or deny the research hypotheses by measuring relationships among the variables. A mixed method approach can make up for the weaknesses of each method by their respective strengths mentioned in the previous sections. Through a mixed approach, we are able to obtain investigative and rich information about the phenomenon of regional branding in addition to factual data about our targeted consumer segment, which are both essential to our study on regional wine branding.

2.2 QUALITATIVE DATA COLLECTION MECHANISMS

2.2.1 Creation of Questionnaires and Semi-Structured Interviews

In the field of marketing, both the offer and demand present common fields of study for qualitative research and in our study, both sides of the market will be analyzed in two stages of qualitative research:

- Stage 1: Experts of the offer, Alsatian wine producers, and
- Stage 2: Experts of the demand, American wine professionals.

Our research is therefore composed of two interview guides, one guide for each stage.

Each interview guide was carefully prepared with themes identified in the literature linked with our two research propositions. Both Stage 1 and Stage 2 started with test interviews that were integrated into the data collection because no changes were made following these test interviews. It is important to note however that semi-structured interviews allow for small differentiations in questions due to the conversation-like and informal nature (De Ketele & Roegiers, 1996). Out of the three types of interviews, structured, unstructured, and semi-structured (De Ketele & Roegiers, 1996; Dunn, 2005), our research led us to conduct semi-structured interviews because they allow participants to respond openly in a conversational manner. Commonly used in the social sciences, researchers carefully prepare predetermined questions, but let the participant express their views and speak freely, guiding them from one question to another (Longhurst, 2003). All of the twelve interviews of Stage 1 and Stage 2 combined were held in a semi-structured manner. Due to the semi-structured nature of the interviews, not all questions presented in the following section were asked in the same order for each participant. Some questions were reworded, added, or deleted as the conversation flowed based on the responses of the participants and judgement of the researcher.

a) Stage 1 Interview Guide

The first interview guide was created based on themes identified in the literature to gain insight into the brand identity of Alsace wines and the Alsatian wine producers' opinions on the US market (see [Appendix A for the complete guide](#)). More precisely, the interview was meant to explore how each Alsatian producer describes elements of the regional wine brand of Alsace and their implementation in the US market, which is our first research proposition. Questions were asked about either the proprietary brand or the regional brand, and this specification was clearly stated in each question. The main themes of the interview guide follow the literature established on brand identity, in addition to questions concerning the regional branding of Alsace Wines in an international setting. Each section is briefly explained below.

- **Introduction:** This section gathered general information about the participant and his or her company. The introductory questions can help to make a participant feel more comfortable before asking more in-depth questions.
- **Individual brand identity:** Individual brands are part of a regional brand. In this sense, we developed questions related to the proprietary brand's associations and characteristics

to better understand the individual brand identities that make up the regional brand.

- **Regional brand identity:** Brand identity has been defined with many dimensions. In our research we explored the associations, characteristics, values, symbols, personality, and consumers of a regional brand.
- **Customer segments:** This section explores the different consumer segments identified in the literature, novice, and expert, and how each participant defines and works with these consumers. The importance of regionality and brand evaluation in relation to the customer segments was also included.
- **Perceptions:** The goal of this section is to investigate how the regional brand of Alsace Wines brand is perceived internationally and in the US market.
- **Collaboration and the future:** This final section explores how the Alsatian producers feel about the current state of affairs in the US market and what they think the regional brand should do going forward.

b) Stage 2 Interview Guide

The second interview guide, intended for American wine professionals, was created to explore the importance of regional branding and the brand image of Alsace Wines in the US market, our second research proposition (see [Appendix B for the complete guide](#)). The main themes were identified from branding literature and composed of multiple questions to deepen our understanding of how these themes are implemented in the field. Each section is briefly explained below. The topics are similar to those of Stage 1, following the literature, the difference being exploring brand image instead of brand identity as the two stages aim to study different sides of the market.

- **Introduction:** The introduction was intended to make the participant feel comfortable and to gain general information about his or her job and position in the distribution chain.
- **Region of origin & other attributes:** This section asked the participant to discuss the

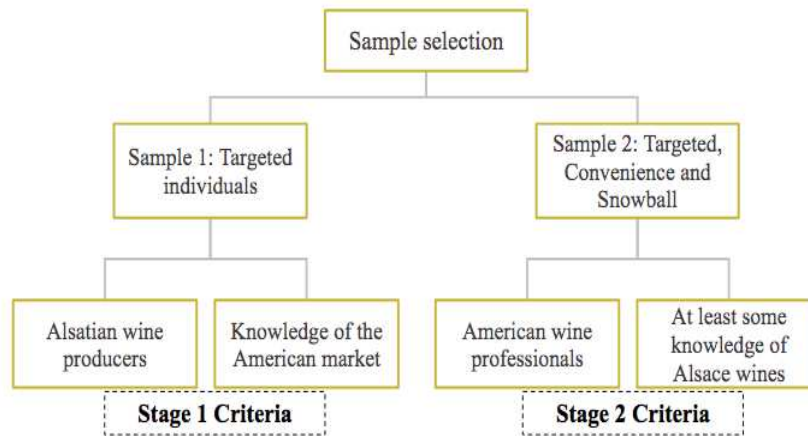
importance, or not, of the region of origin when they buy or recommend a wine, and other attributes that also might be important.

- **Brand image:** These questions aimed to gather the brand awareness and brand associations, two components of brand image, that the US intermediaries have of the wine region of Alsace.
- **Brand evaluation:** This section was made to explore the opinions, feelings, and behavior of American intermediaries in terms of the region of Alsace wines and its identity.
- **Consumers:** This section was intended to understand the different US consumers' behavior and opinion of regional wines in the eyes of the intermediaries and how to successfully market wine, considering any differences between customer segments.
- **Collaboration and the future:** The final section was designed to understand what these American wine professionals feel about the future of Alsace Wines as a regional brand in the US, and how they think the wine region can differentiate themselves in this market.

2.2.2 Creation of the Qualitative Samples

We established two different samples to accommodate the two different stages of qualitative research (See Figure IV).

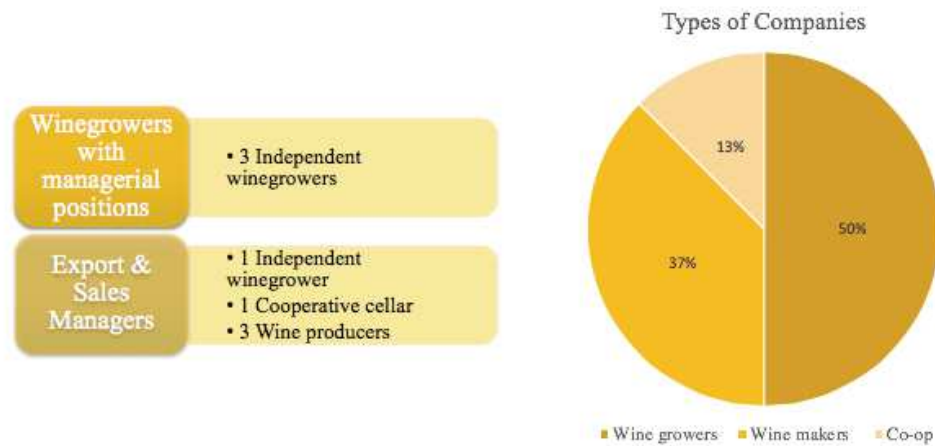
Figure IV: Qualitative Data Sample Selection



a) Stage 1 Sampling

The sampling for Stage 1 was a purposive sample of Alsatian wine producers (see Appendix C for the table of profiles). The main criterion was that the targeted participant, in addition to being an Alsatian wine producer, had knowledge of the American market. In addition, we aimed to have a mixture of winegrowers, winemakers, and cooperative cellars to compose our panel (See Figure V). The participants were carefully chosen to provide a global understanding of the Alsatian vineyard through the different types of wine producing companies and their implementation in the US market. This purposive sample could be obtained because the researcher had an established professional relationship with the targeted participants. Due to this professional relationship, the researcher took on the role of a professional-researcher. It is possible that this status had a positive impact on the willingness to participate and organization of making appointments. Eight potential participants were contacted by email, followed by eight interviews held by telephone over a two-week period. The phone interviews lasted on average forty-five minutes and were recorded by Zoom on the researcher’s computer. General handwritten notes were taken during the interviews and we progressively transcribed the eight interviews to be later analyzed.

Figure V: Panel of Stage 1 Interviews



b) Stage 2 Sampling

The status of the researcher was not as successful in Stage 2 as it was in Stage 1. This sample was obtained but not without difficulties: out of more than twelve American wine professionals contacted, only five resulted in interviews to compose our panel (See Appendix D for the table of profiles). It is important to note that the potential participants needed to have at least some general knowledge of the wine region of Alsace wines to be able to participate in the interview. The researchers aimed to target certain parts of the wine distribution chain in the US market, touching all types of intermediaries (See Figure VI). The final sample was eventually achieved through a convenience and snowball approach. We were dependent on our professional contacts to put us in touch with potential interviewees. Two American wine professionals were identified and through those two contacts, the researchers were able to hold five total interviews of convenience. Depending on the contact and network used, we took on the role as either professional-researchers or student-researchers. Three of the five interviews were held by the virtual meeting platform Zoom, one was held on FaceTime, and the last was a telephone interview. All interviews were recorded by Zoom on the researcher's personal computer. The five virtual interviews were held in a two week-period and just as in Stage 1, we progressively transcribed the recordings for later analysis.

Figure VI: Panel of Stage 2 Interviews



2.3. QUANTITATIVE DATA COLLECTION MECHANISMS

2.3.1 Data Collection Process

After Stage 1 and Stage 3 of qualitative data collection, we began Stage 3 of the research process, a quantitative survey.

a) Survey structure

The 36-question questionnaire was separated into five sections: general wine consumption habits, measurement scales of model variables, evaluation of wines from the region of Alsace, identification of the participant, and a lottery (see Appendix E for the complete questionnaire). All questions required a response.

Part 1) We based our first section of wine consumption habits on questions identified in the literature review on wine branding, to understand the general preferences and behaviors of our targeted sample. The questions included: *drinking frequency*, *consumption company*, *place of consumption*, *wine type preference*, *frequency of drinking organic*, *place of purchase*, and *importance of label attributes*. The *importance of the attribute* question was rated on a 7-point Likert scale from 1 = “Strongly disagree” to 7 = “Strongly agree.” Multiple answers were possible for the *consumption company*, *place of consumption*, and *place of purchase* questions, while we asked that *wine type* preference choices be ranked in order of most frequently consumed to least frequently consumed.

Part 2) The model variables, identified from regional branding literature, make up the second section of questions and will be detailed in section c.

Part 3) The third part of our survey was composed of questions distinguished by the brand image literature and specifically focused on our targeted wine brand of the region of Alsace. This section was composed of: *region familiarity*, *bottle familiarity*, *overall opinion*, *attribute evaluation*, *brand recommendation*, and *wine bottle evaluation*. All questions were rated on 7-point scales in addition to one short answer question which asked the participants to explain a previously submitted answer. If the participants checked “not at all familiar with Alsace,” on the first question they were automatically sent to the final question of this section: *wine bottle evaluation*, which included a picture. This was to ensure valid answers for the subsequent questions as only those familiar with Alsace could answer. We chose to still obtain their opinion about the shape and look of the bottle. The interest in having both a measurement section opens multiple wine regions and a section on the specific wine region of Alsace was to ensure enough responses to validate our hypotheses, and gather even more specific information about our targeted region.

Part 4) General identification questions were established in the fourth section. The questions classified the *gender*, *age*, *occupation*, *education*, *salary*, *nationality*, *place of residence*, and *language* of the participant. This information serves to detail our sample and to eventually find differences among different demographic groups. Kosinski et al. (2015) state that putting general information questions at the end of a survey makes the participant feel more comfortable and freer to express their opinion. Salary, education, and occupation were based on American survey standards.

Part 5) To incite and motivate survey participation, a lottery was put into place at the end of the questionnaire. Participants could choose whether or not they wanted to enter into the raffle to win a bottle of French wine. The lottery is detailed further in section h.

a) Brand selection

The survey participants were asked to select a wine region that they were familiar with from a list of twelve wine regions. The wine regions take on the role as a brand in regional branding. These twelve wine regions were composed of the most exported regions from the top five countries that

export into the United States. Our targeted case, Alsace was additionally included. Then, the participants were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the presented measurements' items that are explained in the following section. The selected region appeared in each of the measurement questions (See Figure VII).

Figure VII: Example of a Selected Brand in a Measurement Question

Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements (1 = Strongly disagree; 7 = Strongly agree).

Thinking about the **wine brand of Hunter Valley (Australia)**, I would say that...

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
This wine brand is not produced anywhere else.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This wine brand has a particular and distinct taste.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This wine brand has specific characteristics that differentiate it from other wine brands of the world.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

b) Measures

These questions measure the relationships of our hypotheses established from the marketing, place-branding, and wine literature. Our study has four variables: one independent, two dependent, and one moderating. The independent variable was measured by the following scale: regional brand image (2 items; adapted from Berger and Mitchell (1989), and 2 items; adapted from Sirgy et al. (1997) (see Table I). The dependent variables were measured by the following scales: regional wine brand image (12 items; adapted from: Easingwood et al. (2011), and regional wine brand equity (2 items; adapted from Voorhees, Brady, and Horowitz (2006), 1 item; adapted from Yoo and Donthu (2001), and 2 items; adapted from Verheof, Langerak and Donkers (2007) (see Table I). The moderating variable was measured by the following scale: wine consumer expertise (3 items; adapted from Flynn et al. (1999); and 2 items; adapted from Johnson and Brewer (2007). All of the measures were rated on a 7-point Likert scale from 1 = “Strongly disagree” to 7 =

“Strongly agree” and the majority items were adapted to the research context of wine regions (see Table I).

Table I: Measurement Items

Concepts	Authors	Dimensions / Items
Regional brand image	2 items adapted from Berger and Mitchell (1989), and 2 items Adapted from Sirgy et al. (1997).	<p>I like this region.</p> <p>I have a positive impression of this region.</p> <p>I appreciate this region.</p> <p>I want to visit/discover this region.</p>
Regional wine brand image	12 items adapted from Easingwood et al. (2011)	<p>This wine brand is much discussed by wine experts (salespeople in wine shops, sommeliers or waiters, connoisseurs in your circle).</p> <p>The quality of this wine brand has a good reputation.</p> <p>This wine brand has potential for bottle aging.</p> <p>This wine brand is highly-rated (wine reviews, wine applications).</p> <p>This wine brand is renowned.</p> <p>This wine brand has a rich history.</p> <p>This wine brand has a heritage in terms of know-how.</p> <p>This wine brand will continue to endure over time.</p> <p>This wine brand has a particular and distinct taste.</p> <p>This wine brand is not produced anywhere else.</p> <p>This wine brand has specific characteristics that differentiate it from other wine brands of the world.</p> <p>This brand has a special <i>terroir</i> that makes this specific wine possible.</p>

Regional wine brand equity	2 items adapted from Voorhees, Brady, and Horowitz (2006); 1 item adapted from Yoo & Donthu (2001); 2 items adapted from Verheof, Langerak & Donkers (2007)	<p>I am loyal to this wine brand.</p> <p>I have a positive attitude toward this wine brand.</p> <p>I am willing to pay more for this wine brand than for other wine brands.</p> <p>I prefer to buy this wine brand even if there are other wine brands that are just as good.</p> <p>This wine brand is strong.</p> <p>This wine brand is unique.</p>
Consumer wine expertise	3 items adapted from Flynn et al. (1999); 2 items adapted from Johnson and Brewer (2007).	<p>I think I have mastered some wine knowledge.</p> <p>I am the one who is referred to as the "wine expert" in my entourage or friend circle.</p> <p>I know more about wine compared to the people around me.</p> <p>I know quite a lot about wine.</p> <p>I am a wine expert.</p>

c) Survey elaboration

A questionnaire was auto-administered online using Qualtrics, a survey platform which is widely used in the field of marketing to study product and customer experience. The platform is user-friendly for both the survey creator and survey taker. It is essential to make the survey as complete and as clear as possible for the eventual participants.

d) Pre-tests:

Our survey was pre-tested multiple times in two different stages of the creation process. The first pre-tests were administered to gain feedback on the measurement items previously explained in section c. We presented only the questions pertaining to these items to five potential survey takers to ensure that the questions and subsequent answer choices were clear. We then made appropriate adaptations based on the participants comments in addition to the expertise of a fellow researcher. After the first round of changes, the pre-test was readministered to three of the five original testers. The final feedback was considered, which mostly included changes of sentence structure and

appropriate wording for our research context. The appropriate word choice and word order of the measure adaptations presented us with the biggest challenge of the pre-test; we worked diligently to ensure clear choices and reliable measures. Once the measurement items were validated, the survey was ready to go through its second round of pre-tests, this time the entire survey.

Four test surveys were distributed to confirm that the general survey flow was smooth and that all questions were understandable. We administered the survey to three potential survey takers, and one wine professional in France. We made sure that one of these tests was completed on a cell phone to validate the mobile version. After obtaining the feedback of the pre-tests, a small number of changes were made to the survey, including minor wording modifications and response settings adjustments. Two of the questions in the wine consumption habits section were adjusted from a single answer choice to a multiple answer possibility. The most important feedback obtained from the pre-tests was an issue with the lottery section, which was resolved thanks to the Qualtrics customer service call center. There were no further changes made to the measurement items.

e) Sampling:

The sample for Stage 3 of quantitative research was created by the personal network of the researcher, and so one of convenience. In addition, another sampling technique called the snowball effect was used, and will be explained in section g. The targeted sample was residents of the United States or Americans living abroad.

f) Diffusion:

The survey was distributed mainly through social media by the platform Facebook, followed by other social media platforms and email (See Figure VIII). Social media research has become a popular form of data collection because it can collect and share information digitally at a very high speed. It is often described as being valuable in addition to other research methods (Social Media Research Group, 2016) and in mixed method approaches (Giglietto, Rossi, & Bennato 2012), which is the case for this study. Facebook was chosen because of its ease of use and the ability to reach a large, diverse number of people (Kosinski et al., 2015), representing all ages. In 2019, 78% of US adults aged 18-29 used Facebook, 78% aged 30-49, 68% aged 50-64, and 40% older than 65 (Statista, 2020).

Another reason we chose to use Facebook is the possibility to benefit from the snowball effect, which occurs on Facebook when friends of the researcher invite their own friends to participate in the posted survey. Even if going viral is not easy to achieve, the snowball effect of shared posts can positively increase the sample size (Kosinski et al., 2015). In the two weeks online, our original post containing the survey was shared twenty-one times, representing a snowball effect. The social media platforms of Instagram and LinkedIn were also used on a smaller scale, to broaden the eventual audience. Finally, targeted emails containing the survey link were sent to contacts in some of the biggest cities in the United States: Chicago, Dallas, Houston, Los Angeles, New York City, Seattle, and San Francisco, to obtain results as generalized as possible. We also hoped to achieve a second snowball sampling effect by asking the recipients specifically to share the survey with their circle of contacts in the respective cities.

Figure VIII: *Survey Distribution Organization*

Facebook	Instagram	LinkedIn	Targeted Emails
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 post by Gracie Boland • 2 weeks online • 21 shares 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 posts by Gracie Boland • Online 24 hours each 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 post by a fellow researcher 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11 personalized emails sent to contacts in 7 cities

g) Incentives:

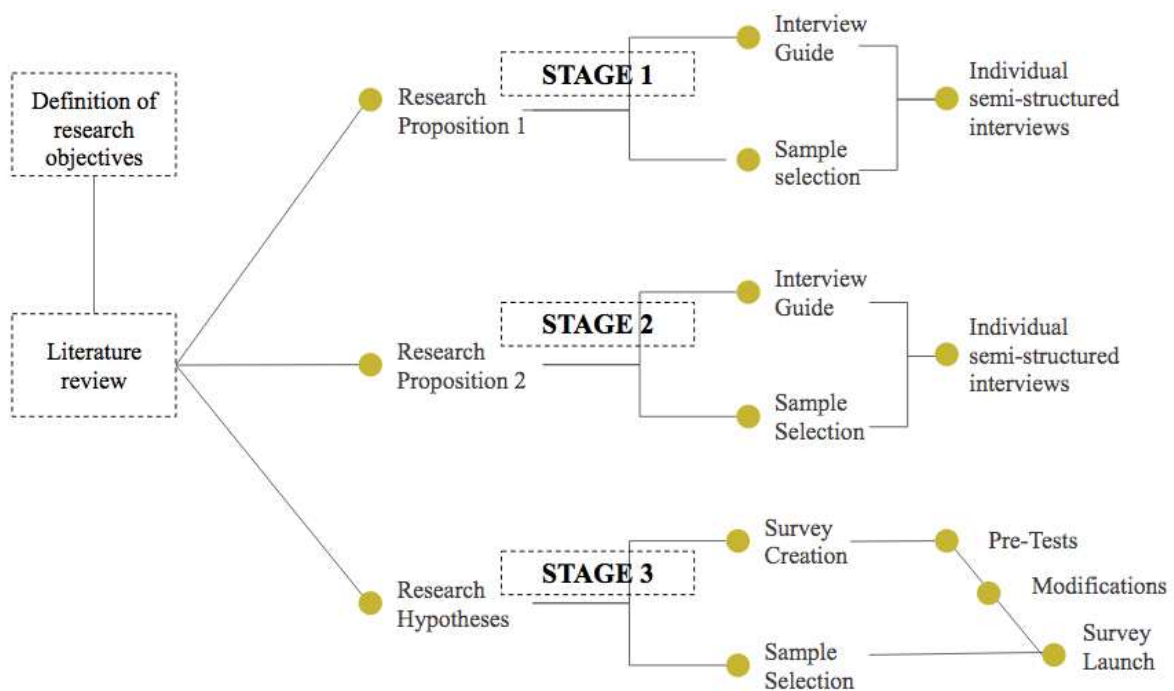
Incentives can encourage people to participate in a survey and therefore increase the sample size. Although there has been research that states that incentives can also encourage dishonest results (Kosinski et al., 2015), we concluded that a raffle for one participant to win one bottle of wine was appropriate for the scale of our research. To enter into the raffle, participants were required to provide personal contact information. This can be an unmotivating factor because it presents ethical dilemmas of privacy. To overcome this barrier, the participants had a choice of whether or not to enter their personal information, therefore consenting. Additionally, the personal information was not analyzed with the rest of the data and this was outlined in the survey guidelines. After the questionnaire was taken offline, excel was used to randomly select a winner. For a total of 187 valid survey responses, 164 participants, or 87.7% of respondents, decided to enter the raffle. This incentive could have indeed played a role in obtaining our sample, although

we did not ask the participants their motivating factor for completing the survey.

METHODOLOGY CONCLUSION

Through our context, we see that the current positioning of Alsace Wines in the American market needs to be reinforced to continue being successful. Our study includes both the offer, the wine producers making up the regional brand of Alsace Wines, and the demand, intermediaries, and final consumers of the US market, in terms of regional branding. It entails three stages of data collection in all. The mixed-method approach is composed of two qualitative studies, Stage 1 with Alsatian wine producers and Stage 2 with American wine professionals, and one quantitative study, Stage 3, with US consumers. This research design (see Figure IX) allowed us to obtain a substantial range of data from three different samples, providing us with ample information to respond to our research propositions and hypotheses. All data collection was held during a six-week period, from mid-April until the end of May, excluding the preparation of Stage 1 and Stage 2 interview guides. The data analysis devices will be explained in Chapter 3 along with the results of our three studies.

Figure IX: *Research Method Design*



CHAPTER 3: DATA ANALYSIS & RESULTS

SECTION 1: QUALITATIVE RESULTS

1.1 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH: STAGE 1

1.1.1 Stage 1 Data Analysis Devices

The same process was used to analyze both the Stage 1 and Stage 2 semi-structured interviews that make up our two qualitative studies. First, we implemented *A-priori* coding which consisted of identifying the main themes evoked during our interviews. This step was simplified with the aid of our interview guide, because we had already organized the interview into coherent themes previously identified in the literature, with the addition of complementary questions specific to our case. Then, the similarities and differences between each participant's answers were coded in the *in vivo* process. We noted the number of times the respondents mentioned elements related to the themes defined in the *A-priori* process. Finally, we linked these elements in the *axial coding* process and created new subthemes by forming relationships between the previously established themes, which allowed us to answer our two research propositions (see Appendix F for the Stage 1 axial coding results).

Each participant was given a coded name (A1 to A8 for Stage 1) for anonymity purposes. It is important that the results found in both stages of our qualitative study be reliable and credible. Our data collection and analytical process provide a chain of evidence (Miles et Huberman, 2003) that gives us reliable information. All analysis was based on the competences of the researcher and in relation to the proposed research objectives.

1.1.2 Stage 1 Results

The first stage of our qualitative interviews aimed to explore our first research proposition: *There is a discrepancy in the regional identity of Alsace Wines among the winegrowers*. Consequently, we focused on the regional brand identity of the wine region of Alsace and the implications in the US market in the eyes of eight Alsatian wine producers. The different themes discovered through

the axial coding process are presented for the brand identity of Alsace Wines followed by the brand in relation to the US market.

a) The brand identity of Alsace Wines

To present the first part of our results, we refer back to Aaker's model of brand identity including the brand as a product, an organization, and a person. The product of Aaker's brand identity is composed of the scope, attributes, quality, users, and country of origin.

i) The multiple attributes of the wine region of Alsace

The wine producers of Alsace expressed many different attributes of Alsatian wines. The idea of being traditional was mentioned four times. One wine producer stated "I wish I could say modernity, but unfortunately it is not the case yet" (A7). Food-friendly, gastronomic wines were mentioned by three participants. "From our grape varieties, our aromas, our Alsatian wine making which is not Burgundy wine making. In my opinion, there is already a definite advantage. We match all the cuisine in the world. (A2)." The fact that Alsatian wines are aromatic wines was mentioned by four participants, and the terroir of Alsace was also cited multiple times. A2 confirms that Alsace "is not a factory, there is a true precision of terroir."

The diversity of Alsace wines was also evoked, four panel members saying that the diversity of the wines is positive and that the wines are "easy to drink" (A1).

On the other hand, diversity being seen as a negative aspect was also cited in four interviews. Reasons are that the wines can be too expressive for novice consumers, or that the terroir that is too complex. A3 explained that the wines of Alsace have too much "complexity and sweetness. [There are] so many different wines with all different levels of sweetness. For normal consumers they get a little bit lost, and they leave the brand because it is difficult to understand. Expert consumers are fine, but others are not." Five wine producers do agree that it is the different grape varieties of good white wine that set Alsace apart from other wine regions. According to A8, "the interesting thing is to have diversity in grape varieties. These grape varieties are also known abroad." As A6 sums up, Alsace wines are "Traditional wines, French wine, with grape varieties not found elsewhere in France." Here we can see multiple attributes cited by the Alsatian wine producers: tradition, aromatic, gastronomic, complex, and diversity of grape varieties.

ii) Country Associations

The country of origin is also an important aspect of brand identity. Six participants stated that it is very important to be associated with French wine because French wine is almost always a safe bet, of good quality and with a reasonable price. However, five participants stated that the wine region of Alsace is not often not associated with being a French wine. As confirmed by A4, “the perception [of French wines] is very positive in terms of image and quality. Unfortunately, Alsatian wines are not always identified as French wines.” Four of the participants spoke about Alsace being more related to Germany and Austria instead of France, whether it be because of the grape variety Riesling, the shape of the bottles, or the shelving placement in wine shops. A3 stated that Alsace is associated with “Rieslings and sweet wines of German Riesling. The shape of the bottle, also.” Most Alsatian wine producers do agree that being associated with French wines enhances the brand image.

Six participants mentioned that it is a problem of geography. The wine producers stated that they must always start off by explaining that Alsace is indeed located in France. As seen with A8, “To be Made in France, it’s important. But we have to say it for Alsace. It happens a lot at professional trade shows to explain that Alsace is in France.” A7 reinforces that fact that in the export markets “I always have to start with the world geography of where Alsace is located.” Conversely, two participants stated that not being associated with France can be positive. “With the German Rieslings that are now well known, it could be a good thing” (A2). A5 mentioned that “some consumers like that [we are not associated with France], it’s a bit different.”

iii) Consumers: Expert, novice, or both?

The majority of the respondents said that there is a wine of Alsace for everyone. A1 acknowledged that “There is something for all budgets, you can find the entry-level wines and then the Grands Crus for more specific meals. There is no reason the wines of Alsace should remain in this non-consumption of wine drinkers.” All eight respondents mentioned the difference between the varietal wines and the terroir wines that are present in Alsace, that they are complementary for the different types of consumers. Another factor that emerged in three interviews is that it is important for Alsace that even the entry-level wines are of good quality.

A difference between the different types of consumers and Alsace wines did emerge in the discussions. Two participants specify that the entry level varietal wines are for the more novice consumer, while the terroir wines are for the experts. Two respondents say that in general, Alsace is definitely for more knowledgeable consumers, especially in the export market, a notion specified by two others. “As soon as we are out of Europe, it’s a niche market that is really for the connoisseurs” (A4). A2 confirms that “it’s clear that Alsace is for the experts. The terroir... the experts are fascinated by Alsace wines. The value for the price is incredible, but when you are in front of a non-expert, it’s too expensive.” Four other producers said that Alsatian wines are confusing wines for the novice consumer. A7 states that Alsace wines are indeed “more for the experts, because of the terroir wines of Alsace. The less-informed consumers are lost.”

While the wine producers agree for the most part on the consumers of Alsace wines, there is a difference in the strategies. Two companies have different strategies corresponding to markets and consumers, based on the profiles and needs, while two have global strategies and sell the same wine no matter the market or consumer.

b) Organizational Values: A human side, innovation, and the environment

The human aspect of the Alsatian vineyard was often stated as a strong value of Alsace. As A3 stated, “what is quite important is the tradition, the history ... we talk about it, it is an added value for us, the human side.” A5 agrees that “Alsace is human, with a lot of small businesses, this human side of Alsace is important,” and for A7, “The human value today is very important, especially with our interlocutors, there has been a relationship for a long time.”

As previously seen, tradition was often also cited as an association of the Alsace Wines, in addition to being one of the core values, according to certain wine producers. However, some other of the respondents had differing ideas about tradition, with three stating that there is a lot of potential in Alsace and that the region should focus on innovation, that the perception of Alsace is maybe a little too traditional. As one respondent states, “I think that if we want to survive, we must not stay on a traditional image but a more modern image. There are really some things that can be done in Alsace” (A6). A7 concluded that “innovation is important, but Alsace is not there yet, although a lot of work is being done. Alsace wines have remained in a universe that is still a little too

traditional, drunk at the table, in aperitif but not all the time, the consumption is very targeted.” In summary, neither the human aspects nor tradition was cited by all respondents.

Different representations of the value of innovation were revealed during the interviews. Some respondents mentioned the labels and shape of the Alsatian wine bottle. Three panel members stated that the labels are something that is too traditional in Alsace. “I find that we are not brave enough in our labeling” (A2), and four wine growers mentioned that the current bottle could be perceived as too traditional (A2, A3, A6, A7). As exemplified by A6, “You see, a slightly different bottle, to put a screw cap even on the Grand Crus. The labels are often very traditional.” While most participants questioned the impact of the Alsatian wine bottle, there was only one participant (A3) who did mention that the bottle is indeed a symbol of the wines of Alsace.

Two other points of innovation that came up during the discussions were the strength of wine tourism in Alsace and the emergence of social media. “Wine tourism will create a relationship with the customer who returns home and if we have done our job well, they will remember our visit, in addition to the wine” (A8), which is supported also by A3 who states, “A great strength that contributes to our notoriety is wine tourism in Alsace. It is really a great force compared to the other regions in France and the other regions of the world.” The use of social media as an innovation was cited by two panel members as points of innovation for the wine region of Alsace. “The most glaring [innovation] is the use of social media (A4).”

Production tools were also cited as important innovations for Alsace Wines. Two participants, A1 and A5, mentioned that the production tools for the vineyard are important elements of innovation to be efficient and make more precise, transparent wines. A1 gives the example of precision, “We always try to be more precise, innovation allows us to make the joy of life. We gain in finesse and precision,” while A5 introduces innovation in relation to the environment, “We try to have very new tools, intelligent systems, we have efficient things that allow us to work optimally in small teams. Now we are trying to work the vines, for example converting to organic, so we also have the best tools for working in the vines.”

The environment is another commonly cited value of Alsace Wines. All eight participants mentioned the importance of the environment to different degrees. A5 stated that “the environmental side is very important here, the vineyard is very green, sustainable development, we are happy to be at the cutting edge” Other panel members agreed that Alsace is a pioneer region for the environment, which we can see in the following quotes: “Alsace Wines has a good approach in terms of the environment, ahead of French wines” (A8). Others concur that it is a way to distinguish themselves from other wine regions. A2 mentioned that “when I see the biodiversity of our vineyard it’s incredible, we see it nowhere else” and for A5 the environment is essential, “one of the cleanest regions in the world and therefore people must be linked to Alsace for this” (A1).

c) A Wine Region with Multiple Personalities

We then wanted to understand the brand personality of Alsace Wines. Two participants stated that they cannot give one personality that describes the region because of the diversity of grape varieties and wines. A1 elaborated, “There is not one personality for all of the wines, it’s impossible. It’s the same as the human, they are complementary.” The other wine producers did identify the Alsace Wines with other personalities. Two mention that the wines are joyous, festive, dynamic and two said that the wines are vibrant. As explained by A3, “it is diversity that gives liveliness, freshness and acidity.” One wine producer qualified the region as generous. “It defines the wine, which is very aromatic, as well as the people of the region. The winemakers take time, in sharing and exchanging. It identifies both the wines and the atmosphere” (A7). Identifiable and precise were also quoted as personality traits. A6 states that the region has “wines with character... fairly frank wines. They have personality, they know where they are going. . . The wines are clearly identified,” while A4 believes that, “I think it's among the wines that are the most transparent and the truest in their ways of expressing themselves.” In conclusion, the Alsatian wine producers do not see Alsace Wines as having one personality, even if some common words were cited.

We also provoked the wine producers by mentioning other personality traits that are often cited in the literature for wine personality traits. Out of being friendly, honest, elegant, and influential, there was one consensus: Alsace Wines are not yet leaders in a global market, but all say that they

hope to be one day. According A5 “In the export market there is a lot of work to do at this level to be more influential.”

d) Alsace Wines in the US market

i) Perceptions

For the export markets in general, five participants mentioned that according to their experience, there was an overall good perception of the wine region of Alsace, although there were conditional statements that followed. For example, there is an overall good perception, but “different markets will perceive it differently” (A7), or that “people like Alsace, but it’s not mandatory” (A5), or finally that “it’s not as well-known as other French regions, but the perception is very good” (A1), which was also affirmed by A2. In general, the Alsatian producers cited that the perception is especially high for the expert consumers, and maybe a little less for the novice consumers.

In relation to the US market, six panel members agree that Alsatian wines are perceived well and are associated with high quality. A8 said that “I think that precisely, we are recognized as a very good quality.” and A7 confirms that “The perception is good. The US is a very important country for the wines of Alsace.” The remaining two panel members disagree, stating that Alsace is not very well known in the US market and that Alsace is too closely associated with low quality German Riesling, as exemplified by A5 who said that US consumers “often have a bad image, or they think of Riesling from Germany, that’s a big problem.” A4 acknowledged that “I think [the United States] is the country that knows the least about Alsace.”

ii) Consumers

The differences in American wine consumers were also evoked during this discussion. First of all, there is a difference geographically. There are multiple markets within the US as mentioned by two panel members. A7 stated that “it is not the same mode of consumption in the east and west coast. I definitely don’t sell the same wines.” Three other panel members brought up the different levels of customer expertise. In the US market, the wines of Alsace are well-perceived for experts and gastronomes, while they tend to be a bit more confusing for novice customers. As stated by A1, “We see a difference between consumers around the world.” In line with the previous section on consumers of Alsace Wines, A3 acknowledged that in the US market, “We have more entry

level wines which are easier and more concise, and the wines of terroir which are adapted to a more involved consumer.” In addition, A1 said that “it’s easier to add value to the wine region of Alsace in wine dinners with professionals more than in the shops for general consumers.”

iii) Potential and Promotion

Two panel members mentioned that the US market is a difficult one: “It’s a really frustrating market,” said A4, and according to A7, “In terms of consumption, it’s very combative. You really need to fight to get there.” Nevertheless, four wine producers said that Alsace is a perfect fit for the American taste, and that there is a huge potential in the US market. A6 specifies that “We really have great potential in the US. We have wines suitable for Americans, American tastes, things that could please” and for A4, “There is a future for Alsace wines in the United States.” A5 agrees with the importance of promoting a region, that Alsace Wines “needs to be visible.”

There are certain elements of the wine region of Alsace that the Alsatian wine producers think should be promoted. All eight members of the panel mentioned the aromatic style of Alsatian wines is an important point to put forward in the US market. In addition, A3 specified the dry style and stated that Alsace “really needs to be separated from the German Riesling.” Other producers also mention the dry style. A8 concludes with “In my opinion the most important things to highlight are: the crémant, fresh and aromatic wines, from Alsace and Made in France.” Three other wine growers specifically mentioned the sparkling crémant of Alsace as having strong value in the US market. A6 agreed, “Bubbles are really working [in the US market] and for A5, “the bubbles are really rewarding.” This idea was also confirmed by A7. We can see that aromatic; dry and sparkling wines were the most commonly cited as the Alsatian style.

In addition to style, three panel members mentioned the importance of the price for value in the US. “It’s really the style of wine associated with the American pallet and the value for money,” according to A3. Also, the variety which allows gastronomic and food-friendly wines was mentioned by four wine producers as being important in the US market (A2, A3, A4, A6). Two panel members acknowledge consumers need to taste the wines of Alsace for them to appreciate it. As A5 says, “We really need to talk about ourselves. You just have to make people taste and

push them in there and we will really have a chance. All wines have their place in the United States. We have a card to play.”

Other commonly cited points of promotion were a mix of tradition, history, authenticity, and human values. As A4 said, “History. Really. Authenticity and terroir are also important,” followed by A5 who confirmed that “What's important is tradition, history,” and A6, “It’s our historic side, an old French vineyard” that is the most important element to promote. However, A8 specifies that “History is important, but it is a second level, it comes after. We need to focus on the region of Alsace being in France.” A7 talks more about the human values, and how “being generous and the human aspect really helps.” We can see that while some Alsatian producers mentioned history as the most important element to promote, the others did not agree.

STAGE 1 CONCLUSION

The semi-structured interviews of Stage 1 allowed us to better understand the brand identity of Alsace Wines and what the Alsatian wine producers think about this regional brand in the US market. We looked at Alsace Wines as a product, an organization, and as a person before discovering how the Alsatian wine producers feel about the potential of the US market and what Alsace Wines has to offer. There are indeed some recurring themes about the regional brand identity of Alsace, such as the consumers and some elements of style, but overall the wine producers had many differing answers for what the region represents and which elements are the most important to put forward. We can therefore **support our first research proposition**: *There is a discrepancy in the regional identity of Alsace Wines among the winegrowers.*

1.2 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH: STAGE 2

1.2.1 Stage 2 Data Analysis Devices

As stated in Section 3.1.1, Stage 2 followed the exact same analytical method at Stage 1. Following the themes established in the interview guide we administered the *A-priori* process, then we found and coded the similarities and differences in the *in-vivo* process, followed by linking elements to answer our research question in the *axial coding* process (see Appendix G for an example of Stage

2 Axial Coding). Several of our recommendations that will be presented in the next chapter are based on some of the Stage 2 responses. Each participant was given a coded name, B1 to B5, for anonymity purposes. The same measures of credibility and reliability were implemented for Stage 2.

1.2.2 Stage 2 Results

Thanks to our second stage of qualitative interviews with five American wine professionals, we were able to gain insights about our second research proposition: *Intermediaries in the American market do not have a clear brand image of the wine region of Alsace*. To do this, we first needed to understand the importance of a regional brand in the eyes of the intermediaries before asking about the regional wine brand of Alsace. The axial coding process allowed us to elaborate on three general themes.

a) The importance of country of origin, region of origin and other wine attributes

All five participants agreed that the country of origin is definitely important when they buy or recommend wine, as it is an important criterion for general consumers and can reflect quality. The concepts of “place” and “source” were also cited when asked about the country of origin. Consumers want to know where their product is coming from, exemplified by B4 who states that the country of origin is “very important because wine always comes from a place, so even for the most basic consumer who is drinking wine just to drink wine, even if it’s a state like California or a country like France, there is a sense of place, “*where is this beverage from?*”

All five respondents agree that the region of origin is important, however each response included “but” demonstrating lesser significance as compared to country of origin. For example, one participant stated that the region is important because of “the region’s wine-style, not the region itself” (B1). All five respondents mentioned the importance of the varietal in addition to the region. B1 concluded that “The regionality and varietal profile are kind of synonymous to me...the regionality is important, for specific styles.” Another contrast to this answer was in relation to the type of consumer. Two respondents stated that while region is important, it is only important for expert consumers because “the highly involved wine consumers care deeply about the region”

(B4). According to B1, “I think for an informed consumer, the region of origin is important and for a less informed, uneducated consumer, virtually nonexistent.” After varietal, the next most-frequently cited attribute was price, mentioned by three respondents, followed by authenticity, service, and the social aspect, each cited once.

b) Regional branding for consumers

Despite contrasting opinions on the importance of the region of origin, all respondents agree that the region of origin is considered as a brand. “Definitely” (B1), “Hands down” (B2), and “Oh yes” (B4) are some example answers. Three respondents went even further into detail saying that even expert consumers consider regions over producer names. According to B1, “It’s a VERY small percentage that pierce the region AND the grape and that go into the producer. Even knowledgeable consumers and the most popular regions like Bordeaux and Burgundy.” In addition to Bordeaux being cited by four respondents, and Burgundy by four respondents, Provence was mentioned by three as being a very popular regional brand, and Champagne by two. Other regions included Chile, Germany, and the American wine regions of California and Oregon.

In our analysis, we were also able to identify what the participants’ thoughts were on what is important to put forward when marketing a regional brand. Having an icon product, one product that the region is known for, was mentioned by three respondents. As A4 states, “If you don’t have an icon product, you will never be a great wine region.” According to A3, “There needs to be a buzz. Promote one product.” A1 and A5 agreed that there needs to be one style that is promoted. Having wineries that agree and cooperate with each other was additionally evoked by three participants in being an important aspect of marketing a region.

Because history was often evoked often during the Stage 1 interviews with Alsatian producers, we were also curious to understand the demand’s opinion. The importance of history brought up mixed feelings. Four respondents said that history is important to some extent, except for B1 who states that “I don’t think that any of my recommendations or sales were ever helped with history.” B5 argued that “Definitely, history is important. There can be so much more marketing around the history of a place.” In conclusion, the respondents do agree that history is not the most important factor of a region: it is a factor, but not a selling point. B4 sums up the majority of respondents’

opinions on history, “People would say though, don’t bore me with this [history], give me the wine. You can mention it, but don’t bore me.” However, all five participants noted that the authenticity and meaningfulness that come with a wine region’s history is noteworthy and can bring visibility.

c) Associations and Perceptions of Alsace Wines in the US market

All five respondents were familiar with Alsace wines, which was a criterion to participate in our panel. Two were experts on Alsace wines, two were very familiar, and one was generally familiar. We were interested to see the characteristics that professionals associated with Alsace Wines. We discovered the style,

Although all five participants answered that Riesling is a characteristic of Alsace, four stated that first, the region must overcome the notoriety of German Riesling. In addition to just the grape variety, all five respondents specified the style of *dry* Riesling. The next wine associated the most with Alsace is the sparkling *crémant*, cited by three of the professionals. The versatility and food-friendliness of Alsatian wines was also evoked by four of the five respondents as being characteristics of Alsace wines. Having the ability to match with so many different food choices is an incredible attribute, according to this panel of experts. “I think of the food of Alsace. I think of beauty” as described by B4. The two other panel members that visited Alsace agreed.

All five participants perceive Alsace as having high quality wines, and three mention the large variety. “I think the quality is quite high, and there is an excellent variety” (B2). B1 stated that the “Quality is fantastic,” and B3 explains that “There is a respect for the quality of Alsace wines” in the American market.

While three participants agree that the Alsatian wine bottle is distinctive, “The shape of the bottle is very recognizable. It is a good thing, people see it right away” (B2), two do not agree and think it is another aspect that is confusing for the consumer: “Alsace is confusing. Especially the bottles” (B5). “From the consumer perspective, I think they are really confusing wines, the tall skinny bottles, they are hard to pronounce...” (B1).

Two of the members of the panel reiterated many times that Alsatian wines are very difficult to sell. According to B3, “Selling Alsace wines is really difficult, if I don’t put the wine in the glass.” While one respondent stated that the Alsatian wines are pretty available in the market, three state that wines from Alsace are only available in fancy restaurants or nice wine shops. Three participants also mention that Alsace wines are not available or adapted for the mass market. B1 explained that “Alsace wines don’t really have those value-driven wines that can be served as wine by the glass, the gateway drugs, that you can always find.” While the panel agrees that Alsace has done a great job of marketing to experts and collectors, they concur that there is less of a presence in the broad market.

STAGE 2 CONCLUSION

Through our Stage 2 analysis, we can **support our second research proposition**: *Intermediaries in the American market do not have a clear brand image of the wine region of Alsace*. American intermediaries do have a positive perception of Alsace Wines for many aspects, but these professionals agree there is a lot more that Alsace Wines can do to increase their presence as a regional brand in the US market. The negative aspects or disagreements evoked were not about the quality of Alsatian wines themselves, but the marketing of the regional brand, which allowed us to confirm our research proposition.

QUALITATIVE DATA CONCLUSION (STAGE 1 AND STAGE 2)

By implementing two stages of qualitative interviews, we were able to understand both the offer and the demand of the regional brand of Alsace Wines. Throughout our Stage 1 interviews with eight Alsatian wine producers and Stage 2 with five American intermediaries, we gained a deeper understanding of Alsace Wines in the US market which will allow us to respond to our original research questions. We were able to confirm both of our research propositions. We acknowledged some points of agreement and clarity, but for the most part, there is not a clear brand identity nor a clear brand image of Alsace Wines in the US market. It is important to remind ourselves and our readers that semi-structured interviews do come with certain limits, such as the order or elimination of certain questions based on the conversation and dependence on the analysis of the researcher.

SECTION 2: QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

2.1 QUANTITATIVE DATA: STAGE 3

2.1.1 Data Analysis Devices

a) Data cleaning

The first step of our quantitative analysis was composed of data cleaning, which begins by coding each survey response into a number to allow for effective analysis. Data cleaning aims to make the data as reliable as possible. The first step was completed in the survey creation phase, as the Qualtrics platform allows the user to code each question when creating the survey. After downloading these coded values, we detected and removed all missing values. Only the surveys that had complete answers were kept. Almost 100 answers had to be deleted because of incomplete surveys, and although we cannot know exactly why a participant stopped taking the survey, we can imagine that some questions could have been perceived to have been too technical, even though the authors worked diligently and pre-tested the survey to make sure the questions were understandable for non-wine-experts. The second criterion for the data cleaning was the criteria of our sample selection: either Americans abroad or American residents, which resulted in ten subsequent samples being deleted from the data.

b) Verification of distribution normality

According to the central limit theorem, samples equal to or larger than 30 are considered accurate (Rosenblatt, 1956) and so with a sample size of 187, we can conclude the normality of distribution for our data set. The central limit theorem also states that larger the sample size, the closer to the actual population the sample becomes. We nevertheless calculated the skewness and kurtosis coefficients for our measurement scales, composed of 26 items, to validate the normality. No measurement item had an extremely high skewness or kurtosis coefficient (see Appendix H) which confirms that the measures follow a normal distribution, or that most of the values are centered around the mean.

The final sample gathered 187 respondents: 187 American consumers (21-73 years of age; 12.83% males; 87.16% females) (see Appendix I for full sample description). 89.9% of survey respondents

were American residents, 98.2% with American nationality, and Americans abroad accounted for 10.1%. Our quantitative data is separated into two sections: our measurement model and complementary results. The measurement model deals with our general hypotheses, while the complementary results provide more insight into our targeted wine region, Alsace.

c) Validation of the measurement model

The software XLSTAT and SPSS Statistics were used to analyze quantitative data in addition to Microsoft Excel. We began our quantitative analysis by measuring our hypothesis variables. To begin, each measurement item was first validated by Confirmatory Factor Analysis. Our measurement data is composed of 26 items, 7 dimensions and 4 scales (see Table II). The factor pattern (F1) alpha of each measurement item in relation to their respective dimension must be greater than $>.5$. This is this case for each of our measurement items (see Appendix J for factor analysis data), so we can conclude that each item is therefore adequate for measurement.

Table II: *Measurement scales description*

Scales (4)	# Dimensions (7)	# Items (26)	Role of variable	Type of variable	Analysis
Regional brand image	1	4	Independent	Scale (interval)	Pearson's Correlation
Regional wine brand image	4	4 for quality 4 for heritage 3 for distinct 1 for terroir	Dependent	Scale (interval)	Pearson's Correlation
Regional wine brand equity	1	5	Dependent	Scale (interval)	Pearson's Correlation
Consumer wine expertise	1	4	Moderator	Scale (interval)	Hayes' process Linear Regression, Median split, Pearson's correlation

Next, we tested the reliability of our measurement model with the index Cronbach. This factor measures how well each measurement item of the proposed scales captures the same concept

(dimensions) and therefore, if the multiple item scale is reliable. A Cronbach alpha greater than $>.8$ is considered reliable. Each of our seven dimensions had Cronbach alphas greater than $>.8$ (see Appendix J), so we can conclude that the measurement scales and items are indeed reliable. The items composing each survey question accurately measure their respective factors and we can proceed with analysis. All of our scales are considered to be intervals and are therefore measured by the following Likert scale: $1=strongly\ disagree$ to $7=strongly\ agree$. We used the Pearson correlation analysis to measure the associations between the variables for the first three hypotheses. For our fourth hypothesis of moderation, we used Hayes' Process macro of interaction and then Pearson's correlation through a median split. The results of the correlation analyses will be presented in the next section.

2.1.2 Structural Model Validation Results

Each correlation analysis will now be explained for each of our four research hypotheses.

H1 (*direct effect*): *Regional brand image has a positive effect on regional wine brand image.*

H1 is composed of one independent variable (regional brand image) and one dependent variable (regional wine brand image), which includes four dimensions (quality, heritage, distinctiveness, and terroir). To test H1, we conducted a Pearson's correlation analysis with regional brand image and all four dimensions of regional wine brand image. **In support of H1**, the Pearson tests yielded significant positive results between regional brand image and all dimensions of regional wine brand image (overall $p = <0.0001$; overall $r = 0.637$). More specifically, regional brand image has significant positive results on regional wine brand image quality ($p = <0.0001$; $r = 0.443$). Regional brand image has a significant positive result on regional wine brand image heritage ($p = <0.0001$; $r = 0.536$). Regional brand image has a significant positive result on regional wine brand image distinctiveness ($p = <0.0001$; $r = 0.598$). Finally, regional brand image has a significant positive result on regional wine brand image terroir ($p = <0.0001$; $r = 0.532$). Having a positive brand image of a region increases the brand image of the wine region for consumers. More specifically, the regional brand image has the strongest effect on the distinctiveness of a region, followed by the heritage, terroir, and then quality. So, consumers that have a positive image of a region consider that wine region to be more distinct.

H2 (*direct effect*): *Regional wine brand image has a positive effect on regional wine brand equity.*

To test H2, we conducted Pearson's correlation test with each of the four regional wine brand image dimensions (quality, heritage, distinctiveness, and terroir) as the independent variable and wine brand equity as the dependent variable. **In support of H2**, the overall regional wine brand image, and each dimension, yields a significant positive result on regional wine brand equity (overall $p = <0.0001$; overall $r = 0.667$). More specifically, regional wine brand image quality has a significant positive result on regional wine brand equity ($p = <0.0001$; $r = 0.380$). Regional wine brand image heritage has a significant positive result on regional wine brand equity ($p = <0.0001$; $r = 0.444$). Regional wine brand image distinctiveness has a significant positive result on regional wine brand equity ($p = <0.0001$; $r = 0.524$). Regional wine brand image terroir has a significant positive result on regional wine brand equity ($p = <0.0001$; $r = 0.431$). When consumers have a positive brand image of a wine region, they perceive the overall region brand value positively. More specifically, a distinctive image of the regional wine brand creates the most positive effect on regional wine brand equity, followed by the dimensions of heritage, terroir, and quality. Consumers associate the highest value to the wine regions that have distinctive aspects.

H3 (*direct effect*): *Regional brand image has a positive effect on regional wine brand equity.*

To test H3, we conducted a correlation test of Pearson with regional brand image as the independent variable and regional wine brand equity as the dependent variable. **In support of H3**, the Pearson test yielded a significant positive relationship between regional brand image and regional wine brand equity ($p = <0.0001$; $r = 0.644$). Therefore, consumers that have a positive brand image of a region perceive the overall value of the regional brand positively.

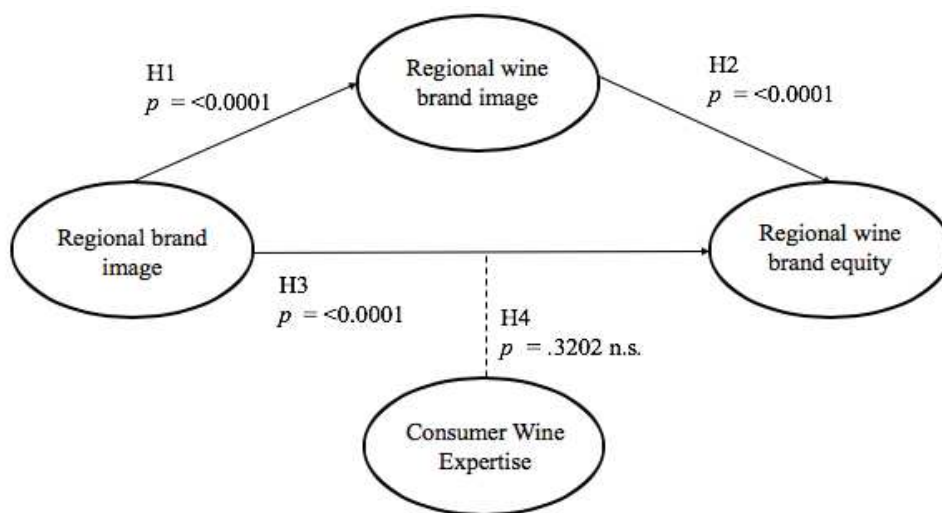
H4 (*moderation effect*): *The effect of regional brand image on regional wine brand equity is moderated by consumer wine expertise (Expert vs. Novice). Precisely, the more the consumer is expert, the more regional brand image will have a positive effect on regional wine brand equity.*

Finally, to test H4, a linear regression analysis with Hayes' process moderating factor module was

administered on SPSS. The interaction factor analysis indicated that the effect of regional brand image on regional wine brand equity is not moderated by consumer wine expertise ($p = .3202$). **Thus, H4 is not supported.** The level of consumers' wine expertise does not have an effect on the relationship between regional brand image and regional wine brand equity.

Through these results, we can therefore present the following research model (see Figure XX):

Figure XX: *Validated Research Model*



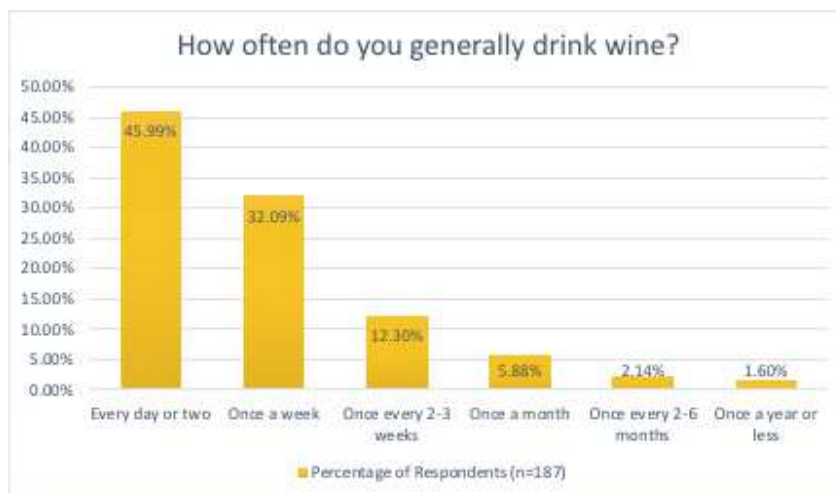
We decided to additionally test consumer expertise on our other two variable hypotheses using the same method to see if we could find a moderation. Hayes' interaction factor showed that consumer expertise does not have a significant moderating effect on the relationship between regional brand image and regional wine brand image ($p = .424$), nor between regional wine brand image and regional wine brand equity ($p = .7125$). We then created two sub-groups with the medium split method to attempt to measure the moderation, however this did not yield significant results. Nevertheless, through the sub-groups, we can acknowledge that the effects of regional brand image on regional wine brand image, and regional wine brand image on regional wine brand equity, are weaker for the more expert consumers, even if not significant ($p = .006$ for expert consumers, $p = <.0001$ for novice consumers for both of the relationships).

2.2 COMPLEMENTARY QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

2.2.1 Consumer Wine Behavior

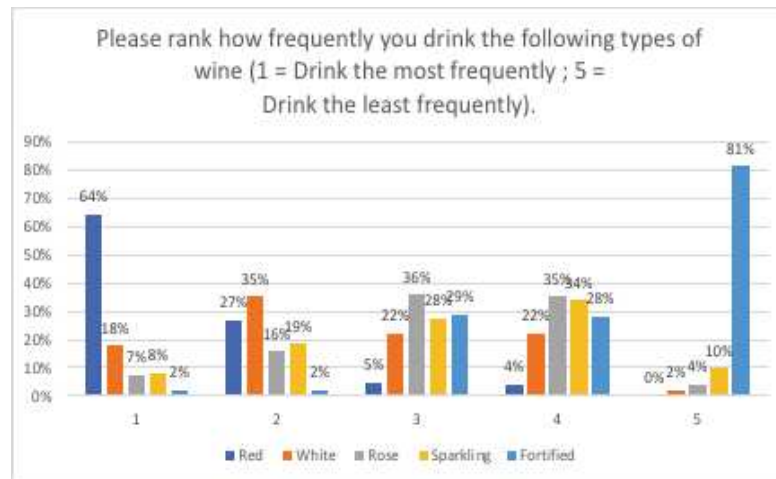
Our US wine consumer sample can be defined even further according to their preferences in wine, which are described in this section. Wine consumption frequency is one indicator of wine behavior and we can see that the majority of our sample drinks wine regularly, or more than once a month. (see Figure X). 45.99% drink every day or two, 32.09% drink once a week, 12.30% drink once every two to three weeks, and 5.88% drink once a month, while only 2.14% drinking once every 2-6 months, and 1.60% once a year or less.

Figure X: *Wine Consumption Frequency*



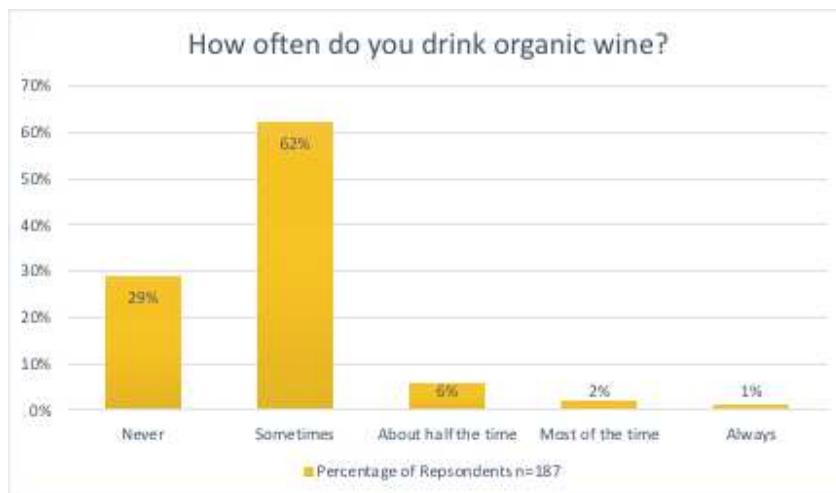
Another indication of wine behavior is the type of wine. We can see that our sample drinks red wine the most frequently (64%), followed by white (18%), sparkling (8%), rosé (7%) and finally fortified wine (2%) (see Figure XI).

Figure XI: Wine Type Frequency



We also chose to study the organic wine consumption of our sample (see Figure XII). 29% of our sample never drinks organic wine, 62% drink organic wine sometimes, 6% about half of the time, 2% most of the time and only 1% of consumers drink organic wine all of the time. The majority of our sample drinks organic wine sometimes.

Figure XII: Organic Wine Frequency



Finally, the survey respondents were asked to rank the importance of wine attributes during their wine selection process (from 1= not at all important to 7= extremely important). We can see that price has the most importance according to the sample consumers, followed by grape variety and

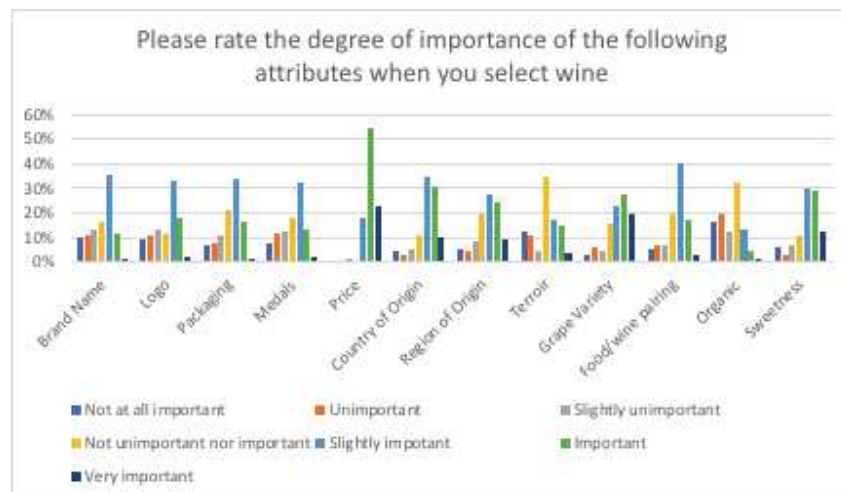
country of origin close together in second and third place (see Table III). The sweetness indicator, region of origin, and food and wine pairing come next, followed by packaging, logo, and medals. The brand names, terroir and organic certification completed the three least important choices.

Table III: *Wine Attribute Importance*

Rank	Attributes	Average Score
1	Price	5.99
2	Grape Variety	5.06
3	Country of origin	5.05
4	Sweetness indicator	4.95
5	Region of origin	4.72
6	Food and wine pairing recommendations	4.46
7	Packaging	4.25
8	Logo	4.15
9	Medals	4.06
10	Brand name	3.98
11	Terroir	3.95
12	Organic certified	3.27

In table XIII, we can see in more detail the division of the survey answers according to each attribute. This table shows each attribute and the scale of importance.

Figure XIII: *Wine Attributes Detail*



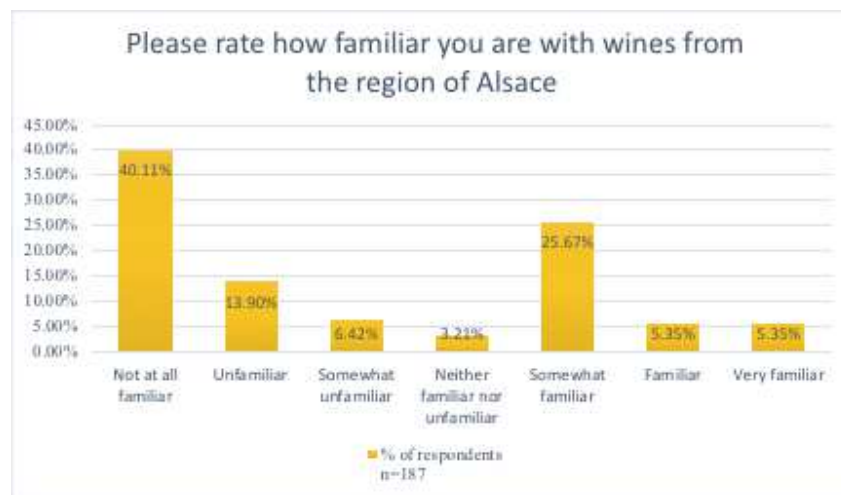
2.2.2 Consumer Evaluation of the Wine Region of Alsace

We also wished to discover US consumers' brand evaluation of the wine region of Alsace.

The first question asked if the participants were familiar with the wine region of Alsace on a 7-

point familiarity scale (1=not at all familiar to 7= very familiar). Out of the 187 respondents, 40.11% answered that they were not at all familiar with the wine region of Alsace (see Figure XIV). There were subsequently three sample sizes used during this analysis: all respondents (n=187) those with some level of familiarity of Alsace (n=112), and those not at all familiar with Alsace (n=75), as those consumers not at all familiar with Alsace are not able to objectively evaluate the brand. 40.11% are not at all familiar with Alsace, 13.9% unfamiliar, 6.42% somewhat unfamiliar, 25.67% somewhat familiar, 5.35% familiar, and 5.35% familiar.

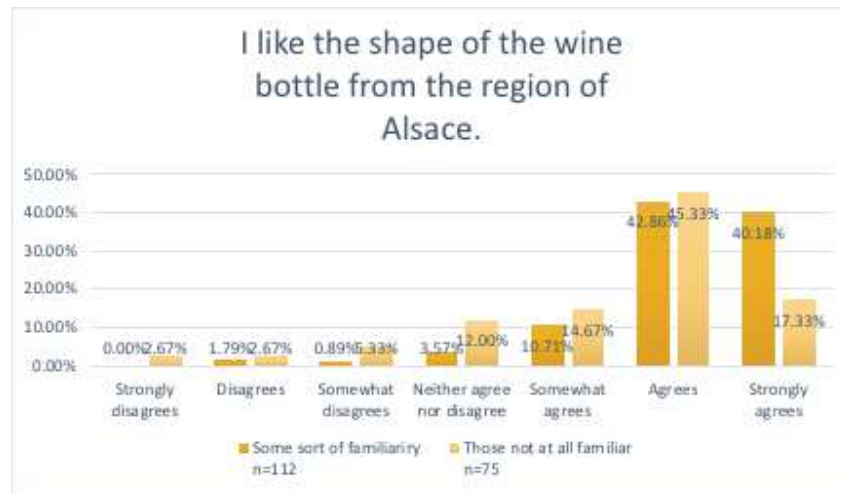
Figure XIV: *Alsace Wines Awareness*



If respondents answered that they were not at all familiar with the wine region of Alsace, the survey automatically skipped to a question evaluating the wine bottle of Alsace, which does not require prior knowledge or awareness of the region. The shape of the Alsatian wine bottle was evoked in both stages of our qualitative interviews, and we were interested in gaining US consumers' opinions, whether they were familiar with the region or not. We decided to compare two sub-groups in the wine bottle evaluation. Figure XI shows that even those not at all familiar with the region like the shape of the wine bottle, with over 77% liking it to some degree³ compared to all 93.75% of respondents familiar with Alsace liking the bottle to some degree (see Figure XV).

³ We consider "to some degree" to be the following categories: somewhat agree, agree, and strongly agree.

Figure XV: Alsace Wines Bottle Evaluation



The 112 respondents who answered that they have some sort of familiarity with the wine region of Alsace proceeded to the following questions. The next questions are based on a sample size of 112, those with some level of familiarity with the wine region of Alsace.

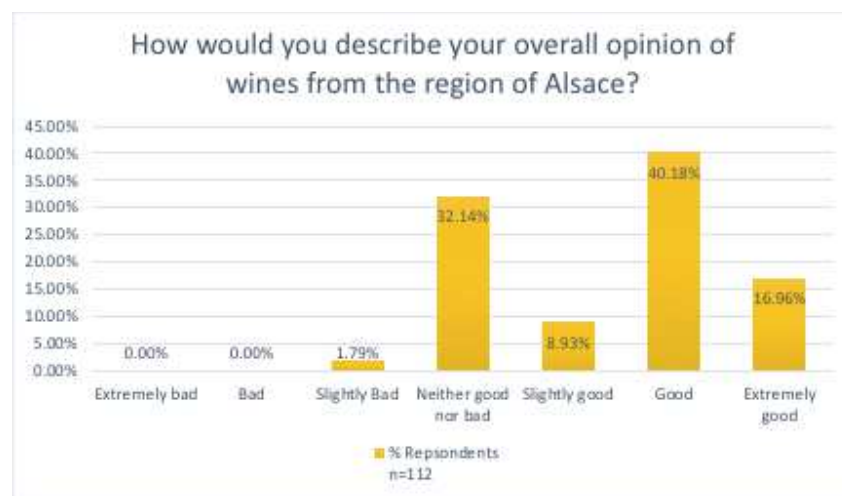
Even those familiar with the wine region of Alsace are not necessarily familiar with the shape of the wine bottle (see Figure XVI). The majority of respondents are indeed unfamiliar with the shape of the Alsatian. 8.93% are not at all familiar with the bottle, 27.68%, unfamiliar, 16.96% somewhat unfamiliar, 2.68% neither familiar nor unfamiliar, somewhat familiar at 23.32%, 10.71% familiar 20.71% very familiar.

Figure XVI: Alsace Wines Bottle Familiarity



We then asked the survey participants with some level of familiarity their overall opinion of the wine region of Alsace (see Figure XVII). The majority of respondents describe their opinion of Alsace as good. No respondents answered extremely bad or bad, only 1.79% slightly bad, 32.14% neither good nor bad, 8.93% slightly good, 40.18% good, and 16.96% extremely good.

Figure XVII: *Alsace Wines Overall Opinion*



A short answer question followed, asking participants to explain why they chose their overall opinion (see Appendix K for each short answer response), and the range of explanations varied (see Table IV). The small percentage of respondents who claimed a slightly bad opinion of Alsace wines cited the sweetness and the quality. Most who answered having a neither good nor bad opinion explained that they did not know enough about the wine region of Alsace to have an informed opinion on thirty-six occasions, and two based their response on personal preferences. All positive overall opinions were analyzed together and a number of themes appeared in the responses. Recommendation and reputation were mentioned twenty-six times, including word of mouth, professional reputation, and the country of origin reputation. The terroir, including landscape, history, and producers, was cited eight times. The style was mentioned fifty-one times, with many associations including white wines, refreshing wines, sparkling wines, Riesling, and Gewurztraminer. The level of sweetness was also acknowledged. Alsace was associated with sweet wines four times, slightly sweet three times, and dry four times as well. Other attributes that were mentioned to explain the overall opinion were the wine bottle and food and wine-pairing

possibilities, mentioned twice each.

Table IV: Alsace Wines Overall Opinion Short Answer Analysis

Categorization of the Overall Opinions of Alsace Wines			
Overall opinion	Theme	Sub-theme	Frequency
Slightly bad (1.78%)	Personal preference	Too Sweet	1
	Quality	Unimpressed	1
No opinion (32.14%)	Unfamiliar	Unfamiliar/not enough knowledge/never tasted	30
		Unfamiliar but positive image of French wines in general	2
		More familiar with American wines	2
		Total:	36
	Personal preference	Personal preference (Dislikes Riesling, dislikes sweet wines)	2
Good (8.93%) Slightly Good (40/18%) Extremely Good (66.07%)	Recommendation and Reputation	Word of mouth, recommendation	11
		Reputation	7
		German wine good reputation	2
		French wines in genral good reputation	4
		Old world/ European	2
		Total:	26
	Terroir	Terroir: Relation to mountains, weather, soil, history and producers	8
	Style	White wines	6
		Riesling	7
		Gewurztraminer	5
		Cremant/sparkling	3
		Refreshing	4
		General taste and variety	13
		Unique	5
		Total:	51
	Sweet vs. dry	Sweet associations	4
		Dry associations	4
		Lightly sweet	3
		Total:	11
	Other attributes	Bottle	2
Food and wine pairing		2	
Total:		4	
n=112			

Respondents were also asked to rate how likely they agree or disagree with nine attributes of the wine region of Alsace. These attributes were cited by the Stage 1 interview panel on brand identity, composed of Alsatian wine producers. The attributes listed the most often in the interviews and therefore included in the consumer survey were: aromatic, pleasant, diverse, cheerful, good quality/price ratio, versatile, strong character, dry and traditional. Across all attributes, percentages ranging from 29% to 47% of respondents did not agree or disagree with any of the attributes listed

(see Table XVII). We can infer based on the overall opinion short answer responses that the sample does not know enough about Alsace Wines to rank the attributes. For those respondents who had an opinion, the results show that the consumers associate Alsace wines with the following attributes (in descending order of importance): pleasant, aromatic, traditional, diverse, good quality/price ratio, cheerful, strong character, versatile, dry, and diverse.

Figure XVIII: Attributes of Alsace Wines

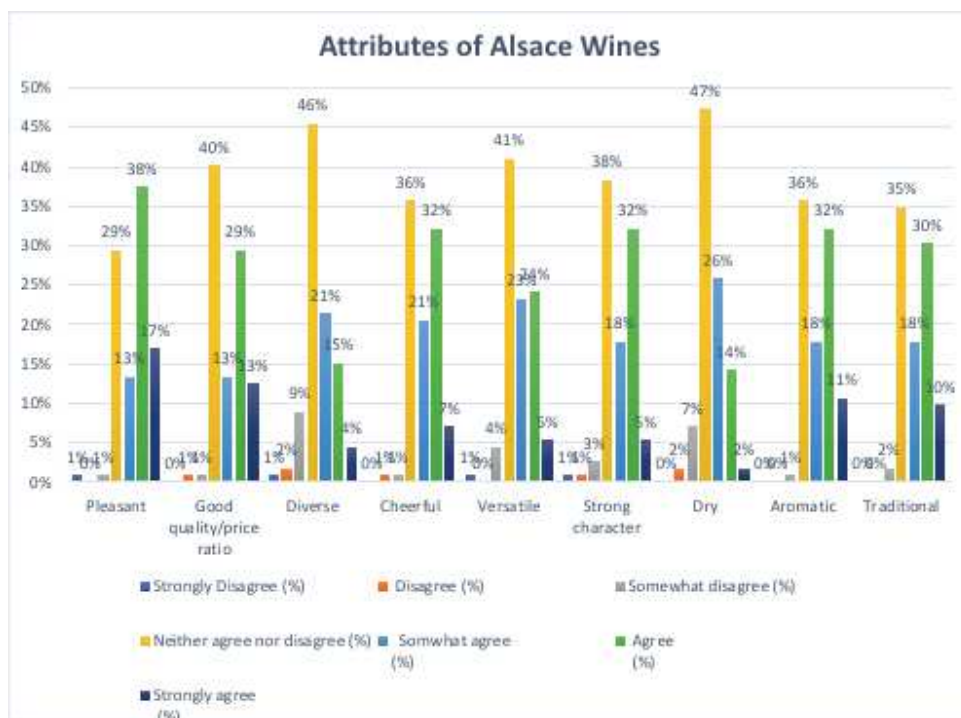


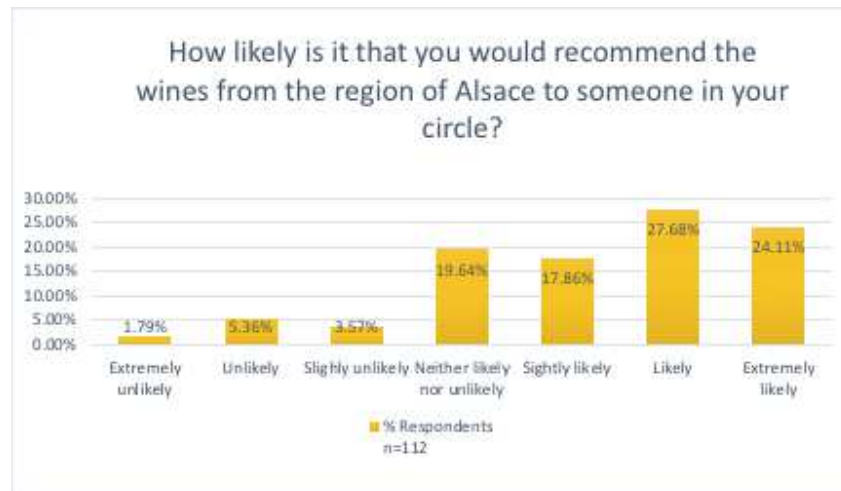
Table V: Order of Importance of the Attributes of Alsace Wines

Attributes	Average Score
Pleasant	5.35
Aromatic	5.13
Traditional	5.11
Good quality/price ratio	5.10
Cheerful	5.04
Strong character	4.92
Versatile	4.80
Dry	4.50
Diverse	4.49

To complete the section on Alsace wines, we asked the respondents if they would recommend Alsace wines to someone in their circle. to recommend Alsace to a friend, and the majority are

likely to (see Figure XIX). 1.79% are extremely unlikely to recommend Alsace to a friend, 5.36% unlikely, 3.57% slightly unlikely, 19.64% neither likely nor unlikely, 17.86% slightly likely, 27.68% likely, and 24.11% of respondents are extremely likely.

Figure XIX: *Alsace Wines Recommendation*



QUANTITATIVE DATA CONCLUSION (STAGE 3)

Our quantitative survey provided two sets of results. The first set was data from questions based on our conceptual model, used to validate our hypotheses. We successfully proved three of our four hypotheses with statistical evidence. Regional brand image has a positive direct effect on regional wine brand image. Regional wine brand image has a positive direct effect on regional wine brand equity, and regional brand image has a positive direct effect on regional wine brand equity. The dimensions of regional wine brand image, distinctiveness, heritage, terroir, and quality, were also analyzed with positive effects. Our data did not support our fourth hypothesis. Consumer expertise does not moderate the effect of regional brand image on regional wine brand equity. Based on these results, we presented a validated research model. The second set of data allowed us to better understand our sample based on wine preferences, and more specifically their evaluations of and associations with the wine region of Alsace. In general, this quantitative survey provided insight into regional wine branding in the US market and specific information on the wine region of Alsace.

RESULTS CONCLUSION

Through our first two stages of qualitative research and third stage of quantitative research, we were able to respond to our two research propositions and four hypotheses.

The Stage 1 qualitative study administered to Alsatian wine producers validated our first research proposition. We learned that although there are some similarities, the eight wine producers of Alsace do not have the same ideas about Alsace Wines as a regional brand. The different elements of brand identity were developed, followed by a more specific discussion on the US market. The wine producers agree that there is potential in the US market but do not present the collective character needed to be successful as a regional brand. **RP1:** *There is a discrepancy in the regional identity of Alsace Wines among the winegrowers.*

The Stage 2 qualitative survey for American wine professionals validated our second research proposition. By analyzing how the five American professionals interviewed considered regional brands in the US and their opinions on Alsace Wines, we were able to see that although their perception is not negative, they do not recognize a clear regional brand of Alsace in the US market. **RP2:** *Intermediaries in the American market do not have a clear brand image of the wine region of Alsace.*

The quantitative study was created to validate our hypotheses and demonstrate the importance of regional branding in the US market, and also to learn complementary information about US consumers in relation to Alsace Wines. Three out of four hypotheses were validated with strong correlations. **H1:** *Regional brand image has a positive effect on regional wine brand image;* **H2:** *Regional wine brand image has a positive effect on regional wine brand equity; and* **H3:** *Regional brand image has a positive effect on regional wine brand equity.* Our fourth and final hypothesis was not validated. **H4:** *The effect of regional brand image on regional wine brand equity is moderated by consumer wine expertise (Expert vs. Novice). Precisely, the more the consumer is expert, the more the regional brand image will have a positive effect on regional wine brand equity.*

We were able to conclude through our hypotheses that regional branding is important for the overall regional wine brand value, but the expertise of the consumer does not play a role. The complementary quantitative results on consumer behavior and evaluation of the wine region of Alsace will be discussed in the next chapter along with our research propositions and hypotheses.

CHAPTER 4: INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The results obtained from our two stages of qualitative data and one stage of quantitative data can now be interpreted and related back to our original research objectives: 1) to explore the regional identity of Alsace Wines and its implication in the US market; 2) to understand the impacts of a regional brand and the perception of Alsace Wines in the US market; and 3) and to demonstrate the importance of regional brand image in relation to the overall perceived brand value.

To do this, the following chapter is composed of three sections. The first will present our research propositions and hypotheses in relation to the literature. The second presents in detail the dimensions of regional wine brand image and compares our three stages of results. We additionally present managerial implications in relation to each subject. Then, in our third section, we present regional branding recommendations. The discussions, interpretations, and recommendations that follow aim to answer our initial research question, “*How can the wines of Alsace continue their success in the US Market?*”

SECTION 1: THE IMPORTANCE OF A REGIONAL BRAND

1.1 REGIONAL WINE BRAND IDENTITY

Through our semi-structured interviews with eight Alsatian wine producers in Stage 1 and five American intermediaries in Stage 2, we were able to confirm our two research propositions relating to the brand identity of the regional wine brand of Alsace and its regional brand image in the US market.

***RPI:** There is a discrepancy in the regional identity of Alsace Wines among the winegrowers.*

We concluded that the regional brand identity of Alsace Wines is not coherent from the point of view of the Alsatian wine producers (RP1). Although there were certainly some similarities and common brand characteristics cited among the wine producers, including the consumers and certain values, there is indeed a discrepancy in the overall brand identity, especially the ideas of **what is most important to promote as a region**. By studying the original elements of brand

identity cited by Aaker (1996) of product, organization, person, and symbol, we were able to see that there is not a coordination among the winegrowers. This idea of collective character is one of the main criteria on how to be a successful regional brand (Charters & Spielmann, 2014; Donner, Fort, & Vellema, 2014).

RP2: Intermediaries in the American market do not have a clear brand image of the region of Alsace.

Through our Stage 2 qualitative interviews with American wine professionals, we concluded that the regional wine brand image of Alsace is not clear for the US intermediaries. We can tie this back to the literature, exhibiting that both wine and places are extremely complicated products for the consumer to perceive because of their multiple attributes (Bruwer & Buller, 2012; Kavaratzis, 2005), making a regional wine brand even more complicated and “multidimensional in nature,” according to Johnson & Bruwer, 2007. Our qualitative studies confirm this theory, with both the Alsatian wine producers and American professionals evoking many elements linked to the regional brand that both the offer and the demand have to consider. Our second research proposition complements previous regional branding literature that reiterates the importance of region of origin (Lockshin, 2000; Perrouy et al. 2006), especially under certain conditions, such as the type of consumer (Johnson & Brewer, 2010). American professionals were able to provide insight into the regional brand image of Alsace Wines in the American market. There are some points of the brand image of Alsace Wines that are unclear, and we confirmed that regional branding is important in the US market. **There is potential for Alsace Wines in the US market**, but the results also show that there is **still room for improvement as a regional brand**.

1.2 REGIONAL WINE BRAND IMAGE

Our three direct hypotheses linking regional brand image, regional wine brand image, and regional wine brand equity were all supported.

H1 (direct effect): *Regional brand image has a positive effect on regional wine brand image.* This is line with the place branding literature, which states that the region of origin has an effect on brand image (Kouba, 2008; Anselmsson, Bondesson and Johansson, 2014), especially the study

of Van Ittersum et al. (2003), that explains in more detail the impacts of regional brand image, and not only the region of origin itself. We can therefore say that if the regional brand of Alsace is perceived as positive, the overall value perceived by the consumer will also be positive.

H2 (direct effect): *Regional wine brand image has a positive effect on regional wine brand equity.*

Our study enhances the literature on regional wine brand image established by Johnson & Brewer (2007), that confirms the importance of regional brand image on quality. It is in contrast to Ohrth et al. (2005), who did not list region of origin as an antecedent to regional wine brand equity. Our study details the dimensions of regionality established by Easingwood et al. (2011) and their effects on regional wine brand equity, which will be discussed in Section 2.

H3 (direct effect): *Regional brand image has a positive effect on regional wine brand equity.*

By supporting this hypothesis, we complement the literature on brand equity. Yasin et al. (2007) stated that the region of origin has a significant positive effect on brand equity and the dimensions of brand equity. Our study adds the effects of brand image, and not just the attribute of region of origin. This correlation between regional brand image, regional wine brand image, and regional wine equity is in line with wine specific wine literature of Brewer & House (2003) and Johnson & Brewer (2007), who also confirm that regional wine brand image is important to wine brand equity.

H4 (moderation effect): *The effect of regional brand image on regional wine brand equity is moderated by consumer wine expertise (Expert vs. Novice). Precisely, the more the consumer is expert, the more regional brand image will have a positive effect on regional wine brand equity.*

Our fourth hypothesis was refuted, which is not coherent with the literature, that has always proven a difference in the importance of region of origin based on consumer segment (Lockshin, 2005; Johnson & Brewer, 2007). Our study therefore presents new information about regional brand image and the effects of consumer segments. These results will be discussed further in Section 2.

Having a positive brand image of a region increases the brand image of the wine region for consumers, therefore, promoting **a region is essential to a positive image of the wine brand**. Then, when consumers have a positive brand image of a wine region, they perceive the overall value of the regional wine brand positively. **Regional branding creates a powerful regional wine**

brand with higher perceived value. Not only does the regional brand image have an effect on the image of a regional wine brand, but the overall perceived value which encompasses quality, loyalty, awareness associations, and other brand assets (Aaker, 1996). It is therefore vital that wine regions focus on regional branding aspects.

SECTION 2: ELEMENTS OF REGIONAL BRANDING

Our quantitative survey presented two sections of results, the validation of our hypotheses and complementary information that helps us to understand US consumers' opinion on Alsace Wines. We discussed briefly our general hypotheses on regional branding, and now, we will discuss the dimensions of regional wine brand image that were also discovered through our hypothesis results. We will compare the complementary results of US consumers' evaluation of the wine region of Alsace to the qualitative data from Alsatian producers and American wine professionals, allowing us to apply our hypotheses to the region of Alsace.

As seen through our results, regional wine brand image entails four dimensions that prove to be very interesting for our discussion. This enriches the literature on regional wine brand image. The definition of a wine brand image had been developed by Johnson & Bruwer (2007), and the elements of regionality were established by Easingwood et al. (2011). Even if the elements have been studied individually in terms of brand equity (Charters & Spielmann, 2014; Moulard et al., 2015; Ohrth et al., 2005; Spielmann et al., 2019), the effects of these dimensions on brand equity have not been studied together. Our study is coherent with the literature, and reveals that distinctiveness, heritage, terroir, and quality have positive effects on regional wine brand equity. In order of importance, the regional brand image has the strongest effect on the distinctiveness of a region, followed by the heritage, terroir, and then quality. A regional wine brand with a distinct image creates the most value for consumers, followed by a wine region with heritage, terroir, and then quality. **Each of these elements increases the overall perceived value, but wine regions must first market their distinctiveness, then their heritage, then their terroir, and finally their quality.**

Now that we understand the implications of a regional brand image on regional wine brand equity, we can apply the results to the wine region of Alsace. By comparing the results of the three stages of research, we are able to recognize certain points of agreement and disagreement between the brand image and the brand identity of Alsace Wines, in relation to the dimensions of regional wine brand image: distinctiveness, heritage, terroir and quality and also to consumer expertise.

2.1 DISTINCTIVENESS

Through our results, we found that a positive regional brand image has the strongest positive effect on the regional wine brand image of distinctiveness and that distinctiveness has the strongest positive effect on regional wine brand equity. This enhances the work of Thode & Maskulka (1998) and Charters et Spielmann (2014), insisting that the resources of a regional brand cannot be replicated elsewhere. Therefore, regions must first and foremost focus on a differentiating factor to create brand value. Most of the Alsatian wine producers mentioned the diversity of grape varieties as what distinguishes Alsace from other regions. This will be discussed further in the following section presenting recommendations. Here, we present two additional proposed elements of distinction in our results, the Alsatian wine bottle, and the environment.

Some of the American wine professionals appreciate the Alsatian wine bottle and say that it adds a distinct character to Alsace Wines, while others think that the bottle is confusing for consumers. Only one wine producer mentioned that the bottle was a symbol of Alsace Wines, and the others agree that the bottle gives a confusing message to the consumer in terms of country of origin. However, the majority of US consumers do appreciate the bottle, even those who are not familiar with the Alsace Wines. Since the US consumers do appreciate the bottle and the US wine professionals agree that it is a distinctive factor of Alsace, **the region could play on this element and add the bottle to marketing materials, creating a clear link between the bottle and the wine region of Alsace.**

Another point to discuss is the environment as a distinctive value of Alsace Wines. The majority of Alsatian producers focused strongly on the importance of the environment being an essential value of the wines of Alsace, being pioneers in France and innovative in this sense. However,

consumers chose the attribute of a wine being organic as the least most important wine attribute. Therefore, being an organic vineyard is not the most important aspect to market to American consumers. One wine producer did recognize this, explaining that he thinks that the US consumers are less concerned about the environment than other markets. We can infer from these results that **the environment is not the most important trend in the American market at this time and marketing efforts should be enforced elsewhere.**

2.2 HERITAGE

According to our results, heritage is the second most important factor that regions should focus on to increase wine brand equity. The overall value of a wine region is higher from a region with positively viewed heritage. We confirm the work of Spielmann et al. (2019), which states that heritage is important to a corporate brand identity. We will talk about history and tradition in terms of heritage. One part of brand identity that the Alsatian wine producers did agree on was the importance of the tradition and the history of Alsace. US consumers agree, ranking tradition as one of the top three attributes of the region. Many winegrowers, however, mentioned that this is the absolute most important element of Alsace Wines that should be promoted. We can see through our measurement model that while history, tradition, and heritage are important, they are not essential promotional elements. The American professionals support this theory, explaining that history is a conversation starter, an added value, but that it is not the most crucial element to market in the US. **Alsace is a region with strong tradition, history, and heritage. It is one aspect of the regional identity and the region should definitely not forget this, but should focus on promoting their distinctiveness before history.**

2.3 TERROIR

Terroir is the third most important regional wine brand dimension that adds to the overall perceived value. This is coherent with the work of Moulard et al. (2015), who specify the difference between region of origin and terroir, showing that terroir does indeed play a role in brand equity. According to Alsatian wine professionals, the terroir is one of the principal characteristics of the region. This being true, US consumers ranked terroir as next to last in the order of importance of attributes when selecting wine. The American wine professionals also commented on how the terroir of

Alsace can be very confusing for the average consumer and is a true barrier. Even though the Alsatian wine producers insisted that the terroir of Alsace is essential to the identity, some of them did recognize that this aspect can indeed be complicated for the average consumer, and is a better fit for a more expert consumer. Thereupon, terroir does not prove to be an important aspect for the average US consumer, and it is the second least influential element of regional brand equity. **Alsace is a region with a strong terroir, but should promote other aspects of their brand identity to the average US consumer.**

2.4 QUALITY

Quality had already been established as an antecedent to general brand equity (Aaker, 1996), and to wine brand equity (Ohrth et al. 2005). Johnson and Bruwer (2007) have empirically proven that the regional brand image has a positive impact on consumers' quality perceptions. By studying the quality of the Alsace Wines, which makes up part of the brand image, we found that US consumers have an overall good opinion of this wine region and the US professionals agree that the wines of Alsace are of high quality. One characteristic of Alsace Wines evoked during our interviews with the wine producers was that Alsatian wines have extremely good quality at a very reasonable price. This is one of the elements that they agreed on the most. The American professionals concur, confirming the quality-price ratio for Alsace is unbeatable, while US consumers ranked the quality-price ratio as the fourth most important attribute out of nine that they associate with Alsace. **This is one of the elements where the brand identity and image is clear.** We can conclude that **Alsace is already known for the quality of wine, so marketing efforts can be focused elsewhere.**

2.5 CONSUMER EXPERTISE

Through our results, we found that consumer wine expertise does not moderate the effect of regional brand image on regional wine brand equity. The notion of customer segments was also confirmed by the American professionals: expert consumers care more about the region of origin. However, in the consumer survey, the region of origin was the fifth most important wine attribute out of twelve, so we can notice some level of importance. Based on this lack of validation of our hypothesis, we can infer that strengthening a regional brand can influence the overall value of the

wine brand for all types of consumers, and not more for novices or for experts. This contrasts Johnson and Brewer (2010), who say that regional branding should only be targeted to expert consumers. In our additional analyses, however, we did find that the effects of regional brand image on regional wine brand image and regional wine brand image on regional wine brand equity were weaker among expert consumers, even if not significant. So, the branding of a region increases the equity of the brand more in the eyes of novice consumers. We will now apply this to the wine region of Alsace.

American wine professionals agree that Alsatian wines are more well-known and appreciated for expert consumers, and Alsatian wine producers mostly agree that Alsace is indeed more popular among expert consumers. However, our US consumer survey shows us that there is a lot of potential for Alsace Wines in the US market. The Alsatian producers do confirm that they offer wines appropriate for the average consumer but that Alsace is just more well known for the experts. The American consumers do not have a bad image of Alsace, they seem to just lack one in general. This allows for marketing strategies to come into play. Since **novice consumers are more prone to regional branding**, focusing on them is important to increase awareness. We recognized that Alsace Wines is already successful for the expert segment, and that there is an occasion to make it popular for the non-experts as well. **There is a potential for Alsace Wines and novice consumers**, and the regional brand should increase their marketing for this segment. No matter the consumer though, if the regional brand image of Alsace is positive, so will be the overall brand equity.

SECTION 3: RECOMMENDATIONS

We can acknowledge throughout our results that the region of origin comes with many nuances. We found that the region of origin is important in the eyes of the American professional because it is inherently linked to a style of wine. In the US market, the region of origin is definitely considered as a brand, and it is the fifth most important selection criteria out of twelve when US consumers purchase wine. It is also important to recognize that having a regional brand is influential for all consumer segments, because even expert consumers that are more prone to recognizing a region, can most likely not identify individual proprietary brands, according to

American professionals. Thus, it can be beneficial to increase the brand awareness for both consumer segments, but with a particular focus on novice consumers who are more influenced by regional branding. The following recommendations of how to improve the regional wine brand of Alsace in the US market are based on the literature, two stages of qualitative research and one stage of quantitative research.

3.1 COLLECTIVE BRAND IDENTITY

Through our results, we validated our second research proposition, that American professionals do not have a clear brand image of the wine region of Alsace. As seen throughout our study, in the literature and during the interviews, all wineries must agree to support the regional brand first and therefore agree on what to put forward to become a successful regional brand. The American wine professionals noted many positive points of Alsace Wines, but in general show that there is still room for improvement as a regional brand. One extremely important factor, as confirmed by the literature (Charters & Spielmann, 2014; Charters et al., 2011) and by the American wine professionals, is that in order for a regional brand to be successful, the wine producers must **collectively agree on what to promote as a region**. If this is not the case, it is very difficult to prosper as a regional brand. By validating our first research proposition we are able to say that this is not the case for Alsace, and that there is indeed a discrepancy in the regional brand identity among Alsatian wine producers. We acknowledge that for most elements, there is not a clear, common identity or idea of what to promote as a region. Often, if there was a clear identity on a certain subject, it did not match the opinion of the demand. Thus, we begin our proposal by encouraging the wine producers of Alsace to agree on what to promote in the US market. In the previous section, we introduced recommendations based on our hypotheses, and now we will enter into more detail.

3.2 MADE IN ALSACE, FRANCE

As seen in the literature, the country of origin is an important aspect of place-branding (Charters & Spielmann, 2014; Van Ittersum et al. 2003; Vrontis, Thrassou, & Czinkota, 2011) and associating a brand with a country of origin has a proven effect on the brand equity or overall perceived value (Yasin et al., 2007). There is an overwhelming conclusion throughout our three

studies that wine from France is perceived as having a very positive image, but that **Alsace is not associated enough with its country of origin**. Our results enhance the literature: all five American professionals agree that the country of origin is one of their most important buying factors, confirmed by our quantitative results that ranks the country of origin as the third most important attribute out of twelve, behind the first, price, and following very close to the second, grape variety. The Alsatian wine professionals acknowledge that French wine has a very good perception of high quality that remains a safe bet for consumers, which is also confirmed by the American professionals.

This idea is also expressed by American consumers. When asked about the overall quality of Alsace, people that were not familiar with the region stated that they assume Alsatian wine has an overall high quality because it is a French wine region. The majority of Alsatian wine producers confirm that they often have to start with a geography lesson when talking about the wines of Alsace. Although our study focuses on the region of origin, we find through our results that Alsace lacks a connection to the most basic form of place-branding and brand identity, which is the country of origin. This is enhanced by the fact that both Alsatian wine producers and American intermediaries recognize that there is a problem with Alsace being associated with German Riesling. German Riesling has experienced a bad reputation in the US, and although that is changing, the sweetness of this wine is detrimental to the image of Alsace Wines, which offers mostly dry Rieslings. This leads us to our next point.

3.3 ICON PRODUCT

The diversity of grape varieties and wine styles was cited by the Alsatian wine producers as being an important attribute of Alsace Wines. This is not in line with the American professionals' opinion of regional branding or the literature, who agree that there needs to be **one style associated with one region** for a wine region to gain popularity. This does not mean that a region must only produce one style, but that the marketing needs to focus on one icon product that the region will be known for. As seen before, one of the most influential dimensions of regional wine brand image is distinctiveness, something that sets the region apart from all others. According to the American

wine professionals and the literature, this differentiating factor is the style of wine that is associated with the region.

As stated by the American professionals, although the diversity of grape varieties is meaningful, especially for food and wine pairing, to reach the mass market there must be an association with one style. This is backed up by the literature on regional branding (Chartres et al. 2011; Easingwood et al.; Thode & Maskulka, 1998) that confirms a region is successful when associated with one style, as is the case for some of the most popular wine regions in the US, for example Provence and rosé or Bordeaux and dry, medium to full-bodied red. This complements the literature of Farmularo et al. (2010), which also states that region of origin is important because it is associated with the grape variety and style. Even though these regions produce other styles, they are known for one, which has gotten their name out in the market and created a successful regional brand. The Alsatian producers focus on diversity when describing the characteristics of Alsace Wines, which is not a bad thing, but it is not what makes a wine region exceptional, like an icon product (Thach, 2016). Alsace must therefore choose an icon product to promote. Through our results, we have narrowed the choice down to two products, dry Riesling and the sparkling crémant of Alsace. Although Gewurztraminer was not often mentioned by the American intermediaries nor the Alsatian wine producers as an important product in the US market, a number of American consumers did cite Gewurztraminer as a reason of why they like Alsace wines.

The American professionals suggest that the fact that most Alsace Rieslings are dry or bone dry should be more strongly promoted. The same number of American consumers associated Alsace with dry, as they did with sweet and lightly sweet, and they also ranked dry as the next to last association of Alsatian wine. We can consequently acknowledge **that there is not a clear style of Alsatian dry Riesling that is known in the US market**. US consumers ranked the sweetness indicator as the fourth most important factor out of twelve when selecting wine, so we can conclude that **communicating on the sweetness or dryness is extremely important to the American consumer**, in the same ranking as grape variety and country of origin.

The American professionals' idea that most US consumers appreciate sparkling wine, but are not familiar with crémant is confirmed by the quantitative survey. A number of US consumers

associated “a nice effervescent” with Alsace but were unable to cite the word *crémant*. This signifies that promotion needs to be done to educate consumers about the *crémant* of Alsace. Some, but not all, of the Alsatian producers agree that *crémant* is one of the most important products of Alsace Wines in the American market.

Aromatic wines were also mentioned by the Alsatian producers and the American consumers, who ranked aromatic as the second attribute that they associate with Alsatian wines. The aromatic wines and diversity can be connected to the food and wine pairing possibilities, that the Alsatian producers, American professionals, and US consumers all agree on. For the American consumer, the food and wine pairing attribute of wine is the sixth most important wine attribute out of twelve. The American professionals agree with the Alsatian wine producers, that Alsatian wines are gastronomic wines that can be matched with an incredible number of dishes. Diversity can be a strong point, but it is not an icon product or known style, which is what a region needs to go from good to great.

In conclusion, we recommend that **Alsace focus on dry Riesling as their icon product** in the US market because of the reasons listed precedingly. Every Alsatian producer produces Riesling, which is not the case for *crémant*, and agreeing on what to promote is one of the most important features of a strong regional brand. We do, however, based on the advice of Alsatian producers and American professionals, recognize that Alsatian *crémant* is very important to the American market because of production capacity, price, and popularity. A final point evoked by the American professionals is the essence of **presence**. Whether it be in person, through social media, or marketing materials, the American professionals insisted that to be visible in the US market you must be active to achieve a successful regional brand.

DISUCSSION CONCLUSION

In this chapter, we synthesized our three stages of results in relation to the literature, compared the three stages of results in relation to the wine region of Alsace, and presented recommendations to continue the success of the regional brand of Alsace Wines in the US market. In general, our study complements the literature on regional brand image and regional wine brand equity, while enhancing the literature on regional brand image with the specific dimensions. Our complementary

quantitative results and qualitative studies allowed us to apply these notions to the wine region of Alsace.

CHAPTER 5: GENERAL CONCLUSION

This study allowed us to understand important elements in the branding of a region. The literature review provided a background of information previously discussed about our main theoretical concepts of brand equity, wine branding and regional branding. We presented a conceptual model, composed of four hypotheses, based on this literature, and two additional research propositions to deepen our understanding of one regional brand in particular, Alsace. Our two stages of semi-structured interviews provided us with qualitative data to confirm our two research propositions. We found through our results that both the brand identity from Alsatian producers, and the brand image from American wine professionals are unclear. It is important to note that the brand image is not negative, but it is just not clear. The idea is similar for the brand identity. There are some points of agreement, but not a collective character. The two stages of qualitative research also helped us to propose managerial recommendations. Through our quantitative study with US consumers, we were able to demonstrate the positive effect of regional branding on regional wine brand equity, as well as the positive effects of the dimensions of regional wine brand image in relation to these two factors. We were also able to gather complementary data about wine behaviors and how US consumers evaluate the wine region of Alsace. Finally, through the analysis and interpretation of our results, we were able to respond to all three of our initial research questions. A summary of the theoretical contributions and managerial contributions present in our study will now be presented, followed by limitations and avenues of future research.

5.1 THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTIONS CONCLUSION

As established in the literature review, the research gaps discovered were notably a lack of studies on regional wine brand image in relation to regional wine brand equity and regional wine brand image of French appellations. Our study completes the work of Johnson & Brewer (2007) which, to our knowledge, is one of the only discussions on wine brand image, and Van Ittersum et al. (2003), who show that a positive regional image creates a positive image of the product or brand that comes from that region. Throughout our analysis, we also found that regional branding is important to how consumers perceive the overall value of a brand, enhancing the research of Johnson & Bruwer (2007), Lockshin (2001), Perrouy et al. (2006) and Yasin et al. (2007), who

all place importance on the region of origin to brand equity. While studies have acknowledged separately distinctiveness (Charters & Spielmann, 2014; Thode & Maskulka, 1998), heritage (Spielmann et al., 2019), terroir (Moulard et al., 2015), and quality (Ohrth et al., 2005) as having positive effects on the overall value of a regional wine brand, the effects of these four dimensions have not been measured by order of importance and adapted to the regional brand image of a French wine appellation. We therefore add to the gap of regional wine brand image in terms of regional wine brand equity.

Thanks to our research propositions specific to Alsace, we continued to filled the gap of literature on regional brands for French appellations, accompanying Charters et Spielmann (2014) and Viot & Passebois-Ducros (2010). Although Johnson and Brewer (2007) say that regional branding should only be targeted to expert consumers, our research propositions along with our refuted hypothesis show that while the region of origin may be more important for expert consumers, regional branding is important for all consumer segments. Both Stage 1 and Stage 2 complemented the regional branding literature and the need for a clear brand identity (Aaker 1991, Charters & Spielmann, 2014).

As seen previously, our results contrasted most of the literature on consumer expertise. Lockshin (2006) focuses on the region of origin as an attribute while Johnson & Brewer (2007) integrate regional wine brand image, but they both empirically prove that the region of origin is less important for novice consumers. While we did notice a stronger link between regional image and regional wine brand equity for novice consumers, our results were not significant enough to complement the literature.

5.2 MANAGERIAL CONTRIBUTIONS CONCLUSION

Through our results, we were able to gain information about US consumers in relation to Alsace Wines. We found that there is a difference in what the Alsatian producers offer to the US market and what the US consumers think of the wine region. There is an overall positive brand image of Alsace, from both professionals and consumers, but there is a lack of some branding initiatives as explained in the previous chapter. We were able to compare these consumer opinions with what

Alsace Wines proposes. Even if there was a clear brandy identity on a certain subject, it did not always match the demand. Although discrepancies are present in the brand identity and brand image of Alsace Wines, we can confirm that the wine region can continue to be successful in the US market by reinforcing their regional branding strategy and presented recommendations to achieve this.

5.3 LIMITATIONS AND AVENUES OF FUTURE RESEARCH

Although we ensured reliable data collection methods, there are a few limitations to our study that are important to mention. One shortcoming of our study is that our Stage 3 quantitative sample was majority female (87.16%). The current US population is 50.8% female and 49.2% male (US Census Bureau, n.d). A slight majority of wine drinkers in the US is indeed female, 56% female versus 44% male (WMC, 2018), however, this segmentation is much more balanced than our sample. We can therefore recommend that future studies be performed on a more balanced and diverse sample of US consumers.

A second limit deals with the consumer expertise variable of our conceptual model. We were not able to prove that consumer expertise is a moderating factor between regional brand image and regional wine brand equity. Our analysis required that we perform a median split and our mean was very low, 2.8 out of 7. A score of 2.8 represents someone who is not at all a wine expert, meaning that the majority of our respondents were not wine experts. This made studying the differences between actual experts and novices quite difficult, as we were only allowed to see the novices and experts of our sample. We can therefore recommend that this future study be done with an intention to have more expert consumers to be able to establish moderation effects, which could have different implications on consumer segment strategies in regional branding. Targeting wine education programs could be a possible idea for sampling methods to achieve this.

Finally, there were certain subjects evoked during the qualitative interviews, for which we did not have enough information in the literature or through our other studies to sufficiently discuss. However, we think that they deserve to be studied in relation to the impact of regional brand image on regional brand equity and could present very interesting results. These subjects are innovation,

social media, and wine tourism. A future study on these topics and their effect on the overall value of a wine region could provide even more marketing implications related to these specific aspects of importance evoked by the Alsatian wine producers.

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Appendix A: Stage 1 Interview Guide

Alsace Wines Brand Identity

Introduction:

- Remerciements

Bonjour Madame, Monsieur XX, je vous remercie d'avoir bien voulu nous accorder du temps, particulièrement en cette période compliquée, pour cet entretien sur l'identité de la marque régionale des Vins d'Alsace sur le marché Américain.

- Présentation rapide de l'enquête et de son contexte :

Cette étude est menée dans le cadre de la rédaction de mon mémoire de fin d'études en Master 2 Management du Tourisme, parcours œnotourisme, proposé par l'EM Strasbourg. Nous allons parler de la marque régionale des vins d'Alsace, particulièrement de son image aux États-Unis.

- Explication du déroulement de l'entretien :

Le plus important lors de l'entretien est que nous puissions échanger librement sur le thème cité précédemment. Soyez libre de discuter des idées qui vous semblent pertinentes et d'exprimer votre point de vue, que ce dernier soit positif ou négatif.

- Rappel des règles de confidentialité :

Cet entretien sera anonyme et les noms et prénoms de la personne interviewée n'apparaîtront pas dans le mémoire de recherche. Les réponses recueillies seront exclusivement utilisées à des fins d'analyse. Nous menons les entretiens en français mais les résultats seront analysés et présentés en anglais.

Profil de l'interviewé :

- L'intitulé exact de votre poste?
- De combien d'années travaillez-vous dans le secteur du vin?
- Que faisiez-vous avant ?
- Toujours en Alsace? Si non, où?
- Parlez-moi de votre travail au quotidien (environnement de travail, déroulement d'une journée type, principales difficultés, etc.)
- Parlez-moi de votre équipe
- Quels types de vins, blanc rouge rose ? %Crémants, Vins tranquilles? % Bio, Biodynamique, HVE, en conversion
- Vers quels pays exporter vous vos vins? (Présent)
 - Ou vous avez vendu? Ou vous pensez les vendrez dans l'avenir?

Cette étude porte (A) sur l'identité d'une marque régionale celle des vins d'Alsace et (B) sur votre vision des vins d'Alsace sur le marché américain. Les questions vont surtout se focaliser sur vos perspectives de cette marque régionale (les Vins d'Alsace), mais certaines questions qui porteront sur votre propre marque seront également évoquées. Je préciserai si la question porte sur les Vins d'Alsace comme marque régionale ou sur votre propre marque de vin. Je vais des fois poser la même question sur les deux (votre marque et les vins d'Alsace).

Thème 1: Les vins d'Alsace

Sous thème 1 : Votre marque et les Vins d'Alsace

- VOTRE MARQUE: Parlez-moi de votre marque “XX” ?
- Pourriez-vous décrire votre vignoble (l’histoire, la taille, la production)? Quelle stratégie avez-vous concernant votre vin? En France ? et à l'étranger? aux états unis ? Vous vous positionner comment?
- Quelles sont les caractéristiques de votre marque? en tant qu’une marque des vins d’Alsace? Des exemples? Pourquoi? Parmi les caractéristiques que je vais vous citer, lesquelles reflètent le plus l’univers de votre marque de vin ?
 - *(Relance) qualité, entreprise leader, expérience de long-terme, entreprise familiale, approche centrée clients, tradition, ancrée dans son territoire, patrimoine, réputation, prix, local, Alsace, vins d'Alsace*
- MARQUE ALSACE: Parlez-moi des Vins d’Alsace en général. (**Marque régionale : la distinction d’un endroit, ou les ressources d’un endroit, de la concurrence, quand la région prend le rôle d’une marque**)
- Quelles sont les associations d’idées qui vous viennent à l’esprit quand vous pensez à la marque régionale des vins d’Alsace ? Parmi les caractéristiques que je vais vous citer, lesquelles reflètent le plus l’univers des vins d’Alsace ?
 - *(Relance) Qualité (+/-) ; groupe puissant ; Approche centrée client ; Tradition liée à l’ancienneté et au savoir-faire ; Tradition liée au lieu : ancrage, territoire, ; Rapport-qualité prix ; Innovante ; Festif ; Forte ; Ancienne ; Entreprise leader, grand groupe, entreprise mondiale ; Qualité et réputation*
- Qu’est-ce qui distingue l’identité des vins alsaciens des vins des autres régions viticoles françaises ? Quelle est leur valeur ajoutée ? Qu’est ce qui les rend uniques ? Et qu’est ce qu’ils ont de similarités avec les autres régions ?

Sous-thème 2 : Corporate Identity

- MARQUE ALSACE:
- Quelles sont les valeurs (humaines, de travail, sociales) des vins d’Alsace à votre avis? (Interne, les façons de travailler, le rapport à la terre, aux traditions, avec les autres métiers du vin, les ancêtres, aux méthodes du travail).
- Pour les vins d’Alsace, quelle est aujourd’hui la place de l’environnement (écologie, responsabilité sociale, méthodes respectueuses de l’environnement et de l’humain).
- Quelle est la place du Bio ? Biodynamique ? HVE ? En conversion ? dans l’identité des vins d’Alsace.
- Quelle est la place de l’innovation dans la marque vins d’Alsace ? Sont-elles destinées à des marchés spécifiques ? Les États-Unis? Donnez les exemples.

Sous-thème 3 : Symboles des vins d'Alsace

- VOTRE MARQUE:
- Parlez-moi de votre logo (AM) : que représente-il ?
- MARQUE ALSACE:
- Selon vous, quelles est/sont le/s symbole/s des Vins d’Alsace (les couleurs, les images, etc.)? Pourquoi?

- Parlez-moi de logo Vins d'Alsace : que représente-il ? (VA en noir et d'or Alsace)

Sous-thème 4 : Personnalité des Vins d'Alsace

MARQUE ALSACE:

- Comment décririez-vous la personnalité des vins d'Alsace ? Quels mots viennent à l'esprit? Pourquoi?
- Est-ce que les vins d'Alsace sont vibrant?
 - Ouvert d'esprit, jeune, moderne?
 - Les exemples? Pourquoi?
- Est-ce que les vins d'Alsace sont amicales?
 - Accessible, charmant, confortant?
 - Les exemples? Pourquoi?
- Est-ce que les vins d'Alsace sont honnête?
 - Directe, fiable, éthique?
 - Les exemples? Pourquoi?
- Est-ce que les vins d'Alsace sont réussis?
 - Éduqués, influents, des leaders?
 - Les exemples? Pourquoi?
- Est-ce que les vins d'Alsace sont sophistiqués?
 - Élégante, prestigieuse, prétentions?
 - Les exemples? Pourquoi?

Sous thème 5 : Consommateurs

- Parlez-mois des consommateurs français des vins d'Alsace. Selon vous qu'est-ce qu'ils recherchent en premier dans vos vins ? D'où viennent-ils ? Quel est leur profil ? Pourquoi sont-ils fidèles au vin ?
- Selon vous, les vins d'Alsace attirent-ils plus les novices ou les experts en France ?
- Proposez-vous des gammes différentes selon les attentes de chaque groupe ? Pourquoi? Des exemples?

Je vais maintenant vous poser des questions sur l'internationale.

Thème 2: Les Vins d'Alsace à l'international

Sous-thème 1: France, Alsace et l'international

VIN FRANCAIS:

- Quelles sont les points forts ou distinctifs d'un vin français à l'international?
- Est-ce que le fait que l'Alsace soit une marque française est la première raison de son succès à l'international? Pourquoi ou pourquoi pas?
- Si oui, alors que rajoute la marque région à ce succès ?
- Si non, la marque région à elle seule est-elle suffisante ? (Sans la France)

MARQUE ALSACE:

- Quelle est selon vous la perception de la marque régionale vins d'Alsace à l'international?
 - Vs. Autres régions françaises: En quoi est-elle différente de celle d'autres régions en France? Si oui/non, Pourquoi ?

- Vs. Autres old world wine regions: En quoi est-elle différente de celle d'autres régions en Europe (Italie, Espagne, Grèce, Portugal,) ?
- Vs. All wine brands: En quoi est-elle différente de celle d'autres régions de vin dans le monde (régions en Australie (Clare ou Eden Valley), Nouvelle-Zélande (Stellenbosch), les régions en Allemagne?)

Sous- thème 2 : Aux États-Unis

VIN FRANÇAIS:

- Quelles sont les points forts ou distinctifs d'un vin français aux États-Unis?
- Est-ce que le fait que l'Alsace soit une marque française est la première raison de son succès aux États-Unis? Pourquoi ou pourquoi pas?
- Si oui, alors que rajoute la marque région à ce succès ?
- Si non, la marque région seule est-elle suffisante ? (Sans la France)

VOTRE MARQUE:

- Pour votre propre marque, proposez-vous des produits différents pour la France et les États-Unis? Avez-vous une stratégie (positionnement) différente sur chaque marché?

MARQUE ALSACE:

- Quelle est selon vous la perception de la marque régionale vins d'Alsace aux États-Unis? *(Vous avez parlé des vins d'Alsace à l'international, est-ce que les mêmes idées sont juste aux États Unis)*
 - Vs. Autres régions françaises: En quoi est-elle différente de celle d'autres régions en France? Si oui/non, Pourquoi ?
 - Vs. Autres old world wine regions: En quoi est-elle différente de celle d'autres régions en Europe (Italie, Espagne, Grèce, Portugal,) ?
 - Vs. all wine brands: En quoi est-elle différente de celle d'autres régions de vin dans le monde (régions en Australie (Clare ou Eden Valley), Nouvelle-Zélande (Stellenbosch))
- Selon vous, quelles sont les valeurs de la marque Alsace qui devraient être communiquées au marché américain? À votre avis, quelles sont les valeurs les plus importants dans ce marché? *(De ce que vous aviez cité avant: environnement, bio, innovations)*
 - Valeurs (humaines, de travail, sociales, interne, les façons de travailler, le rapport à la terre, aux traditions, avec les autres métiers du vin, les ancêtres, aux méthodes du travail).
 - Environnement (écologie, responsabilité sociale, méthodes respectueuses de l'environnement et de l'humain,).
 - Bio ? Biodynamique ? HVE ? En conversion ? dans l'identité des vins d'Alsace aux États-Unis.
 - Les innovations (les exemples si cités avant)
- Comment les valeurs sont-elles communiquées selon vous aux États-Unis? Qu'en pensez-vous de comment la marque comment la marque régionale des vins d'Alsace communique-t-elle en termes de ces valeurs?

Sous thème 3 : Consommateurs US

- Parlez-moi des consommateurs américains. Selon vous ils cherchent quoi dans les vins d'Alsace?
- Proposez-vous des gammes différentes selon les attentes de différents profils de consommateurs américains (par exemple: occasionnel vs régulier; novices vs. experts; autres?)? Pourquoi? Des exemples?

Sous thème 4 : Collaboration, logistique, réseaux commerciaux

- Comment travaillez-vous avec les intermédiaires aux États-Unis? Que pensez-vous du système de distribution aux États-Unis?
- Pensez-vous que les conjonctures des taxes de Trump et la crise du COVID-19 aura un impact sur les affaires des Vins d'Alsace aux États-Unis? Les points forts des vins d'Alsace au marché américain changeront ils?
- Selon vous, quel est l'avenir des vins d'Alsace aux États-Unis ? Qu'est ce qu'il faut faire ou arrêter de faire ? Quelles solutions ou suggestions ?

Conclusion

- Auriez-vous quelque chose à ajouter que nous n'aurions pas évoquée lors de l'entretien?

Remercier de nouveau la personne interviewée.

Appendix B: Stage 2 Interview Guide

The region of Alsace Wines: Brand Image & US consumers

Target: Wine professionals who have a role in the region of Alsace Wines in the US market
Max 20 minutes for interviews.

Introduction: Thank you very much for taking the time to speak with me about the regional brand image of Alsace Wines in the American market, especially in this complicated period.

Quick presentation of the survey and its context: This study is being carried out as part of my final thesis in Tourism Management, specializing in wine tourism, offered by the Strasbourg Business School. We are going to talk about the regional brand of Alsace wines and particularly its image in the United States.

Explanation of the interview process: The most important thing during the interview is that you feel comfortable to freely exchange on the subject mentioned above. Feel free to discuss ideas that you think are relevant and to express your views, whether positive or negative, it is just your opinion that matters.

A reminder of the confidentiality rules: The responses collected will be used only for my thesis and analyzed by me. Unless permission is given by the interviewee, this interview will be anonymous and the names and surnames of the interviewee will not appear in the research report.

Interviewee profile:

- What is your job title?
- In which state? Always in this state?
- How long have you worked in the wine business?
- Could you tell me about your everyday work? (work environment, a typical day, principal difficulties)
- Could you tell me about your team?

Theme 1: Region of origin

- Is the country of origin important to you when you purchase or recommend a wine?
 - If so, why? If not, what other attributes are important?
- Is the region of origin important to you when you purchase or recommend a wine?
 - If so, why? If not, what other attributes are important?
- Do you identify the region of origin as a brand itself or as an attribute of wine?
- In your opinion, how does a regional brand compare to a proprietary brand?
 - For example, the name brand or name of the domain?
- What are the most important regional brands according to you?
 - Examples? Why?
- What are the most important French regional brands according to you?
 - Examples? Why?

Theme 2: Brand Image

Sub-theme 1: Brand awareness (defining how well the interviewees know AW)

- Are you familiar with the region of Alsace wines?
- What are the products of the region of Alsace wines that you know of?

- The main types of wine, the grape varieties, the brands?
- According to you, what are the characteristics of Alsace Wines?
 - Physical attributes: taste, bottle, labels, etc.
- Are you familiar with the history of the region of Alsace?

Sub-theme 2: Brand associations

- What associations come to mind when you think of Alsace Wines?
 - *Reminder words: Tradition, History, Gastronomic wines, Diversity, Complexity, environmental pioneers, Organic advances, white wine, dry wine, different types of soil, the people behind the vineyards*
 - Examples? Why?
- Could you give your impressions of the region of Alsace wines in terms of being a French wine region? In terms of being a global wine region? (Compared to other wine regions)
 - *Reminder words: quality, leader, long-term experience, family companies, customer directed approach, tradition, rooted in terroir, heritage, history, reputation, price-performance ratio?*
 - Examples? Why?

Theme 3: Brand evaluation (Opinions + Feelings/emotions + behavior)

Sub-theme 1: Opinions

- What is your opinion of the region of Alsace Wines?
 - Examples? Why?
- How would you describe the quality of wine from the region of Alsace?
 - Examples? Why?
- What is your opinion on the availability of wine from the Alsace region?
 - Examples? Why?
- What do you think about the wine-making style?
 - *Reminder words: Dry Rieslings, complexity, mostly family companies*
- What do you think of the Alsace Wines bottle (*la flute d'Alsace*,)? (*show picture if they do not know*)
- What do you think of the labels of Alsace Wines? (*show pictures if they do not know*)
 - Examples? Why?
- Do you feel that history is important to the region of Alsace wines?

Sub-theme 2: Feelings/emotions

- Do you appreciate wines from the region of Alsace when you drink/taste them?
- Do you appreciate the region of Alsace and its traditions or other associations when you drink/taste the wines?
- Do positive images come to your mind about the region of Alsace and its tradition or other associations (*that you may have cited before*) when you drink/taste the wines?
- Do you feel a sense of attachment to the wines of Alsace? To the region? Traditions?

Sub-theme 3: Behavior (*does region encourage you to buy? = goal*)

- What are the main criteria for you when you buy or recommend wine?
- Do you buy/recommend wines from the region of Alsace?
 - How often? (compared to other wine regions in France? In Europe? Globally?)
 - How much? (compared to other wine regions in France? In Europe? Globally?)

- Which ones? (Brands or styles)
- Will you continue? (compared to other wine regions in France? In Europe? Globally?) (loyalty)

Theme 4: Consumers

Sub-theme 1: Opinions, Behavior, Preferences

- According to your experience, what are the opinions that US consumers have of French wine?
- According to your experience, what are the opinions that US consumers have of French wine regions?
- According to your experience, what are the opinions that US consumers have of the Alsace wine region?
- In your experience, do US consumers buy/choose French wine? Alsatian wine?
 - How often? How much? Will they continue?
- In your opinion, which global wine regions do US consumers prefer? Which French wine regions?

Sub-theme 2: Customer segments

- Do you distinguish different customer segments (experts vs novices) when you buy/recommend wine?
- Should the different customer segments of experts and novices be considered by having:
 - Different offers for the two profiles?
 - Different marketing for the two profiles?
- Which type of branding works with each profile?
 - Modern/traditional labels, regional brands, proprietary brands?
- In your opinion, is the region of origin important for consumers?
- Is there a difference in the importance of the region of origin between novice or expert consumers?

Theme 5: Collaboration

- Out of the associations that you listed earlier about Alsace, which do you think are the most important to communicate to US consumers?
 - In general? To novice consumers? to expert consumers?
- What can the region of Alsace wines do differently in the US market?
- In your opinion, what is the future of the region of Alsace Wines in the US compared to other French wine regions? Compared to other regions around the world? How can it succeed? (considering the current taxation and COVID-19)

Conclusion:

- Is there anything that you would like to add that I did not evoke?
- Would you have a recommendation for someone else that you think would be interested in this subject that you would not mind sharing with me?

Thank you again.

Appendix C: Stage 1 Profile of Respondents

Code	Business	Respondent	Gender
A1	Independent Wine Grower	Winegrower / Co-Owner	Female
A2	Independent Wine Grower	Winegrower / Co-Owner	Female
A3	Independent Wine Grower	Sales Director / Co-Owner	Male
A4	Family-owned Winery	Transversal Manager	Male
A5	Independent Wine Grower	Sales Director / Co-Owner	Male
A6	Co-operative Cellar	Export Manager	Male
A7	Wine Producer	Oenologist / Global Manager	Male
A8	Family-owned Winery	Export Manager	Female

Appendix D: Stage 2 Profile of Respondents

Code	Business	Respondent	Gender
B1	NoHo Hospitality (Restaurant)	Beverage Director	Male
B2	Sepia and Proxi (Restaurant)	Wine Director	Female
B3	71 Vintage (Broker)	Founder & CEO	Male
B4	Sonoma State University (Research)	Distinguished Professor of Wine and Management, Consultant	Female
B5	Mary Taylor Wines (Importer)	Founder & CEO	Female

Appendix E: Quantitative Questionnaire

Start of Block: Introduction

Q0

INTRODUCTION

As part of my master's thesis on regional wine branding, I would really appreciate your help in completing this questionnaire.

By doing so, you will be entered into a raffle to **win a bottle of Alsatian wine!**
(*Details at the end of the questionnaire. Must be 21 or older to participate*).

The survey should take approximately 6 minutes and the most important thing is your opinion. There are no right or wrong answers!

We guarantee the anonymity of your answers: all results will be used solely for my thesis research.

Thank you in advance!

Gracie Boland
Masters Student in Tourism and Wine Management
Ecole de Management Strasbourg
mary-grace.boland@em-strasbourg.eu

End of Block: Introduction

Start of Block: Wine buying behavior

Q1

YOUR WINE CONSUMPTION

How often do you generally drink wine?

- Every day or two (1)
- Once a week (2)
- Once every 2-3 weeks (3)
- Once a month (4)
- Once every 2-6 months (5)
- Once a year or less (6)

Page _____
Break

Q2 With whom do you usually drink wine? (Multiple answers are possible)

- Family (1)
- Friends (2)
- Work colleagues (3)
- Other: (4) _____

Page
Break



Q3 In which setting do you usually drink wine? (Multiple answers are possible)

- At work events (1)
- Cocktail hour at home (2)
- Happy hour/ After-work (3)
- At a party (4)
- During meals at home (5)
- Restaurants (6)
- Bars (7)
- Special occasions (weddings, birthdays) (8)
- Other (please specify): (9) _____

Page
Break

Q4 Please rank how frequently you drink the following types of wine (1 = Drink the most frequently ; 5 = Drink the least frequently).

_____ Red (1)

_____ White (2)

_____ Rosé (3)

_____ Sparkling (white or rosé) (4)

_____ Fortified wine (Porto, etc.) (5)

Page

Break



Q5 How often do you drink organic wine?

- Never (1)
- Sometimes (2)
- About half the time (3)
- Most of the time (4)
- Always (5)

Page
Break



Q6 From where do you, or someone from your household, **usually** get wine? (Multiple answers possible)

- Directly from the winery or winery tasting rooms (1)
- Liquor Stores (2)
- Supermarkets / Grocery stores (3)
- Direct internet shops (wine.com, etc.) (4)
- Wine clubs (5)
- Independent wine shops (6)
- Club stores (Cotso, Sam's) (7)
- Other (please specify): (8) _____

Page
Break



Q7

Please rate the degree of importance of the following attributes when you (or someone from your household) select(s) wine (1 = Not at all important; 7 = Extremely important).

	Not at all important (1) (1)	Unimportant (2) (2)	Slightly unimportant (3) (3)	Neither important nor unimportant (4) (4)	Slightly important (5) (5)	Important (6) (6)	Extremely important (7) (7)
Brand name (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Logo (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Packaging (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Medals (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Price (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Country of origin (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Region of origin (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Terroir* (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Grape Variety (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Food and wine pairing recommendations (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Organic certified (11)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sweetness indicator (12)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q39 *Terroir: the complete natural environment in which a particular wine is produced, including factors such as the soil, landscape, and climate.

End of Block: Wine buying behavior

Start of Block: Wine region image



Q8

WINE REGION BRANDS

Please choose one **wine-region** that you are familiar with.

- Alsace (France) (1)
- Bordeaux (France) (2)
- Piedmont (Italy) (3)
- Chianti (Italy) (4)
- Loire Valley (France) (5)
- Burgundy (France) (6)
- Catamarca (Argentina) (7)
- Hawke's Bay (New Zealand) (8)
- Barossa Valley (Australia) (9)
- Hunter Valley (Australia) (10)
- Mendoza (Argentina) (11)
- Marlborough (New Zealand) (12)

Page _____
Break



Q9 You are familiar with the **#{Q8/ChoiceGroup/SelectedChoices}** wine-region.

Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements about this **region in general** (1 = Strongly disagree; 7 = Strongly agree).

	Strongly disagree (1) (1)	Disagree (2) (2)	Somewhat disagree (3) (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4) (4)	Somewhat agree (5) (5)	Agree (6) (6)	Strongly agree (7) (7)
I like this region. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have a positive impression of this region. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I appreciate this region. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I want to visit/discover this region. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Page
Break

End of Block: Wine region image

Start of Block: Quality



Q10

Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements (1 = Strongly disagree; 7 = Strongly agree).

Thinking about the **wine brand of [\\${Q8/ChoiceGroup/SelectedChoices}](#)**, I would say that...

	Strongly disagree (1) (1)	Disagree (2) (2)	Somewhat disagree (3) (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4) (4)	Somewhat agree (5) (5)	Agree (6) (6)	Strongly agree (7) (7)
This wine brand is much discussed by wine experts (salespeople in wine shops, sommeliers or waiters, connoisseurs in your circle). (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The quality of this wine brand has a good reputation. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This wine brand has potential for bottle aging. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This wine brand is highly-rated (wine applications, wine reviews on websites or magazines). (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Page
Break

End of Block: Quality

Start of Block: Heritage



Q11

Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements (1 = Strongly disagree; 7 = Strongly agree).

Thinking about the wine brand of [\\${Q8/ChoiceGroup/SelectedChoices}](#), I would say that...

	Strongly disagree (1) (1)	Disagree (2) (2)	Somewhat disagree (3) (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4) (4)	Somewhat agree (5) (5)	Agree (6) (6)	Strongly agree (7) (7)
This wine brand is renowned. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This wine brand has a rich history. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This wine brand has a heritage in terms of know-how. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This wine brand will continue to endure over time. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Page
Break

End of Block: Heritage

Start of Block: Distinct



Q12

Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements (1 = Strongly disagree; 7 = Strongly agree).

Thinking about the wine brand of [\\${Q8/ChoiceGroup/SelectedChoices}](#), I would say that...

	Strongly disagree (1) (1)	Disagree (2) (2)	Somewhat disagree (3) (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4) (4)	Somewhat agree (5) (5)	Agree (6) (6)	Strongly agree (7) (7)
This wine brand has a particular and distinct taste. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This wine brand is not produced anywhere else. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This wine brand has specific characteristics that differentiate it from other wine brands of the world. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Page
Break

End of Block: Distinct

Start of Block: Terroir



Q13

Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statement (1 = Strongly disagree; 7 = Strongly agree).

Thinking about the wine brand of [\\${Q8/ChoiceGroup/SelectedChoices}](#), I would say that...

	Strongly disagree (1) (1)	Disagree (2) (2)	Somewhat disagree (3) (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4) (4)	Somewhat agree (5) (5)	Agree (6) (6)	Strongly agree (7) (7)
This wine brand has a special <i>terroir</i> * that makes this specific wine possible. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q40 *Terroir: the complete natural environment in which a particular wine is produced, including factors such as the soil, landscape, and climate.

Page
Break

End of Block: Terroir

Start of Block: Equity and Knowledge



Q14

Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements (1 = Strongly disagree; 7 = Strongly agree).

Thinking about the **wine brand of [\\${Q8/ChoiceGroup/SelectedChoices}](#)**, I would say that...

	Strongly disagree (1) (1)	Disagree (2) (2)	Somewhat disagree (3) (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4) (4)	Somewhat agree (5) (5)	Agree (6) (6)	Strongly agree (7) (7)
I am loyal to this wine brand. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have a positive attitude toward this wine brand. (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I prefer to buy this wine brand even if there are other wine brands that are just as good. (12)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This wine brand is unique. (13)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This wine brand is strong. (23)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Page
Break



Q15

YOUR WINE KNOWLEDGE

How would you describe **your knowledge of wine**?

Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements (1 = Strongly disagree; 7 = Strongly agree).

	Strongly disagree (1) (1)	Disagree (2) (2)	Somewhat disagree (3) (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4) (4)	Somewhat agree (5) (5)	Agree (6) (6)	Strongly agree (7) (7)
I think I have mastered some wine knowledge. (34)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am referred to as the "wine expert" in my entourage/friend circle. (35)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I know more about wine compared to the people around me. (36)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I know quite a lot about wine. (37)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am a wine expert. (38)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Page
Break



Q16

WINES FROM THE REGION OF ALSACE

Please rate how familiar you are with wines from the region of Alsace (1 = Not at all familiar; 7 = Very familiar).

- Not at all familiar (1) (1)
- Unfamiliar (2) (2)
- Somewhat unfamiliar (3) (3)
- Neither familiar nor unfamiliar (4) (4)
- Somewhat familiar (5) (5)
- Familiar (6) (6)
- Very familiar (7) (7)

Skip To: Q22 If awareness alsace = Not at all familiar (1)

Page
Break



Q17 Are you familiar with the shape of the wine bottle from Alsace?

- Definitely not (1)
- No (2)
- Probably not (3)
- Neither yes nor no (4)
- Probably yes (5)
- Yes (6)
- Definitely yes (7)

Page
Break



Q18 How would you describe your overall opinion of wines from the region of Alsace?

- Extremely bad (1)
- Bad (2)
- Slightly bad (3)
- Neither good nor bad (4)
- Slightly good (5)
- Good (6)
- Extremely good (7)

Page
Break

Q19 Could you please explain below why you consider that wines from the region of Alsace are [\\${Q18/ChoiceGroup/SelectedChoices}](#)?

Page
Break



Q20

Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with these attributes to describe wines from the region of Alsace (1 = Strongly disagree; 7 = Strongly agree).

	Strongly disagree (1) (1)	Disagree (2) (2)	Somewhat disagree (3) (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4) (4)	Somewhat agree (5) (5)	Agree (6) (6)	Strongly agree (7) (7)
Pleasant (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Good quality/price ratio (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Diverse (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cheerful (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Versatile (21)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Strong character (24)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Dry (25)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Aromatic (26)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Traditional (33)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Page
Break



Q21 How likely is it that you would recommend the wines from the region of Alsace to someone in your circle?

- Extremely unlikely (1)
- Unlikely (2)
- Slightly unlikely (3)
- Neither likely nor unlikely (4)
- Slightly likely (5)
- Likely (6)
- Extremely likely (7)

Page
Break



Q22 Below you will see a wine bottle from the region of Alsace (left) and a regular wine bottle (right).

ALSATIAN REGULAR
WINE BOTTLE WINE BOTTLE

What do you think of the shape of the wine bottle from the region of Alsace?

Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statement (1 = Strongly disagree; 7 = Strongly agree).

	Strongly disagree (1) (1)	Disagree (2) (2)	Somewhat disagree (3) (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4) (4)	Somewhat agree (5) (5)	Agree (6) (6)	Strongly agree (7) (7)
I like the shape of the wine bottle from the region of Alsace. (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Page
Break

End of Block: Alsace Wines

Start of Block: Identification

Q23

TO GET TO KNOW YOU BETTER

What is your gender?

- Male (1)
 - Female (2)
 - Prefer not to say (3)
 - Other (4)
-

Page
Break



Q25 What is your occupation?

- Professional (medicine, law, etc.) (1)
- Executive/managerial (2)
- Self-employed (3)
- Marketing/sales (4)
- Retired (5)
- Administrative (6)
- Trade/technical (7)
- Student (8)
- Homemaker (9)
- Unemployed (10)
- Other (please specify): (11) _____

Page
Break



Q26 What is your highest education level?

- Did not attend school (1)
- High school (2)
- Associate's degree (3)
- Other degree or certification (4)
- Some college education (5)
- Bachelor's degree (6)
- Some graduate school (7)
- Master's degree (8)
- PhD or Doctorate (9)
- Other (please specify): (10) _____

Page
Break

Q27 What is your (or your household's) yearly salary?

- \$0-\$24,999 (1)
- \$25,000-\$49,999 (2)
- \$50,000-\$74,999 (3)
- \$75,000-\$99,999 (4)
- \$100,000-\$149,999 (5)
- \$150,000-\$199,000 (6)
- \$200,000 or more (7)

Page
Break



Q28 What is your nationality? (If you have more than one nationality including American, you can choose both answers)

American (1)

Other (2)

Q29 Where is your principal residence?

The United States (1)

Abroad (2)

Skip To: Q31 If residence = Abroad

Page
Break



Q30 In which state do you reside?

▼ AL (1) ... WY (50)

Q31 What is your native language? (Native language: the first language a child learns)

- English (1)
- Other (2)

End of Block: Identification

Start of Block: Raffle

Q32

Thank you very much for your participation in this survey!

Now, would you like to enter the raffle to win a bottle of wine from the region of Alsace? Click "**Yes**" for more details, click "**No**" to end this survey.

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Skip To: Q35 If choice_raffle = Yes

Skip To: End of Survey If choice_raffle = No

Q35 Thank you again for taking my survey!

Please enter the following information to have the chance to win a bottle of Alsatian wine!
(You must be 21+ to enter).

Reminder, your privacy is important: this information will only be used by me to execute the raffle and to contact you! -Gracie

Name (1) _____

Preferred Phone (2) _____

Email (3) _____

State (4) _____

Zip Code (5) _____

End of Block: Raffle

Appendix F: Stage 1 Axial Coding

Questions	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	A7	A8
Votre marque et les vins d'Alsace								
<p>Pourriez-vous décrire votre vignoble (l'histoire, la taille, la production)? Quelle stratégie avez-vous concernant votre vin? En France? et à l'étranger? aux états unis? Vous vous positionner comment?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nous avons beaucoup travaillé de se positionner en tant que marque de qualité, - On peut mettre une belle vitrine mais si les choses en l'intérieur ne sont pas bien, ça ne fait rien . - on se positionne en tant que marque et pas que de la région 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - un domaine familial avec une notoriété historique mais d'une taille humaine. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - les vins qu'on peut avoir à tous les repas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - crémant, du crémant rosé, c'est ce qui développe le plus en ce moment, - Les états unis, chez nous ils prennent l'entrée de gamme pour les vins tranquilles, et sur le crémant ils prennent un peu de haut de gamme. 		
<p>Quelles sont les caractéristiques de votre marque? en tant qu'une marque des vins d'Alsace?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - on arrive à donner la confiance au client, 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - La tradition, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Notre histoire 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - La Tradition, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - historique et de tradition. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - . Innovation et tradition 	
<p>Quelles sont les associations d'idées qui vous viennent à l'esprit quand vous pensez à la marque régionale des vins d'Alsace ?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Malheureusement aujourd'hui la connotation est une peu négative - il fait parler de la facilité. C'est les vins extrêmement facile - Ce n'est pas une usine, une vraie spécificité de terroir. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - On peut aller d'une très bonne surprise à une très mauvaise qualité. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - comme la gastronomie que j'ai oublié à dire tout à l'heure, c'est très important pour nous et les vins d'alsace. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Il y a une grosse diversité de style. - l'Alsace est fascinant pour les experts mais pour les novices, ça pourrait être un frein. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - aromatiques, - Mais cela peut-être des fois trop expressives. C'est un peu dommage car avec ça on peut avoir les mauvaises perceptions. - Ce qu'on veut montrer c'est ça aussi, la partie gastronomique. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Les vins de tradition, - Après c'est une région qui est vraiment une petite région viticole donc qui est méconnu sur beaucoup de marchés donc il est difficile à mettre sur la carte. - tres tradition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - La tradition et le terroir. - J'aimerais pouvoir dire la modernité, mais malheureusement t ce n'est pas encore. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frais, aromatique, sec, crémant, Riesling.
<p>Qu'est-ce qui distingue l'identité des vins alsaciens des vins des autres régions viticoles françaises ?</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - On n'a jamais aussi bien correspondu nos vins aromatiques. - La diversité peut être une chance. - On correspond à toute les cuisine du monde. - L'histoire est la base de tout. - Notre région est riche de sa diversité, riche de sa culture, riche de son paysage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - La complexité et la sucrosité, - Les consommateurs expert, ça va mais les autres pas du tout. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Les cépages. - On a l'aspect des vins de cépages qui est très présent aux vins de nouveau monde. Mais nous apparitions les applications qui est très particulier. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Les cépages - l d'innovation. - . C'est tradition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On a les vins de cépages - . C'est important d'avoir cette identité, et d'avoir ces cépages très différents, on n'a pas la conformité dans le goût. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - meilleurs vins blancs du monde. - Aussi la cote intéressante c'est d'avoir la diversité au niveau de cépages. Ces cépages qui sont aussi connu à l'étranger.
<p>Quelles sont les valeurs (humaines, de travail, sociales) des vins d'Alsace à votre avis?</p>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - En innovation en n'est pas tout à fait là, - la gastronomie et l'œnotourisme. - On a vraiment les vins qui va à vous tous dans la gastronomie. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Avec l'environnement économie ou l'innovation qu'elle qu'il soit. Le passé, le présent et l'avenir sont important. Notre présent et le passe pour quelqu'un d'autre. Le passé aide à nous comprendre mais on fait surtout pour le futur. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> C'est humain, - Aussi le côté environnemental qui est très important ici, - être au point des choses. 			

Place de l'environnement?	- Nous sommes le vignoble le plus incroyable de monde et il faut savoir le dire, sans être prétentieuse	- Je trouve que notre région est vraiment avant-gardiste par rapport à l'environnement.						- Les vins d'Alsace ont une démarche bien, en avance sur les vins français au niveau de l'environnement. - Il faut donc déjà expliquer la différence entre une Riesling allemande et nous.
Place de innovation?	- mettre en valeur l'artisanat de vin et la production agricole face à la production de masse.	- Je trouve qu'on n'est pas aussi courageux dans nos habillages des étiquettes. - , les alsaciens ne sont pas assez courageux pour les habillages des étiquettes.		- Le plus flagrant c'est l'usage des réseaux sociaux.	- outils très nouveaux, systèmes intelligents, - Je commence à faire plus de réseaux sociaux et les vidéos,	- Tu vois, une bouteille un peu différente, de mettre une capsule à vis même sur les Grands Cru. L'étiquette sont souvent très traditionnels. Même si on veut faire les choses, - l'Alsace reste traditionnel. - , hyper traditionnelle, - , Et l'innovation aiderait ça aussi.	- Le marché français n'est pas encore aussi moderne que dans autres pays. - un peu trop tradition -	
Symboles								
Selon vous, quelles est/sont le/s symbole/s des Vins d'Alsace (les couleurs, les images, etc.)? Pourquoi?		- Brillant. - il y a de la fraîcheur. - Brillant, vivante. Un éclat de diamant, c'est pure.	La flûte, vert et jaune, les foutres.	- L'histoire - . L'histoire est très important chez nous.				
Personnalité								
Comment décririez-vous la personnalité des vins d'Alsace ? Quels mots viennent à l'esprit? Pourquoi?	- Pas une personnalité pour tous les vins, - C'est pareil dans l'humaine- c'est complémentaire.		Vivacité.	- Versatile, précis, élégant, inattendu	Une personne joviale, festive, dynamique.	- la personnalité, - Les vins sont clairement identifiés.	Généreux. - . Ca identifie aussi bien le vins que l'atmosphère. D'une manière générale.	Conviviale, jovial, joyeux,
Reussis?		- Non, non. on n'est pas du tout leader. - , il viennent jamais dans la vie à un vin d'Alsace.	Pas encore mais j'aimerais bien	Les vins d'alsace n'y sont pas encore.	Pas assez encore.	- Ca marche un peu moins bien, on est pas les leaders. - . Quand on sera reconnu à l'international ça sera bien. Mais on est très petite d'être leader.		
Consommateurs								
Parlez-mois des consommateurs des vins d'Alsace.	- Il y en pour toutes les bourses, on peut trouver l'entrée de gamme, les grands crus pour les repas plus particuliers. - . Il y a un manque de connaissance et à quoi s'attendre donc ils vont pas choisir les VA. - Difficile mais les experts quand même. Non, c'est sûr. - J'ai une partie de la gamme pour les experts et une partie pour les novices.	- Le connaisseur plus éclairé, il va dire que les vins d'Alsace ont un rapport qualité prix exceptionnel. - C'est clair que c'est plus visible pour les experts. La terroir... les connaisseurs seront fascinés par les vins d'Alsace. Notre rapport qualité prix est incroyable. - tu es en face d'un non-consommateur, c'est toujours trop cher.		- On a vraiment une stratégie globale. — Ils sont prêt à payer pour certaines productrices et pour certains marchés mais il y a vraiment beaucoup de travail pour l'Alsace.	On a une clientèle en particulier qui reviennent, qui sont habitués, qui connaisse notre vin, qui l'achète pour plusieurs occasions. Après les novices qui connaissent un peu moins et qui viennent en groupe touristiques.		- , on a diversifié notre portefeuille de clients	- On a tous les niveaux.

<p>Selon vous, les vins d'Alsace attirent-ils plus les novices ou les experts en France ?</p> <p>Proposez-vous des gammes différentes selon les attentes de chaque groupe ?</p>		<p>- les vins de terroir et les grands crus, mais aussi les vins de cépages</p>	<p>On a des plus entrée de gamme qui sont plus facile et plus concis. Et après le vin de terroir et lieu-dit qui s'adapte aux consommateurs plus pointus</p>	<p>- Tout dépend vraiment du marché,</p> <p>- En dehors de la France les vins d'Alsace touchent plus aux experts,</p> <p>- Dès qu'on sorte de Europe, c'est un marché de niche qui s'adresse vraiment aux connaisseurs.</p>	<p>Les novices c'est de découvrir les principales cuvées,</p>		<p>'- Souvent les experts, parce que c'était souvent avec les VA, que le terroir. Les consos qui ne sont pas avertie étaient perdus.</p> <p>- Donc il faut améliorer l'images des consommateurs jeunes. Mosina de la compréhension exacte de la région du vin.</p>	
<p>Vin français</p>								
<p>Quelles sont les points forts ou distinctifs d'un vin français à l'international?</p>		<p>- Alors, ça vient de la France et la France est reconnue comme un grand pays de vin. La France est liée au vin.</p>		<p>- Les points forts c'est la qualité. C'est identifié comme une production des vins de grande qualité. La connaissance est très positive au niveau de l'image et la qualité.</p> <p>- Malheureusement les vins d'Alsace sont pas toujours identifié sur les vins français.</p>	<p>La qualité à l'international, c'est une valeur sûre.</p>		<p>- Les vins français ont une très bonne notoriété et une très belle image à l'international.</p>	
<p>Est-ce que le fait que l'Alsace soit une marque française est la première raison de son succès à l'international? Pourquoi ou pourquoi pas?</p>	<p>- On a assez battu pour être un vin français.</p>	<p>- Souvent ils ne mettent pas les vins d'alsace avec les vins française donc ça nous aide pas. On a un problème de rayonnage. Les vins allemande ou autrichienne.</p>	<p>- On n'est pas assez associe aux vin français</p> <p>- Les rieslings et les vins sucrés de ce riesling allemand. La forme de bouteilles aussi.</p>		<p>-, on ne parle pas souvent de l'Alsace avec le France.</p> <p>- Ca dépend, un peu les deux mais un peu plus de négatif. On a moins cette image des vins français de qualité on en bénéficie moins.</p>		<p>- Je dois commencer avec la géographie mondiale d'où se situe l'Alsace.</p>	<p>- Dans plusieurs pays et dans certains états aux US, le fait qu'on devrait expliquer que l'Alsace est France, et les gens disent "Ah oui d'accord"</p> <p>- t, Made in France c'est important.</p>
<p>Aux États-Unis</p>								
<p>Quelle est selon vous la perception de la marque régionale vins d'Alsace à l'international?</p>	<p>- Toujours bonne, meilleure qu'en France. Pas aussi connue que les autres régions françaises elle a une bonne réputation</p>	<p>- On aura jamais la notoriété d'un bordelais ou d'une bourgogne à mon avis, jamais.</p> <p>- Je me suis toujours dit que c'est peut-être la bouteille qui s'est posé problème.</p>	<p>- Bien perçu comme les vins de gastronomie,</p>		<p>- Um, les gens les apprécient, mais ils ne sont pas indispensable,</p>		<p>- Aha, elle est bonne</p> <p>- L'image est bonne mais elle va être très différent.</p>	
<p>Pour votre propre marque, proposez-vous des produits différents pour la France et les États-Unis? Avez-vous une stratégie (positionnement) différente sur chaque marché?</p>								<p>- Riesling, Pinot Blanc and Crémant.</p> <p>- Le crémant c'est ce qui croit aux US. Il est en augmentation.</p>

<p>Selon vous, quelles sont les valeurs de la marque Alsace qui devraient être communiquées au marché américain?</p>	<p>- C'est difficile car on est mélangé avec tout l'industrie - les valeurs sont pas dans le rayonnage.</p>	<p>- Je ne sais pas si l'américain est vraiment fidèle. C'est difficile à dire. Mais je trouve les américains ont un vrai rapport à vin.</p>	<p>- Les vins aromatique, gastronomique - Les prix par rapport aux notes dans les magazines de vin. importance de l'environnement:</p>	<p>- L'Histoire. - L'authenticité</p>	<p>- Ce qui est assez important c'est le côté tradition, l'histoire, quand on y va on en parle, c'est une valeur ajoutée pour nous, - le côté humain.</p>	<p>- C'est notre côté historique, - Je leur parle aussi du crémant. Les bulles ça fonctionne bien.</p>	<p>- La générosité - La valeur humaine aujourd'hui est très important avec nos interlocuteurs, notre relation depuis longtemps.</p>	<p>- C'est important de mettre en avant le crémant, - donc il faut vraiment lier Alsace et la France. - Après je pense que chaque producteur raconte son histoire mais à mon avis ce qui est intéressant, - L'histoire c'est un deuxième niveau, ça vient après.</p>
<p>La perception des VA aux USA</p>	<p>- De meilleur et meilleur,</p>		<p>- mais avec pas mal des pros - les VA sont pas assez cher d'être super bien valoriser aux États-Unis.</p>	<p>- Je pense que c'est le pays qui connaît le moins l'Alsace, - Parce qu'il y a un manque de connaissance de la géographie et l'histoire.</p>	<p>- Ils ont souvent une mauvaise image, ou ils pensent au Riesling Allemagne, - Le crémant est vraiment plus comparé à un champagne.</p>	<p>- Aux États-Unis ils ont une belle image de la France. - États-Unis. Mais ce qui le rend plus difficile, c'est difficile à expliquer de mettre les appellations et le terroir en avant en France et c'est difficile pour le consommateur classique de comprendre. - Après le consommateur averti, eux ils comprennent le terroir.</p>	<p>- La perception est bonne. Pays très important pour les VA. - Les bulles sont en train de monter en gamme. Vraiment.</p>	<p>- Je pense que justement, on est reconnu comme une très bonne qualité - côté aromatique et frais,</p>
<p>Parlez-moi des consommateurs américains. Selon vous ils cherchent quoi dans les vins d'Alsace? Proposez-vous des gammes différentes selon les attentes de différents profils de consommateurs américains</p>	<p>- Les tout novices veulent que les vins sucrés, le Gewurztraminer. - Les connaisseurs, le pinot gris grand cru, peut voir les choses par rapport à la terroir, l'acidité, etc.</p>	<p>- Je pense que les américains sont le premier de regarder le rapport qualité prix.</p>			<p>- On nous demande beaucoup de vin sec. - Pour nous c'est le Crémant rosé, ils aiment bien la couleur. - On voit vraiment la fidélité sur le crémant</p>			
L'avenir								
<p>Selon vous, quel est l'avenir des vins d'Alsace aux États-Unis? Qu'est ce qu'il faut faire ou arrêter de faire? Quelles solutions ou suggestions?</p>	<p>- J'espère que comme partout dans le monde c'est assez positive, je suis convaincue</p>		<p>- d'arriver se diversifié sur les vins Allemagne.</p>	<p>- Les États-Unis c'est un marché très frustrant. - Découvrir la gastronomie.</p>	<p>- Il faut vraiment parler de nous. Il faut juste leur faire goûter et pousser là-dedans et on a vraiment une chance. - côté gastronomie</p>	<p>- On a un gros potentiel aux États-Unis. -, On est les vins adaptés aux américains, les goûts américains, les choses qui pourrait plaire. - Les esprits sont très différents, en particulier le milieu, la côte est et ouest.</p>		
L'avenir								
<p>Auriez-vous quelque chose à ajouter que nous n'aurions pas évoquée lors de l'entretien?</p>			<p>- Une grande force que contribue à notre notoriété c'est enotourisme en Alsace. - Le est feedback est toujours très positive qui aide à l'image et la consommation des vins d'alsace.</p>					

Appendix G: Stage 2 Axial Coding

Questions	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5
Region of origin					
Is the country of origin important to you when you purchase or recommend a wine?	<p>The country of origin is very important,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It's hugely important when I choose wine then. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -They want French, Italian, California. - There is a big importance on varietal, but also country. 		<p>It's very important because wine always comes from a place, so even the most basic consumer who is drinking wine just to drink wine, even if it's a state like California or a country like France, there is a sense of place, "where is this beverage from?"</p>	<p>Yeah, it is critical. It determines the quality and the taste.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - story, the family, is it grown with sustainability in mind, does it have authenticity. - price of course, - And of course the region, you know the appellation system, the appellation system. It is critical for me. - they are drinking something right from the source.
Is the region of origin important to you when you purchase or recommend a wine?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It's super important, but the regionality, it's not like "Oh I need a wine from the south." It is like I want a Rhone because of its ripe style and Grenache driven wines. It is not a matter of the name, but I can say I am looking for cooler climate wines. The regionality and varietal and profile are kind of synonymous to me. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Regions are also important. It is interesting. It is definitely important. 	<p>Yes and no. Both.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -It is a mixture of appellation and branding. The appellation is a common brand: For The region, you cannot ask The consumer to have a knowledge of wine. 	<p>That is for a more advanced consumer, a more involved consumer is interested in the specificity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - price, price, and brand first, - the other thing they look for in the US is the varietal. - the place. It is about 4th-5th. <p>But the highly involved wine consumers care deeply about the region, and the even more knowledgeable consumer goes down to the AVA. Especially in a place like Burgundy they might be able to figure out the villages but the premier crus and grand crus are very confusing. Even in Napa, there are 17 AVAs, very few consumers know all of these, or even 1-2 of them. That level of specificity is a challenge for consumers around the world. So, it is better to brand a larger region, for example, the grapes have been a challenge for a lot of people, because you know there are a lot of them.</p>	
What other attributes are important?	<p>The style and the varietal, yeah</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "-regionality is important, for specific styles. This is just important and the varietal and the price point. 		<p>What is important in the US market is the service. People love to go to a wine shop. It is like a sommelier in a restaurant.</p> <p>Because I know I am going to sell it. I target the importer and I look at their portfolio.</p>		

<p>Do you identify the region of origin as a brand itself or as an attribute of wine? In your opinion, how does a regional brand compare to a proprietary brand?</p>	<p>Definitely. People shop for Bordeaux, Burgundy, Napa, Sancerre. No question. It is a VERY small percentage that pierce the region AND the grape and that go into the producer. Even knowledgeable consumers and the most popular regions like Bordeaux and Burgundy. Very few are saying anything more specific. It is definitely regional for most people.</p>	<p>Hands down. they don't automatically go to a producer, they go to the wines of Alsace umbrella. So, it is not only good for consumers but also educating staff. We do have a ton of collectors, but generally we have consumers that understand a bit due to that regional focus.</p>		<p>Oh yes. Provence has done a really good job in the US. .</p>	
<p>What are the most important regional brands according to you?</p>		<p>Wines of Alsace, Wines of Germany, Wines of Austria, Wines of Chile are really big too. Sonoma and Napa also, outreach is popular and accessible. Those are the big ones for me. Burgundy is also a big one. Bordeaux. Those two are always around especially with collectors. So, we have done things like galas and things. The big ones to me, Champagne too. And Alsace. The top with visibility here.</p>	<p>The social part of the wine is important, I have to listen to what the market wants. . Italy, Spain, domestic are competitions, Chile, Australia, those are the competitions, but American consumers work by style and price. No way do they ask, no way do they say "I want a cote du Rhone."</p>	<p>Bordeaux. Bordeaux is really well-known. Oregon has also done a really good job. They do not focus on the AVAs but Oregon as a whole with a focus on Pinot Noir. The general buying consumer needs to have a region and one wine that goes with it. Everybody thinks of Riesling belonging to Germany, they do not think of Riesling and Alsace together. Alsace has not done a great job in my opinion of marketing themselves to the general consumer, they have done a great job of the more involved consumers, but not general. They do not know what Alsace does.</p>	<p>I think that Provence Rose is a big deal.</p>
<p>Do you feel that history is important to the region when marketing?</p>	<p>I do not think that any of my recommendations or sales were ever helped with history. . but I keep it to 5-10 minutes. If not, people fall asleep. . There are other things that I would prioritize in addition to the history. More about what the consumers can expect, the varieties, is just as, if not more important. They should not abandon history, but to focus on that at the expense of other stuff would be a mistake.</p>	<p>One of the draws is that you wanna explain the history and you wanna explain the family. . It means something. And it is not a new place that just has a lot of money and can make wine. That gives it so much more credibility</p>	<p>History is important because it is a story. There is a story we can tell. You can talk about the monk and the church. In California the story is not the same, you do not talk about history. Even because you make wine for 300 years - that is credibility.</p>	<p>Yes, there needs to be some sort of history and heritage. It is not as critical to all consumers, but it helps. People would say though, do not bore me with this, give me the wine. You can mention it, but do not bore me :)</p>	<p>Definitely. There can be so much more marketing around the history of a place.</p>
<p>Alsace Wines Evaluation</p>					

<p>According to you, what are the characteristics of Alsace Wines?</p>		<p>For me, the food friendly nature, especially working in restaurants, there are so many different styles. I also think they run the spectrum of really beautiful bone dry and sparkling to something with more residual sugar that we can eat with stinky cheese, there is a lot of variety,</p>		<p>I think of the food of Alsace. I think of beauty. I think Alsace is the most beautiful wine region of France. Y Alsace had incredible food. It is something that Alsace has not capitalized o enough. You know regional branding is differentiation yourself, capitalizing on what you have. They do not have an icon product, a significant grape variety. If you do not have an icon product, you will never be a great wine region. dry Grand Cru Riesling.</p>	<p>Riesling with Litchi fruit. Pinot Gris. I know about three domains really well. And then, of course, there are tons of other ones. Alsace is a little confusing for me. And it is hard for Americans. There is the bottle, I think it scares them. I do not know, I do not think it has a broad appeal. It is definitely appealing to collectors though. . All these different foods. It is definitely a different version of French wine.</p>
<p>What associations come to mind when you think of Alsace Wines?</p>	<p>Versatile, in price and great value, farmed conscientiously, biodynamics and organics. incredibly versatile with food, underappreciated, confusing for the consumer, and delicious!</p>	<p>I am spoiled! I have been to the actual area once so I think about that. sustainability and I have seen these beautiful vineyards that are super alive.</p>	<p>Not easy. There are not many images in Alsace in the US. Alsace is more interesting to female sommeliers; the girls go to Frankfort to German wine to Alsace My male contacts never come to Alsace. Paris Rhone Burgundy. There is German Riesling, but We do not say French Riesling, we talk about Alsace Riesling. In France it is already in the region. And that is a problem because Alsace is not a big one, not at all.</p>		
<p>Could you give your impressions of the region of Alsace wines in terms of being a French wine region? In terms of being a global wine region? (Compared to other wine regions)</p>	<p>, I think they are really confusing wines, the tall skinny bottles. Alsace has not done a good job of getting out the reality that Alsace AOC can be dry at this point. There is no regional setting for sec, demi sec or anything like that, so that is one. So, I think if you take those 3 things together: the confusing things on the bottle: names, size, dryness, the no entry-level possibility and the best producers not wanting to travel, or focusing on export and all that. it on a regional scale,</p>	<p>I feel like there is a lot of interest with Alsace. . People see it now as new. People are coming in and asking, and I did not see that before. It is definitely been in the last couple of years.</p>	<p>I do not know, because they are closer to Germany and Austria than France. The problem is competing with Germany and Austria, not France. The Alsatian producers disagree on how to do promotion. For me, it is using the best of the best - The 20-year-old Riesling. You have to match with the people that you work with. A=. We know Germany because of Riesling and Austria because of this. But in Alsace... nothing.</p>		

<p>How would you describe the quality of wine from the region of Alsace?</p>	<p>.The quality is fantastic, but the lack of economies of scale, and the lack of appearance of small producers that cannot make wines at a lower price in large quantities. Y. How many wines can you get on a shelf for 20\$? virtually none. There is a huge barrier to entry, the gateway drug.</p>	<p>I think the quality is quite high, and there is an excellent variety. I You can enjoy every day without spending a ton of money.</p>	<p>Alsace is not a light wine, and the best wine takes time to be enjoyable. It. I sell what I can sell what people want. And it is not Alsace. . It is really hard to sell. For the label, you see the label of a wine that you had liked before but OH it is a vendanges tardive. Oops. not what you want. Why is it sweet this time? It is a problem, we do not know. The little off-dry and dry sign on the back that they are talking about.</p>	<p>I love Alsatian wines and most of the people I hang out with do. You know the big names and people who play the whole spectrum. The one nice thing for Alsace is that it has a level of respect for the quality of the wines. It is not considered cheap, and if your wines are considered cheap, that is a really hard place to start. For example, Languedoc, Chile, Argentina to some extent, parts of Spain. It's hard then to bring them up. Alsace, fortunately, is not perceived as cheap. It's almost perceived in the middle.</p>	<p>There can be cheap stuff, I think you can find Gewurztraminer at \$8.99, and then there's really really high-end Grand Cru. It's all over the place. I don't drink it that much, I don't see it that much. The tall bottle is a problem. I just don't think this shape is attractive to the mass market. Vinifying things a bit dryer might be better for the broader market. Packaging tends to be Germanic and it doesn't appeal here. I don't think the superfine wines need to change, but if Alsace wants to be a player in the big brand world, they should change the bottle size.</p>
<p>What is your opinion on the availability of wine from the Alsace region?</p>	<p>In the US market, outside of French restaurants and the most progressive wine shops, virtually nonexistent. Maybe Trimbach and Hugel for their distribution. Unfortunately, if it's not a French or Asian cuisine restaurant, it's really not available, but it's really unfortunate.</p>	<p>I feel like there is quite a bit of availability. I do surround myself with wine people. But if I'm walking in retail, I see Alsace on the shelf. I don't think that it's hard to find, If I wasn't in the restaurant industry, and just went to the store, wine shop, I would find something anywhere in the wine shops around town.</p>	<p>Not at all the same for Alsace. When you are amateur you can know, but when you are not an amateur you are completely lost. Selling Alsace wines is really difficult. if I don't put the wine in the glass I won't sell it. It's true. I don't export Alsace. I used to have more but now barely 1. When we talk about Riesling, there are 50 crus, dry or not dry, GW I But when you do a promotion, do you sell the wine or the region?</p>	<p>I've only seen Alsace, even in California, you find Alsace in fine-dining establishments and nice wine shops. You won't find Alsace in Target, I' crémants are not very expensive, so people will buy them</p>	
<p>What do you think of the Alsace Wines bottle?</p>		<p>The shape of the bottle is very recognizable. It's a good thing, people see it right away. There is an old school feel for the labels and I think it's beautiful, it also has that history feel to it.</p>	<p>The need to keep it, it's fine. If they change it they will lose identity.</p>	<p>I think it's absolutely beautiful and it helps to differentiate Alsace.</p>	
<p>What do you think of the Alsace Wines Labels?</p>	<p>I think they are beautiful, charming, I think they are confusing for American consumers. American consumers shop by varietal or by region. With Alsace it's really not sure what you are buying... is it the terroir, producer, grape. But I also find them beautiful. But if you take the label and name and the tall skinny bottles and the vintage variations and the fact that they aren't Chardonnay or Sauvignon Blanc, there are so many things. So, it's really confusing,</p>	<p>often questioning is the sweetness levels of ripeness. The varietal really helps, and I do think there are other regions that are much more difficult.</p>			<p>I just think the label should be cool, chic, fresh, young, hip, pop. Clean, looks expensive, it checks a lot of boxes for a lot of people.</p>

Do you buy/recommend wines from the region of Alsace?	I recommend them anytime anyone asks, I recommend it with all types of food. it was still a struggle to sell. I tend to sell the dryer wines better. But it's still a struggle, it's not easy to sell. But at the Michelin stars it was easier to sell because people are pairing.	Really often. Yeah, I'm always talking about them. It's such a beautiful area I think it's difficult to understand unless you've been there.			
US Consumers and customer segments					
According to your experience, what are the opinions that US consumers have of French wine regions?		They have a very strong desire to taste wine from France.	The US is not one country and it's not easy for people to understand the market. It's a great market for wine and spirits because all people are from Europe, wine is part of the culture and the history. City to city is not the same, state to state. Metro to the countryside. North to south to middle.	Americans have a love-hate relationship with France. Right now, people are in love with French Rose, mainly Provence. And then Champagne. They have never stopped loving Champagne. . And after that, Bordeaux to some extent and Burgundy for the collectors and Alsace for the people who know about it.	
According to your experience, what are the opinions that US consumers have of the Alsace wine region?		. It can reach a huge variety of people. From collectors to people like my mom who doesn't know a lot about wine.	Style, story, and price-point is important. You need to train the people in the industry. Tasting is really important. When you buy the bottle, you buy what's in the bottle but also a story and an image, but in Alsace if you have never been there, it's very hard to keep. For example, Provence, people see the Riviera, they know Provence rose. Alsace, I don't know where they are, it fights with its own politics.	So, it's focusing on the iconic product, and then traveling is really important. do something like that, get their iconic product, their color, Just focusing on the trade is not going to touch the consumers. Do they really wanna be in the grocery stores or do they only wanna be in fine dining and wine shops? . It still doesn't mean that Alsace shouldn't have an iconic product and an image. That's why Provence has a good story because everything was really clear.	. What does it taste like, it should speak to the elegance of Alsace. The sweetness should be communicated. Alsace should definitely keep their small growers, but is that what makes their region successful?
Should the different customer segments of experts and novices be considered by having: Different offers for the two profiles? Different marketing for the two profiles?	. At my restaurants, they know about certain points at a certain price range.	There are a variety of things and they do a good job of that, you can reach a large number of consumers with the entry level wines, and then you can pepper in some of the higher ends once they gain some more trust. I think guests are willing to give information.	he bigger difference would be metro cities and the countryside. Dryer and dryer styles. Alsace works by grapes. In Alsace you have Riesling, but also New Zealand and Australia. The same grape at 4 different wines. I don't know how to communicate. A		The more involved is usually an urban, educated person, curious person who travels, lives in the city center, and eats in restaurants. They have a relationship with their wine store and want to discover new things. Educated and curious I think the less engaged are people who find a brand that they like and they hang on to it for a really long time. Price is really important to them.

<p>Is there a difference in the importance of the region of origin between novice or expert consumers?</p>	<p>I think for an informed consumer, the region of origin is important and for a less informed, uneducated consumer, virtually nonexistent. For those people it doesn't matter where it comes from, it's about how it feels. It's more about texture and body. For the educated consumer, regionality becomes more important.</p>	<p>When you go from the old world to the new world and then down to grand cru, the more educated consumers find more details to be important</p>			
<p>Collaboration and the future</p>					
<p>Out of the associations that you listed earlier about Alsace, which do you think are the most important to communicate to US consumers?</p>	<p>You gotta communicate that the entry level wine is DRY AND BONE DRY. The producers need to stamp it on their heads. versatile wine in the world with food, fraction of the price with the same history. Then Dry or off-dry. They have to figure out how to communicate the profile of the wine on the bottle. , there has GOT to be a sweetness scale. . Why does the bottle of Cotes de Bordeaux sell? Because people know that it's medium to full-bodied red wine on a certain price point. It's because it's a reliable wine that they can understand. It's crazy to me that they wouldn't take the steps to do it and really educate the American consumers about the versatility of the wines. It's dry, aromatic, no oak. It's more floral and stone. and then they will try it. You just have to have this conversation and this isn't really being done on the marketing side.</p>	<p>Food friendliness, versatility is one of the easiest for me to sell wines of Alsace in the restaurant. History is huge. Absolutely. It's across the board for both sectors of consumers.</p>	<p>Promote one product. why not have an "Alsace white", like Burgundy white, Bordeaux white. This could help somehow but people don't agree on what to do, and then they put the wrong price. Alsace doesn't sell well outside of Alsace. The amateurs that know Alsace are only 2% of the market.</p>		
<p>What can the region of Alsace wines do differently in the US market? In your opinion, what is the future of the region of Alsace Wines in the US compared to other French wine regions? Compared to other regions around the world? How can it succeed? (considering the current taxation and COVID-19)</p>	<p>all of a sudden on Zoom with a moderator, buyers, everyone etc. give people an intimate view. That's what consumers are expecting. The marketing playing field has leveled and it would be a good time to really revisit the strategies. And INCLUDE FOOD! The versatility, it's really what we need. I love history, but it's not why people sit down and open a bottle of wine.</p>	<p>I mean, the producers, I would love to have more of them visit. The dinners go really well. To just have presence and visibility is awesome. I've seen more and more on Instagram, it is also important from a social media standpoint. Just interaction is cool. If we can do that virtually with engagement that way we can do it can translate into sales.</p>	<p>Maybe an idea is to promote by the top even if there is no wine to sell. Then it starts the image. I listen to my consumers, but nobody asks for Alsace, even though I live in Strasbourg. Alsace is not at all mandatory.</p>	<p>I really wanna see Alsace succeed. encourage the leaders to work together. . crémant d'Alsace doesn't get mixed up with the other regions. There is a lot that you can do in Alsace but it takes time, patience, and collaboration. A way to start is just to create a goal. How much do we want to be able to ship and sell and what do we want to focus on?</p>	

Appendix H: Normality Distribution

Item	skewness	kurtosis
1 image_region - I like this region.	-1.3889192	2.18195727
2 image_region - I have a positive impression of this region.	-1.6331327	3.37718687
3 image_region - I appreciate this region.	-1.696725	3.88193802
4 image_region - I want to visit/discover this region.	-1.844755	4.0995615
5 imag_winereg_qual - This wine brand is much discussed by wine experts (salespeople in wine shops, sommeliers or waiters, connoisseurs in your circle).	-0.3230725	-0.1687975
6 imag_winereg_qual - The quality of this wine brand has a good reputation.	-1.2475654	1.95779749
7 imag_winereg_qual - This wine brand has potential for bottle aging.	0.22168469	-0.4034748
8 imag_winereg_qual - This wine brand is highly-rated (wine applications, wine reviews on websites or magazines).	-0.4215136	-0.0511694
9 img_winereg_hertg - This wine brand is renowned.	-0.9553403	1.17208504
10 img_winereg_hertg - This wine brand has a rich history.	-1.1729749	1.64968034
11 img_winereg_hertg - This wine brand has a heritage in terms of know-how.	-0.8593651	0.85916155
12 img_winereg_hertg - This wine brand will continue to endure over time.	-1.0918267	1.73669759
13 img_winereg_disti - This wine brand has a particular and distinct taste.	-0.8544671	1.22980483
14 img_winereg_disti - This wine brand is not produced anywhere else.	-0.5325575	-0.4169813
15 img_winereg_disti - This wine brand has specific characteristics that differentiate it from other wine brands of the world.	-0.6852914	0.6533361
16 img_winereg_ter - This wine brand has a special terroir* that makes this specific wine possible.	-0.3795868	-0.3738362
17 equity_wine_region - I am loyal to this wine brand.	-0.2955293	-0.7011836
18 equity_wine_region - I have a positive attitude toward this wine brand.	-1.5165485	4.35287267
19 equity_wine_region - I prefer to buy this wine brand even if there are other wine brands that are just as good.	-0.1893147	-0.824814
20 equity_wine_region - This wine brand is unique.	-0.7252986	0.95846713
21 equity_wine_region - This wine brand is strong.	-0.697763	0.47427977
22 expertise_wine - I think I have mastered some wine knowledge.	-0.0557357	-0.993308
23 expertise_wine - I am referred to as the "wine expert" in my entourage/friend circle.	0.57909968	-0.5298568
24 expertise_wine - I know more about wine compared to the people around me.	-0.2665889	-0.9329322
25 expertise_wine - I know quite a lot about wine.	0.01972783	-0.8579891
26 expertise_wine - I am a wine expert.	1.01886532	0.73422156

Appendix I: Quantitative Sample Description

Gender	Number	Percentage
Female	163	87.16%
Male	24	12.83%

Age	Number	Percentage
Between 21 and 25 yo	19	10.16%
Between 26 and 35 yo	126	67.37%
Between 36 and 45 yo	16	8.56%
Between 46 and 55 yo	4	2.14%
Between 56 and 65 yo	16	8.56%
More than 65 yo	6	3.20%

Education	Number	Percentage
No degree	0	0%
High school degree	1	0.54%
Associate's degree	2	1.07%
Other degree or certification	0	0%
Some college education	7	3.74%
Bachelor's degree	71	37.96%
Some graduate studies	14	7.49%
Master's degree	70	37.43%
Ph.D. or Doctorate	9	4.81%

Other	3	1.60%
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Revenue	Number	Percentage
\$0-\$24,999	14	7.49%
\$25,000-\$49,999	30	16.04%
\$50,000-\$74,999	40	21.40%
\$75,000-\$99,999	27	14.43%
\$100,000-\$149,999	39	20.85%
\$150,000-\$199,000	18	9.62%
\$200,000 or more	19	10.16%

Nationality	Number	Percentage
American	168	89.83%
Other	19	10.16%

Mother tongue	Number	Percentage
English	180	96.25%
Other	7	3.74%

Note: N=187 (final data set)

Appendix J: Validation of Measures Factor Analysis Table

Dimension	Item	F1	Cronbach's alpha
1	image_region - I like this region.	0.748	0.845
	image_region - I have a positive impression of this region.	0.873	
	image_region - I appreciate this region.	0.915	
	image_region - I want to visit/discover this region.	0.797	
		F1	Cronbach's alpha
2	imag_winereg_qual - This wine brand is much discussed by wine experts (salespeople in wine shops, sommeliers or waiters, connoisseurs in your circle).	0.803	0.900
	imag_winereg_qual - The quality of this wine brand has a good reputation.	0.789	
	imag_winereg_qual - This wine brand has potential for bottle aging.	0.608	
	imag_winereg_qual - This wine brand is highly-rated (wine applications, wine reviews on websites or magazines).	0.847	
		F1	Cronbach's alpha
3	img_winereg_hertg - This wine brand is renowned.	0.790	0.907
	img_winereg_hertg - This wine brand has a rich history.	0.848	
	img_winereg_hertg - This wine brand has a heritage in terms of know-how.	0.860	
	img_winereg_hertg - This wine brand will continue to endure over time.	0.874	
		F1	Cronbach's alpha
4	img_winereg_disti - This wine brand has a particular and distinct taste.	0.747	0.804
	img_winereg_disti - This wine brand is not produced anywhere else.	0.601	
	img_winereg_disti - This wine brand has specific characteristics that differentiate it from other wine brands of the world.	0.952	
5	img_winereg_ter - This wine brand has a special terroir* that makes this specific wine possible	X	X
		F1	Cronbach's alpha
6	equity_wine_region - I am loyal to this wine brand.	0.686	0.823
	equity_wine_region - I have a positive attitude toward this wine brand.	0.751	
	equity_wine_region - I prefer to buy this wine brand even if there are other wine brands that are just as good.	0.707	
	equity_wine_region - This wine brand is unique.	0.725	
	equity_wine_region - This wine brand is strong.	0.606	
		F1	Cronbach's alpha
7	expertise_wine - I think I have mastered some wine knowledge.	0.694	0.889
	expertise_wine - I am referred to as the "wine expert" in my entourage/friend circle.	0.833	
	expertise_wine - I know more about wine compared to the people around me.	0.805	
	expertise_wine - I know quite a lot about wine.	0.846	
	expertise_wine - I am a wine expert.	0.745	
		F1: Factor weight	

Appendix K: Alsace Wines Overall Evaluation Short Answer Responses

How would you describe your overall opinion of wines from the region of Alsace?

(1= extremely bad; 2= bad; 3=slightly bad; 4= neither bad nor good; 5=slightly good; 6=good; 7= extremely good)

Could you please explain why?

Evaluation	Explanation
3	I would know more white sweeter wines from Alsace which I don't enjoy much.
3	Have had more unimpressive than amazing wine from the region, also find there is not really a wow factor
4	Because I am not literate in the distinctions
4	I am not that familiar with wine specifically from this region but I feel confident that I would like it
4	I am unfamiliar with them, but have heard good things about French wine in general.
4	Do not know enough to make a judgement
4	I just don't know enough!
4	I have no knowledge of them so nothing to base an opinion on. Nothing positive nor negative, beyond the general conceit that French wines, in general, are good. But I know nothing of Alsace as a specific region.
4	Little direct knowledge
4	Would need to restate and try in order to answer as I haven't had many
4	Not familiar with them
4	Not familiar with the region.
4	I am unfamiliar with that region of wine
4	I'm not familiar with the region, I usually drink CA or wines.
4	Not familiar enough with the variety produced in the Alsace region to have an opinion.
4	Just unfamiliar with these wines
4	I've never had it and don't recognize it
4	Not familiar with which wines are from that region
4	I have never tried them.
4	I am unfamiliar with this region of wines.
4	Because I don't have enough experience with this wine to rate it good or bad.
4	Because I'm really not sure
4	I don't know anything about them
4	I haven't had the chance to try an Alsatian wine yet.
4	N/A

4	Not my favorite because I don't love Riesling
4	I've never had wine from Alsace, so I feel like I cannot give a well-informed opinion on the matter.
4	I am not familiar enough with the specifically Alsatian wines to form a strong opinion but I'm sure they're wonderful.
4	I am unfamiliar with wines from that region. I couldn't say if they are good nor bad.
4	I just can't think of any that am very familiar with
4	Not all wines from any region are strictly good or bad
4	Don't know much about them
4	I am more familiar with wines in the United States, specifically California
4	N/a
4	Unsure if I've had many wines from Alsace
4	I know generally what wines are made in Alsace but am unsure if I have tasted one
4	I think of mostly sweet whites which are not my usual taste
4	I don't drink a lot of Alsace wine so don't have a true opinion
5	I have heard about it at wine shops but don't know anything beyond that
5	I've heard of the wines from the region but do not personally know about them
5	They have a tendency to have white wine, which is preferable for me since I have a history of migraines. It is also what I prefer.
5	I know that it's a renowned region for many of the same grapes that are grown in Germany, and I enjoy them on occasion in specific contexts, but I prefer wines from other regions.
5	I traveled to Alsace a few years ago, and we tried various wines. There were a lot of whites when I was more of a red fan. I remember liking one Gewurztraminer (spelling?) quite a lot though.
5	Full body, slightly sweet
5	A lot of Riesling and gewürztraminer are too sweet for me even if they're delicious
5	I am familiar with some of the whites from Alsace (crisp, refreshing), but I don't know of many other different types of wine associated with this region.
5	Good reputation; generally wine enthusiasts like it
5	Their unique flavor profile
6	Because its French Wine country
6	Good terroir, with lots of Riesling
6	I feel like I've been recommended wines from that region often at the liquor store.
6	Reputation
6	Very good with food.
6	I have Gewürztraminer every Christmas morning with my eggs Benedict.
6	A friend of mine lived there for a while and describe really liking the wine
6	The region is close to Germany, and I suppose that its white wines are excellent.

6	I think that European wines are generally good
6	Closer to mountains, but it's not a very informed perspective
6	Although I'm not huge on white wines (which from what I know is most of what Alsace makes) I do appreciate that they aren't crazy sweet. They have a nice dry taste which I prefer.
6	Taste, availability, and reputation
6	They are smooth and easy to drink
6	I just love wine and the wine from the Alsace region are delicious. The grapes used are unique and rich.
6	The reputation
6	I know that I like some whites from the Alsace region and friends have recommended them to me
6	I feel like French wines in general have a good to great reputation.
6	Word of mouth
6	I have had Alsatian wine at wine tastings at my favorite restaurant.
6	Crisp and clean taste
6	France generally has a history of producing excellent wine, therefore I'm assuming the Alsace wine would be good as well.
6	My opinion is strongly influenced by that of my peers
6	I have heard that their Riesling is good
6	I'm more of a red wine drinker, but if only white is available, I'm looking for a Riesling from Alsace ;)
6	Because it is diverse in types and flavors.
6	I like crisp and dry white wines, and also sparkling white wines.
6	Excellent old-world wine. Strong reputation
6	I like the taste of Riesling.
6	Good weather and soil for vineyards
6	Rieslings are my favorite type of white wine though I usually prefer to drink red varieties in general.
6	I love to drink them
6	I think of this region as having some of those lovely slightly effervescent whites? Pinot Gris, dryish Rieslings, etc., and those are wines I enjoy.
6	they taste good to me
6	The French make excellent wine.
6	Taste
6	Amazing white
6	Rich history of unique wines that are somewhat lesser known to American buyers
6	Personally, I love the floral notes that I've experienced with Alsace wines and it doesn't traditionally have oak aging (which can trigger migraines in me). I like the flavor; it reminds me of a more grownup version of the Riesling I started out with in college
6	Pretty bottles and refreshing wine

6	I really love the whites, especially the pinot Gris! I think they have an excellent balance between dry and too sweet.
6	I've visited the region and its wine producers and left feeling that they are very knowledgeable in their craft. I find the white varieties to be well balanced.
6	There are many individual producers who care about their terroir and cultivate in a conscientious, environmentally responsible manner. Alsatian Riesling, from a good producer, makes a unique contribution to many festive meals, as well.
6	Unique product, expressions of gewurz
6	I like the taste, the variety, and the price
6	I like Rieslings and gewurztraminers but only when they're dry. Very often they come sweet, so I personally can't appreciate absolutely all of them.
7	Because of the age of the wineries.
7	They have good white varieties
7	Great growing weather and knowledgeable growers
7	Word of mouth
7	I don't typically drink white wines, but my mom is a big Riesling gal. When searching for her bottle we always search for Alsace Riesling (my ancestors are from there and it's this ongoing thing that the best Riesling is from Alsace.) I do enjoy a glass of chilled Riesling on a hot summer day and I think Alsace Riesling is particularly very satisfying.
7	Because I have been introduced to the wines of the region!
7	I find the wine unique and extremely flavorful without being overly sweet. I prefer cremant to other sparkling wines and find the Rieslings generally exceptional.
7	Whenever I've been offered Alsatian wine without knowing where it is, I always comment on how good it tastes!!
7	Primarily light, dry wines and light slightly sweet wines
7	The hillside /rain/ effect on grape growing!
7	As a local, I have a distinct appreciation for local products and I also enjoy the taste of Alsatian wines.
7	Alsace produces some of the best white wines in the world.
7	The German/French mix of influences on taste and creation produce unique and delicious wine.
7	Beautiful bottle & label. White wine is crisp and fresh. It is light and pairs well with many dishes.
7	I have been to Alsace and sampled many of the wines. The connection between the history and landscape and the taste of the wine is a strong scent/Taste memory!
7	I consider Alsatian wines extremely good because of their complexity, especially for some grape varieties that often lack complexity in wines produced elsewhere (esp. Riesling, pinot Gris). I also feel some bias because I'm especially attuned to the flavors of Alsatian wine, so it gives me extra enjoyment to drink, compare, and critique it, beyond just "I like this" or "I don't like this."
7	I lived in Strasbourg for some time and drank it pretty exclusively. I have fond memories of discovering the different types. I also took a gastronomy class while there, which gave me a greater appreciation for it. I also love sweet white wines, so it is kind of perfect for me.

7	Alsatian wines are of high quality and of unique taste. This region offers a wide variety of wines (predominately white wines) for all preferences and has an impressive reputation in and out of France.
7	Variety and taste!

Analyze of Short Answers

Theme	Frequency
Sweet	1
Unimpressed	1
Unfamiliar/not enough knowledge	30
Unfamiliar but positive image of French wines in general	2
More familiar with American wines	2
Personal preference (Dislike Riesling, dislike sweet)	2
Word of mouth, recommendation	11
Reputation	7
Country of origin	6
German wine good reputation	2
French wines in general good reputation	4
Old world/ European	2
Terroir: Relation to mountains, weather, soil , history, and producers	8
White wines	6
Riesling	7
Gewurztraminer	5
cremant/sparkling	3
Refreshing	4
General taste and variety	13
Unique	5
Bottle	2
Food and wine pairing	2
Sweet associations	4
Dry associations	4
Lightly sweet	3

Transcriptions of Stage 1 Interviews

Transcription

Interview with a winegrower, Alsace, France.

Code: A1

April 9th, 2020, 54 minutes.

(Introduction)

Gracie: Pourriez-vous me dire le nom exact de votre poste?

A1: Je n'en ai pas vraiment, vigneronne.

Gracie: OK c'est très bien et de combien d'années travaillez-vous dans le secteur de vin?

A1: 19 ans

Gracie: Vous avez toujours être dans le vin?

A1: Non la restauration en Angleterre.

Gracie: Pendant combien d'années en Angleterre?

A1: 4 ans.

Gracie: Pourriez-vous me parler d'une journée quotidienne? Environnement de travail comment ça se passe une journée type, etc.?

A1: On est une grosse équipe, je travaille avec mon frère. Dans les vignes, le domaine familial le plus grand d'alsace. On a pas mal de monde. Grande PME avec 50 personnes. Pour dire tous les jours c'est compliqué, je n'ai pas 2 journées qui sont pareil - les activités principales sont d'être commerciale à l'export, je vois tous les marchés européens, la côte est des états unis, ensuite le RP et après la communication site internet brochures etc. après d'autres choses.

Gracie: je vais avoir trois types de questions certaines à parler de la marque Alsace donc d'une marque régionale est sûr qu'il va parler de votre marque

A1: OK pas de soucis

Gracie: Pourriez-vous me dire quel type de vin avez-vous au domaine?

A1: Les 7 cépages alsaciens classiques. 8 GC différents, 3 vendanges tardives et 3 SGN - on fait environ 22 vins chaque année

Gracie: Bio ?

A1: Nous avons aucune certification. On est trop grand avec 100 hectares, on n'arrive pas à faire de l'ensemble de la surface. On fait de l'agriculture culture bio mais on n'arrive pas à faire sur les 130 hectares.

Gracie: Je comprends, et vers quels pays exportez-vous?

A1: La première marche c'est la Belgique, client historique qui nous fait une grosse marche si de chiffre d'affaires, après les USA qui a un grand volume et après l'Angleterre

Gracie: Pouvez-vous me parler de votre marque ? Quelle stratégie avez-vous concernant votre vin?

A1: Nous avons beaucoup travaillé de se positionner en tant que marque de qualité, une des plus gros domaines sur la région. On a fait les gros investissements dans la cave et avec les outils plus modernes pour améliorer notre qualité. L'année dernière l'accueil, avant les gens attendaient dans le couloir. Vraiment pas mal d'investissement.

Nous étions assez discrets et au sein de la région pas forcément active. On avait beaucoup de travail en interne pour améliorer la qualité de vin et les outils de productions.

Maintenant les choses sont à jour on pourrait être activé pour la région car nous on interne on a fait les choses correctes. On peut mettre une belle vitrine mais si les choses en l'intérieur ne sont pas bien, ça ne fait rien .

Nous avons aussi focaliser sur le développement à l'export, les marchés qu'on n'avait pas avant. On sert les vins de qualité n'importe le millésime, on se positionne en tant que marque et pas que de la région. Certains domaines sont devenus les vraies marques on a essayé de faire pareil - faire un produit de qualité même dans les mauvais millésimes , nous sommes en valeur sûre en Alsace.

Gracie: Avez-vous d'autres caractéristiques de votre marque?

A1: Ce que je trouve assez extraordinaire, aujourd'hui on est en 2019 (2020), on arrive à donner la confiance au client, quand on a un vin de notre domaine on sait que c'est la qualité,

Si c'est un mauvais millésime certains domaines ne vont pas le faire. Faire un produit qui donne confiance, c'est un luxe extraordinaire - un vrai luxe.

Produire les vins de qualité qui sont les produits de confiance. Même aujourd'hui ça tient plus

On fait l'investissement qualitatif pour donner confiance aux clients. C'est vraiment la propriété du domaine

Gracie: Très bien, merci. Je vais vous poser une sur les VA en général
Quelles sont les associations avec la région des vins d'Alsace ?

Malheureusement aujourd'hui la connotation est une peu négative, je cherche le mot, la région alsace est la *belle endormie*, presque du gâchis, on les atouts absolument extraordinaires, on est dans les tendances. Mais les consos n'ont pas les vrais réflexes sur les VA et c'est très dommage. L'Alsace est incontournable. N'importe où vous mangez ce soir dans le monde j'ai un VA qui va avec. C'est la seule région au monde qui offre une telle diversité de vins blanc. Pinot blanc au vendanges tardives, un vin pour toutes les occasions. Une réponse à toutes les situations pour les vins blancs et la seule région au monde de faire faire ça. Pour changer de Chardonnay ou de Sauvignon Blanc, les autres régions ont fait les cépages alsaciens.

On offre un tel panel de vin - impossible de venir en alsace et ne pas trouver un vin qu'on n'aime pas. Je ne comprends pas pourquoi on ne parvient pas à la consommation comme en Bordeaux ou comme dans d'autres régions connues, on se dit que c'est tellement facile de boire l'alsace Les vignerons ont toujours parlé de la complexité mais ça fait peur. Donc il fait parler de la facilité. C'est les vins extrêmement faciles.

Je fais trop vite ?

Gracie: Non, pas de soucis

A1: Il y en pour toutes les bourses, on peut trouver l'entrée de gamme, les grands crus pour les repas plus particuliers. Il n'y a aucune raison que le VA reste dans cette non-consommation de buveur de vin. Ça va de mieux en mieux amis ce n'est pas encore là.

Gracie: Et pourquoi?

A1: La culture et les états d'esprit des alsaciens. L'alsacien travaille très bien et très dure mais qui n'est pas démonstrative. Il ne va pas se faire valoir, c'est dans le DNA dans alsaciens.

On a très mal su se vendre, les alsaciens sont profondément honnêtes, ils n'exagère pas, le storytelling, non, faut que ça soit le réel. Donc on est mauvaise en marketing. Même les meilleurs ne sont pas bons. Regarde champagne. Pas de raison, pas de discours de terroir, ils n'ont pas faire l'effort. Champagne est un vin de marketing. Alsace est comme Bourgogne, ils n'ont pas fait non plus, mais ça a venu comme ça. On fait notre boulot mais on a du mal à le faire savoir.

Si le vigneron derrière la table n's'y croit pas en lui-même ça va ne pas marcher.

Ce qu'on devoir travailler dans la région, c'est que les vignerons reprendre la fierté de ce qu'ils vendent, on n'est pas fière de qu'on on fait. On est leader et on doit absolument le reprendre cette

fierté. Une région qui est capable de faire 25-30 vins par an est incroyable. Ce n'est pas une usine, une vraie spécificité de terroir. La confiance au vigneron va donner les confiances aux consos.

Gracie: Donc j'entends bien les valeurs du mode de travail et le rapport et la terre est très important ?

A1: Absolument. Nous sommes le vignoble le plus incroyable de monde et il faut savoir le dire, sans être prétentieuse

Gracie: Pour revenir à votre marque, comment est-ce que votre marque est-elle alsacienne?

A1: Partout sur nos documents on marque Alsace, on est fière d'être dans cette région. On fait les vins d'Alsace. Pour nous c'est dehors de questions de n'y pas être. On ne va pas faire les vins de table pour être à la mode. C'est pour les usines ça. On reste fidèle au vin de la région.

Gracie: Et quelle est la place de l'innovation dans les VA?

A1: L'innovation c'est important car on suit la connaissance de notre terroir. On recherche toujours à être plus précis, l'innovation nous permet de faire la joie de la vie. On gagne en finesse et précision. On est beaucoup plus précis avec l'innovation. Les machines qui vont plus vite et qui permettent de faire d'autres choses plus facile - par exemples prenez le temps dans les vignes avec les grands crus,

Gracie: Pour vous, quel est la place de l'environnement?

A1: C'est l'essentiel. L'environnement est extrêmement présent. Une des régions la plus propre du monde et donc les gens doivent être liée à Alsace pour cela. En tant que domaine on est en Une partie en bio mais 130 hectares est trop. Malheureusement on ne peut faire faire une partie en bio. On est en train de s'améliorer la plus possible par rapport à la terre. Je pense que les vigneron de plusieurs de générations sont propres car on ne vas pas sur les pesticides partout, on travaille dans la notion de transmettre au suivant. On est assez responsable, On essaie de freiner les grosses industries pour arrêter de nous positionner.

On essaie d'éviter les grandes entreprises, et les gros industriels du vin il y en aussi la production de masse. En Alsace la cave coop mais qui sont très qualitative mais à l'échelle mondiale c'est les usine, laboratoire de vin

Je pense de ce côté-là, de mettre en valeur l'artisanat de vin et la production agricole face à la production de masse. Consommer de plus en plus, j'ai changé ma façon de consommer- plus vers le producteur et je pense que les autres font aussi.

Gracie: Et les américains?

A1: Les américains sont déconnectés, ils ne savent pas sont ou ils sont les fermes. Les grandes villes sont trop loin, c'est plus compliqué aux USA, il faut que les gens fasse les tourisme agriculture

Gracie: Est-ce que vous pourriez me parler de votre logo?

A1: Notre logo a une histoire, je ne sais pas de quelle génération. Il a été complète par mon arrière-grand-père. La chienne qui représente les chiens du moyen-âge quand le vignoble appartient aux religions, c'est le symbole de l'abbaye, le bonhomme rouge date de la Révolution - le symbole des vignerons des Guebwiller. Il y a ES (mon arrière-grand-père) les 3 petits étoiles, autrefois, on n'avait pas une boîte à lettre mais chaque famille avait un symbole gravé, et les 2 petites étoiles voulaient dit le nom de votre famille. Les différents morceaux de notre histoire. On n'est pas cherché à le désigner, c'est nos 200 d'existence.

Gracie: Le logo des VA?

A1: Fantastique. Très moderne. J'ai en tête toujours la vidéo d'Alsace Rocks. Vraiment positive, un démarrage d'un nouveau temps pour les VA.

Gracie: Est-il existé un lien entre votre logo et le VA?

A1: Aucun. 200 ans d'existence je ne peux pas faire de la mode. Si on fait un grand cru on doit attendre 15 ans, donc la mode a déjà changé. On reste un domaine traditionnel et on le fait bien. Le logo du CIVA pourrait être modifié avec le temps. Notre logo s'ancre dans notre histoire. Nos enfants vont avoir une génération déconnectée. Ils vont devenir adulte et être déconnecté de la vie et la nature, la vivante. Ils vont donc en avoir un besoin immense de se connecter. Justement d'ancre le logo dans l'histoire, on a un métier qui ancre le gens. Notre marketing de nous vont se base dessous. L'alsace est une région qui reconnecte. J'ai toujours cru que notre époque est devant nous. On a tous les outillages, et cette notion de reconnexion.

Gracie: Un peu plus sur les VA. Si vous donnez une traite de personne aux VA?

A1: Le Pinot Gris c'est le charme féminin. Riesling c'est la droiture, très doit, très honnête, très direct.

Gracie: Et les VA en général?

A1: Pas une personnalité pour tous les vins, c'est impossible. C'est pareil dans l'humaine- c'est complémentaire.

Gracie: Sophistiqué?

A1: Oui

Gracie: Vibrante?

A1: Absolument, beaucoup.

Gracie: Vous avez déjà parlé un peu des consommateurs français, cherchent-ils quoi dans la VA?

A1: ils ne cherchent rien, c'est ça le problème. Ils n'achètent pas car ils ne savent pas comment ils vont avoir. Il y a un manque de connaissance et à quoi s'attendre donc ils ne vont pas choisir les VA.

Gracie: Attirent-ils plus les novice ou expert?

A1: Difficile mais les experts quand même. Non, c'est sûr. J'ai une partie de la gamme pour les experts et une partie pour les novices. Mais c'est sur les connaisseurs qui prennent plus des VA

Gracie: Est-ce que c'est important d'être un vin français?

A1: Oui! On a assez battu pour être un vin français.

Gracie: Quelle est selon vous la perception à l'international

A1: Toujours bonne, meilleure qu'en France.

Gracie: Et par rapport aux autres régions en France ou à l'étranger?

A1: Pas aussi connue pas elle a une bonne réputation

Gracie: Je commerce les USA. Proposez-vous les produits différent pour la France et les USA?

A1: Non tout pareil

Gracie: Et la même stratégie?

A1: On aimerait bien avoir une stratégie différente, le gros souci c'est le système de distribution. C'est très frustrant. Ils ont le conteur de vin, il prend 4-5 vins sur nos 22. Ils ne connaissent pas grandes choses, ils suivent leur ordi. Les usa sont très frustrant. Il y a une base de consos ÉNORME et je pourrais multiplier par 5 mes ventes, le rapport qualité prix, il y a les consos là, mais mes vins ne sont pas disponibles. C'est pareil pour tous les producteurs. C'est très triste car il y a les consos qui adorent nos vins mais qui ne les trouvent pas. Même au Canada. C'est moins pire, la bouteille ne reste aussi longtemps. C'est très frustrant. Notre importateur travaille très bien mais ils faut quand même passer par la distribution.

J'ai arrêté d'aller aux États-Unis et quand je suis retourné et eu un choc énorme- la surproduction est vraiment dans les rayons.

Donc notre stratégie c'est d'être la meilleur dans la presse. Il faut avoir le meilleur score. On ne peut pas faire du travail constructif. C'est les one shot, c'est triste, on ne peut faire avoir une stratégie de long-terme.

Gracie: C'est important de communiquer les valeurs aux États-Unis?

A1: C'est difficile car on est mélangé avec tout l'industrie - les valeurs ne sont pas dans le rayonnement. Mais dans les wine diner et présentations ils sont super contente. On a tout pour faire rêver les américains mais ça ne peut être transmis au consommateur normal dans les rayons.

Gracie: La perception des VA aux USA?

A1: De meilleur et meilleur, les USA n'ont pas les préjugés. Les autres pays n'ont pas les préconçus comme La France. L'alsace arrive comme une nouvelle histoire pour les USA.

Gracie: Et l'Alsace comparer au Nouveau Monde et Vieux monde?

A1: L'Alsace se positionne dans le vieux monde, rien à voir avec le nouveau.

Les US sont prêts pour les vins alsace mais ce n'est pas encore disponible.

Gracie: Vous avez les gammes différentes pour les USA et la France? Les experts et les novices?

A1: On vend les mêmes vins qu'ailleurs. Mais on voit une différence entre consommateurs dans le monde entier. Je vois tout de suite. Les tout novices veulent que les vins sucrés, le Gewurztraminer. Ce qui ont l'habitude, les vins secs. Les connaisseurs, le pinot gris grand cru, peut voir les choses par rapport à la terroir, l'acidité, etc.

Je pense que la tendance aux USA c'est les vins secs en ce moment.

Évidemment les proportions sont différentes, la côte est avec plus des connaisseurs, mais en Floride c'est entre les deux.

Gracie: Vous avez parlé de votre importateur ?

A1: C'est le système de distributions qui est un très gros frein à toute stratégie, on n'arrive pas à avoir une vraie direction commerciale

Gracie: Que pensez-vous des conjonctures, la taxation, et la crise actuelle des affaires?

A1: Honnêtement pour nous ça va, si on vendait à la mode ça n'aurait pas être le cas. Nos vins ne sont pas vendus très chers, 25% n'est pas beaucoup sur nos vins.

Les américains vont se dire "pas de vin français car taxe," donc le fait que l'Alsace ne soit pas toujours perçu comme les un vin français, ça c'est ou cela nous aide. Je suis sûre que ça va mettre un frein pour l'économie. Quand l'économie est bonne, les gens explorent - 50 euros dans une bouteille de vin qu'ils ne connaissent pas - contraire dans l'économie est mal, ils vont continuer de dépenser 50 dollars mais avec une valeur sûre.

Gracie: L'avenir selon vous des VA aux usa?

A1: J'espère que comme partout dans le monde c'est assez positif, je suis convaincue que, pour moi si l'Alsace ne dévoile pas dans les 30 prochaines années c'est perdu pour les nouvelles 2-3 générations. J'ai du mal à croire que ça n'arrive pas, on a toutes les cartes en mains. C'est frustrant c'est pareil qu'en 2008, plus belles années, et bam la crise économique. Là j'ai l'impression que ce pareil. On doit recommencer mais il y a des bases qui sont solides.

Je suis profondément optimiste, la dernière à me plaindre, j'estime qu'on a tout, il faut prendre nos atouts pour mieux rebondir. Honnêtement d'être un vignoble familial, actions 100% familial c'est un plus. Toutes les grandes entreprises avec les tableaux 'Excel, ce n'est pas la même musique. Faut faire de la qualité et ça coûte cher et quand les groupes perdent le CA, ce n'est pas bien, mais nous on peut se permettre de continuer à offrir la qualité malgré les circonstances.

Gracie: Ce que j'ai entendue, la qualité et la tradition, mais qu'il faut appuyer sur nos valeurs?

A1: Absolument.

Gracie: Merci Beaucoup! Quelque chose à ajouter?

A1: Non, merci beaucoup. N'hésitez pas à revenir vers moi.

Transcription

Interview with a winegrower, Alsace, France.

Code: A2

April 15th, 2020, 1 hour.

Introduction

Gracie: Pourriez-vous me dire l'intitulé exacte de votre poste?

A2: J'envie de te dire que je n'en ai pas d'exacte. Quand on est copropriétaire d'un domaine on est très polyvalent. Je peux être. Je dirige tout ce qui est du commerce, marketing, la promotion, responsable export. Maintenant ça ne veut plus rien dire. Dans la direction de tous qui s'est retrouvé visible. Voilà.

Gracie: Depuis combien d'année travaillez-vous dans le secteur du vin?

A2: Depuis 28 ans, avant j'étais étudiante. Je faisais les études de commerce international et avant on ne faisait pas de commerce international au domaine. Je voulais amener ce que j'ai appris au domaine. Mais je n'étais pas toute seule. J'ai des supers associés, si tu veux, qui sont quand même déplaçable, montrable. Je suis toujours restée derrière jusqu'en, 2010, 2011 car je considérais que ça devait les garçons, mais suite à ma séparation je voyageais plus et j'ai commencé la promotion.

Gracie: Pourriez-vous me parlez d'une journée type?

A2: L'avantage de mon travail, je fais tout. Je me suis mariée avec un vigneron. J'ai dans l'ADN d'être dans le commerce. J'avais ce don de faire le commerce. Dans mon métier, on fait un business toujours proche de la joie de vivre. On est dans un produit vivant qui évolue. Le problème de confinement d'aujourd'hui, on n'a plus de joie. Mars et avril était très dur, car on m'a enlevé ce sel et le business de tous les jours.

Les journées, on peut accueillir un journaliste américain le matin et l'après-midi accueillir les retraités qui sont en train de refaire leur cave. C'est très intéressant et ce que j'ai toujours essayé de faire, c'est de rester très proches des clients au domaine. Tu vois chaque personne à une visage et un prénom, c'est un don. J'ai une grosse mémoire et c'est la base. Mes journées ne rassemble pas du tout. Et j'adore. On est en train de construire un nouveau business, on ne revient jamais au business qu'on a eu. Le covid-19 et ses échanges interplanétaires. Je pense qu'on doit reconquérir les parts du marché locale, en Alsace et en France.

Gracie: Pourriez-vous me parlez de votre équipe?

A2: J'ai une collaboratrice qui s'occupe de facturation et compta. Moi qui fais le marketing. Mais depuis 6 mois j'ai pris une petite jeune pour l'Instagram qui est très Access à cette technologie. C'est important d'anticiper et déléguer à d'autres personnes quand on est dirigeant.

Gracie: Quel type de vins avez-vous?

A2: On a plusieurs types. On les sépare par cépages et par technique. On s'est orienté vers les grands pinots noirs des terroirs, on a des Riesling très pure, les Gewurztraminer. Les bonnes vignes plantées au bon endroit. Des fois ce n'est pas le cas car les domaines héritent les mauvaise part. Mais on a eu beaucoup de chance. Car le grand père a mis les plantes dans les bons endroits. L'accroche de la Terre et les autres petites choses, tu produis une grande raison qui produit un bon vin, mais il a planté les supers vignes, les choix stratégiques de nos ancêtres de planter les vignes nous permet de faire les supers vins aujourd'hui et faire les supers crus.

Gracie: Vers quel pays exportez-vous?

A2: Dans 40 pays. Et je n'aurais jamais pensé dans ma vie, j'ai toujours pensé que ma stratégie était bonne. Je ne voulais pas les pays principaux. Les choix aberrant du président aux États-Unis. Ça fait un an que j'ai bien fait de ne pas tout mettre aux États-Unis, même si c'est un marché de grand potentiel, Il décide des trucs n'importe comment. On a 40 pays et il n'y a pas de chef dans ce pays pas. C'est un peu près égal.

Gracie: Et vous parliez de votre stratégie?

A2: C'est revu très différemment aujourd'hui. On revient à un business très différent. Je n'ai pas les clefs pour les analyser. Peut-être j'ai donné trop à l'export - on est déséquilibré maintenant. Mes clients sont surtout les étrangères qui viennent à la cave.

Gracie: Quelles sont les caractéristiques de votre marque? Comment le domaine se positionne?

A2: Dans les tops domaines alsaciens. C'est la presse qui dit. C'est notre spécialité, le pinot noir et on en parle beaucoup. Je n'avais pas bien compris pourquoi on a été élu meilleur vigneron de France. Je leur a demandé, et ils ont dit que "vous êtes le seul domaine en Alsace de savoir produire tous les couleurs et tous les styles de vin." Il y avait 10 personnes et chaque journaliste a eu une émotion différente à notre domaine. Tous nos vins sont très difféérés. C'est le Pinot Noir qui nous fait, les grands cru, tous nos vins sont toujours presque 20/20. De très haute qualité. La philosophie de notre domaine, le vins qui sortent de notre domaine doivent être sur la gamme d'excellence.

Gracie: Quelles sont les associations des vins d'alsace?

A2: Quand je vais goûter un vin d'Alsace autre que nous, j'aurais besoin de connaître le vigneron. J'ai toujours un peu peur des vins d'Alsace. On peut aller d'une très bonne surprise à une très mauvaise qualité. Je demande toujours d'où viennent les vins avant de dire "je vais consommer les vins d'Alsace." C'est un manque de confiance dans les vins d'Alsace. J'avais toujours l'impression que les gens ne faisaient pas l'effort de produire les bons vins. Je ne fais pas forcément confiance à la marque. On est dans une Alsace à plusieurs vitesses. Certains qui ont peur de changements. On était même trop tôt dans le biodynamisme. Les autres nous comprennent pas. On est pris pour les idiots. Les gens ont eu peur et on a perdu de la récolte avec les nouvelles pratiques. Les vins d'Alsace ne savaient pas être réactifs. Par exemple les rendements, il faut que quelqu'un prenne une décision.

Gracie: Par rapport aux autres régions viticoles en France ou à l'étranger, quelles sont les valeurs ajoutées?

A2: Il y en a beaucoup. On n'a jamais aussi bien correspondu nos vins aromatiques. Les gens voulaient les choses uniformes, que le Chardonnay vinifié dans la même façon. La diversité peut être une chance. De nos cépages, de nos arômes, de notre vinification alsacienne qui n'est pas une vinification à la bourgogne. À mon avis, là on avait déjà un avantage certain. On correspond à toute la cuisine du monde. Les Gewurztraminers sont extraordinaires sur un plat relevé, les muscats avec les plats amers, un risotto avec les asperges et le muscat c'est exceptionnel. On correspond à toute cette cuisine végétale. La grosse valeur ajoutée mais le problème c'est qu'on n'a pas pu peut-être communiquer dessus ces valeurs. On aborde ça d'une manière négative au lieu d'avoir un côté positif et spontané. Comme je suis originaire d'Espagne, on a envie de comprendre pourquoi les alsaciens s'agissent comme ça. L'histoire est la base de tout. La double culture germanophone et francophone est la base. La germanophone nous amène le côté droit et carré, rigoureux, et la partie plus joyeuse et fraternelle c'est le côté latin, les français. Les deux associés donnent quelques choses très intéressantes. On est accueillant, pas trop vite, et des fois qu'on est rentré, tu en fais partie. Un peu d'allemand on feint, après bam français est on est dans la famille. Mais j'ai aperçu un peu de discrimination quand j'étais plus jeune, j'ai dû travailler pour gagner ma place en Alsace, mais c'est bien. Notre région est riche de sa diversité, riche de sa culture, riche de son paysage. Des valeurs ajoutées il y en a plein, mais on n'était pas le plus fier. Je vais toujours offrir un vin d'Alsace, mais un alsacien va ramener un vin de bourgogne. On manque de confiance dans nos produits. C'est plus que dommage, c'est incroyable qu'on n'ait pas réussi à être plus percutant. C'est une grande partie de parler d'eux même, mais ça vient aussi de la guerre. Les deux guerres nous ont fait beaucoup souffrir. Les familles ont eu des difficultés et il y a les blessures qui restent, assez profondes. La guerre a donné un manque de confiance aux alsaciens qui respire très fort. Il y a tellement d'histoire. C'est riche, c'est beau, mais avec beaucoup de souffrance. C'est la vie. J'espère qu'on arrivera à se révéler. Le COVID-19 ne tombe pas très bien pour nous, j'ai eu l'impression qu'on était en train de gagner une bataille et là j'ai un peu peur car qu'on ne sait pas comment ça va se passer.

Gracie: Quelle est la place de l'environnement pour les vins d'Alsace?

A2: Je trouve que notre région est vraiment avant-gardiste par rapport à l'environnement. Il y a un vrai respect. Quand je vois la biodiversité de notre vignoble c'est incroyable, on voit ça nulle part ailleurs. Et tu vois là, c'est très difficile de communiquer dessus. Mais c'est les petits vigneron et les entreprises familiales qui étaient les pionniers qui a un vrai respect de l'environnement.

Gracie: Quelle est la place de l'innovation pour les vins d'Alsace?

A2: Je trouve qu'on n'est pas aussi courageux dans nos habillages des étiquettes. Certains sont audacieux mais c'est souvent très, trop classique. Nos étiquettes, c'est un peintre qui les a faits. Celles qui à 25 ans n'a même pas pris une ride. Nos gestes ont été très avant-gardiste mais en générale, les alsaciens ne sont pas assez courageux pour les habillages des étiquettes. C'est difficile de faire passer aux clients, donc je peux comprendre, mais après ils sont contents. Les alsaciens ont peur de changer.

Gracie: Pourriez-vous me parler de votre logo? Est-il lié à l'Alsace?

A2: Le violet et jaune c'est les vignes, le côté solaire de nous, la terre. Notre peintre qui a fait notre étiquette a vu notre emble qui date de 1947 et de là il est parti et il est fait ce logo. C'est partie d'une base traditionnelle et le peintre l'a adopté. Mais lié à l'alsace. Je ne suis pas sûre. Mais c'est notre logo depuis 30s and il est resté frais et jeune.

Gracie: Est- ce que les vins d'Alsace ont une personnalité? Comment décririez-vous les vins d'Alsace comme une personne?

A2: Brillant. Les vins d'alsace ont un côté... sa claque! Si tu tombes sur un beau domaine c'est vraiment le pep, ça claque, il y a de la fraîcheur. C'est vraiment le mot. Si tu veux ça correspondre aussi à d'autres choses par rapport à l'alsace, par exemple les terres brillant de l'Alsace. Le paysage, la culture, les maisons. Il y a un truc. Brillant, vivante. Un éclat de diamant, c'est pur.

Gracie: Je vous cite des mots. Pourriez-vous me dire s'ils corresponde à l'Alsace?
Amicale, confortant

A2: Ouais... pourquoi pas.

Gracie: Honnête et direct?

A2: Directe on dirait

Gracie: Influent, leader?

A2: Non, non. On n'est pas du tout leader. On doit être déguster avant d'être apprécié, Personne ne va venir aux vins d'Alsace à l'aveugle. Si on te laisse les choix entre le Sauvignon, Chardonnay ou l'Alsace, il ne viennent jamais dans la vie à un vin d'Alsace.

Gracie: Sophistiqué, élégant?

A2: Élégant mais ne pas sophistiqué, non pas du tout.

Gracie: Je vous poser maintenant des questions sur les consommateurs.

A2: Connaisseur ou pas connaisseur ?

Gracie: C'est ça le sujet, comment vous les voyez?

A2: C'est à dire que dans la tête d'un consommateur nouveau, l'Alsace est un petit vin. Le connaisseur plus éclairé, il va dire que les vins d'Alsace ont un rapport qualité prix exceptionnel. C'est clair que c'est plus visible pour les experts. La terroir.... Les connaisseurs seront fascinés par les vins d'Alsace. Notre rapport qualité prix est incroyable. Voir le Bourgogne. On reste exceptionnel pour les connaisseurs, mais quand tu es en face d'un non- consommateur, c'est toujours trop cher.

Pour nous, les nouveaux clients viennent car ils ont goûté le vin, et ils veulent nous avoir dans leur cave. Exemple pendant le confinement, j'ai eu une grosse commande. Ils ont dit "Vous êtes souvent cité comme référence." Il faisait confiance aux vins d'Alsace et il nous a choisi car on est souvent cité. C'est important les appels d'offres. Il ne faut pas avoir peur de donner les vins pour les faire goûter.

Gracie: Proposez- vous les gammes différents selon les deux groupes de consommateurs?

A2: Non, pas des gammes différentes mais on a les vins de terroir et les grands crus, mais aussi les vins de cépages. C'est super d'avoir les vins de terroir, il faut aussi travailler les vins de cépages. Nous, la qualité est très bonne pour les deux, c'est juste différent. Il ne faut pas faire le contraire car il faut plaire à tout le monde, on ne peut pas loucher les non-connaisseurs ou ceux 'avec un petit portefeuille. Je suis très contente que les gens aimes notre vin qui le moins cher. Car c'est bien fait. Il faut les gens peuvent accéder aux vins d'alsace. Des fois ils ne font pas l'effort sur l'entrée de gamme et c'est dommage.

Gracie: Quelles sont les points forts ou distinctive d'un vin français à l'international?

A2: Alors, ça vient de la France et la France est reconnue comme un grand pays de vin. La France est liée au vin.

Gracie: Et l'alsace est-elle une marque française?

A2: Souvent ils ne mettent pas les vins d'alsace avec les vins française donc ça ne nous aide pas. On a un problème de rayonnement. Les vins allemande ou autrichienne. Ils sont rayonne avec les vins étrangers.

Gracie: Et c'est une mauvaise chose ou bons choses?

A2: A une époque ce n'était pas une bonne chose, mais là, avec les Riesling d'Allemagne qui sont connue, ça pourrait être une bonne chose.

Gracie: Et aux États-Unis?

A2: Je pense que les américains sont le premier de regarder le rapport qualité prix. Je me suis toujours rendu compte que pour l'American, le temps c'est l'argent. Ils bossent, Il ne se perdent pas le temps donc ils ont besoin d'avoir un très bonne qualité prix. Parker à classifie le marché et il y en avait un vrai besoin. Ça nous a ouvert les portes à l'étranger. Le fait d'avoir autant de bonnes notes, ça nous a permis d'avoir vraiment l'avance à l'export. Les gens se référencent sur les journalistes.

Gracie: Quelle est selon vous la perception des vins d'Alsace à l'étranger?

A2: En fait, on est encore une niche de marché. On n'aura jamais la notoriété d'un bordelais ou d'une bourgogne à mon avis, jamais. Je ne sais pas pourquoi, les gens n'arrivent pas trop à identifier l'Alsace, où elle se trouve, etc. Je me pose la question.

Les plats asiatiques correspond beaucoup à nos vins, mais comme on n'est pas dans la catégorie du luxe, on n'est pas choisi, et c'est du tort. Je me suis toujours dit que c'est peut-être la bouteille qui s'est posé problème. À une certaine époque je me suis demandé pour la forme mais maintenant c'est aussi lié au packaging. Dans une grande surface on dit vraiment que certains ne sont pas bien. Et je pense que c'est pareil aux États-Unis. Mais des fois avec certains habillages à côté de #Drink Alsace on a envie de pleurer, c'est les domaines qui ont envie de bouger mais en même temps on reste dans la tradition, on a peur de changer. Les étiquettes de notre domaine il y a 30 ans tu rigolais. Mais là ils vont rester, ils n'ont pas pris une ride. On était audacieux, de courage. Il faut avoir ça. L'alsacien n'est pas assez courageux. Il ne veut pas changer les traditions. Le vigneron il ne sait pas faire c'est sûr. Il ne manque pas grandes choses mais il y a quelque chose qui manque.

Les vins naturels osent faire avec leur packaging mais c'est déjà quelque chose de nouveau pour les consommateurs de devoir comprendre.

Gracie: Pourriez-vous me parler des consommateurs américains?

A2: L'américain qui vient au domaine, c'est super, c'est génial. Mais à la fin il n'y a pas de suite. Les gens ont adoré, ils ont été super contents mais il n'y a pas la suite d'achat. Je ne sais pas si l'américain est vraiment fidèle. C'est difficile à dire. Mais je trouve que les américains ont un vrai rapport au vin.

Gracie: Pour terminer, quel est selon vous l'avenir aux US?

A2: Aujourd'hui je ne sais pas répondre à l'avenir en général. Est-ce que Trump va en profiter pour fermer même plus les frontières, tu vois. Je suis incapable, mais je pense qu'on est en train de réécrire toute l'histoire de la chaîne de distribution de tout, le produit, on est rentré dans une nouvelle ère. Je suis inquiète mais je suis positive, mais c'est sûr que ça va changer. J'en ai vraiment aucune idée.

Gracie: Vous trouvez comment le système de distribution aux US?

A2: L'importateur a beaucoup de poids et c'est lui qui dirige. Je ne suis pas toujours fan de la distribution américaine. Je trouve que, je n'ai jamais travaillé en directe mais maintenant je me suis dit que j'aurai du. Je me pose les questions aux États-Unis et sur la distribution en générale. On est tous des novices maintenant avec le COVID-19. Personne ne sait comment ça va reprendre. On ne sait pas si on a fait les bonnes décisions. Temps très compliqué de notre existence. Si tu as d'autres questions n'hésite pas!

Gracie: Merci beaucoup d'avoir pris le temps pour moi

Transcription
Interview with a Sales Director, Alsace, France.
Code: A3
April 15th, 2020, 32 minutes

(Introduction)

Gracie: Pourriez-vous me dire l'intitulé exacte de votre poste?

A3: Ahan, Directeur Commercial

Gracie: Pourriez-vous me parler de votre travail au quotidien? Une journée type?

A3: Ah, beaucoup de choses. Suivi des vinifications, dégustations, accueil des clients, clients export, et puis la communication avec clients étrangers.

Gracie: et de combien de temps travaillez-vous dans le vin ?

A3: 3 ans

Gracie: Toujours en Alsace?

A3: Non, en Brasil pendant 12 ans

Gracie: Pourriez-vous me parler de votre équipe au domaine ?

A3: On est 15 salariés , ma mère qui dirige le domaine, mon frère qui s'occupe des vignes, et moi. Après on a un chef de cave pour la vinification, après une personne au bureau pour la comptabilité et export etc. Et une personne étiquettes et commandes. Les restes sont dans les vignes

Gracie: Quels types de vins proposez-vous?

A3: On a presque toute la gamme des Vins d'Alsace, on produit 15-20 vins par an. Nous avons 80-90% blanc, on a les Grand Cru, 4 ou 5 grand cru et après un peu de Pinot Noir sur 3 terroirs différent. Pas de crémant et pas beaucoup de Vendanges tardives et sélections des graines nobles.

Gracie: Vers quel pays exportez-vous

A3: Une bonne trentaine, les plus grands étant les états unis, le japon, la canada, le Danemark, Norvège, suède, d'autre pays de l'Asie , Singapour, Vietnam, Chine continentale, Italie.

On volume on export plus, on valeur c'est un peu plus le marché France. Dans le marché France on inclut la vente au caveau même si c'est les clients étrangers.

Gracie: Les prochaines questions vont parler de votre marque et la marque des vins alsace. Pourriez-vous me parler de votre domaine? quelle est votre stratégie et les valeurs?

A3: Pour nous les valeurs, on est un domaine familial avec une notoriété historique mais d'une taille humaine. On ne fait pas de négoce c'est important pour nous. On travaille en biodynamie depuis 20 ans quelques fois les rendements pour avoir les exclusivités.

Gracie: Est-ce que ce positionnement change aux États-Unis?

A3: Après sur le marché américain, on y est depuis 40 ans. On a une pénétration un peu plus forte compare à notre production. Notre marque est très forte. On est assez présent aux États-Unis donc les gens pensent qu'on a une production beaucoup plus grande de ce qu'on produit vraiment.

Gracie: Quelles sont d'autres caractéristiques de votre marque?

A3: La tradition, l'acre dans le terroir mais qui essaie d'être dans son temps et la perspective du long terme depuis longtemps en biodynamie et même quelques vins naturels.

Gracie: Est-ce que vous partagez les mêmes valeurs et caractéristiques que les vins d'Alsace ?

A3: Certaines oui, comme la gastronomie que j'ai oublié à dire tout à l'heure, c'est très important pour nous et les vins d'alsace. Mais l'aspect terroir est très important pour les vins d'alsace et pour nous c'est plutôt les vins de cépages

Gracie: Qu'est-ce qui distingue les vins d'Alsace des autres régions viticoles en France ou à l'étranger?

A3: La complexité et la sucrosité, tous les vins différents et tous la sucrosité différent. Pour les consommateurs normaux il se perdent un petit peu, et ils laissent la marque car c'est difficile de comprendre. Les consommateurs experts, ça va mais les autres pas du tout.

G; Quelles sont les valeurs des vins d'alsace à votre avis? Quelle est la place de l'innovation et l'environnement?

A3: En innovation en n'est pas tout à fait là, mais on peut jouer sur l'environnement oui, et aussi les autres valeurs sont la gastronomie et l'œnotourisme. On a vraiment les vins qui va à vous tous dans la gastronomie.

Gracie: Je suis sur votre site web. Pourriez-vous me parler de vos symboles et le logo du domaine?

A3: On a deux logos. Le domaine en calligraphie qui date d'une centaine d'années. Et le logo est le monstre, tout comme les moines, c'est l'histoire du domaine. Au niveau du logo c'est volontairement très traditionnel on envoie à l'ancrage dans l'histoire C'est aussi l'ancrage dans le terroir - que ça soit associé à une histoire. Cet ancrage en histoire est plus important que les vins plus industriels.

Gracie: À votre avis quelles sont les symboles des VA en générale? Les couleurs ou les images qui viennent à l'export

A3: La flûte, vert et jaune, les foudres. C'est ce qui me vient à l'esprit pour la marque en général.

Gracie: Parlez-moi de logo des vins d'Alsace, que représente-il pour vous?

A3: C'est fait de donner la confiance, directe et classique sans être trop baroque, bien aigre, une touche de champagnes ou de bordelais, s'est établie, dans l'idée de ces vignobles bourgeois.

Gracie: C'est une bonne chose?

A3: c'est compliqué. Mais c'est toujours bon d'avoir une base traditionnelle. Parce que les choses changent très vite.

Gracie: Si vous devez donner une personnalité aux vins d'Alsace, vous diriez quoi? Les traits d'une personne.

A3: Vivacité.

Gracie: Pourquoi?

A3: C'est la diversité qui donne de la vivacité, la fraîcheur et l'acidité.

Gracie: Charmant et confortant?

A3: Oui? Non pas le plus important

Gracie: Direct et fiable ?

A3: Ouais sans plus

Gracie: Leader, influent?

A3: Pas encore mais j'aimerais bien

Gracie: Prestigieux et prétentieux?

A3: Non, je ne pense pas

Gracie: Merci, Ça c'était la partie pour comprendre l'identité des vins d'alsace. Maintenant je vais poser les questions sur l'international et les consommateurs.

Les consommateurs en France : Ils cherchent quoi dans vos vins et leurs profils?

A3: Souvent les bon vivants, les gens qui fréquentent le grand restaurant, les gastronomes.

Gracie: Proposez-vous les produits différents pour les novices et les experts?

A3: On a des plus entrée de gamme qui sont plus facile et plus concis. Et après le vin de terroir et lieu-dit qui s'adapte aux consommer plus pointus

Gracie: Quels sont les points forts d'être un vin français?

A3: Ça c'est le problème. On n'est pas assez associé aux vins français, ça fait penser aux allemandes et Les rieslings et les vins sucrés de ce riesling allemand. La forme de bouteilles aussi. S'il y 30 ans on avait fait tomber la flûte, on se porterait mieux et d'avoir plus du marketing français dans une autre forme de la bouteille. Historiquement les vins d'alsace ne sont pas associés avec les vins français. Certains marchés sont très confus. Ils ne sont pas très sûre, sur les consommateurs moyenne dans certains pays c'est malheureusement peu connu et on est souvent associé à l'Allemagne.

Gracie: Quelles est la perception des VA à l'international?

A3: Bien perçu comme les vins de gastronomie, pareil pour les sommeliers. Mais même sur le marché français ça pourrait être un peu complexe.

Gracie: C'est pareil aux USA ?

A3: oui, je pense, mais avec pas mal des pros et les consommateurs on voit avec les réseaux sociaux que aussi aux États-Unis le rapport qualité est très intéressant. Mais c'est bien et pas bien

au même temps: les VA sont pas assez cher d'être super bien valoriser aux États-Unis. Les vins étrangers ont tous le même problème et le mark up de système de 3-tiers. Comparer aux vins américains qui sont souvent assez cher, je pense qu'on a de la marge pour que les bons vins étrangers d'être vendu plus cher. Mais les coûts de productions en France c'est beaucoup plus cher qu'aux États-Unis. Je pense qu'on a encore de chemin à faire pour que ça soit plus valorisées aux États-Unis.

Gracie: Est-ce vous proposez les mêmes produits en France et aux États-Unis?

A3: Des fois on fais des coffrets et ou du packaging différent. Mais pas les vins différents non.

Gracie: Quelles sont les valeurs les plus important selon toi pour le marché américain?

A3: Les vins aromatique, gastronomique.

A3: Qu'est que vous pensez que les consommateurs américains cherchent dans les vins d'Alsace?

A3: : La fraîcheur, . Comparer aux vins plus sucrés et les autres régions en France, la vivacité et la fraîcheur.

Gracie: Est-ce que l'Environnement est important pour les américains?

A3: Moins que d'autres marchés, à mon avis les États-Unis sont un peu en retard par rapport à d'autres marchés. Ce n'est pas un driver très très fort pour les consommateurs américains. C'est à la freine par rapport à Europe du nord ou le japon.

Gracie: Donc quoi est le drive?

A3: C'est vraiment le style de vin associé au palette américain et le rapport qualité prix. Un peu plus aussi aux États-Unis c'est le "value pour points. Les prix par rapport aux notes dans les magazines de vin.

Gracie: Vous m'aviez dit que vous avez le même importateur depuis 40 ans? Que pensez-vous du système de distribution?

A3: C'est un train d'exploser aujourd'hui et il va avoir les consolidations un peu différentes. Les domaines en CA ont maintenant le droit d'envoyer partout, les vendeurs sur internet. De vendre directe au détailler, ou les distributeurs de faire le retail. Pour le consommateur c'est bien car ça va rendre les vins un peu moins chers car moins d'intermédiaires. Après ça va consolider le vin à

l'export. Donc moins de diversité pour les consommateurs. Les gros distributeurs qui font les direct et le marché est trop consolidé et il y aura moins de choix pour les consommateurs.

Gracie: Ça revient aux autres changements, comme la taxation de Trump et le COVID-19. Comment à votre avis est-ce que ça va impacter les affaires aux États-Unis?

A3: Vu notre rapport qualité-prix, c'est OK, je ne suis pas très inquiète pour la taxation. Les vins d'entrée de gamme auront plus d'un souci. Le COVID est une autre chose. Mais pas plus pour les VA que les autres vins. Plus d'un souci pour le rose car ils vont perdre tout leur été.

Gracie: Selon vous, il faut faire quoi pour le marché américain ?

A3: C'est aussi les problèmes de vins d'Alsace en général, moins des différences sur le sucrosité, les vins plus secs en générale. AUX US ça serait vraiment bien, d'arriver se diversifier sur les vins Allemagne. C'est serait vraiment bien.

Gracie: Ça se fait avec les marques individus ou les marques régionales ?

A3: C'est toujours tiré par les marques individuelles mais derrière il faut aussi plus de marges de manœuvre de la région pour pouvoir différer choses. C'est limite de ce qu'on peut faire. Les marques individuelles qui essaient les choses différentes, mais on a besoin des marges de manœuvre pour pouvoir le faire.

Gracie: Je pense que nous avons terminé. Avez-vous d'autres choses à ajouter?

A3: Une grande force qui contribue à notre notoriété c'est l'œnotourisme en Alsace. C'est vraiment une grande force par rapport aux autres régions en France et les autres régions mondiale. On a beaucoup des américains aux domaines et dans la région d'Alsace.

On a beaucoup de touristes dans les vins d'Alsace qui continuent à renforcer notre marché. Le niveau d'hôtellerie, l'accueil en Alsace. Le feedback est toujours très positif qui aide à l'image et la consommation des vins d'Alsace. Pour moi c'est un des meilleurs facteurs de fidélisation. Quand ils ont eu une expérience positive, et en Alsace c'est là, c'est le meilleur facteur de fidélisation. Les américains sont fidèles à ça.

Gracie: Merci beaucoup, je vais essayer de venir faire une dégustation ! Merci beaucoup de votre temps, vous avez éclairé les sujets pour moi.

A3: Merci à vous Gracie et à bientôt.

Transcription

Interview with a Transversal Manager, Alsace, France.

Code: A4

April 15th, 2020, 47 minutes.

(Introduction)

Gracie: Intitulé exact de votre poste?

A4: Chez nous, on n'a pas, je fais un peu de tout, de commercial à l'accueil et la vente

Gracie: Et avez-vous une journée type?

A4: il y a très peu de journée type. Je passe 6 mois de l'année à l'étranger en tant que commercial et la reste de l'année j'accueillais les clients à la cave

Gracie: Quelles sont vos principales difficultés?

A4: On y maintenant, de gérer les crises et la gestion du temps

Gracie: Depuis combien de temps travaillez-vous dans le secteur du vin?

A4: Toujours, j'ai fait les études, les longues études du commerce et après je suis rentrée au domaine

Gracie: Pourriez-vous me parlez de votre équipe?

A4: Oui. On a deux entités, une entité agricole, on a est propriétaire et aussi négociante. Donc on a 11 personnes dans la partie agricole, et 24 personnes dans la partie production et commercialisation.

Gracie: Quel type de vin avez-vous?

A4: Que des vins tranquilles, pas de crémant, et sur les tranquilles tous les cépages qui sont produit en Alsace. On a une dominance sur les cépages nobles: Riesling, Pinot Gris Gewurztraminer and un peu de Muscat. La particularité de la maison c'est le domaine c'est le 50% terroir en grand cru, les très très grands crus qui nous permet de produire les fleurons du domaine et les très bons vins avec les sélections des grains nobles et vendanges tardives et les cuvées particulier et l'activité. Le négoce est sur les classique et l'entrée de gamme.

Gracie: Vers quels pays exportez-vous?

A4: Vers 96 pays, de ce que je sache en Alsace on exporte les plus de marchés différents. Un peu près tous les pays ou on pense qu'on boit du vin. C'est répartie partout, c'est une politique de l'entreprise de ne pas mettre tous nos œufs dans le même panier, de minimiser les risques. Mais les plus grands quand même c'est les états unis, la canada, l'Angleterre et le Japon. La plupart de nos ventes sont à l'export.

Gracie: Les prochaines questions sur l'identité régionale et dans un deuxième je vous pose les questions sur l'international.

Quels sont les caractéristiques de votre marque?

A4: On joue de notre histoire et le fait qu'on est pionnier, le premier avec un site internet, page Facebook et twitter. Un gros élément de notre communication c'est les réseaux sociaux, et la particularité c'est la recherche. On fait les vins les plus élégant et le plus gastronomique possible. Ils sont construits pour la table. On travaille 60% en restauration, que ça soit à l'export ou en France. Ils sont faits pour être servis avec les plats. Mon oncle dit toujours "citez-moi un plat et j'ai un vin qui va avec."

Gracie: Quelles sont les associations et les caractéristiques des vins d'Alsace?

A4: C'est un peu le point compliqué. Il y a une grosse diversité de style. C'est difficile de les décrire en quelques mots. On trouve plus des exceptions que les règles. Le mono cépage c'est la norme mais ce n'est pas la règle, c'est des vins Riesling sec mais c'est pas la règle, l'Alsace est à la fois belle dans sa diversité mais elle en souffre aussi. Ça dépend du point de vue. L'Alsace est fascinant pour les experts mais pour les novices, ça pourrait être un frein.

Gracie: Qu'est-ce qui distingue les vins d'Alsace d'autres régions viticoles en France?

A4: Les cépages. On est l'exception en France, Dans la plupart des régions en France, les cépages sont plantés ailleurs dans le pays. On trouve le chardonnay partout, le grenache et la syrah partout. C'est la seule région avec les Riesling, Gewurztraminer, Sylvaner. On cultive une différent terroir et on est la plus étrangère des régions françaises.

Gracie: Quels sont les valeurs de votre marque?

A4: Je pense que la principale c'est l'honnêteté. Pas de mensonge chez nous. Nos vins sont très transparent. On les travaille très peu. C'est la transparence autant que possible sur les vins. On essaie de faire transpirer le terroir dans le vin pour essayer de montrer le caractère authentique du vin. Très peu de technique. C'est essentiellement la terre. On travaille beaucoup plus les raisons

que le vins. Aussi, on est une entreprise familiale, une autre dimension c'est qu'on recherche du succès à long termes. Vraiment pas le profit à court terme. L'objectif c'est d'obtenir ça sur plusieurs générations. Le but c'est de la garantie aux générations futures. Avec l'environnement économie ou l'innovation qu'elle qu'il soit. Le passé, le présent et l'avenir sont important. Notre présent et le passe pour quelqu'un d'autre. Le passé aide à nous comprendre mais on fait surtout pour le futur.

Gracie: Quelle est la place de l'environnement pour les vins d'alsace?

A4: L'environnement c'est à la fois un outil et un but. On en as besoin de l'environnement et l'exploite évidemment. On ne peut pas dire que c'est une interaction nul. On laisse une trace sur notre terroir car on le cultive, mais c'est le but de le rendre aussi perrein que possible. Pour que ça soit un outil dans l'avenir

Gracie: Quelle est la place de l'innovation pour les vins d'alsace?

A4: Le plus flagrant c'est l'usage des réseaux sociaux. Le message même n'a pas changé, mais la façon de la convoyer, le fait d'avoir les informations qui sont à la fois facile d'accès mais on est beaucoup plus perdu avec toutes les autres informations. Aujourd'hui, si on doit communiquer c'est très facile, mais de se différencier c'est très difficile. On doit être intelligente car il y beaucoup de bruit de autour de nous. Avant il suffisait de faire le bon vin. Maintenant ça suffit plus. Il faut communiquer dans la bonne façon, et surtout rester vraie vis à vis de ces valeurs. Parce que si vous changez d'avis tous les 5 ans, il y a des traces, l'informations reste partout. La rigueur et l'authenticité, ils viennent de plus en plus important. C'est devenue de plus en plus important de devenir vrai dans son message, d'être honnête sur la durée, il faut se faire son avis très vite et de pouvoir le garder.

Gracie: Et comment faites-vous votre stratégie?

A4: En famille. Aucune décision n'est prise instamment. C'est des fois très énervant surtout quand on est jeune et on veut tout changer. Ça prend du temps de trouver les bonnes solutions et de vraiment chercher les problèmes et ne pas la seule chose qui va tout régler, il faut aller au fonds des choses.

Gracie: En parlant de votre famille, pouvez-vous me parler de votre logo? L'histoire?

A4: C'est le nom du fondateur. 1639 la fondation de l'entreprise. Et les trois collines car le nom de famille en alsacien ça veut dire la colline. 300 ans c'est le blason et la signature de la famille. L'éthique a aussi beaucoup d'histoire chez nous. On était la première en alsace d'adapter une étiquette jaune. On a établi un peu la norme avec cette couleur. L'étiquette vient de la guerre, ou

mon grand-oncle a été en Allemagne, c'est le même jaune que le sauce Maggi, la rouge la jaune et la dorée. Donc mon arrière-grand-père à revenir avec une nouvelle expérience marketing et ces couleurs.

Gracie: Pourriez-vous me parlez un peu plus de la guerre et son effet sur les vins d'Alsace?

A4: L'histoire est un composant essentiel de ce que nos vins sont aujourd'hui. C'est la guerre de 30 ans qui a tout fait car c'était la première région, les vins de vins alsace pendant 3 siècles et étaient les vins les plus cher du monde et les plus prestigieux pendant longtemps. Les guerres, ce ça soit les 30 ans ou les deux guerres mondiales ou d'autres, c'est vraiment les guerres en Alsace qui font ce qui sont nos vins aujourd'hui. Donc le goût et le terroir des vins d'Alsace c'est la production des guerres. Et sans le premier et deuxième guerre mondiale, la guerre franco prussien, le prix n'aurait pas tombé. Si l'Alsace n'est pas redevenue Alsace la notoriété de nos vins ce ne serait pas pareil. Mon oncle est un historien. On partage ça. L'histoire est très important chez nous.

Gracie: Pourriez-vous décrire la personnalité des vins d'alsace en générale?

A4: Versatile, précis, élégant, inattendu,

Gracie: Pourquoi? Exemples?

A4: Je pense que c'est parmi les vins qui sont les plus transparent et les plus vrai dans leurs façons de s'exprimer. On ne peut pas confondre le GW avec une autre cépage/ on ne peut pas confondre les vins d'alsace avec les autres vins, les Rieslings aussi très précis et respire le terroir d'où ils viennent. Très authentique. On ne peut pas confondre avec les vins d'alsace et les vins de la Loire, ou un Pinot Noir d'alsace et Pinot Noir de Bourgogne.

Gracie: Est-ce que les vins d'Alsace sont influent, leader?

A4: Les vins d'alsace n'y sont pas encore. Leader non c'est sûr, clairement pas. Je pense que les VA pourrait être influent mais ce n'est pas le cas en ce moment. Il y évidemment le potentiel de devenir, on a le potentiel qualitatif mais il y a encore énormément de travail.

Gracie: Les vins d'Alsace sont charmant et confortant?

A4: Confortant pas sure, mais amicale très amical très conviviale.

Gracie: C'était les questions sur l'identité des vins d'Alsace et maintenant je vous pose les questions sur les consommateurs et l'international.

Comment gérez-vous les segments les clients? Les experts et les novices?

A4: Tout dépend vraiment du marché, évidemment, sachant que les experts en générale on aura plus des occasions de les rencontrerai 1 par 1. Je les vois à l'étranger, et c'est qui ce qui sont aussi prêt à mettre l'argent dans une bouteille de vin. Pour des vins plus entrés de gamme on a les consommateurs un peu moins expert. En dehors de la France les vins d'Alsace touchent plus aux experts, mais dans quelques marches les VA sont plus volume. Dès qu'on sorte de Europe, c'est un marché de niche qui s'adresse vraiment aux connaisseurs.

Gracie: Quels sont les points forts d'un français? Est-ce l'alsace en fait partie ?

A4: Les points forts c'est la qualité. C'est identifié comme une production des vins de grande qualité. La connaissance est très positive au niveau de l'image et la qualité. Malheureusement les vins d'Alsace ne sont pas toujours identifié sur les vins français. C'est un peu ce qui manque dans les marchés export. Aux États-Unis c'est souvent mis avec les vins allemands ou les autrichien à cause aussi de la flûte. Ça m'arrive très souvent de me retrouver avec les alsaces qui sont dans la section Autriche allemande alsace et après les vins français. C'est un choix de la retailler, en pensant bien faire. C'est vrai que ça ne colle pas non plus avec l'image des vin France, particulièrement avec le sucrosité des vins d'Alsace.

Gracie: Comment est-ce que les vins d'Alsace se compare avec les vins de nouveau monde?

A4: On a l'aspect des vins de cépages qui est très présent aux vins de nouveau monde. Mais nous apprécions les applications qui est très particulier. On est du vin d'Australie et les vins de la Nouvelle Zélande. Les États-Unis c'est la patrie des vins de cépages. C'est devenue officielle en Alsace pendant les année de '60 et '70, c'est normal car c'est l'année ou il fallait conquérir ces marchés du nouveau monde et donc on a fait. Il y a une culture de AOC et l'appellation qu'il faut aussi mettre dans l'esprit. Vins de cépages ne s'oppose pas aux vins de terroir.

Gracie: Pour vos clients aux États-Unis, avez-vous une stratégie différente?

A4: On a vraiment une stratégie globale. On fait les vins de terroir. On ne cherche pas les consommateurs, on fait les vins telle qu'ils sont censés être. Ensuite on fait notre interprétation de nos terroirs. La stratégie est la même partout, c'est d'établir la distribution, et d'imposer une marque de confiance. C'est très important, cette notion de l'honnêteté. On à la confiance des nombres des clients qui boivent nos vins depuis très longtemps. Notre stratégie ce n'est pas de développement, c'est une stratégie de valorisation. De vendre plus cher, et ne pas vendre plus. Vendre moins mais de valoriser plus cher et c'est notre stratégie principale. L'objectif est de valoriser les terroirs et vendre moins mais maintenir notre chiffre d'affaires. Pour les États-Unis,

Ils sont prêts à payer pour certaines productrices et pour certains marchés mais il y a vraiment beaucoup de travail pour l'Alsace.

Gracie: Quelle est la perception des Vins d'Alsace aux États-Unis dans votre expérience?

A4: Je pense que c'est le pays qui connaît le moins l'Alsace, est-ce le pays où j'ai vu le plus des vins d'Alsace avec les vins d'Allemagne ou les vins d'Autriche. Parce qu'il y a un manque de connaissance de la géographie et l'histoire. S'ils savent où elle l'Alsace c'est un miracle, s'ils savent où se situe la France c'est déjà pas mal. Et ensuite réussir à expliquer l'Alsace qui est en France qui fait bien les vins français, même si c'est la bouteille allemande. Ça prend beaucoup de temps, c'est vraiment beaucoup d'éducation. Ce n'est pas un elevator pitch.

Gracie: Quelles sont d'autres valeurs des vins d'Alsace qu'il faut mettre en avant aux États-Unis ?

A4: l'Histoire. Vraiment. Plus de 300 ans une entreprise. Notre entreprise est plus vieille que leurs pays, c'est quelques choses qui démarque le plus souvent. De mettre l'histoire de nos pays à tous les deux en passant par Lafayette et le débarquement en Normandie. Les Texans ont libéré Riquewihr. Une histoire qu'on a en commun. J'adore parler du fait que c'est notre région qui a été le prix pour tous les vainqueurs. La première et la deuxième guerre mondiale c'est de notre faute. C'était la région disputée entre la France et l'Allemagne. C'est la raison pour laquelle nos vins sont plus forts, c'est grâce aux États-Unis.

L'authenticité et le terroir sont aussi importants. Beaucoup de domaines viticoles sont les 2-3^{ème} générations aux US et après c'est repris donc de voir la continuation c'est important pour eux. Les appellations de Napa sont en train de continuer et les appellations sont là en Alsace depuis un certain nombre d'années.

Gracie: Quelques dernières questions, qu'est-ce que vous pensez du système de distribution?

A4: On travaille avec 1 importateur qui est distribué par Southern qui est dans la majorité des états. Donc l'1 qui est basé sur la côte est, que ça soit en direct ou alors distribué depuis les entrepôts.

Gracie: La dernière question, selon vous quel est l'avenir des VA aux USA, en vue des taxations et du COVID-19?

A4: Les États-Unis c'est un marché très frustrant. On a toujours l'impression d'avancer et après 2 semaines d'après un bon coup de tête. On était très bien avec +5% avant les taxations, après M. Trump a décidé de nous grever d'un jour à l'autre. Les États-Unis restera un marché très important mais je suis incapable de vous dire ce que le monde va rassembler dans un mois ni 3 ans. Il y a un avenir sur les vins d'Alsace aux États-Unis et surtout pour ceux qui ont réussi à valoriser leur

produit parce qu'il faut aussi établir une marque forte pour pouvoir résister aux douanes et autres. Il y a un point qui m'a donné beaucoup de motivation aux États-Unis. Il y a 10 ans le marché consommait plus de soda que de vin, le fast food plus que resto, et là ils redécouvrent comment manger et comment découvrir la gastronomie. Je dis toujours de ne pas avoir pas des complexes vis à vis aux français car maintenant c'est le top chef qui apprend aux français comment cuisiner. Et donc il y a un retour de la cuisine avec le vin aux US en plus de tout ce qu'on peut travailler en excès, le spectacle, qui n'est pas très français. Les habitudes changent très vite aux États-Unis. Une jeune génération apprendront le vin et aussi aux États-Unis, ils diminuent aussi la consommation de vin rouge et ça c'est notre point fort avec les vins blancs.

Gracie: Merci beaucoup d'avoir éclairé les sujets.

A4: Super. Merci à vous

Transcription

Interview with a winegrower, Alsace, France.

Code: A5

April 17th, 2020, 50 minutes.

(Introduction)

Gracie: L'intitulé exacte de ton post?

A5: Hah, vigneron, oui, vigneron

Gracie: Depuis combien de temps travailles-tu dans le vin?

A5: Depuis 7 ans et avant c'était les études.

Gracie: Toujours en Alsace

A5: Une école de commerce à Marseille et après spécialisation vin à Reims

Gracie: Comment ça se passe un déroulement d'une journée type pour toi?

A5: On est que 3 a temps pleins, mes parents et moi, et deux à mi-temps dans la vigne. Deux employées et mon père qui travaillent dans les vignes. Moi je suis à la cave. La vinification, et après les commandes et les ventes.

Gracie: Quel type de vin avez-vous?

A5: Toute la gamme de l'Alsace, l'ensemble, les 7 cépages et le crémant. Nous avons 1 grand cru. Le crémant représente plus de la moitié de la production. On a nos vignes et on en a 20-25 hectares, on achète aussi une partie, ce qu'on achète c'est du crémant et tous les vins tranquilles sont de chez nous, de notre propriété. Les $\frac{3}{4}$ de notre marche c'est de l'export, le premier marché les US, 25 % en France et 25% dans un dizaine d'autre pays. Mon père a commencé l'export assez tôt pour un très petit domaine, quelques contacts, après mes études je voulais revenir au domaine et développer les ventes. Je suis allée aux états en stage, en CA, notre importateur est dans la baie de SF. Le but c'était de développer nos ventes et les marchés à l'export.

Gracie: Quelle est votre stratégie ? Comment vous vous positionner ?

A5: En France, un domaine familial avec les vins bon rapport qualité prix, les vins qu'on peut avoir à tous les repas et ne pas avoir peur d'ouvrir la bouteille. C'est le vin qu'on peut toujours boire et de bonne qualité.

Gracie: Quelles sont les caractéristiques de votre domaine?

A5: La Tradition, on en parle, l'histoire de deux familles qui se sont associés et on garde les noms pour qu'on soit liées à la tradition et l'héritage

Le terroir, on a un grand cru, on en parle un petit peu, mais ce n'est pas le plus important pour nous. La gamme est très large en Alsace, on essaie d'avoir une carte complète mais pas trop diversifié pour ce que ça ne soit pas trop compliqué. Tous les terroirs c'est beaucoup trop, ce n'est pas le premier critère pour nous.

Gracie: En parlant des Vins d'Alsace en générale, quelles sont les caractéristiques qui reflètent les ces vins?

A5: L'image et les choses comme ça ?

Gracie: Oui exactement.

A5: Ce qu'on voit beaucoup, c'est ce qu'ils sont assez aromatiques, c'est comme ça qu'on perçoit par rapport aux autres régions, Mais cela peut-être des fois trop expressives. C'est un peu dommage car avec ça on peut avoir les mauvaises perceptions. Les vins sec, fruité, gastronomique. Ce qu'on veut montrer c'est ça aussi, la partie gastronomique.

Gracie: Et quelles sont les valeurs des vins d'Alsace?

A5: C'est humain, avec beaucoup de petites entreprises, ce côté humain. Aussi le côté environnemental qui est très important ici, le vignoble est très vert, le développement durable, on est content d'être au point des choses.

Gracie: Quelle est la place de l'innovation?

A5: On travaille dans une petite équipe, on essaie d'avoir les outils très nouveaux, systèmes intelligents, on a les choses efficaces qui nous permet de travailler optimale en petite équipe. Maintenant on essaie de travailler les vignes, on fait la conversion en bio ce printemps, donc aussi avoir les meilleurs outils pour travailler dans les vignes

Gracie: Pourrais-tu me parler du logo du domaine?

A5: Pour info, quelques jours on aura notre nouveau site beaucoup plus sympa. Le logo doit avoir 25-30 ans, ils ont fait les nouvelles étiquettes au même temps. Nous vous gardons la tradition, et de développer les étiquettes un peu modernes, bah moderne il y a 30 ans en Alsace. On garde les choses traditionnelles. C'est quelque chose qu'on a gardé, on ne veut pas trop toucher car les gens connaissent, on ne va plus toucher, et on continue comme ça. La modernité et le côté traditionnelle. Il y a d'autres plus modernes et d'autres plus traditionnelles.

Gracie: Et le logo des VA? C'est bien aperçu à l'international?

A5: C'est sympa, c'est court et concis, on n'est pas encore trop eu l'occasion de voir à l'international ou d'avoir le feedback mais c'est très bien avec tout le travail du CIVA. Ça représente tout le vignoble.

Gracie: Comment tu les décrirais la personnalité des vins d'Alsace?

A5: Une personne joviale, festive, dynamique. Comme nous on fait beaucoup de crémant on joue sur ce côté festif, mais aussi c'est précis, c'est rigoureux et joviale.

Gracie: Parfait. Je vais te citer quelques mots. Pourrais-tu me dire s'ils match avec les vins d'Alsace?

Gracie: Amicale et confortant?

A5: Les plus rond, justement, oui

Gracie: Honnête, directe fiable?

A5: Oui, on a une cote qualitative et consistant

Gracie: Réussie, influent, leader?

A5: Pas assez encore.

Gracie: Et pourquoi à ton avis?

A5: On voit qu'aux États-Unis À l'export on a beaucoup travail de faire à ce côté pour être plus influent

Gracie: Élégant, prétentieuse, sophistiqué?

A5: Élégant, oui ok

Gracie: Merci, cette partie c'était pour comprendre ton avis sur les vins alsace, maintenant je vais te poser plus des questions sur les consommateurs et le commerce à l'international

Gracie: Comment est-ce que vous distinguez au domaine les différents types des consommateurs?

A5: On a une clientèle en particulier qui reviennent, qui sont habitués, qui connaissent notre vin, qui l'achète pour plusieurs occasions. Après les novices qui connaissent un peu moins et qui viennent en groupe touristiques.

Gracie: Et les attentes différentes des segments de clients?

A5: Les novices c'est de découvrir les principales cuvées, et les particuliers plus réguliers, eux ils ont leur attente à eux, pour les occasions différentes, une qui pour un vin plus moelleux, l'autre pour le crémant. C'est plus spécifique et personnelle.

Gracie: Maintenant je vais te poser sur les vins français et l'Alsace à l'international. Quels sont les points d'un vin français à l'international?

A5: La qualité à l'international, c'est une valeur sûre, pour certains pays ça va être un bon rapport qualité prix (à part Bourgogne) les autres sont les prix abordables par rapport à la qualité.

Gracie: Et l'Alsace est-elle une marque française?

A5: C'est compliqué, on ne parle pas souvent de l'Alsace avec la France. On n'est pas toujours classé avec la France, mais avec l'Autriche ou le

Gracie: Et c'est positif ou négatif?

A5: Ça dépend, un peu les deux mais un peu plus de négatif. On a moins cette image des vins français de qualité on en bénéficie moins, mais il y en a qui aime que ce soit un peu différent. Mais pour le plus grand nombre on n'est pas associé aux vins français.

Gracie: Quelle est selon toi la perception des vins d'Alsace à l'international ?

A5: Um, les gens les apprécient, mais ils ne sont pas indispensables, souvent les gens aiment bien ils n'achètent pas authentique. C'est l'impression que j'ai.

Gracie: Comparer au nouveau monde, comment sont les vins d'Alsace?

A5: Il y a beaucoup de cépages alsaciens qui sont produits dans le nouveau monde, je ne connais pas énormément le nouveau monde, ils sont plus sec, et nous on a quand même les plus sucrés. En France on a encore une demande sur les vins un peu riches, pour boire à l'apéritif

Gracie: Est-ce que c'est le même cas aux États-Unis?

A5: On nous demande beaucoup de vin sec.

Gracie: Est-ce que vous proposez les mêmes produits et la même gamme aux États-Unis?

A5: Oui. Mais les vendanges, on fait les différends. Par exemples le 2016 est plus sec donc on a vendu plus aux États-Unis et le 2017 plus ronde qu'on a gardé pour la France.

Gracie: Quelle est la perception des vins d'Alsace aux consommateurs américains à ton avis ?

A5: Ils ont souvent une mauvaise image, ou ils pensent au Riesling Allemagne, ça c'est un gros problème. Une fois qu'il le goûte ils aiment bien. Je suis obligée de parler un peu du crémant, 80% de qu'on envoie aux États-Unis. Le crémant est vraiment plus comparé à un champagne. Notre crémant est dans la catégorie champagne qui est plus valorisant. Tout ce qui est bulles et qualitatif et plus valorisant pour nous que par exemple les proseccos.

Gracie: Quelles sont les valeurs qui sont important aux États-Unis?

A5: Ce qui est assez important c'est le côté tradition, l'histoire, quand on y va on en parle, c'est une valeur ajoutée pour nous, le côté humain. Par exemple nous sommes à Whole Food, donc ils aiment le côté humain d'une petite famille.

Gracie: Comment est-ce que vous travaillez avec importateur?

A5: J'y vais 1 fois par an aux États-Unis, sinon on échange par email. De tourner tous les jours avec un autre représentative ou distributeur.

Gracie: Qu'est que tu penses du système de distribution?

A5: Je connais surtout la Californie. Là-bas ça se passe plutôt bien. Après chaque état est différent, une fois on est dans le système c'est plus facile. On est dedans et ça tourne bien et on est content. Tout se passe bien. Nous on ne gère pas la distribution mais ça à l'air de bien marcher. On a commencé à travailler dans la Géorgie mais le système est plus compliqué, mais ça dépend des états avec les 3 tiers coupes.

Gracie: Qu'est-ce que tu penses des conjonctures des taxations et du COVID-19?

A5: C'est très dur pour nous, on essaie de ne pas inquiéter, le crémant n'était pas 1 pour les taxations; on pourrait s'adapter à cette taxation mais c'est tellement incertain que nos clients n'osent même pas commander. Et c'est encore différent avec le COVID. Mais avec la taxation que rien se passe et tout et à l'arrêt. Depuis octobre on a envoyé que 2 containers, d'habitude c'est 1 container par mois. En plus maintenant avec le COVID, il ne savent pas comment ça va passer, ils ne savent pas. Ils préfèrent un vin une rupture qui celui qui est un qui en taxation.

Gracie: Et comment est-ce que les vins d'Alsace peuvent continuer leur succès aux États-Unis?

A5: On doit continuer, on est tout petit, un grain de sable aux États-Unis. Il faut vraiment parler de nous. Il faut juste leur faire goûter et pousser là-dedans et on a vraiment une chance. Tous les vins ont leur place aux États-Unis. Même le Pinot Noir qui plait beaucoup. On est surtout sur la baie de SF et côté gastronomie sont en avance par rapport à d'autres villes. On a une carte à jouer.

Gracie: C'est quoi qui rendent les américains fidèles?

A5: Pour nous c'est le Crémant rosé, ils aiment bien la couleur. On a toujours du mal à expliquer, mais ils sont fidèles par rapport à ce vin. It's a good match au palet américain. On essaie de continuer là-dessus. Les vins sont dans les magasins et les restaurants depuis les années et on nous dit toujours que s'il y un vin qui va toujours rester à la carte c'est notre crémant rosé. D'avoir aussi les choses bien notés. Le partage. La fidélité, Après les autres vins aussi, on est en train de développer, mais les vins millésimes c'est plus compliqué, car le gout ça changes d'année à année. On voit vraiment la fidélité sur le crémant.

Gracie: Je reviens aux visites de domaine. Vous avez les visiteurs qui viennent des États-Unis?

A5: Les bus sont français mais on a les américains qui viennent aussi, les particuliers qui viennent par recommandation.

Gracie: Est-ce que tu as à quelque chose à ajouter que nous n'avons pas évoqués?

A5: Mm... si l'innovation, quand je vais aux États-Unis je vois l'innovation. Je commence à faire plus de réseaux sociaux et les vides, Teuwen et le CIVA aussi, YouTube, aujourd'hui il faut se faire connaître par les plus jeune qui l'utilisent beaucoup.

Gracie: Merci beaucoup, Nicolas!

A5: N'hésitez pas si tu as d'autres questions, tu peux me rappeler ou écrire.

Gracie: Merci ! je viendrai faire une dégustation au domaine.

A5: Avec plaisir

Transcription

Interview with an Export Manager, Alsace, France.

Code: A6

April 17th, 2020, 52 minutes.

(Introduction)

Gracie: Pourrais-tu me dire l'intitulé exacte de votre poste?

A6: Je suis responsable export pour nos deux entreprises.

Gracie: De combien d'année travaille tu dans le vin?

A6: Depuis 2006, 14 ans déjà. J'ai fini mes études et travaille dans le vin
J'étais dans le fromage pendant 2 ans entre temps mais je suis retournée dans le vin ensuite.

Gracie: Pourrais-tu me parler de votre travail au quotidien? Une journée type?

A6: Moi mon rôle c'est d'interface avec les clients export, donc mon rôle c'est occuper des clients, proposer les prix, les nouveaux vins et dynamiser un peu les ventes sur les marchés export, et à côté de ça j'ai aussi comme rôle de trouver les nouveaux clients, c'est la prospection. Développer les pays où on n'est pas encore. Mon but est de mettre les 2 entreprises sur chaque pays. On ne peut pas tout faire donc j'essaie de mettre en place une stratégie où on sent qu'il y a le potentiel et de travailler ce pays, et de dépendre plus sur eux qui sont les pays qui peuvent se correspondre des vins d'Alsace. Les vins d'Alsace ne sont pas le plus facile à exporter. Les pays qui sont déjà intéressés au vin français, et cépages alsaciens. Il y a d'autres pays qui connaissent moins et donc ils sont un moins de priorités.

Gracie: Vers quel pays exportez-vous?

A6: On travaille sur 30 pays. Les gros marchés pour nous, ça reste le Canada, la Finlande, la Russie et les États-Unis. Le Japon un petit peu, le Danemark. L'Angleterre, l'Israël est un pays important pour nous. Il y a des pays avec beaucoup d'importateurs, et les pays avec moins. Mais par exemple en Israël il n'y a pas beaucoup et on a de la chance d'être avec le plus grand. Après la plupart des pays en Europe. À l'export généralement on touche aussi ce qui est territoire d'outremer. La Réunion, La Nouvelle Calédonie, etc. Notre stratégie c'est de continuer de focaliser sur l'export.

Gracie: Quels vins avez-vous?

On produit toutes les appellations d'Alsace, les 7 cépages et les Grands Cru. On a arrêté à faire les vendanges tardives et les sélections des grains nobles. Notre prix moyen de vente "ex-cellar" vers 5-6 euros la bouteille. Le Sylvaner 3-4 euros et les Grands Cru 10-12 euros.

On est positionné dans les moyenne gamme. Aux États-Unis on ne vend pas tous nos vins, on vend pas mal de crémant, du crémant rosé, c'est ce qui développe le plus en ce moment, car il n'y a pas le 25% de taxe. (Aux États-Unis toujours) Sur les vins tranquilles, on vend pas mal de Riesling, GW, pas mal de Pinot blanc, and un espace de Edelzwicker qui est un assemblage de Sylvaner et du Pinot Blanc. Les états unis, chez nous ils prennent l'entrée de gamme pour les vins tranquilles, et sur le crémant ils prennent un peu de haut de gamme. On a mal de développer tout ce qui est grand cru. Le consommateur américain comprend pas très bien la nation des Grand cru. Les vins tranquilles fonctionne car ce n'est pas difficile de comprendre l'étiquette, donc on eut du mal de développer les grands crus. Mais cela doit dépendre des interlocuteurs car certains de nos compétiteurs les vendent bien.

Gracie: Quelles sont les caractéristiques de votre domaine? Je cite les mots

A6: On a une cave historique et de tradition. Le domaine on reste sur la tradition. C'était une entreprise familiale, et on mets en avant la famille. On a essayé de ne pas changer la gamme de vin après avoir acheté le domaine. On garde le vignoble comme il était. On mets en avant cet héritage de la famille. Et le maintenir. Bien sûr tout ce qui est vinification on a fait les investissements, mais on garde comment c'était fait auparavant. Avant il y a avait moins de crémant, on en fait un peu plus. On va changer un peu les cépages. On essaie de privilégier les Riesling et PN, on est à Riquewihr, c'est vraiment les bons terroirs. C'est les cépages qui fonctionne bien et qui ont l'avenir en Alsace.

Gracie: Pourrais-tu me parler du logo ?

A6: La famille a acheté ce château, le bâtiment a été partagé avec la mairie de Riquewihr. C'est 27 hectares qu'on ont vinifié sur cette équipe. Nous avons une entrée de gamme, c'est le négoce, donc le logo est sans le château. On achète 100% des raisins de la cave coopérative. Le domaine un peu plus haut de gamme et les terroirs se trouvent à Riquewihr.

Gracie: La marque régional des vins d'Alsace? Quelles sont les mots qui viennent à l'esprit?

A6: Les vins de tradition, un vin français avec les cépages qu'on ne trouve pas ailleurs en France. Après c'est une région qui est vraiment une petite région viticole donc qui est méconnu sur beaucoup de marchés donc il est difficile à mettre sur la carte. Les américains ont du mal à mettre la France sur la carte, voire pire l'Alsace. Ils pensent que c'est une région allemande et que ce n'est pas en France. C'est méconnu en dehors de la France.

Un point fort c'est très tradition et atypique donc c'est les mots qui je retiendrais.

Gracie: Qu'est-ce que distingue l'Alsace des autres régions viticoles en France ou à l'international?

A6: Les cépages mais avec un vrai potentiel d'innovation. Les choses qui pourraient fonctionner comme les assemblages. C'est très nouveau, il y a des choses qu'on pourrait faire. C'est tradition mais il y a eu qui commence à faire l'innovation. Le bio et biodynamie qui sont des révolutions et aussi les étiquettes. Pas nous mais les confrères et la compétition, c'est vraiment intéressant.

Gracie: Quelle est la place de l'innovation pour les Vins d'Alsace?

A6: Je pense que si on veut survivre, il ne faut pas rester sur une image tradition mais une image plus moderne. Les choses à faire en Alsace. Tu vois, une bouteille un peu différente, de mettre une capsule à vis même sur les Grands Cru. L'étiquette sont souvent très traditionnels. Même si on veut faire les choses, l'Alsace reste traditionnel.

La situation n'est pas très bonne pour les vignerons en ce moment. On export beaucoup, mais ce qui sont sur le touriste et que vend depuis la cave. Je pense que la situation était mauvaise avant mais pendant le COVID c'est pire. De s'en sortir, c'est d'innover un peu. A l'export et aussi à la France. Ma vision de l'Alsace du sud, d'où je viens, hyper traditionnelle, une moitié allemande. On a aussi besoin de gagner de la France. Et l'innovation aiderait ça aussi. A l'export, aux États Unis, dans tous nos marchés. Les choses comme les assemblages ce n'est pas trop autorisé. On propose sur les marchés du monopole. (Europe du nord).

Gracie: Pourrais-tu me parler de l'étiquette? Je suis sur une bouteille de [...]

A6: Tu es sûr qu'elle vin? Ah oui Ok j'ai trouvé le même.

Sur le château de Riquewihr, tu as à chaque fois le château qui revient. C'est là où on fait le vin. L'entrée de gamme on ne peut pas mettre le château car c'est le négociant. On ne peut pas mettre le château en avant, donc on a mis le blason de la Famille. Les familles se sont associées ensemble 1945. La famille c'est une vraie famille de tradition de Riquewihr, avec plusieurs domaines. Ils sont mis sur vignes ensemble et ils ont créé les blasons. C'est leur association et eux qu'ils ont fait. Mais la tradition c'est vraiment le château.

Gracie: Comment tu décrirais l'Alsace comme une personne ?

A6: Les vins de caractère... les vins assez francs.

Gracie: Pourquoi?

A6: Ils ont de la personnalité, ils savent où il vont. Les vins soit sec, soit fruité et rond. Les vins sont clairement identifiés.

Gracie: Je vais citer quelques mots. Tu me dis si ça matche avec l'Alsace:

Gracie: Vibrant, modern?

A6: Ça peut marcher, oui.

Gracie: Amicale, confortant?

A6: Certain, mais ce qui est bien, tu as toujours un vin qui va avec. Ce n'est pas les même à chaque fois.

Gracie: Une dernière, Réussite et leader?

A6: Ça marche un peu moins bien, on n'est pas les leaders. Les leaders sur le RI c'est les Allemands. Les autres on a vraiment une grosse concurrence mondiale. Quand on sera reconnu à l'international ça sera bien. Mais on est très petite d'être leader.

Gracie: Je vais te poser quelques questions maintenant sur l'international et les États-Unis. Quels sont les points forts d'un vin français?

A6: Aux États-Unis ils ont une belle image de la France. Le vin est venu tout suite. Notamment alsacien, qui sont venues juste après la guerre en 1944. Et aussi déjà exporté d'où j'ai travaillé avant, depuis très longtemps. Donc l'Alsace était un des premiers vins français exportés aux États-Unis. Mais ce qui le rend plus difficile, c'est difficile à expliquer de mettre les appellations et le terroir en avant en France et c'est difficile pour le consommateur classique de comprendre. Le cépage est important de mettre en avant quand on travaille à l'export. Après le consommateur averti, eux ils comprennent le terroir.

Gracie: Proposez-vous les vins pour chaque segment de client aux États-Unis ?

A6: Non ça, on ne fait pas souvent, mais on devrait. Suivant le segment ils ne consomment pas dans la même façon. Après c'est tout un travail de mon importateur. Mais je fais confiance à mon importateur de cibler les bons vins pour les bons consommateurs. Lui il connaît notre vin et c'est lui qui décide quel vin pourrait fonctionner dans les états.

Gracie: Tu trouves comment le système de distribution?

A6: Je pense que c'est compliqué. Ça fait beaucoup d'intermédiaire, ce système de 3 tiers. Ça fait que c'est compliqué de pouvoir suivre son vin jusqu'au consommateur finale. J'arrive à aller les promouvoir auprès des importateurs et d'aller voir les distributeurs, mais les distributeurs ont les portefeuilles énormes, il y a quelques distributeurs qui fait 80% de la distribution. C'est compliqué de s'en sortir, particulièrement quand on est alsacien. C'est n'est pas bien pour les petites régions comme nous. Ça convient à par exemple Champagne, ou les grosses marques américaines, mais les petits vigneron, c'est assez compliqué comme système pour percer.

Gracie: Comment est-ce les vins d'alsace se compare avec le nouveau monde?

A6: Ça dépend ou tu es aux États-Unis sur la côte est, ils aiment le côté historique et là sur le reste des États-Unis ils sont plus touchés à la marque. Chaque zone des États-Unis est c'est une mentalité un peu différente,

Gracie: Selon les valeurs (l'environnement, innovation, façon de travailler,) qu'est-ce que tu penses sont les valeurs qui devraient mis en avant aux États- Unis? Les valeurs les plus importants?

A6: C'est notre côté historique, un vieux vignoble français depuis longtemps. L'histoire de l'Alsace ça les intéresse toujours les américaines, de savoir que c'est une région qui a changé la nationalité, qui a vécu la guerre, etc.

Aussi les cépages qu'on fait, le Riesling et Pinot Noir, qui sont les cépages populaires aux États-Unis. Je leur parle aussi du crémant. Les bulles ça fonctionne bien. Je les explique comment c'est fait. Ce n'est pas que la Champagne qui le fait. La 2^{me} région après le Champagne en appellation! Je pense que le plus vins de d'Alsace le plus vendu c'est du Crémant rose de Lucien Albrecht, on ne vendait pas ça comme Crémant d'Alsace. On vendait ça comme une "bulle rosé pinot noir Français" sous la marque Lucien Albrecht. On a mis comme ça. Après la marque Lucien Albrecht et venu très populaire, sous la côte ouest, après on a commencé à parler des appellations et de l'Alsace. On a suivi les demandes de clients. Ils voulaient la marque.

Gracie: Et quel est l'avenir selon toi aux États-Unis?

A6: On a un gros potentiel aux États-Unis. Les américains se sont passé à Wine Paris, si n'était pas pour le COVID 19, on aurait eu les nouveaux clients. La taxe va passer, on ne peut pas rester avec ça éternellement, J'ai senti à Wine Paris plutôt combative qui avait envie de continuer avec les Vins d'Alsace. Le contexte même en ce moment et les prospects sont près à commencer quand les situations reviennent à normal. Les opportunités à venir, On est les vins adaptés aux américains, les goûts américains, les choses qui pourrait plaire. Notre travail pourrait toujours être mieux mais le CIVA fait un bon travail avec l'agence aux États-Unis, ce n'est pas pareil partout. Une présence de plus c'est d'avoir la bonne agence.

Aussi aux USA, on a tous les types de producteurs qui sont les bienvenues. Les caves coop, les grandes maisons, les plus petites, les américains sont ouverts. Au US pas un gros problème de prix, nos vins ne sont pas très cher, malgré les marges et les taxes, on reste à un prix raisonnable pour le consommateur américain. Les esprits sont très différents, en particulier le milieu, la côte est et ouest. Après Donald Trump ne nous aide pas et ne nous aime pas finalement. (..)

Gracie: Merci beaucoup, tu as éclairé beaucoup de sujets pour moi. Quelque chose à ajouter?

A6: On aurait accès à ton mémoire?

Gracie: Oui bien sur je vous envoie!

A6: Merci beaucoup ça m'intéresse beaucoup.

Gracie: Merci à toi!

A6: Je te souhaite de bien travailler et une bonne continuation

Transcription

Interview with an Oenologist and Global Export Manager, Alsace, France.

Code: A7

April 17th, 2020, 41 minutes.

(Introduction)

Gracie: Pour commencer, l'intitulé exacte de votre post ?

A7: Œnologue et responsable transversale - j'interviens dans beaucoup de pays pour les vins d'Alsace

Gracie: De combien d'années travaillez-vous dans le vin ?

A7: Difficile à dire, je suis né avec, mes parents y sont, mais officiellement depuis 2008, Pas qu'en Alsace, j'ai fait les études et les stages en Nouvelle Zélande, La Bourgogne et la vallée de la Loire.

Gracie: Pourriez-vous me parler de votre travail au quotidien? Avez-vous une journée type?

A7: Pas de journée type. 400 personnes à travers le monde qui sont mes interlocuteurs. Je ne sais jamais à quel pays avec lequel je vais parler - USA, Japon, l'Europe. Je sais de quel vin on en a en ce moment, mais pas de quel pays!

Gracie: Donc votre équipe est internationale?

A7: Oui, répartie dans plusieurs pays. On a plusieurs pays où l'équipe est présente toute l'année. Sinon il y a l'équipe en France qui se déplace pendant l'année. Je dirai que la moitié est installée à l'international. Je ne les gère pas directement mais j'interviens pour la partie vin d'Alsace vis à vis d'eux.

Gracie: Quel type de vin avez-vous et quelle est votre stratégie?

A7: c'est une tradition en Alsace, depuis longtemps, 1904. Même s'il y a des maisons familiales bien plus vieilles que ça. C'était une entreprise familiale au départ, et 2 familles qui se sont fusionnées. XXX et XXX qui ont cédé l'entreprise à GDF. On a tout le portefeuille de vin d'Alsace. Beaucoup de Grand Cru, on a 19 différents Grand Cru ce qui est assez important. Sinon le produit phare chez nous est le crémant, ça représente 55% de la part chez nous

(Et c'est que 25% moyenne de la production alsacienne) et au niveau de l'export une grosse fraction aussi.

Gracie: Et vous exportez dans quel pays?

A7: Le GCF est présent dans 173, 160 avec les Vins D'Alsace, bien sûr avec les marchés phare et beaucoup plus d'export. Mais même si on fait une caisse c'est l'export, hein ? Voilà on est dans pas mal de pays.

Gracie: Vous vous positionnez différemment selon le pays? Est-ce que la stratégie change?

A7: Oui elle va être très différent. Pour nous, c'est d'écouter le marché, ce qui le marché en a besoin, avant de proposer quelque chose. Ce n'est pas les mêmes vins qui va être présenté au Japon aux États-Unis. On adapte aux marchés. Il y a certains qui aiment le sucre, certains qui n'aime pas le sucre, qui n'aime pas les bulles, qui adore les bulles, voilà. Très aromatique ou relativement nature, ce n'est pas à nous de venir avec un produit mais d'écouter le marché.

Gracie: Je vois! Quelles sont les caractères de votre marque?

A7: Comme quoi ? Dans quels sens?

Gracie: Je vous cite quelques mots, vous me direz ce que vous retiens.

A7: Chez nous, on essaie de trouver le milieu entre la tradition et l'innovation. On va chercher les nouveautés, être la créatrice des tendances. Innovation et tradition c'est vraiment les maîtres mots de la société.

Gracie: Et pour les vins d'alsace, quelles sont les caractérisés et des associations qui vous viennent à l'esprit?

A7: La tradition et le terroir. On en parle énormément en Alsace. J'aimerais pouvoir dire la modernité, mais malheureusement ce n'est pas encore. Il y a beaucoup de travail qui est fait de ce côté, on en besoin. Mais c'est vraiment la tradition et le terroir, dans le bon sens du mot, le travail au sol et l'environnement.

Gracie: Qu'est qui distingue les VA des autres régions viticoles en France?

A7: On a les vins de cépages. C'est vraiment ça. C'est important d'avoir cette identité, et d'avoir ces cépages très différents, on n'a pas la conformité dans le goût. Le terroir nous permet d'ajouter encore l'expressions à nos vins.

Gracie: Un peu plus sur les valeurs des vins d'Alsace: Quelle est l'importance de l'innovation?

A7: Le marché français n'est pas encore aussi moderne que dans autres pays. Heureusement à l'export on est confronté à la modernité. Les VA est resté dans un univers encore un peu trop tradition - bu à la table, un apéritif mais pas tout le temps, la consommation est très ciblé.

Certain pays sont beaucoup plus décomplexés. En Angleterre, Ils vont dans un proxy, acheter une salade et un quart de vin pour manger au parc. Les vins d'Alsace, on ne peut pas mettre dans les petites bouteilles

Mais VA pourrait faire une rosé, on n'est pas connu pour ça mais ça améliore chaque année. Donc la région est tournée vers les nouveaux leviers pour créer les nouveaux moyens de consommations. L'innovations est importante mais pas encore la même beaucoup de travail est en train de faire.

Gracie: Pourriez-vous me parler de votre logo?

A7: Le logo a été retravaillé, refait en 1998, quand le caveau à Marlenheim été refait pour inciter les clients de venir.

Gracie: Et vos étiquettes?

A7: La tradition est quand même important chez nous. On fait dans le nom de nos gammes. Il y a toujours une histoire. On crée, on décline les gammes différentes, la gamme réservée pour la gastronomie, ou pour les consommateurs moins avertis. Ça nous permet de travailler avec les différents réseaux de distributions. Tous les vins n'ont pas le même moyen de consommations, qu'il soit en restauration ou en GD.

Gracie: Quel est le profil de vos consommateurs?

A7: Le profil de nos consos, on analyse vraiment sur nos PDV, on connaît la situation de clientèle. On a les produits pour tout mais on a remarqué que le client a vraiment rajeunie.

L'export, les pays ou on peut avoir les sorties caisses en tranche d'âge. On analyse au fils des sorties des achats des nouveautés, on voit que les nouveaux clients ont vraiment ajouté, les ventes n'ont pas stagné, on a diversifié notre portefeuille de clients

Gracie: Est-ce que les VA en général attire plus les novices ou experts?

A7: Souvent les experts, parce que c'était souvent avec les VA, que le terroir. Les consos qui ne sont pas avertie étaient perdus. Sol calcaire ou volcanique? Il s'en fiche. Ce conso était vraiment perdu. Donc fait pour les consos plus averties.

Aussi dans les exports - les VA sont souvent dans les pays de consommateurs avertis pas les pays avec les jeunes consommateurs. Donc il faut améliorer l'images des consommateurs jeunes. Mosina de la compréhension exacte de la région du vin.

Gracie: Pour compléter l'identité des VA, quelle est la personnalité des VA selon vous?

A7: Généreux. Ça définit aussi bien le vin, très travaillé aromatique, mais aussi les personnes de la région. Les vigneronns prennent du temps, dans l'échange le partage. Ça identifie aussi bien le vins que l'atmosphère. D'une manière générale.

Gracie: 10 minutes de plus vous va?

A7: Pas de soucis.

Gracie: Quelle est l'images des vins d'Alsace à l'internationale?

A7: Les vins français ont une très bonne notoriété et une très belle image à l'international. Il faut aussi bien le cultiver, pas que cultiver mais le changer le moderniser. Ne faut pas qu'on reste sur ce qu'on a fait, faut aussi travailler notre image. Il faut cultiver les choses.

Gracie: Est-ce que l'Alsace est une marque française ?

A7: Oui ? et Non. Dans certains pays, oui et certains. Je me rappelle dans certains marchés export. Je dois commencer avec la géographie mondiale d'où se situe l'Alsace. Amérique du nord, au Canada, ce n'est pas de soucis, on est un vin français mais ailleurs c'est plus fort toute seule que de la rattacher à la France. La compréhension n'est pas forcément le même. On a de la chance d'avoir une région forte, on n'a pas toujours bien d'expliquer, c'est très bien d'avoir une région qui tient à part, BCP de touristes dans la région.

Gracie: Et plus sur la perception des vins d'Alsace à l'international?

A7: Aha, elle est bonne c'est sure, mais ça va être très différent d'un pays à l'autre. Dans les pays très jeune, les gens sont plus intéressés par les vin frais et léger, quand on va dans vers autres pays, On fait plus le terroir. Gourmand, structuré pour plus des avertis, comme au Japon. L'image est bonne mais elle va être très différent.

Gracie: Et la perception aux USA?

A7: La perception est bonne. Pays très important pour les VA. Ça fait longtemps que les certaines maisons d'Alsace exportent. Au niveau de la consommation, mmm, très très bataillé. Vraiment besoin de se battre pour y arriver. La distribution va vraiment dépendre. Simple et compliqué à la

fois. Large, beaucoup d'endroits, le système de distribution ce n'est pas toujours facile. Chacun voit les choses à sa manière. C'est un marché qui est compliqué, mais vachement intéressant. Ce que je note ce dernier temps, pas lié à la taxation, depuis une bonne année, une grosse demande pour les bulles - avec ce qui nous concerne. Les bulles sont en train de monter en gamme. Vraiment.

Gracie: Et votre gamme aux US est comment?

A7: On vend tous les vins du domaine mais c'est dans les petites cavistes donc beaucoup moins de volume. On est chez Total Grand, il est dans un paquet des états, et distribué dans la grande distribution et c'est moins intéressant, bon pas moins, c'est très intéressant mais les vins du domaine sont avec les petite cavistes avec lequel on peut vraiment parler, dans des états et villes différent. Mais on une équipe aux USA - on a un bureau à Miami et les personnes réparties sur les villes: NYC, Chicago, Californie, Dallas. Les grands marchés et c'est un grand relais pour nous.

Gracie: Donc important d'avoir quelqu'un sur place ?

A7: Oui, mais pour nous il ne vendent que les vins d'Alsace, D'avoir une personne de travailler le marché, pour voir et surveiller comme ça va se passe. Si c'est qu'une personne pour les VA, j'aurais besoin de réfléchir. Je ne pourrais pas dire ou non tout de suite. I ly a 3 ans, oui, clairement pour travailler le marché. Mais là c'est compliqué. J'attends de voir vraiment comment les exportations des vins d'alsace vont continuer. Les commerciaux vendent les GCF. Il s'occupent de tous les vins qu'on produit. C'est là où j'interviens, je les forme pour les vins, d'aller plus en profondeur. Je fais toujours l'analytique de marche, par exemple, il faut vendre le Pinot Gris car c'est que les gens veulent. Il vaut acheter et déguster pour comprendre ce que les consommateurs veulent aujourd'hui. Prends ces 2-3 vins qu'ils veulent, plus dans le cœur de marché et ne pas proposer un Gewurztraminer si ce n'est pas ce que les clients veulent.

Gracie: Est-ce que vous voyez une différence entre les novices et les experts?

A7: Nos commerciaux sont en contact avec tout le réseau de distribution. Ils sont en contact, on a les benchmarks et on les fait par réseaux, il n'est pas en général pour les US. Pour un pays aussi grand, Amérique, pareil, Ce n'est pas le même mode de consommation, côté est ou ouest. Je prends les mêmes vins c'est sure.

Gracie: Quelles sont les valeurs qui doivent être mis en avant pour les vins d'Alsace aux États-Unis?

A7: La générosité pour le coup dans ce cas-là, Les familles ont l'exportation qui se passent mal, les défauts de paiements. Mais malgré le fait qu'on a le défaut, on est derrière les importateurs et

les soutient. OK, ça ne va pas bien, mais un jour ça ira mieux donc travaillons ensemble, on vous aide on sort les commandes et les décale les paiements. La valeur humaine aujourd'hui est très importante avec nos interlocuteurs, notre relation depuis longtemps. Je me suis tapé dans une main qui a dit - t'inquiète pas je vais te payer. Je ne suis pas inquiète. Les relations humaines sont très importantes. On fait les visio-conférences, appels clients, on est là pour eux, même si on ne peut pas se déplacer on va les soutenir. L'aspect humaine et de réfléchir, ce n'est pas plus mal en ce temps. Ça aidera, on apprend les choses différemment, on fait les choses mieux. Plus intelligent.

Gracie: Quelque chose d'autre à ajouter?

A7: Non, non

Gracie: Merci beaucoup!

A7: Avec plaisir

Transcription

Interview with an Export Manager, Alsace, France.

Code: A8

April 23rd, 2020, 45 minutes.

(Introduction)

Gracie: quel est l'intitulé exacte de votre poste?

A8: Export manager. Je travaille aussi à temps au Belvédère, ou je passe BCP de temps pour l'œnotourisme

Gracie: Depuis combien d'années travaillez-vous dans le vin?

A8: Depuis 2006

Gracie: Pourriez-vous me parler de votre équipe?

A8: Avec mon mari, on est sur la partie marketing et communication. Le packaging, la marque, les campagnes sur les différents produits. Je suis 80% commercial, 10% marketing et le reste, tourisme.

Gracie: Maintenant je vais poser les questions sur votre marque: Quels type de vins proposez-vous?

A8: On a une gamme très large, très complet, tous les Alsace AOC, une grande variété du crémant d'alsace qui est une de nos spécificités. Notre maison, on est la plus grosse maison indépendante (pas d'investisseurs, entreprise familiale) et un grand vignoble en exploitation. C'est ce que nous différencie, les gens ont dû grande vignoble mais avec les investisseurs qui ne le rends pas vraiment indépendant. On a cette positionne unique. Et avec Toute la gamme d'Alsace.

Gracie: Avez-vous les vins en bios?

A8: Oui, On a notamment une gamme avec du crémant, et plusieurs autres cépages en bio.

Gracie: Pourriez-vous me parler de l'export? les parts du marché France et export? Vers quels pays exportez-vous?

A8: Aujourd'hui on export les deux marques principales. Si on considère ces deux marques, moitié moitié. Si on prend en compte toutes nos autres marchés, on est plus sur le marché français mais les deux marques qu'on a à l'export, c'est les plus valorisé.

Les pays suivent les exportant des vins l'alsace en générale. Le marché historique, l'Allemagne, Pays-Bas. Les marchés moins historiques mais aussi bien ancré maintenant, le Danemark et les pays du nord, et bien sûr on a la canada et les états unis. Et après, l'Asie.

Gracie: Tu avais parlé du positionnement: entreprise familiale et indépendant, et bien sûr d'avoir une large gamme avec une grande exploitation. Ce positionnement change-il entre la France et les USA? Vous mettez les mêmes choses en avant?

A8: Aux US, la manière dont on se présent comme ça, c'est très important pour nous de se différencier. On est une grande maison indépendante, c'est le 12eme génération de la famille/ C'est déjà une belle réalisation. Depuis 18720, chaque génération a suivi la dernière. On a une belle histoire et nous sommes 100% familiale, honnêtement pour un acheteur c'est bien car il va être directement en contact avec nous, on n'aurait pas un export manager qui change tous les 2-3 ans ou un directeur de cave qui va aussi changer. Le fait d'avoir une maison familiale avec une certaine taille c'est important. Du coup on se présente de la même manière n'importe où ça se soit car c'est propre à notre histoire et notre structure.

Gracie: Quelles sont les associations avec les Vins d'Alsace en général.

A8: Frais, aromatique, sec, crémant, Riesling.

Gracie: Quelles sont les valeurs des vins d'Alsace?

A8: Je dirai que c'est pour moi, ce je remarque et ce que j'entends, ils sont reconnu pour être les meilleurs vins blancs du monde. C'est vraiment un point super important. La plupart du temps sec, aromatique, droit, pure. Ça fait partie de l'importance dans vins alsace. Aussi la cote intéressante c'est d'avoir la diversité au niveau de cépages. Ces cépages qui sont aussi connu à l'étranger.

Gracie : Comment les vins d'Alsace se différencier d'autres régions?

A8 : Les vins blanc, sec, frais, aromatique, pur et droit, c'est ça déjà qui va aider à nous différences des autres régions viticoles.

Gracie: Quelle est la place de l'environnement et l'innovation dans les vins d'Alsace?

A8: Les vins d'Alsace ont une démarche bien, en avance sur les vins français au niveau de l'environnement. Pour rendre une grande partie du vignoble en HVE donc je pense que bien

l'environnement fait partie de ce qui caractérise les vins d'Alsace. Mais ce n'est pas la chose la plus importante pour un acheteur. Surtout je me rends compte aux US, on parle de Riesling, ils connaissent tous les RI allemande. Il faut donc déjà expliquer la différence entre une Riesling allemande et nous. Le fait que le nôtre est bio ça aide mais ce n'est pas l'argument décisif pour acheter et pour différencier. Je pense que ça fait partie mais ça ne fait pas tout. Aussi les normes ne sont pas pareil. Nous en faisons les bios mais ils ne sont pas vendus comme bio aux États-Unis. Le client, il est content de savoir mais il ne peut pas être écrit sur la bouteille. Quand on est bio en Europe on n'est pas forcément bio aux États-Unis. Le marché américain va être sensible à comment on travaille dans nos vignes, les questions sur notre manière de travailler, de vinifier. Avoir le vin bio mais pas mettre sur la bouteille, ils préfèrent qu'on leur explique comment on travaille. On n'a pas forcément toujours l'équivalent. La cote humaine et la façon de travailler est importante.

Gracie: Est-ce que vous accueillez beaucoup d'américaines qui viennent sur place? Sont-ils fidèles?

A8: Oui, si le vin est disponible, s'ils ont passé un bon moment chez nous. Complètement. En plus par exemple de les accueillir au cave, faire un tour en segway, vélo électrique, déguster du vin, manger une planchette de fromage etc. il font tout, ils passent un moment agréable. Et quand ils retournent chez eux ils parlent de nous, ils retournent dans leurs états et c'est d'autant plus important de parler de nous. L'œnotourisme va créer une relation avec le client qui rentre chez lui et si on a bien fait notre travail, ils se rappelleront de notre visite, en plus du vin.

Gracie: Pourrais-tu me parler de votre logo?

A8: Alors, on a différentes choses. On a choisi de mettre que le nom de famille quand on a refait la cave. Le logo qui marque la réunification des 2 branches de famille. Les 2 branches ont été séparés pendant 20 ans. C'est le nom de Maison, la famille. Ça nous permet d'appuyer sur les clients, ceux qui veulent plutôt traditionnelle, va partir sur la marque plus traditionnelle et les clients par exemples de Californie, les gens sensibles à l'environnement, bio, là on part sur l'autre. On veut toucher toutes les cibles.

Gracie : Qu'en penses-tu du logo des VA? Cette image est-elle importante au marché export?

A8: Oui, je pense que c'est important mais ça ne fait pas tout. C'est plus les différentes choses qu'on peut mettre avant que la forme elle-même. Je reviens par car, Wine of Germany faisait énormément de promo aux états. Une reine de Riesling s'est baladé partout en faisant la promotion des riesling allemandes aux états unis. Donc il y a vraiment les choses qui marquent. Les choses pour le grand public et la grande distribution. C'est les actions qui sont importantes plutôt qu'un logo lui-même. Les actions qui représentent les vins d'Alsace.

Gracie: Tu as déjà décrit les vins d'Alsace, sec aromatique. Pourrais-tu les décrire comme une personne? Ce sera quoi sa personnalité?

A8: Conviviale, jovial, joyeux, je dirais déjà ça.

Gracie: Je te cite quelques mots qui sont cités, pourrais-me dire si c'est vrai ou pas pour les VA Amicale, charmant

A8: Oui ?

Gracie: Honnête, directe?

A8: Oui. Oui. Le riesling c'est droit mais on peut aussi avoir un Pinot Gris qui est très aromatique. C'est difficile de parler de tous les vins.

Gracie: Réussi, influent?

A8: Alors j'aimerais bien que ça soit le cas mais je ne pense pas encore.

Gracie: Sophistiqué, prestigieux?

A8: Ça peut décrire certaines. Mais c'est vraiment ce j'ai dit avant, conviviale et jovial. C'est difficile à dire, c'est important de parler des choses que représente vraiment tous les vins ensemble, en générale.

Gracie: Je vais te parler de business international. Quels sont vos types de clients différents?

A8: Nous avons les personnes un peu plus novices et après ceux qui ont le WSET 3 ou 4. On a tous les niveaux.

Gracie: Vous pensez-vous qu'ils devraient avoir une communication différente?

A8: Je pense qu'aux US, on a encore un très grand travail à faire pour présenter le Riesling, Pinot Blanc and Crémant. Le crémant c'est ce qui croit aux US. Il est en augmentation. C'est important de communiquer sur l'Alsace en rentrant déjà sur quelque chose qui marque. Quand on parle des acheteuses de professionnels ils connaissent, mais dans les commerciaux ils ne connaissent pas, ils demandent c'est quoi la différence entre le crémant et le champagne, et ensuite ils ne connaissent pas ce mot. Pour moi c'est la priorité. De faire les campagnes les actions et la campagne sur le crémant d'Alsace.

C'est quand même bizarre, ça peut être prise au même prix qu'un parking de Californie, Chandon par exemples, après on a beaucoup plus de fraîcheur, et le Chandon peut être très dose. Donc quand on fait goûter ça plait énormément. C'est un produit qui devrait être facile de communiquer et de faire les actions dessous. Il faut que les VA aux US, ils devraient communiquer sur les choses qui peuvent parler à un grand public. Si on veut faire connaître une région ou un produit il vaut mieux parler de quelque chose qui parlent à un grand public plutôt que le 1% des grands connaisseurs qui mets 50\$ dans une bouteille. Ça aurait pas du tout le même impacte. C'est moins rentable. C'est ce que les Rieslings d'Allemagne ont fait et ça a marché. Jouer sur quelque chose qui marche déjà et qui va parler aussi à un grand nombre des personnes. Le crémant d'alsace peuvent parlera un grand nombre de personnes.

Gracie: Quelle est la perception des vins d'Alsace à l'international à votre expérience?

A8: Je pense que justement, on est reconnu comme une très bonne qualité. Les vins blanc SEC je redise car on a bien sur les autres biens comme le Gewurztraminer les Vendanges Tardives etc., qui ne rendent pas dans la catégorie sèche. Mais aux US ils pensent à crémant l'acheteur pros, mais les autres pensent à un riesling sec ou un pinot blanc sec. Je pense que ça c'est important et ensuite ils aiment le côté aromatique et frais, c'est important. C'est la côte frais et aromatique à la fois. Soit Sec.

Gracie: Est-ce que le fait que l'Alsace soit une région française aide à son succès?

A8: Clairement oui. Oui. Dans plusieurs pays et dans certains états aux US, le fait qu'on devrait expliquer que l'Alsace est France, et les gens disent "Ah oui d'accord" avec intérêt, on voit quand même que ça a un impact, Made in France c'est important. Mais il faut quand même le dire, ça nous arrive très souvent aux salons de devoir expliquer.

Gracie: et dans les rayons?

A8: Ça dépend pour les rayons. Quand c'est par cépages c'est pratique car Alsace peut être partout. Mais si c'est par région, ils peuvent donner une petite place et ne pas mettre autant de cépages d'Alsace en avant. Je me dis que dans beaucoup de magasins c'est par cépages. Ça permet aux magasins d'avoir une belle offre des VA. De les mettre par cépages. Tout ce qui est champagne, starking, RI, PG, PN, CH, SB.

Gracie: Qu'en penses-tu du système de distribution aux états unis?

A8: Il est comme il est. Du coup c'est un système très différent de chez nous S'est compliqué de savoir qui suit quoi. Ça rend l'information un peu plus opaque puisqu'il est l'importateur et le distributeur. Parfois c'est un peu compliqué de savoir qui est vraiment l'acheteur d'une chaîne de

distribution par exemple. Qui achète et à qui propose les vins pour acheter. La prospection est plus compliqué mais c'est un marché qui est très ouvert et réceptif. On peut aller toquer sur les portes. Le structure rends les choses plus compliqués mais les gens rends les choses plus faciles.

Gracie: D'autres choses qu'on devrait mettre en avant aux US?

A8: C'est important de mettre en avant le crémant, les vins aromatiques mais frais, les vins qui sont, par rapport aux marchés domestique plus bas en alcool, on n'est pas sur les degrés très haut en alcool. Parfois sur le marché domestique les vins sont de 14 ou plus. C'est aussi un angle d'approche. À mon avis les choses la plus important de mettre en avant c'est : le crémant, frais et aromatique, d'Alsace et Made in France. Mettre en avant aussi Alsace, France. C'est quelque chose qui n'est pas forcément facile pour les gens de comprendre quand ils habitent dans un autre pays et un autre continent. En fait la France tout le monde connaît, mais l'Alsace tout le monde ne connais pas, donc il faut vraiment lier Alsace et la France.

Gracie: Et l'histoire est-elle important?

A8: Après je pense que chaque producteur raconte son histoire mais à mon avis ce qui est intéressant, c'est l'Alsace en France, où nous sommes, on est pile poil entre 3 pays, vraiment entre les frontières avec une spécificité niveau du sol et du climat. Sans rentrer dans les choses trop compliqués, on explique en quelques mots pour aider les gens à comprendre déjà qu'on est en France pile poil entre 3 pays. L'histoire c'est un deuxième niveau, ça vient après.

Gracie: Que pensez-vous de la taxation est du COVID-19, comment est-ce que ça va impacter les affaires aux USA et comment les VA peuvent rester fort dans l'avenir ?

A8: On peut revenir au crémant car la taxe trump ne l'a pas touché. Après on ne peut pas changer la situation, en essayant de trouver les façons de se démarquer et faire la promotion de nos produits. Je pense qu'il faut essayer d'aller à l'avant. Après les américains restent au business, c'est culturel. Ils sont orienté business, il pense à l'avant et sont en train de préparer l'après. Il faut continuer et travailler pour l'avenir.

Gracie: Merci beaucoup, je pense que c'est tout, sauf si tu as quelque chose à ajouter?

A8: En revanche, j'aimerais bien avoir une copie de ton mémoire?

Gracie: Bien sûr! Je t'enverrai ça.

A8: Super, je serais vraiment intéressé et ravie.

Transcriptions of Stage 2 Interviews

Transcription

Interview a Beverage Director, MW, New York City.

Code: B1

May 17th, 2020, 1 hour.

(Introduction)

Gracie: Could you tell me your exact job title?

B1: Masters Sommelier. In addition, beverage director for a Hospitality group. NoHo Hospitality. and the wine partner for the Thrive market, and then my winery in Oregon. I've been in the wine business for 20 years. in NY. Miami Chicago and Detroit, we also have restaurants. Born and raised in NY.

Gracie: What would a typical day be like for you?

B1: It used to be full-time at NoHo. we have 13 restaurants at bars, ½ hotels, and ½ independent standing. I run everything from water to coffee to liquor and wine. I run all the programs. Then with creative people to maintain these programs. Any day I'd be working the floor in one of the restaurants with the beverage team, sometimes in the office and administrative things. I travel to Oregon 3-4 times a year to check on wines, do some blends, a lot of sales and marketing. For Thrive, LA 1-2 a year, then ProWein for moderately priced organic wine, and samples in New York. My professional world. But right now, the restaurants are closed, winery sales non-existent, a lot of the marketing and consulting I'm doing is drying up. I'm working with Thrive market in LA which is direct to consumer, organic, granola to shrimp to beauty, in the wine sections and that's keeping me busy. I'm on Long Island with my wife. Hospitality is about to be in a really different place for the next few years. It's totally stopped.

Gracie: Now I'll ask questions about region of origin, followed by Alsace wines and consumer behavior.

Is the country of origin important to you when you purchase or recommend a wine?

B1: The country of origin is very important, especially for me, my restaurants have a national point of view, with 1-2 exceptions. The rest have wine lists of American, French, or Italian exclusively. We have 10 full service restaurants but only 2 of them have a mixed wine list. It's hugely important when I choose wine then.

Gracie: And what about the region of origin?

B1: I would say it's super important, but the regionality, it's not like "Oh I need a wine from the south." It's like I want a Rhone because of its ripe style and Grenache driven wines. It's not a matter of the name, but I can say I'm looking for cooler climate wines. So, when it comes to domesticity, the regionality is important because I think the best Pinot Noir comes from this specific place in Oregon. The regionality and varietal and profile are kind of synonymous to me. Do you wanna elaborate?

Gracie: That's great. So what other attributes are important, if it's the regionality ?

B1: The style and the varietal, yeah. I wanted this one restaurant to have the message "If you lived in Lyon, or Strasbourg, what wines would you drink?" In this case yes, the regionality is important, for specific styles. Also, some restaurants that I have, the wine list are specific to the menu - northern Italian or southern Italian. I think that my wine selections first and foremost reinforce the message of the menu and the transposase message of the restaurants. We want you to feel like you're in a bistro in Montpellier, or al-Fresca in Bologna, or spending 500\$ on Grand Cru Chablis. This is just important and the varietal and the price point.

Gracie: Do you consider the regionality to be a brand itself?

B1: Definitely. People shop for Bordeaux, Burgundy, Napa, Sancerre. No question. Even American Europhilic who have travelled, will shop for Barolo, wines from Tuscany, places they have references too, where they studied abroad, etc. It's a VERY small percentage that pierce the region AND the grape and that go into the producer. Even knowledgeable consumers and the most popular regions like Bordeaux and Burgundy. Our Wine Spectator restaurants with very high-class clients would know some Bordeaux producers, but now our 13 restaurants have many less enophiles, but still wine enthusiasts, which is much more part of the population, that represents the real world. People drinking 71 et 72 XXX, that's not real people. People say "I want to spend 60-120 on a bottle of Bordeaux". Very few are saying anything more specific. It's definitely regionality for most people.

Gracie: What are the characteristics of wines from Alsace?

B1: My first impressions? Ok.

Versatile, unadulterated by oak, aromatically beautiful, unique, modest in price and great value, farmed conscientiously, biodynamics and organics. Mostly white with some nice cremant. These are my broad first instincts, incredibly versatile with food, underappreciated. confusing for the consumer, and delicious!

Gracie: Compared to other French wine regions, how do you compare Alsace?

B1: In the US market, outside of French restaurants and the most progressive wine shops, virtually nonexistent. Maybe Trimbach and Hugel for their distribution. Unfortunately, if it's not a French or Asian cuisine restaurant, it's really not available, but it's really unfortunate. Outside of NY, SF and maybe Chicago, it doesn't share the limelight, unfortunately it's not even on the stage with Bordeaux, Burgundy, and Loire valley. There was a time when Loire and Alsace were fighting for a place at the table, and now Loire is there. There is better farming in Alsace, so I don't know why people love Loire for the natural wine. Alsace is still very much fighting for even a place at the kid's table.

Gracie: Why do you think that is?

B1: There are a lot of reasons why. a lot. It's a long answer. From the consumer perspective, I think they are really confusing wines, the tall skinny bottles, they are hard to pronounce, they have the stigma of being or dry or off-dry. Alsace has not done a good job of getting out the reality that Alsace AOC can be dry at this point. There is no regional setting for sec, demi sec or anything like that, so that's one. Americans are still reeling from the stigma of Kabinant XXX, really shitty German Riesling that was here in the 90s. But they are getting over it slowly. I also think the really quality producers make a really small amount of wine. I was talking to the XXX and I asked why they don't do more marketing, traveling. And they said "We want to sell from our winery, people come from around the world to hang out, fill their trunk and go home. That's how we want to sell." Another thing, the number of times the Alsatians have traveled overseas compared to the big names in other wine regions. You realize that there is a lack of marketing momentum. JT is tireless. OH used to come 1-2 a year, and there are some younger kids that are taking over and things going on in some really great wineries. Wines of Alsace is doing really good stuff, but it's the producer's that get people excited.

There are certain ways that wine regions choose to penetrate the market. Alsace wines don't really have those value-driven wines that can be served as wine by the glass, the gateway drugs that you can always find: a cheap Sancerre or Chenin blanc, Alsace doesn't have the capacity or scale. You're never gonna get the good Alsatian Riesling by the glass. It's not anyone's fault, the soil is good, the yields are low, you get quality not quantity, and the entry level is 22 dollars, how do you compete with Chardonnay from Argentina, Riesling from Australia? Sauvignon Blanc from Chile? So I think if you take those 3 things together: the confusing things on the bottle: names, size, dryness, the no entry-level possibility and the best producers not wanting to travel, or focusing on export and all that. We need to set up where we are getting people excited about it on a regional scale, not a producer scale, to get the wines on the shelves and on all wine lists, not just the creative Asian restaurant or on the tasting menu with the choucroute course.

Gracie: So are you saying that the quality of wines is great, but it's not appropriate for the American market?

B1: Yeah, the entry-level wine and the pricing that you find. Lemme rephrase. So I would say this- because the lining share of quality producers in Alsace and the economies of scale, it does not work in favor of wines that I would categorize in entry-level pricing. The quality is fantastic, but the lack of economies of scale, and the lack of appearance of small producers that can't make wines at a lower price in large quantities. You'll find that the entry level pricing exceeds that of most other regions. And when you have people who are shopping for a "white wine to go with dinner" under 20\$, the choices become a little bit limited. Alsace has a very small number of those, and the really great producers might have none. How many wines can you get on a shelf for 20\$? virtually none. There is a huge barrier to entry, the gateway drug.

Gracie: Ok, thanks for that. And what do you think about the labels of Alsace?

B1: I think they are beautiful, charming, I think they are confusing for American consumers. American consumers shop by varietal or by region. They are going to buy either Shiraz, Chardonnay or A Margot or Barolo. With Alsace it's really not sure what you are buying... is it the terroir, producer, grape,...

But I also find them beautiful. But if you take the label and name and the tall skinny bottles and the vintage variations and the fact that they aren't Chardonnay or Sauvignon Blanc, there are so many things. So it's really confusing,

Gracie: Do you feel that the history of Alsace is important? and are you attached to that history?

B1: I don't think that any of my recommendations or sales were ever helped with history, However, when I teach about it, people find it very interesting. I teach about it in a lot of places, and it's a really great background, the geological history is very interesting. but I keep it to 5-10 minutes. If not, people fall asleep. And then the socio-political history.

At the end of the day, there is a very small percentage of people who care, when they are picking a wine for their cheese plate, about the annexation of Alsace in 1971. Do they care about the history? No, they want a bottle of wine that tastes good. Although it's beautiful to be there, and I mean look at Saving Private Ryan - it's there- Alace. But I don't think anyone really cares. When they are really choosing their wine, it's a minuscule feature. But it does bring visibility, it's a feature, a level of conversation, it gives you an extra 2-3 minutes at the table but I don't think anyone cares about the history. Americans love the history of Tuscany. The history is what makes a region unique, and the wine market has shown us, over time, that these regions have longevity, but Alsace has a lot to do before it can get there.

There are a lot of things that are more important than they need to clarify before they get involved in something that is different and further from 1- what am I buying and 2- how can I get it on the shelves. There are other things that I would prioritize in addition to the history. More about what

the consumers can expect, the varieties, is just as, if not more important. They should not abandon history, but to focus on that at the expense of other stuff would be a mistake.

Gracie: How often and how much Alsace wines do you buy/recommend?

B1: I recommend them anytime anyone asks, when I teach, on the floor, even in the restaurants when we don't have any on the list! I will say they are sold exclusively when they are hand sold. There are very few people who come in and say "we are looking for Alsace" so it has to be recommended by a sommelier. I recommend it with all types of food. Unfortunately, when we opened up we had 40 Alsace wines on the list, on the first page, and it was still a struggle to sell. I tend to sell the dryer wines better. But it's still a struggle, it's not easy to sell. But at the Michelin stars it was easier to sell because people are pairing. Today I can sell some glasses but the bottles are harder.

Gracie: Can you talk a little more about the segment of clients? Novice and experts?

B1: The Michelin star restaurants, the customers that come in, they go in there to do what they are told to do by the sommelier. At my restaurants, they know about certain points at a certain price range. Barolo at this, Sancerre at this. But there is a different conversation and psychological playing field for the consumer.

Gracie: For the region of origin, is there difference in importance according to type of consumer?

B1: I think for an informed consumer, the region of origin is important and for a less informed, uneducated consumer, virtually nonexistent. An uneducated consumer wants "full bodied red wine" or "sweet white wine" or maybe they had an Italian wine that they liked one time, or they want a wine "not too sour" that's the uneducated consumer and that's what you have to decode. For those people it doesn't matter where it comes from, it's about how it feels. It's more about texture and body. For the educated consumer, regionality becomes more important.

Gracie: What are the most positive things to communicate to the US consumers?

B1: You gotta communicate that the entry level wine is DRY AND BONE DRY. The producers need to stamp it on their heads.

Also, that it's some of the most versatile wine in the world with food, lots of different flavors and lots of different grapes to choose from. Wine consumption has really changed. People have the same desire for wine, food, but they can't get in restaurants or in wine stores anymore. There is a change that's happening and the only other time this happens is when women are expecting. They are the most marketed people, ever. They change their brand loyalty and consumption habits more than any other consumer, and that's proven. Now every wine consumer in the world is an expecting

mother. there is an opportunity to change buying habits and brand loyalties. People are cooking at home, and maybe they can't get their usual wines. But the regions have to do a good job of getting the wines out there. I think one of the best ways to do that is to travel to get the word out, but that's not really possible at this moment.

Also, Alsace wines are a *fraction* of the price with the same history, it's not like someone in Napa that's been making wine for 4 years can sell a 500\$ bottle of wine, these producers have 100s and 100s years of history. And Alsace has the history and does it cheaper.

Then Dry or off-dry. They have to figure out how to communicate the profile of the wine on the bottle. All the grand crus., I respect that, and that they are different from one producer to another. But on their bottles, there has GOT to be a sweetness scale. What has prevented them from doing it?

It's like they. don't give a shit of growing their American market. "I sell the same 4 cases to 4 restaurants and that's it.". But the lack of foresight to put a sweetness on the bottle really baffles my mind. Why don't they wanna do it?! It's really dumb. We are going to deliberately make this product as opaque as possible to you. It's like saying "I have an opportunity to describe this a little better to you but I'm not gonna do it."

Does Chambertin sell because of the story of the monks? Does it sell because of the story that it's named from the 1300 that had the best ripening and has the best limestone? Or does it sell because XXX makes really good wine and it's delicious and people know what they are getting. It's Grand Cru Burgundy, so Lamborghini. That's why it sells. Let's go on a smaller scale. Why does the bottle of Cotes de Bordeaux sell? Because people know that it's medium to full-bodied red wine on a certain price point. Do people know about the history of the cotes? That the Dutch engineers unearthed the greatest terror? NO. NO.!!!

It's because it's a reliable wine that they can understand. It's crazy to me that they wouldn't take the steps to do it and really educate the American consumers about the versatility of the wines.

What are the alternatives? Then we can find the conversations. If you like Pinot Grigio, try Pinot Blanc from Alsace. You'd be surprised at what I could sell. You have to find the conversations. Who are you going to sell dry Rieslings too? It could be someone that drinks Sancerre. It's dry, aromatic, no oak. It's more floral and stone. and then they will try it. You just have to have this conversation and this isn't really being done on the marketing side.

Gracie: B1, thank you so much, I've really learned a lot.

B1: Please feel free to email me if you have any questions, I have all the passion in the world for Alsace. I almost feel like I want to help Alsace more than they wanna be helped.

Gracie: One last question, you say now is the time to educate?

B1: The way that wine is being marketed right now is very different than it has been in the past. And what a lot of people are doing is providing direct access to the wine producers, even really small ones, are all of a sudden on Zoom with a moderator, buyers, everyone etc.

There is not any reason that these families can't bring people into their wineries, show them around, and give people an intimate view. That's what consumers are expecting. The marketing playing field has leveled and it would be a good time to really revise the strategies. And INCLUDE FOOD!

Alsatian wine is so good with wine. Cheese, fish, anything, cooking as much as they need to.

The versatility. it's really what we need. I love history, but it's not why people sit down and open a bottle of wine.

Gracie: Ok thanks, I'm really excited to go back over my recording and to analyze all of this.

B1: Thanks for including me, enjoy Alsace!

Transcription

Interview with a Wine Director, MW, Chicago, Illinois.

Code: B2

May 17th, 2020, 35 minutes.

(Introduction)

Gracie: Could you tell me your job title and about your everyday work?

B2: Wine director for 2 restaurants in Chicago, 1 in Michelin star for fine dining and one is much more laid back.

I'm in charge of education, in charge of sommeliers on the floor, back of the house as well. Costing, purchasing, making sure we get the margins that we need. Staff and guests as well.

Gracie: Have you always been in the wine business ?

B2: I've been in Chicago for a little over two years and been in the wine business since 2006 after college, more serious for about the past 10-12 years. I started off in NYC, I was there for a couple of years working in restaurants and wine shops, mostly Italian. Then I moved to Miami for 11 years and that's where I went from being more of a novice into the business side and direction, not just being a floor sommelier, but purchasing and other things.

Gracie: How would you describe your team?

B2: Two distinct groups, at Sepia we have 450 selections of wine all over the world. Focusing on sustainability. I need the wines to be excellent and the people we support to be good people. Good people AND good wine. At Proxi, we have more of new and a younger staff, more fast paced. All women focused wine list with 40-45 selections.

I have a wine assistant at each restaurant. The wine assistant at Sepia understands the costing a bit more. At Proxi, she's in charge of ordering, signaling disturbances in the chain things like that. She also helps with education but in a smaller way. I do educational classes with both staff, and then the assistant will do the daily wine updates. The education classes are about producers in town, regions, etc.

Gracie: Is the country of origin important when you purchase/recommend wine?

B2: Yes, I try to keep a nice balance from wines from around the world at both restaurants. There are definitely some consumers from around the world that know what they want. They want French, Italian, California. But I think a large population is just looking for some sort of direction,

so having a myriad sort of choices is really important. There is a big importance on variety, but also country.

Gracie: What about the importance of region of origin when you purchase/recommend wine?

B2: Regions are also important. It's interesting. It's definitely important. I'm really used to Miami and Chicago so I'd also be interested to see what other markets are like, and I also work a lot with Alsace wines, supporting the region and wines. So you'll see people asking for Alsace. There is the Burgundy drinking, the Bordeaux drinkers, a little more classic, something they are familiar with. Which is a good entry way to seeing what they would like from anywhere else in the world. They have their regions that they are interested in, definitely.

Gracie: Does the region of origin act as a brand?

B2: Hands down. I have the conversations often. I'll use Alsace as an example, if I start talking to people about wines from that region, they don't automatically go to a producer, they go to the wines of Alsace umbrella. Those sorts of regional focused organizations all appeal to those looking for education too because they do such a great job- wines of Germany, wines of Austria, wines of Alsace, they have great educational platforms. So it's not only good for consumers but also educating staff. So yes, the wines of Alsace or Germany are more important for consumers than brands unless they are collectors and looking for specific producers. We do have a ton of collectors, but generally we have consumers that understand a bit due to that regional focus.

Gracie: What are the most important regional wine brands?

B2: Wines of Alsace, Wines of Germany, Wines of Austria, Wines of Chile are really big too. Sonoma and Napa also, outreach is popular and accessible. Those are the big ones for me.

Gracie: What about French regional brands?

B2: Burgundy is also a big one. Bordeaux. Those two are always around especially with collectors. So we've done things like galas and things. The big ones to me, Champagne too. And Alsace. The top with visibility here.

Gracie: What are your first impressions about Alsace wines? What are the characteristics?

B2: For me, the food friendly nature, especially working in restaurants, there are so many different styles. I also think they run the spectrum of really beautiful bone dry and sparkling to something with more residual sugar that we can eat with stinky cheese, there is a lot of variety, a lot of things to choose from. So it makes it fun for a sommelier or someone dealing with guests to recommend

something from this region. It's really fun. We have a section of Sepia with only Alsace, people are like what is this about?! and we are excited to talk about it.

Gracie: What about Alsace compared to or in terms of being a French wine region?

B2: I feel like there is a lot of interest with Alsace. Whereas people know about the other 3, maybe not in depth, but in Alsace it seems kind of new. It feels like Fresh. People are now like wait a minute, that's a really cool wine. Although it's an older region and has all the great history. People see it now as new. People are coming in and asking, and I didn't see that before. It's definitely been in the last couple of years.

Gracie: How does history link to branding?

B2: One of the draws is that you wanna explain the history and you wanna explain the family. Especially how rich and interesting the region of Alsace is. I'll say it like this family has been making wine for 400 years. It means something. And it's not a new place that just has a lot of money and can make wine. That gives it so much more credibility because it's done out of passion and not for a financial gain. Good idea, good packaging, and investors OK, but it doesn't have that story, and it's so much more meaningful because it comes from their heart, not because they are bored.

Gracie: Could you talk about the physical attributes of the wines of Alsace? Taste, label, bottle.

B2: The shape of the bottle is very recognizable. It's a good thing, people see it right away. There is an old school feel for the labels and I think it's beautiful, it also has that history feel to it. There are so many producers that I'm not familiar with but it also seems to have this organic feel.

Gracie: What about the info that's listed? Does it help or is it confusing?

B2: I think that it helps. I think the one thing that guests are often questioning is the sweetness levels of ripeness. I think it's important to know producer to producer and vintage to vintage to be able to explain to consumers but in general it's a lot easier to read than the German bottles for example. The varietal really helps, and I do think there are other regions that are much more difficult.

Gracie: What about the overall quality of Alsace wines?

B2: I think the quality is quite high, and there is an excellent variety. I can have a really beautiful cremant by the glass at a good price point, the value is really there. High quality but it's not expensive. But you also have the Clos St. Hune that is beautiful in that next tier. I have a friend

that collects Alsace, he is really focusing on ageing, which you can find too. I like that things are able to be consumed now and some later. You can enjoy every day without spending a ton of money.

Gracie: What about the availability?

B2: I feel like there is quite a bit of availability. I do surround myself with wine people. But if I'm walking in retail, I see Alsace on the shelf. I don't think that it's hard to find, If I wasn't in the restaurant industry, and just went to the store, wine shop, I would find something anywhere in the wine shops around town.

Gracie: What are some positive images that come to your mind when you drink or talk about Alsace wines?

B2: I'm spoiled! I've been to the actual area once so I think about that. The water going around Colmar, I think of the focus on sustainability and I've seen these beautiful vineyards that are super alive. When I'm drinking wines from Alsace you want the wine to be alive, you don't want it to come from a dead looking chemical vineyard. You want to think of one that looks delicious and I do get that image when drinking wines from Alsace.

Gracie: Do you feel a sense of attachment to the wine of Alsace?

B2: Yeah, I'm always talking about them. It's such a beautiful area and from someone studying for a long time, I think it's difficult to understand unless you've been there. I was so excited after visiting and I clearly get excited when I talk, trying to explain what I saw, trying to convey it. But it's difficult not to when you hang out together with the people that are making the wine. Everyone was super warm, very welcoming, very interested in letting you know what they are doing. Because I still have so much to learn and they were very forthcoming with info. And the younger information is so into it!

Gracie: How often do you recommend Alsace wines?

B2: Really often. I have wine by the glass at both restaurants so it gives guests the chance to try it if they want to. Tasting menus depending on the dishes because it's so versatile. People are like "what is this?!" The beautiful Rieslings and Pinot Noirs. People are buying Pinot Noirs. It's really good! It's its own. People don't equate Alsace with red, so it feels almost like a secret. Guests get excited.

Gracie: What would be a situation when you would not recommend Alsace wines?

B2: I would not if gusts are really specifically set on something else. Sometimes you can take someone that has an idea and recommend something else. But sometimes people are really in to a certain region. I don't try to take people too much out unless they are interested. I let them enjoy it and know there are people who are willing to go out of the box. You can sometimes turn people around. I just pour a taste for fun and let people try it. I don't take no for an answer much if it's going to benefit the gusts. Then people are happy and I sell more wine! I recommend Alsace a lot.

Gracie: According to your experience, what are the perceptions that US consumers have of French wine? French wine regions?

B2: They have a very strong desire to taste wine from France. Here people are very French oriented. In Miami they were maybe more South America, new world. In Chicago, the more old world, French oriented.

Gracie: And what about the perception of Alsace?

B2: In this area it's very high. I got a couple bottles for my mom and she drinks it with her friends. It can be for all people. It can reach a huge variety of people. From collectors to people like my mom who doesn't know a lot about wine.

Gracie: Can you talk a little bit about customer segments. How do you distinguish and work with Expert vs. novice?

B2: I think guests are willing to give information. I ask easy questions not to stress them out. If they give me producers or styles, then I can recommend. At Proxi, the casual place the demographic is younger. They are into something new and fresh. They drink bubbles that don't understand so we are able to let them try some fun and fresh stuff. And they feel cool because it's new. And then I think in Sepia, they are educated, but they also want to know what's new. The higher price-point wines. At Proxi it's easier and sepia is different so i have the option to have more expensive, more collector wines.

Gracie: Should there be different offers, marketing, brands for the different customer segments?

B2: I feel like all of the brands will have their tiers. They present it where they can cover a bit of ground. Where it's yellow label T vs. Frederic Emile. There are a variety of things and they do a good job of that, you can reach a large number of consumers with the entry level wines, and then you can pepper in some of the higher ends once they gain some more trust.

Gracie: Is there a difference in the importance of the region of origin for novice and expert consumers?

B2: When you go from the old world to the new world and then down to grand cru, the more educated consumers find more details to be important while the novice consumers try to focus a bit, but not that much. I like wines from Alsace in general. The details are about someone who is really into it, and also people that are spending more money. So that's related.

Gracie: What are the most important things to communicate about the wines of Alsace in the US market?

B2: Food friendliness, versatility is one of the easiest for me to sell wines of Alsace in the restaurant. History is huge. Sometimes people don't even know where it is. Vosges black forest, all the sun. It's also fun to explain.

Gracie: And would you use these with both expert and novice consumers ?

B2: Absolutely. It's across the board.

Gracie: Is there anything that the wines of Alsace can do differently in the US market?

B2: I mean, the producers, I would love to have more of them visit. The dinners go really well. To just have presence and visibility is awesome. I've seen more and more on Instagram, it is also important from a social media standpoint. When you see it really creates loyalty? Some sort of visibility that will aid in increasing sales and the customer base that is loyal to that brand. Just interaction is cool. If we can do that virtually with engagement that way we can do it can translate into sales.

Gracie: That's great, Thank you so much.

B2: Don't hesitate to email me if you need anything else. Thanks Gracie.

Gracie: Thank you!

Transcription

Interview a Founder & CEO, Strasbourg, France.

Code: B3

May 20th, 2020, 1 hour.

(Introduction)

B3: I'm not an expert in Alsace but in the American market.

Gracie: That's perfect!

Can you tell me about your job? a typical day at work?

B3: I am independent, my company is only me. I am a broker, to export French wine to the US. Why French? I am French, why the US? Because I lived and worked there for 7 years. I'm not from Alsace, but from Burgundy, Chablis. I have a farming background and viticulture on my grandmother's side. I had the opportunity to have an internship at a winery in California and then I went to New York and stayed there. It was like the American dream.

Being French working in wine helps a lot, it's easy, being French I already have the credibility. I was really fine and I worked in all industries within the wine industry. I worked in the restaurants, I was a sommelier, used to work in some stores, and importers. I could manage all aspects of the wine industry. I used to taste wine on panels for wine magazines. When I came back to France I tried to work with the US market, so I made my own company, made my contacts, and little by little created a network by selling wine. I'm sourcing wine for different importers because I know the French part well and the American part well. There are not many people that do that. I can be comfortable in downtown LA and I can be very comfortable with a farmer, I have both aspects.

The US is not one country and it's not easy for people to understand the market. It's a great market for wine and spirits because all people are from Europe, wine is part of the culture and the history. Italian wine is popular because there are so many Italian immigrants. The US is young and not young at the same time. City to city is not the same, state to state. Metro to the countryside. North to south to middle. There is a new generation. In the US you can move around a lot. You need people to understand - the young people in hospitality. You cannot open a restaurant in New York but you go back to your roots. Fresh tomatoes and basic wine, then more texture, and so on. You bring more culture to the consumer and they are looking for it. American consumers are curious, they are not afraid to taste and they like it. The story is changing but that's what is happening. The big cities are difficult so people are moving. For the wine it's the same thing, you follow the culture, you share what you used to learn and people love it.

The social part of the wine is important, I have to listen to what the market wants. The French people don't understand that there are other countries. Italy, Spain, domestic are competitions,

Chile, Australia, those are the competitions, but American consumers work by style and price. No way do they ask, no way do they say “ I want a cote du Rhone. “

Gracie: So the region and country of origin aren't important?

B3: Yes and no. Both. We need to understand and know wine because we are in the industry. Chablis for example, people don't know that it's a Chardonnay grape, Sancerre, people don't know that it's a Sauvignon blanc, “I don't like SB but I love Sancerre.

It's a mixture of appellation and branding. The appellation is a common brand: Sancerre but there are 200 different Sancerre's and you get lost. For the region, you cannot ask the consumer to have a knowledge of wine. It's like music, you might recognize a song but you don't know everything. What is dry for you and is not for me.

What's important in the US market is the service. People love to go to a wine shop. It's like a sommelier in a restaurant. You know what the clients like and you can go from this cluster. It's difficult to give an idea to consumers when they have no idea. And then they don't even have the same taste. And then, with Chablis and Sancerre there is only one grape.

Not at all the same for Alsace. When you are amateur you can know, but when you are not an amateur you are completely lost. Selling Alsace wines is really difficult, if I don't put the wine in the glass I won't sell it. It's true. I don't export Alsace. I used to have more but now barely 1.

When we talk about Riesling, there are 50 crus, dry or not dry, GW is interesting but not everyone likes it. The Sylvaner is lost. Then there are all the estates and areas. It's not the strongest part of Alsace. Then there is the Cremant. And there is not the latest vintage in the US, but Alsace wine is good ageing.

Promotion should show all the vintages, and they would beat anything. The best white wines in the world after 20 years are Alsace. Because of the acidity. I already told that to the CIVA but there is nothing to sell. But when you do a promotion, do you sell the wine or the region?

Romanee Conti? Who actually drinks it? We know expensive cars but who drives them?

You need to create a buzz and the buzz comes from the top. Burgundy works because we talk about a really expensive burgundy but no one really drinks it. Romanee conti - we see it but we never drink it. The buzz comes from the top, not the base, it's a pyramid.

Gracie: how and why do you choose the wines that you source?

B3: Because I know I'm going to sell it. I target the importer and I look at their portfolio. There is already wine, I have more room with young companies. But I check the wine of the portfolio and the sales people that will sell the wine because the importers compete against one another.

So you need to find what works in their portfolio. And after you need to find the channel. The three tier where you work with the importer who is a distributor then and off trade.

The small importers could take 10 years, exclusivity is important and you have to be careful, you have to be careful and find the good people and consistent clients who understand the market.

Gracie: What do you associate with Alsace?

B3: Not easy. There are not many images in Alsace in the US. Alsace is more interesting to female sommeliers; the girls go to Frankfurt to German wine to Alsace. My male contacts never come to Alsace. Paris Rhone Burgundy. There is German Riesling, but we don't say French Riesling, we talk about Alsace Riesling. In France it's already in the region. And that is a problem because Alsace is not a big one, not at all.

Gracie: Should Alsace market themselves more as a French wine?

B3: I don't know, because they are closer to Germany and Austria than France.

Gracie: And the bottle?

B3: The need to keep it, it's fine. If they change it they will lose identity.

The problem is competing with Germany and Austria, not France. But Alsace people think they are closer to Burgundy than Germany. Because of the history after '45, there is really a cut between France and Germany. We really see the difference in feelings. It's strange. Alsace producers are proud to be French but they also use their German qualities.

The Alsatian producers disagree on how to do promotion.

For me, it's using the best of the best - The 20-year-old Riesling, like Spurrier's best wine in the world. Take someone from the UK, neutral and do that. Alsace would win or be close. That's the buzz. Before the 1976 tasting no one knew about California. We have to be awake and Alsace needs a kick off because they are dying. They are dying because their economic plan doesn't work anymore. People used to go to the farm and drink and buy wine. And then they sell it at the same price for export. It's all wrong.

The price is low anyways, so it's hard to sell a Riesling at 15 euros. In France, the super markets sell Grand Cru for 10 euros which makes no sense. It's tradition, but very few sell terroir.

The estate names are what sells. But they don't sell a lot of wine. They sell glass at 10\$ but you really have to push.

You have to match with the people that you work with. Alsace is in the Midwest might have more background because of the culture. In Indiana, there were all the German farmers. In Texas and Idaho the Germans keep this style of wine.

Mondavi planted Riesling because it's what they used to do. Alsace came strong after WW2 but now it's decreasing. We know Germany because of Riesling and Austria because of this. But in Alsace... nothing.

Gracie: So should they promote a main product?

B3: Yeah, like Edzelwicker which is better quality now, so why not have an “Alsace white”, like Burgundy white, Bordeaux white. This could help somehow but people don’t agree on what to do, and then they put the wrong price. Then you have the big cooperatives and the small estates, but that has everything so you only have 3 pallets to export, and that’s a problem.

Because it’s what’s planted, you can’t change. It’s very cultural and historic.

Alsace is dying because everyone was working for free, the whole family, you could come in and taste for free anytime, but now that doesn’t exist anymore. People want to get paid and it’s a new business. Consumers don’t just come anymore. Alsace doesn’t sell well outside of Alsace. Other places in France it’s only sold when choucroute is on promotion. It’s true. And then it’s not expensive, and then people think that this is Alsace.

The amateurs that know Alsace are only 2% of the market.

Gracie: Do consumers care about history?

B3: History is important because it is a story. There is a story we can tell. You can talk about the monk and the church. In California the story is not the same, you don’t talk about history.

History is important but you have to make a story. Even because you make wine for 300 years - that is credibility, it has never ended. The wine is still there, it’s a story, the wine is good, people are still buying it. And from history, you tell the story.

Gracie: For the different parts of the distribution chain, how can you talk about the different segments? Global message or different marketing strategies?

B3: US is not one market. It’s so complicated. The bigger difference would be metro cities and the countryside. When you are in the metro you have a big choice, and people have disruptive marketing needs, organic, natural the specific farming type. Dryer and dryer styles.

After, you cannot tell consumers that they are uneducated - you have to be careful and be respectful.

Alsace works by grapes. Burgundy is known by regions. For example, no one knows that it’s Chardonnay and if they do it sometimes doesn’t help because Chablis is not the traditional Chardonnay style.

In Alsace you have Riesling, but also New Zealand and Australia. The same grape at 4 different wines. I don’t know how to communicate.

Style, story, and price-point is important. You have then 10-20\$ to find a way to be there. There is the cremant and the Pinot Blanc and the Riesling Tradition. Anything else you are outside of that and to the higher level. So maybe it’s not the same communication. It’s not easy. You need to

train the people in the industry. It's one of the key factors because Americans love to ask for advice. The era of Parker is ending. People have different tastes.

The key factor is training the industry. The people that work is really passionate. You don't make much money so you are really passionate. It's very hard to make a living, especially in the big city. In SF it's hard to find salespeople. The restaurant's rent is so high so you can't pay the employees. Wine industry is made of passionate young knowledgeable people, but who need to taste more and more. Tasting is really important.

But Alsace and the US are different. When you buy the bottle you buy what's in the bottle but also a story and an image, but in Alsace if you have never been there, it's very hard to keep.

For example Provence, people see the Riviera, they know Provence rose.

If you go after 20\$ in the US it's not the same game. Alsace, I don't know where they are. Is Alsace only cremant now? But cremant is made from not the best grapes, so it fights with its own politics.

In Illinois, they have a better response for Chicago. In NY, it's hard because there is so much wine. In Illinois because of the history of German farmers and maybe the style.

Should Alsace work more in Chicago? Maybe, you have to put your money in where it works.

New York is too big. People buy luxe, organic, price, maybe not a region except burgundy because it's luxe. There is a buzz about Burgundy because it's fancy, even more than Bordeaux. Then Italian Barolo, Spain doesn't have much of a story and then many regions. Italy has Tuscany and Piedmont, then Prosecco and Chianti from Tuscany.

Nobody knows anything else, but they do know Italian wines in general. It's also linked to history and their roots. Italian cooking is everywhere in the US, French not so much. NY there is Asian cuisine everywhere. But in Chicago maybe it's more French, but then Alsace cuisine is not French.

Gracie: And Alsace and Asian cuisine?

B3: Yes but also German and Australia.

Alsace is not a light wine, and the best wine takes time to be enjoyable. It's for the elite people. In NY, the sommeliers don't sell it to their customers but to their sommelier friends.

This Jean-Georges restaurant which is from Alsace has 1 page of Alsace and 10 pages of white burgundy's and 10 pages of red Burgundy then Bordeaux, and then 1 page from each of the other regions of the world. It's a sign, and It's a shame. I don't know what to say.

I sell what I can sell what people want. And it's not Alsace. There is so much effort to sell Alsace wines. My friends buy it from me, but they don't reorder. It's an extra thing. It's really hard to sell. Other dry styles, there are things much less expensive.

The numbers show that Cremant is there. It works. It's the same style, not the difference between a Pinot Blanc, Pinot Gris, and Riesling.

For the label, you see the label of a wine that you had liked before but OH it's a vendanges tardive. Oops. not what you want. Why is it sweet this time? It's a problem, we don't know. The little off-dry and dry sign on the back that they are talking about. Alsace is really in a funk. Cremant is good but we can't push the cremant because of all the grand crus. And Riesling? Because the style changes every year.

Maybe an idea is to promote by the top even if there is no wine to sell. Then it starts the image. Alsace is not huge for young vintages. But also selling an upscale cremant is hard, you have to beat and leave the world of Prosecco. I listen to my consumers, but nobody asks for Alsace, even though I live in Strasbourg. Alsace is not at all mandatory.

COVID is just at the wrong time of the year. Before COVID there were the tariffs which can be a huge thing. And then restaurants are shut down. And the primeur (That need to be had quickly) these wines are really hurt with the tariffs and the COVID. Hopefully, this crisis will end and by July it will be better.

Gracie: Thank you so much for taking the time to talk with me

B3: My pleasure.

Transcription

Interview with a Distinguished Professor of Wine and Management & Consultant, MW, Sonoma County, California.

May 21st, 2020, 42 minutes.

(Introduction)

Gracie: Could you tell me about your professional life?

B4: My title is distinguished professor of wine and management. The full-time job is to teach in the wine and general MBA program at Sonoma State University. And on the side, I consult, I do workshops and research for wineries or associations and I do a lot of international wine judging around the world.

Gracie: How long have you been in the wine industry?

B4: 20 years.

Gracie: In your experience, when you are judging or teaching, how important is the country of origin?

B4: It's very important because wine always comes from a place, so even the most basic consumer who is drinking wine just to drink wine, even if it's a state like California or a country like France, there is a sense of place, "where is this beverage from?"

Gracie: And what about the region of origin?

B4: That is for a more advanced consumer, a more involved consumer is interested in the specificity. A lot of research shows this too. When consumers go buy a bottle of wine the first thing they look for is the price, and it depends on the country, but it's price and brand first, and the other thing they look for in the US is the varietal. And then they look for the place. It's about 4th-5th. But it definitely depends on the country.

But the highly involved wine consumers care deeply about the region, and the even more knowledgeable consumer goes down to the AVA. The AVA is only for a small percentage of consumers. Especially in a place like Burgundy they might be able to figure out the villages but the premier crus and grand crus are very confusing. Even in Napa, there are 17 AVAs, very few consumers know all of these, or even 1-2 of them. That level of specificity is a challenge for consumers around the world. So it's better to brand a larger region, for example, Alsace. People know Alsace, but they don't know all the Grand Crus and the grapes of Alsace. In fact, the grapes

have been a challenge for a lot of people, because you know there are a lot of them. White is predominant, but there is also red and a lot of sparkling, crémant, that people don't know about.

Gracie: Can the region of origin be a brand itself?

B4: Oh yes.

Provence has done a really good job in the US. About 10 years ago very few people had heard of Provence wines and now it's extremely popular in the US. People go into stores and ask for Provence. They did a really good job at it.

Gracie: What about some other important regional brands in the US?

B4: Bordeaux. Bordeaux is really well-known. Oregon has also done a really good job. They don't focus on the AVAs but Oregon as a whole with a focus on Pinot Noir. Being simple is very effective, getting too complicated with the general consumers doesn't work. You can do it with the more knowledgeable and the more involved but the general buying consumer needs to have a region and one wine that goes with it. Everybody thinks of Riesling belonging to Germany, they don't think of Riesling and Alsace together. Alsace hasn't done a great job in my opinion of marketing themselves to the general consumer, they have done a great job of the more involved consumers, but not general. In France everyone knows Alsace, and the consumers understand the different varieties, Muscat, Pinot Gris, in France and Europe they do, but not in the US. They don't know what Alsace does.

Gracie: What are some associations that come to your mind when you think of Alsace wines?

B4: I think of the food of Alsace. I think of beauty. I think Alsace is the most beautiful wine region of France. You fall in love with these fairy tale villages. The storks and the flowers, oh my gosh it's so beautiful. Compared to Alsace, Burgundy looks gray. It's just not as beautiful. Alsace had incredible food. Gourmands think about the foie gras and the tarte flambee. It's something that Alsace hasn't capitalized on enough, it's something that could differentiate them. You know regional branding is differentiation yourself, capitalizing on what you have. This is unique and shows what's different in the minds of consumers. Alsace also has the Christmas fairs, it's very popular and pretty well known. Things like that.

That's a challenge for Alsace. They don't have an icon product, a significant grape variety. If you don't have an icon product, you will never be a great wine region. They are respected but going from good to great, you need to have this icon product.

I think in my opinion it's the dry Riesling. If they were to emphasize this. Americans turn up their nose at German Riesling, people always think of German Riesling as sweet. That it's too sweet. So if someone were to say we specialize in dry Riesling, I think that that could really be a direction

to go. And also the crémant, the bubble that could be a good way to go. Alsace needs to agree on an icon product and they have not done that yet. The winegrowers must come together and have a collaboration. All the great wine regions come together, they make an economic product. Then Bordeaux and the Bordeaux blend, of course they have Sauternes and other products but the red blend is their iconic product, so it can be a blend.

Burgundy can be confusing to Americans because they don't know it's Chardonnay and Pinot Noir. Even professionals don't know that Burgundy white is Chardonnay. So I don't think that has done a good job of being clear to the general consumers but I don't think that Burgundy cares. Because they produce so little wines, and they are producing a luxury product because of the scarcity. They are in a different situation. Some of them do care, but they don't make enough wine and they run out every day.

Even if people don't drink it, they know it. They think Burgundy - expensive. Burgundy itself as a region is a luxury brand. You have name brands and regional brands. Napa is also becoming a luxury brand.

Gracie: Just to be sure, an iconic product can't be just white wines in general?

B4: Oh no that's way too broad. And when I talk to regional wine associations, they think they can only do one thing, of course, they can make other wine but focus on one that everyone is proud of and that has actually gotten some high scores from the critics. You know that's the wine that is coveted. If I look at Alsace, it's dry Grand Cru Riesling. The really good ones. Of course you still have the Pinot Gris and Muscat, but having something that you are really proud of and that everyone does relatively well. It's difficult. Getting all the wineries to agree is very challenging. All as long as having a consensus in the association. It has to do with branding and marketing. When Alsace goes on the road it needs to be a consistent message on this icon product. Then people will want to come and taste other things.

Gracie: Is history important in regional branding?

B4: Yes, there needs to be some sort of history and heritage. It's not as critical to all consumers, but it helps. We've been growing wine here since the 1200s. It's especially important to the Europeans and the Asians. It's not as important to the New World. These countries are younger. They aren't as concerned with it. But it is a story to tell. People would say though, don't bore me with this, give me the wine. You can mention it, but don't bore me :)

Gracie: How would you describe the overall quality of Alsace wines?

B4: I love Alsatian wines and most of the people I hang out with do. You know the big names and people who play the whole spectrum. The one nice thing for Alsace is that it has a level of respect for the quality of the wines. It's not considered cheap, and if your wines are considered cheap,

that's a really hard place to start. For example Languedoc, Chile, Argentina to some extent, parts of Spain. It's hard then to bring them up.

Alsace, fortunately, is not perceived as cheap. It's almost perceived in the middle. People think you can get a really nice wine from Alsace and you don't have to break the bank, around \$20. It doesn't cost that much. Below 10\$ is considered less expensive. And then in a restaurant, if you can find it on a menu - only the really nice restaurants will have it, then it's often, it's not inexpensive nor terribly expensive.

Gracie: Can you expand a little more on the availability of Alsace wines in the US?

B4: I've only seen Alsace, even in California, you find Alsace in fine-dining establishments and nice wine shops. You won't find Alsace in Target, I've only seen it a couple of times in Costco, the crémant.

But Americans don't know about crémant. They know Champagne but they don't know crémant. They don't know what it's gonna taste like. So if you buy a crémant de Loire that could be a bit funky, Limoux, they will take this unpleasant experience and put it on all crémants. So they don't know that crémant d'Alsace has different grapes. crémants are not very expensive, so people will buy them

Gracie: What do you think about the Alsace wine bottle?

B4: I think it's absolutely beautiful and it helps to differentiate Alsace. I do wonder, you may want to interview some wine shops or collectors, it is sometimes a challenge to put it on a shelf unless you have a spot for those types of bottles. I do know some people that forget how the bottles fit it.

Gracie: In your experience, what do the US consumers think of French wine in general?

B4: Americans have a love-hate relationship with France. Like family members. We have had so much history together: the wars, the statue of liberty. There is a back and forth. Sometimes Americans think it's snobby but then love the fashion and the perfume, even jealousy of this. People immediately boycott French wine but then people are back in love. Right now, people are in love with French Rose, mainly Provence. And then Champagne. They have never stopped loving Champagne. But Champagne sales have fallen during the coronavirus. And after that, Bordeaux to some extent and Burgundy for the collectors and Alsace for the people who know about it.

Gracie: So what can Alsace wines do differently in the US market?

B4: So it's focusing on the iconic product, and then traveling is really important. Coming into the major cities and doing tastings with the trade and consumers. Doing both is really important.

Sometimes the French associations only do trade tastings and that's not gonna work. So you need to hit all these major cities but that takes money. But Provence did this. They went on a tour and set up this big pink thing and the rose and the new emblem and they were so well put together and they were all excited. People were fascinated by it.

For a while Portugal did it, the Duero Boys on a tour of America. The sons of the winemakers and they went around and did these presentations. Everybody was so excited about it. They were cute. What they did wrong was that they never followed up. This just did the one tour and we never heard of them again. That was a time when there wasn't a lot of social media, and that would have been a good thing to do, to keep connecting.

So if Alsace could do something like that, get their iconic product, their color, I do always think of yellow, and a symbol that goes along with you. And they go around and they meet with trade. a cheaper way to do it is to fly the trade into the region and wine and dine them. You let them see all the new brands and logo and color and enthusiasm and you can hope that it works. It does work but it's more one on one. A somm coming in and saying Oh you should try this Alsace instead of this white Burgundy. It's requiring someone to actually do that. Just focusing on the trade is not going to touch the consumers. But does Alsace produce enough wine? What is their goal? How much do they really wanna sell in the US market? Do they really wanna be in the grocery stores or do they only wanna be in fine dining and wine shops? If that's it, just focus on the trade but if you want the everyday consumer to know about the wine you have to produce enough.

It still doesn't mean that Alsace shouldn't have an iconic product and an image. That's why Provence has a good story because everything was really clear. With the grapes and the pink.

I really wanna see Alsace succeed. The emergence of a leader is really important. Someone that can really encourage the leaders to work together. Or like Mondovi. Or the elders in Oregon who come together and are well respected and they are driving Oregon as a region and they have done phenomenally. Well. It's not that easy to do but you have to know what you want to accomplish. Where do they want their wines to be placed? So if they just want to focus on getting crémant into the grocery stores that's a whole other story. And Americans love bubbles, look at Prosecco. It's booming even with COVID. Do something with the label so that crémant d'Alsace doesn't get mixed up with the other regions. Americans don't know what crémant is. Something around that too would help. You could have a focus on that, Pushing that into the American market. And having every single bottle have the logo of Alsace and come up with a slogan. The something bubble. I was surprised that Ice crémant hasn't made it into the US yet. People in the US have never heard of it. There is a lot that you can do in Alsace but it takes time, patience, and collaboration. A way to start is just to create a goal. How much do we want to be able to ship and sell and what do we want to focus on?

Gracie: Thank you so much, everything is much clearer.

B4: It's a great topic. You should interview Steve Charters and another professor in New Zealand. When do you finish?

Gracie: June for my thesis, then September for my internship.

B4: You could become a regional wine tourism manager in the US! Good luck with everything.

Transcription

Interview a Founder, Import Company & Wine Company, New York City.

Code: B5

May 22nd, 2020, 34 minutes.

(Introduction)

Gracie: Could you tell me about your job title and your everyday work?

B5: I run my own business, I'm the founder and CEO of an import company, Stonewaites, but that's not really important because it's not the consumer-facing company. First and foremost I'm an importer and I have a federal license to import into the US. And I have a brand. It's similar to a *negociant* brand but I put the grower name on every bottle. It's not a private label. I feel they don't get a lot of respect in the fine dining and nice wine shop world, so I wanted to create something that they would respect and also use the concept of a brand. I was trying to bridge the gap of brands in what we in the fine wine world like, the natural and small producer wine. Wines that have a lot of stories that come from real people, and the terroirs. I created an idea that would set me apart from anything else that is out there. My idea is to use the appellation system. I'm working on a Navarre, on my passenger seat I have a Douro. I just love letting the consumer explore them because of all the crazy labeling, it's so confusing. Europeans make great wine, but bad labels. They have a rough time with branding and a look that is chic. What speaks to Americans as luxury is not what Europeans are doing. I'm gonna make a luxury looking, elegant bottle at \$11.99\$. The original branding of these companies is bad. And everything is confusing and in America we like simplicity. I run my business, I have a huge resume in the industry, I know how it works. I really do everything, accounting, everything aspect.

Gracie: Is this country and region of origin important when you import and sell wines?

B5: Yeah, it's critical. It determines the quality and the taste. The factors that go into my picking the wine are: the quality, the story, the family, is it grown with sustainability in mind, does it have authenticity. I don't like wine with oak chips, I don't like industrialized wine and I think they are easy to identify. The price of course, and are they willing to work with me. All of these things go into how I choose the wines. And of course the region, you know the appellation system. Within a region like Bordeaux there are like 60 appellations. It's a whole system. That's what my whole project is about, the appellation system. It's critical for me. If I see one more private label Chardonnay from Languedoc, blah. But a lot of Americans really don't understand the European system. I put the winegrower's name, instead of Chardonnay and private label. I put everything down, so people feel like they are drinking something right from the source.

Gracie: What are the most important regional brands according to you that are exported into the US? Who does a good job in the US?

B5: I think that Provence Rose is a big deal. And then all the big brands, Sauvignon Blanc Cloudy Bay from New Zealand. That's a good example of a private label that sources fruit. You don't know where exactly it came from, no terroir around the wine. Of course California is a really big

deal in the American market. One of my favorites is Beaujolais at a good price range. They have a really nice package that labels according to where it comes from. The place it comes from labeling is the opposite of the varietal. You know there are a lot of different types of Chardonnay. It's like calling all cheese that comes from a cow, cow milk cheese. Chardonnay can be really different according to where it's from.

Gracie: Are you familiar with the wine region of Alsace?

B5: I am, I love them.

Gracie: What are some associations that come to your mind?

B5: Riesling with Litchi fruit. Pinot Gris. I know about three domains really well. And then, of course, there are tons of other ones. Alsace is a little confusing for me. And it's hard for Americans. There's the bottle, I think it scares them. I don't know, I don't think it has a broad appeal. It's definitely appealing to collectors though. And then the Pinot Gris and Riesling, and that everything is Germanic. All these different foods. It's definitely a different version of French wine.

Gracie: How would you describe the overall quality?

B5: There can be cheap stuff, I think you can find Gewurztraminer at \$8.99, and then there's really really high-end Grand Cru. It's all over the place. I think you need to know the grower. I don't know if it's a wine that does really well in the mass market unless it's cheap GW and I'd hate to see Alsace sacrifice its traditions, but if it wants to sell in the mass market maybe it needs to change a little bit with their packaging and their promotions. I don't drink it that much, I don't see it that much. It's usually pretty expensive, I don't have \$45 to spend on a Riesling, that's ridiculous. I definitely think the packaging is a problem. The tall bottle is a problem. I just don't think this shape is attractive to the mass market. Vinifying things a bit dryer might be better for the broader market. Packaging tends to be Germanic and it doesn't appeal here. I don't think the superfine wines need to change, but if Alsace wants to be a player in the big brand world, they should change the bottle size. But the problem with Alsace is that it's all varietal. I'll need to look up the AOCs. The classification system is confusing to me.

Gracie: What about the history of the region? Should you use that as a communication point in the US market?

B5: Definitely. There can be so much more marketing around the history of a place. On the Europeans wines so much more, it should be front and center on the packaging. Maybe I'll do an Alsace brand. For me sustainability, price point, volume, and willingness to work with me, and of course to change the packaging.

Gracie: Could you tell me a little bit about the different consumer segments in the US? The more involved and the less involved?

B5: The more involved is usually an urban, educated person, curious person who travels, lives in the city center, and eats in restaurants. They have a relationship with their wine store and want to

discover new things. Their wine merchant isn't a big box store, it's a little wine shop. Their weekends consist of opening different bottles with friends and exploring different tastes. Traveling for wine to Italy and France. I think people that are upper-middle-class to wealthy because it takes that level of education to that level of curiosity. Educated and curious, but I don't think there is necessarily an age for that. I think the upper 20s to 70s for that type of behavior.

I think the less engaged are people who find a brand that they like and they hang on to it for a really long time. Price is really important to them. I think they are into the standard Sauvignon Blanc. I think wine confuses them, even though they like it, they don't get involved with where it comes from, it really doesn't matter. They are from any age group. Age, it's a hard one because everybody drinks and there can be any education for any age. The less-educated consumer doesn't care where it comes from, might like the packaging, and definitely cares about the price point. They really don't care. The big brands, they don't care what Pinot Grigio is and where it comes from. To the low engagement consumer, brand is important, something that sticks out. That's why for European wines, they collect dust on the shelf because their branding doesn't pop. And then when it does pop, it looks stupid. The British talk about French tacky.

Gracie: What does that mean to you, French tacky?

B5: I just think the label should be cool, chic, fresh, young, hip, pop. My consumers are of high touch. We had a joke about Wine Paris - somebody can make a fortune by setting up a graphic design shop there. It's confusing, the fonts are bad, it's tacky. Mega simplicity is what I went for one of my labels. Clean, looks expensive, it checks a lot of boxes for a lot of people.

Gracie: Out of the associations we talked about with Alsace, what are the most important to communicate to US consumers in your opinion? Besides changing the labels.

B5: It's hard to say because I'm a geek. The terroir should definitely be defined. What does it taste like, the minerals, so it should speak to the elegance of Alsace. The fact that the wine can be a bit sweeter. For example, where Amoroni comes from, the wine is really sweet. They pivoted and made cheaper wines and turned up the sweetness, and the consumers loved the red wines with a lot of sweetness. The sweetness should be communicated. The Italians really know how to brand better than French. They have a much better handle of branding. They turned Moscato into one of the top 10 selling wines in America. The French and German sit on their laurels too much. The Italians work really hard. Someone just approached me with a wine that they love from this certain region, this grower is making incredible Sauvignon Blanc. And I went on the website and it was so tacky! It's really important, I love great wines because I find these wines that are so good but growers that have no concept of packaging and I just redo that. I judge them, and they need good judging. If everything looks run of the mill and it's not exciting, no one will choose it. They may come across it. My label designer is an art director for a publishing company. She's super good. It's a really good project for both of us.

Alsace should definitely keep their small growers, but is that what makes their region successful?

Thesis Reporting Sheet (Fiche Mémoire)



Suivi du mémoire de Master

Nom de l'étudiant : **BOLAND** Prénom : **Gracie**

Tuteur universitaire : **Nada Maaninou**

Compléter de 1 à 5 (1 : Pas commencé à 5 : Finalisé) ou NA : non applicable.

Préciser la date de chacun des entretiens où les recommandations ont été réalisées par le tuteur universitaire.

	Etat d'avancement
I. Missions- Objectifs-Thème	<p>17 décembre : premier RDV, lire sur wine brand equity, wine brand expérience, wine brand image, wine region brand image, pour décider d'un cadre théorique marketing (2)</p> <p>5 février : choix de thème => régional wine brand equity (5)</p>
II. Problématique- Question de recherche	<p>5 février : avancement de la revue de la littérature et questions de recherche après d'avoir lu et réfléchi (3.5)</p> <p>4 mars : définition précise des objectifs de la recherche (4.5), discussion des pré-soutenances</p> <p>5 juin : changements finaux (style de proposition) des propositions de recherche (5)</p>
III. Méthodologie- Modèle ou design de la recherche	<p>19 mars : avancement de 1 guide d'entretien quali (2)</p> <p>7 avril : validation de 1 guide d'entretien quali(5)</p> <p>17 avril : 2 guides d'entretiens quali (5)</p> <p>1 mai : avancement du questionnaire quanti (1)</p> <p>3 mai : avancement du questionnaire quanti (4) (terminer par échanges de courriel) (5)</p>

IV. Revue de la littérature- Références académiques	5 février : avancement de la revue de la littérature et questions de recherche après d'avoir lu et réfléchi (3.5) 24 avril : Revoir les hypothèses, soigner la revue de la littérature (4.5)
V. Plan	5 février : Plan revu de la littérature (4.) 5 juin : Questions générales, plan des analyses et résultats (5) 19 juin : dernier rdv prévu (5)
VI. Collecte de données- Analyse	22 mai : Analyse des données quanti (2.5) 29 mai : Présentation de la méthodologie et des résultats (5) 10 juin : Analyses des données quanti (5)

Commentaires et recommandations additionnels

- J'ai mis certaines dates de RDV pour plusieurs thèmes, car nous avons discuté des fois de plusieurs éléments pendant nos appels téléphoniques
- Nada a été très pédagogue et encourageante tout au cours des processus du mémoire. Elle est très réactive et m'a vraiment guidée pendant mon travail. J'ai été suivie régulièrement, ce qui m'a aidée à rester sur les rails et à bien suivre les méthodes adaptées, en particulier pour les méthodes et les analyses des données pour mes 3 études et 4 sections des résultats. Je me suis également appuyée sur l'aide de Coralie Haller et de Dobromir Stoyonov, pour des précisions sur certaines analyses.

Signature du tuteur universitaire

Signature de l'étudiant

Nada Maaninou


Maya Grace Bland
