

# **Sustainable Wine Consumption: Exploring Consumer Behaviour and Marketing Strategies for Natural and Gourmet Wines in Portugal**

**Beatriz Gaspar<sup>1</sup>, Sara Sousa<sup>2</sup>, Ana Saltão<sup>3</sup>, Ana Alves<sup>4</sup>, Inês Ribeiro<sup>5</sup>,**

<sup>1</sup>Polytechnic University of Coimbra, Coimbra Business School|ISCAC & CERNAS  
Bencanta, 3045-601 Coimbra, Portugal  
[a2020134646@alumni.iscac.pt](mailto:a2020134646@alumni.iscac.pt);

<sup>2</sup>Polytechnic University of Coimbra, Coimbra Business School|ISCAC & CERNAS  
Bencanta, 3045-601 Coimbra, Portugal  
[ssousa@iscac.pt](mailto:ssousa@iscac.pt);

<sup>3</sup>Polytechnic University of Coimbra, Coimbra Business School|ISCAC  
Bencanta, 3045-601 Coimbra, Portugal  
[a2020134369@alumni.iscac.pt](mailto:a2020134369@alumni.iscac.pt);

<sup>4</sup>Polytechnic University of Coimbra, Coimbra Business School|ISCAC  
Bencanta, 3045-601 Coimbra, Portugal  
[a2023124312@alumni.iscac.pt](mailto:a2023124312@alumni.iscac.pt);

<sup>5</sup>Polytechnic University of Coimbra, Coimbra Business School|ISCAC  
Bencanta, 3045-601 Coimbra, Portugal  
[iscac15469@alumni.iscac.pt](mailto:iscac15469@alumni.iscac.pt);

## **Extended Abstract**

This study investigates consumer behaviour towards natural and gourmet wines in Portugal, with a particular emphasis on the role of sustainability in influencing purchasing decisions, perceptions of quality, and product differentiation. The objective is to explore how sustainable attributes impact consumer preferences and how marketing strategies can promote these wine categories better. This research's scope encompasses natural wines, which emphasise minimal intervention and terroir authenticity, and gourmet wines, which focus on high-quality production and exceptional sensory profiles [1], [2], [3], [4]. These production approaches reflect different winemaking philosophies and make a unique contribution to the sustainability narrative, emphasising both environmentally responsible farming and quality craftsmanship.

To this end, a survey was conducted among Portuguese wine consumers, with 200 valid responses collected through an online questionnaire. The survey targeted a diverse demographic, capturing variables such as age, occupation, wine knowledge, and consumption habits. It also assessed consumer knowledge, perception, and behaviour towards natural and gourmet wines, focusing on sustainability elements such as eco-friendly production, minimal additives, and origin. The survey participants were invited to rate the importance of sustainable certifications, the environmental impact of wine production, and the influence of marketing strategies on their purchasing decisions.

The findings indicate a growing consumer interest in wines that align with personal values, particularly concerning quality, origin, and environmental responsibility. The majority preferred wines that reflect authentic production methods and minimal ecological impact. Sustainability was identified as a significant factor influencing purchasing behaviour, with a preference for wines perceived as genuine and ethically produced [5], [6]. The study identified key motivators for this shift, including support for local producers, selection of wines with organic certifications, and prioritisation of products with reduced environmental impact. The data also highlighted variations based on demographic factors, such as younger consumers being more influenced by sustainability claims than older demographics.

However, the results also reveal a significant gap in effective marketing strategies that communicate the sustainable attributes of these wine categories. Despite consumer interest in sustainability, most respondents reported limited exposure to targeted campaigns emphasizing this aspect, suggesting the need for clearer messaging and enhanced consumer education. Furthermore, a significant proportion of participants preferred more detailed labelling that communicates the sustainable practices employed during production and highlights eco-friendly processes.

The study highlights how effective marketing strategies can bridge the gap between consumer interest and market visibility for sustainable wines. Producers can better align with consumer values and drive market growth by emphasizing natural and gourmet wines' environmental benefits and premium sensory experiences [7]. This research further underscores the importance of transparent labelling, storytelling in marketing strategies, and collaboration between wineries and sustainability certification bodies to create a stronger market presence for environmentally responsible wines.

This research contributes to the field of environmental sustainability and development by offering insights into how sustainable wine production can influence market behaviour and promote eco-conscious consumption. The findings provide practical implications for winemakers and marketers seeking to foster sustainable practices in the wine sector and respond to evolving consumer demands for quality and sustainability.

**Keywords:** Natural wines, Gourmet wines, Consumer behaviour, Wine consumption, Environmental sustainability.

## References

- [1] Fabbrizzi, S., Alampi Sottini, V., Cipollaro, M., & Menghini, S. (2021). Sustainability and Natural Wines: An Exploratory Analysis on Consumers. *Sustainability*, 13(14). <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13147645>
- [2] Gazzola, P., Pavione, E., Grechi, D., & Scavarda, F. (2023). Natural wine as an expression of sustainability: an exploratory analysis of Italy's restaurant industry. *British Food Journal*, 125(13), 390–409. <https://doi.org/10.1108/BFJ-08-2022-0680>
- [3] Thach, L., Charters, S., & Cogan-Marie, L. (2018). Core tensions in luxury wine marketing: the case of Burgundian wineries. *International Journal of Wine Business Research*, 30(3), 343–365. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJWBR-04-2017-0025>
- [4] Wolf, H. L., Morrish, S. C., & Fountain, J. (2016). A conceptualization of the perceptions and motivators that drive luxury wine consumption. *International Journal of Wine Business Research*, 28(2), 120–133. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJWBR-09-2015-0038>
- [5] Santini, C., Cavicchi, A., & Casini, L. (2013). Sustainability in the wine industry: key questions and research trends. *Agricultural and Food Economics*, 1(1), 9. <https://doi.org/10.1186/2193-7532-1-9>
- [6] Wei, R., Wang, L., Ding, Y., Zhang, L., Gao, F., Chen, N., Song, Y., Li, H., & Wang, H. (2023). Natural and sustainable wine: a review. *Critical Reviews in Food Science and Nutrition*, 63(26), 8249–8260. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10408398.2022.2055528>
- [7] Vecchio, R., Parga-Dans, E., Alonso González, P., & Annunziata, A. (2021). Why consumers drink natural wine? Consumer perception and information about natural wine. *Agricultural and Food Economics*, 9(1), 22. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40100-021-00197-1>