



Wine Drinkers Demographics - Do you fit in?

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Ever wonder how your wine drinking habits fit in with the "norm" whatever that is? Here are a couple observations that might indicate if you are north of the "average" American wine consumer.

#1 – Inspect your neighbors recycle bins on trash day. Do you have the greatest number of empty wine bottles of anyone?

#2 - When you walk into your favorite wine shop do the owners greet you as if you were on an episode of Cheers?

#3 – Tell stories at a party about the night you opened six different bottles of Chardonnay, looking for the one with perfect balance. Does everyone stare at you like you might have been exposed to Ebola?

#4 – When you are in the checkout line at your local wine shop with your regular ration of vino, does the person behind you ask "where's the party"?

#5 – Do you believe that a good cause for celebrating with wine is any day that ends with a "Y"?

If you answered yes to more than one or two, there is a good chance you are helping contribute to the growth in consumption, and average price paid, by the American wine consumer. A recently published report from Wine Intelligence USA can help you determine where you fit in the broad spectrum of the wine consuming public. The report cites an increase of 10 million wine consumers in the United States over the past two years, a nearly 40% increase.

How much are people drinking?

Per capita consumption in 2012 was estimated at 10.42 liters per capita, which equates to roughly 14 bottles (750ml) a year. This statistic is however, based on total United States population of nearly 318 million. Adjust to the 91 million wine consumers and the rate becomes 36.5 liters, 49 bottles per year, or basically a bottle a week. Now I don't know about you, but personally I am helping this average. Compare this to France where the rate is more like 4-5 bottle per week and we look like teetotalers. Also according to the Wine Market Council, 57% of all wine drinkers are "core" drinkers, accounting for 93% of all wine consumption. Now I'm starting to feel at home.



What do you drink?

Well somewhat to my surprise, the average price paid for a bottle of wine is under \$7. I guess this is plausible when you look at all of the Yellow Tail, Canyon Oaks, Woodbridge, Pacific Peak, Sutter Home, Beringer and Arbor Mist wine occupying wine store shelves, but I

confess I have yet to find much quaffable at under \$10, proving once again the adage – don't confuse good wine with wine that sells.

How old are you?

I know that's none of my business, but it is of utmost importance to wine marketers. The most significant increase in wine consumers was among the Millennials – the under 35 crowd. While Baby Boomers still constitute the largest group, the number and average paid per bottle are both declining as age and fixed incomes catch up on us.

A final observation in the report is the increasing role of craft beer and spirits adding to the mix of alcoholic alternatives. Thirty-six percent of regular wine drinkers now include craft beer in their repertoire.

So what constitutes an average wine consumer? If you take data literally you would be either a Millennial or Baby Boomer, spend no more than \$7 on average for a bottle of wine and drink a bottle a week. Chances are if you read this far in the article this is not you. But that's OK, some of us enjoy being in a minority, even if that minority consists of millions of other wine lovers.

Cheers,

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