



The transformation of ordinary wines: a new danger for vintage wines

David MENIVAL
Université de Reims

Abstract

A split has always characterized the French wines history. We can distinguish two types of wines: vintage wines and ordinary wines. Vintage wines are delimited by restrictive conditions of production and take a high social value, while ordinary wines are characterized by a wide production and take a dietary value.

However, this split is currently questioned. Indeed, in spite of their effort, vintage wines encounter first signals of erosion. This trend could be accentuated by the transformation of ordinary wines. Thus, these latter have headed toward a better quality image.

At the first time, the outcome of this transformation caused an increase of the French country wines. The first idea of the country wines was to use the advantages of the AOC, notably in using a geographical indication. This specialization allowed the removal of the outlet of ordinary wines toward the international market. But, this evolution involved an increasing sensibility facing the international competition too. So, in order to protect their market shares, the French country wines now have new requirements. They must lean more and more on the concept of “Terroir” facing the development of the geographical indications within some new producing countries. Consequently, the AOC wines lose an important source of distinction and encounter a new threat of erosion.

Key words: ordinary wines, vintage wines, country wines, geographical indications.