



PINOT GRIGIO SALES RISE NEARLY 20% IN THE US

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US sales of Pinot Grigio saw a boost of nearly 20% in the US during the Covid-19 pandemic, according to Wine Intelligence and the **Consorzio delle Venezie DOC**, even though sales of other white varietals declined in the US market.

Speaking at a conference on the development of Pinot Grigio in the USA during lockdown at the Wine2wine business forum, organized by Vinality International and sponsored by the **Consorzio delle Venezie DOC**, Wine Intelligence's CEO Lulie Halstead said that varietals still play a key role in driving customer decisions, informing around 73% of decisions.

The growth of Pinot Grigio, which rose 19% in the US, increasing in sales both through large scale distribution and on e-commerce platforms, contrasted to other white varieties such as Chardonnay, Moscato and Riesling, which recorded a slight drop.

The study demonstrated the rising trend went hand in hand with a change in habits, as well as the precise direction on consumption choice, with wine becoming more of an "allowable pleasure" and moment of relaxation at the end of the day, as well as more customary in the context of a meal, rather than an "occasional" treat.

"This is to all intents and purposes an increase in the frequency of consumption which moves into a domestic environment, disconnecting itself from the food factor and the so-called food occasion; and, moreover, women are driving the positive trend of recent months," Halstead said.

Nicholas Paris MW, director of global sourcing of European wines at E. & J. Gallo Winery, said Pinot Grigio has been highly successful "because consumers knew it,"

"In difficult times people wanted something they could trust, because they didn't know what would happen. And Pinot Grigio responded precisely to this need," he said, noting that sales of Gallo's Pinot Grigio has seen growth of between 15% to 30% in the US market, from March onwards.

CEO of the Ruffino Group and CB EMEA Sandro Sartor said the recent recognition of the DOC for Pinot Grigio delle Venezie, would generate greater value, interest and recognition for Pinot Grigio as it enable the implementation of greater promotion overseas.

"Today, most wine consumers in the US are still not fully aware of the implications and specifics contained in the concept of Designation of Origin," he said, pointing out that Italian tradition and origin needed to be accompanied by a powerful brand to avoid uncertainty. "Only 17% of consumers interviewed believe that this (origin) is a determining factor in the purchasing process."

He said that American consumers were "sensitive" to the value of the DOC once it had been explained to them. "This, in the case of Pinot Grigio delle Venezie, must be a stimulus for further growth in the immediate future. The Consortium has done a good job so far, but there is still ample room for manoeuvre to make the concept of certification, safety, control and high quality of both the raw material and its transformation more familiar to American buyers," he concluded.



Nicholas Paris MW, director of global sourcing of European wines at E. & J. Gallo Winery

