Introduction

South Africans are rich in diverse perceptions, preferences and levels of aspiration for wine as a choice of beverage, due to the different cultures, ethnic groups and background.

Chenin blanc is an equally diverse cultivar and a jack of many trades. It presents a large style spectrum, ranging from fresh, to ripe and complex. There is room for style innovation.

However, many consumers may not be able to identify a particular style of Chenin blanc and their opinions are not known by industry.

The potential of Chenin to become SA’s true flagship white variety can be fulfilled by listening to the consumers’ voice.

Objectives

To identify the opportunities for Chenin by evaluating two groups, consumers and industry experts, in qualitative and quantitative research.

Investigate the wine style perceptions of Chenin blanc wine styles amongst:

(a) Consumers

- Age
- Ethnic group
- Gender
- Income level

(b) Wine industry experts

- Winemakers (production)
- Sommeliers (on-trade)
- Retail experts (off-trade)

Listening to the consumers’ voice

Currently, SA, as a new wine world, is researching various marketing strategies to address the lack of SA consumers’ interest in wine as a favoured beverage.

The “voice” of the consumers regarding their perception of Chenin blanc has not been investigated.

A study has been launched by the Institute of Wine Biotechnology, Stellenbosch University, to investigate the perceptions and impressions that Chenin blanc has within the industry and the market.

Wine industry experts (sommeliers, retail experts, winemakers) can play a pivotal role in effective communication with current and future wine consumers.

Impact of study

- For the first time, to understand the SA consumers’ likes, preferences and uncertainties about Chenin.
- To proactively use this information to:
  - serve the SA consumer segments better
  - improve the communication from experts to the consumer
- Bridge the perception gap between industry experts and consumers.