

HOW TO DEFINE SENSORY TYPICITY IN WINE ?
POSSIBLE APPLICATION OF SENSORY METHODOLOGIES TO PROTECTED DESIGNATION
OF ORIGIN PRODUCTS

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Wine is one product whose concept of typicality is prevalent. Typicality includes sensory typicality. Sensory evaluation of this typicality presents stakes and bottle necks. Some regulations demand that specific sensory characteristics of POD wines be proved by a human group of reference, without precising the way to do that. Sensory analysis can be helpful to that aim with adaptation of methodologies to a professional context. Wines inside a POD has common sensory characteristics, however they are not all the same. To characterize typicality needs to highlight common points while showing the specific attributes of the sample. Researchers have tried to optimize sensory evaluation to this specific context. The first task is to identify if the product is typical or not. The existence of a common memorized prototype supports the typicality concept (Casabianca *et al.* 2005). Scientists seem to agree on the way to measure directly typicality of products: they use a single global question : “Is this sample a good example of the appellation ?” (Perrin & al, 2009 ; Ballester & al, 2004). Indirect methodologies can be used to check if the product has got common characteristics with other ones from the same POD : sorting tasks are very often worked out in this objective. Sorting tasks can be completely free, asking to the assessor to group samples according to their similarity (Ballester & al, 2008) or directed, the panellist having to sort wines according to their origin by example (Parr & al, 2010). Napping® (Perrin & al, 2008) gives two spatial dimensions to the taster, in order to help him to sort products.

Professionals from wine sector have a sensory expertise (Chollet *et al.* 2001, Nicod 2006), and in a limited geographic area, they are used to taste together regularly and share common descriptors. This has been clearly shown by Perrin, 2008, as she used a classical sensory profile with a fixed list of attributes. Before setting up this kind of analysis, the list of attributes needs to be defined, they are keys to highlight common qualities of wines from the same POD. Esti (2010) and Etaio (2010) suggest an extensive way to perform that successfully. More the analysis is imposed, less the professional can give his expertise if needed, for example if an attribute is missing for a specific sample. That's why some tools have been tested, for the opportunity they give to the taster to give his own opinion : free choice profiling, ultraflash profiling (Perrin & al, 2008). The weakness of these methodologies is that results are often less precise than a conventional sensory profile. Lawrence & al, 2012, suggest to mix a classical approach with a short defined and imposed list of attributes and the possibility for the taster to add as much descriptors he needs to completely describe the product.

Professional tasting has often to check if the main characteristics expected for the appellation have been reached by the wine. Just About Right methodology seems to perform well in this objective (Cadot & al, 2010). Accreditation cards, developed with rigour and numerous tasting sessions, can be used too (Esti & al, 2010).

All these efforts would be useless without benefit for consumers. Consistency between sensory properties of wines and POD can be checked by conjoint analysis methodology (Symoneaux & al, 2010). Sensory characteristics can be positively used to communicate to consumers (Prigent-Simonin & al, 2005).

Great efforts are still to be done to introduce more exactness in practices. However, all signs are encouraging, as European producers want to promote quality of their products!

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