International trends in wine: Lynne Sherriff 1 September 2009: Stellenbosch

1. **Polarisation** of wine trends: Robert Parker vs Jancis Robinson.
   What is successful in the UK is not necessarily successful in the US.   There has been a huge change in profile in even neighbouring countries (Norway is Francophile, while Sweden is into the New World). Wine makers are retaining their individual styles and focus sales on countries that prefer that profile. Some stores in US even arrange the stock by Parker scores instead of region, wine producer or region. There has been a lashback, where some consumers will not buy a wine with Parker scores e.g. 90+because they don't like the style. Japanese consumers now compare the ratings of RP and JR.

2. **Anti alcohol lobby**
   Increasing focus on **alcohol content** and growth in the anti alcohol lobby in some countries, especially the UK. The first question in wine presentations is about the alcohol content. There is now an organization that tries to give a balanced view: AIM (Alcohol in Moderation).

3. Growth in **Rose**: well made, seriously made rose (not blush and not sweet). Growing in Scandinavia.

4. Rise and rise and rise in **Pinot Gris**. This has resulted in the growth of Italian wine market share worldwide. (Comment from a well-known Italian wine producer: "how does it grow when so much is so awful!). Believed to be a result of being a light, easy drinking, low alcohol, no wood, low extract wine, reflecting a move away from sweet, heavy, over wooded chardonnay. Increasing plantings in the New World.

5. **Re-emergence of the Old World** :

   - **Sauvignon Blanc** in the Loire has improved: radically in the past 8 years. As a result of cross-interests and cross-investments in New Zealand. Clean well made Cabernet Franc, sometimes unwooded or lightly wooded are emerging in the region.

   - **Rise in use of indigenous varieties**: (Fiamo, alvarinho, Verdhejo,) because they are not the ubiquitous Chardonnay. (Alvarinho, Nero d'Avolo, Montepulciano, there has been double digit growth in the UK in the sales of Portuguese varieties and styles.

   - **Growth of Riesling** (German and Austrian) in US and Asia (not UK) because it fits the cuisine

6. **Increasing interest in environmental issues**.
   Organic, biodynamic, Fairtrade, Ethical Trade products in UK, Austria and Germany

7. **Growth in the use of screw caps**: 93% of all New Zealand whites and 63% of New Zealand reds. Now increasing trend in Italy and Spain (for Albarinho). Kingsland Bottling has launched 300g lightweight bottle (vs normal weight 500g).

8. **Focus on Rhone style wines** - as a result of worldwide success of Shiraz. Driven by Australia first and then SA and Chile. Also Shiraz / Grenache (soaked) blends. There is growing interest in these styles in Scandinavia, UK, and Asia. Based on Grenache, Temporarily, old vine Grenache.

   (What chance do these varieties have in SA? Tempranillo has lowish acidity and high phonemics in ripe grapes – may therefore not be a good choice in SA unless maceration is well managed very well. Very few people outside Spain are successful with Tempranillo. Perhaps SA should look rather at Sangiovese. However there seem to be poor clones or poor viticulture that prevent Italian varieties from performing well in SA. Merlot single varietal wines also fail to impress - result of clones and vineyards).

9. Polarisation of brands vs individual wines
Brands give consumers confidence (Japan), while wines are considered to be "real" especially if they have story to tell. Wines are considered to be "real" especially if they have story to tell. This is not just at the top level, but also at the middle, especially in the past 5 years.

10. **Increasingly curious consumers –** spend more on wine for home, but are not going out as much, therefore spend more on the wine (up to GBP3 more) for home consumption. Asia / India are truing new things.