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## INTRODUCTION

The history of wine spans thousands of years and is closely intertwined with the history of agriculture, cuisine, civilization and humanity itself. Throughout antiquity the conversion of grapes into wine was considered a gift from the gods and the best wines were thus reserved for the elite of society.

In today's world there is a global over-supply of wine, and it has become a commodity - though perhaps a rather unique commodity. Some consumers view wine in much the same way as they would flour, milk, fruit juice or instant coffee. To these consumers grapes are merely grown, crushed and made into wine, which is then sold cheaply and consumed uncritically. But then there are also the consumers who are driven by a genuine interest in wine. This interest stems from the fact that there exists a diversity of wine types that are each able to express elements of their cultural and geographical origins in the finished product. For these consumers winemaking is best viewed as a process of stewardship rather than one of manufacturing<sup>1</sup>.

Wine is unique among other consumable consumer products because consumers cannot assess the quality characteristics, colour, and aroma without purchasing and tasting the wine (Barber & Almanza, 2006).

Research suggests that the purchase of a wine can be a complex experience compared to other consumer products. Consumers may not be fully knowledgeable about the wide variety of wine products and this can cause them to feel intimidated when it comes to making wine purchases (Gluckman, 1990; Olsen et al., 2003). The issue of consumers' self-confidence, as discussed by Olsen et al. (2003), then plays a key role in wine buying behaviour, as consumers doubt their own ability to choose an appropriate wine.

Formerly, wine consumers used to rely heavily on the origin of the wine - using this cue as one of the most important indications of quality (Chaney, 2002). Traditionally, wine from countries such as France and Italy was considered to be of high quality (Landon & Smith, 1998; Nerlove, 1995). However, with the emerge of many new wine producing countries, consumers are no longer inclined to simply rely on a wine's origin, but are looking for additional cues to help them make a wine purchase decision.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.wineanorak.com>

One of the ways wine producers and wine marketers can meet consumers' insecurity in regard to wine purchases is by providing them with information. Purchase behavior can be influenced by the manner in which information is presented and by the way it is perceived and processed (Thomas & Pickering, 2003).

Another important element is wine packaging, which, as described by Thomas & Pickering (2003), consists of several inter-related factors like the shape of the bottle, colour and labels, which interacts with the consumer's varying experience and knowledge of wines. According to Combris et al. (1997, p. 401):

*"Consumers may decide to make their wine choice primarily on the basis of the objective characteristics (appearing on the label of the wine bottle)"*

Based on the above it is then important for wine producers to take the packaging of their wine into serious consideration in order to reach their costumers.

The importance of wine packaging and labelling and their influence on consumers' purchases decisions have been brought into focus with the emergence of new wine consuming countries such as the United States. According to the Wine Institute, from 1997 to 2001 the United States reported an impressive 9.7% increase in wine consumption<sup>2</sup>. This increase in consumption has resulted in a dramatic rise in the number of wineries, wine brands, labels, bottle shapes and colours, style of closures, regional designations, and grape varieties – making the issue of wine packaging extremely important for marketers in such new wine markets.

However, as most of the research on the importance of wine labelling and packaging seems to be focused on new world wine countries, it would be interesting to see how an old traditional winemaking country relates to this issue. In this thesis France will be used as a representative for the traditional wine countries.

France has traditionally been one of the world's leaders in wine production and consumption. France is a country with long-rooted traditions of wine drinking and historical heritage.

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<sup>2</sup> Wine Institute. (2004). World Wine Consumption in Listed Countries (Hectolitres 000) 1997 to 2001. Wine Institute 425 Market Street Suite 1000, San Francisco, CA 94105. <http://www.wineinstitute.org/who.htm>

However, within the last decade French wine has started to lose market shares all over Europe – including Denmark. According to a study carried out by VSOD<sup>3</sup>, France lost its place as the leading supplier of wine to the Danish population to Chile back in 2008<sup>4</sup>.

The Danish wine market is considered to be very important. In 2011, “The Economist” listed Denmark as the fifth biggest wine drinking country (France being number one). The popularity of wine is also reflected in the country’s import of wine. In 2008 Denmark imported 197 million litres of wine – 29,9 million litres hereof being French wine.<sup>5</sup>

Knowledge on the importance consumers attach to wine packaging would offer wine makers a value-added impression of specific information elements and its value to consumers (Thomas & Pickering, 2003).

Thomas & Pickering’s (2003) definition of the term wine packaging will be used throughout the thesis. The term will be covering the shape, colour, label design and material of the bottle. Wine information, in the thesis, will only be referring to the amount of information that can be found on the actual wine bottle and label.

## **Problem Statement & Research Questions**

*The present thesis seeks to explore to which extent the packaging of a bottle of wine affects consumers’ wine purchase decision.*

To investigate the problem statement the following research questions will be asked:

**RQ1:** How do Danish wine consumers perceive and value a wine’s packaging?

**RQ2:** Is there a difference in how new wine consumers value the importance of wine packaging, as opposed to the consumers purchasing wine before the emergence of the new world wine countries?

**RQ3:** Does the issue of self-confidence in fact play a role in the purchase of wine?

**RQ4:** Do wine packaging from traditional wine countries, such as France, differ significantly from those from New World countries, and if so what is the significance of these differences?

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<sup>3</sup> The Wine & Spirits Organisation in Denmark (Vin & Spiritus Organisationen i Danmark)

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.vsod.dk>

<sup>5</sup> V.S.O.D. based on data from Statistics Denmark

## FACTS & FIGURES

This section will provide the reader with a brief overview of the Danish wine market in general. It is meant to serve as background knowledge in order to clarify the thoughts behind the problem formulation of the present thesis.

### The Danish Wine Market

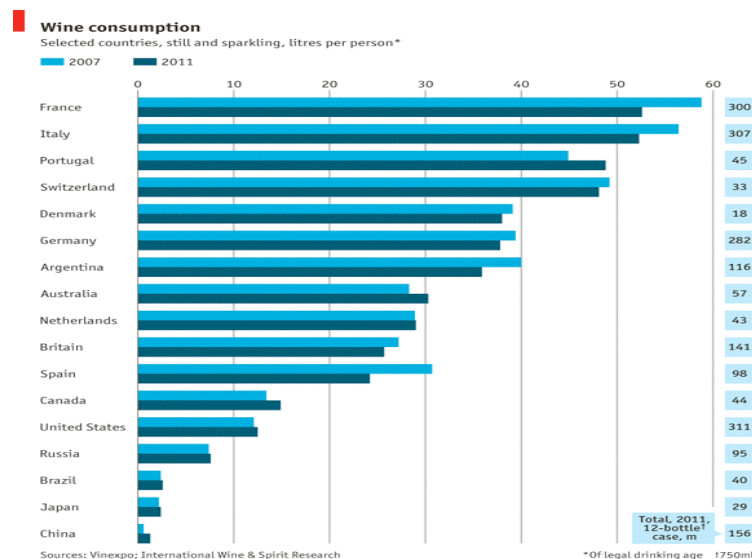
Since the 1970s there has been an overwhelming change in the consumption of wine in Denmark. In the early 1970s very few Danes drank wine, but a booming economy changed all that. In 1978, wine consumption had reached 13 litres per head and wine was:

*“(...) becoming a trendy product and the gastronomy in restaurant and at home were accomplishing a revolution.” (Lohfert, 2007, p.32)*

According to a French export company, the Danish wine market is considered one of the fastest growing markets in Europe. Due to its northerly location, Denmark produces almost no wine - It is essentially a consumer country, and a quite important one at that: With a population of over 5.4 million people, Denmark is a country with a very high consumption of wine per inhabitant - amounting to 30 litres in 2007.

Over the past ten years the national consumption of wine in Denmark has increased by 25.2% - representing 0.8% of the total wine consumption in the world.<sup>6</sup> In other terms, this means that every Dane drinks, every year, an average of 34 litres of wine - equivalent to 44 bottles of wine annually, or slightly less than a bottle a week.<sup>7</sup>

In 2011, “The Economist” listed Denmark as the fifth biggest wine drinking country (France being number one, followed by Italy, Portugal and Switzerland), consuming more than 38 litres per adult of drinking age<sup>8</sup>.



<sup>6</sup> <http://www.suddefrance-developpement.com>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.dst.dk>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.economist.com>

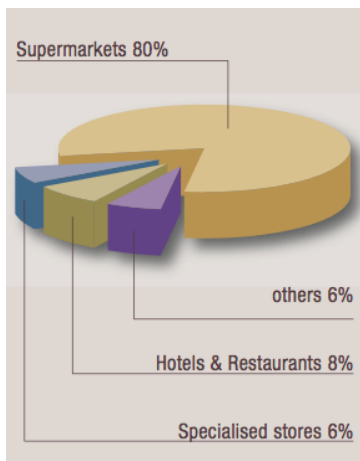
Wine in Denmark is today so popular that it can be purchased everywhere, from petrol stations to bakers and florists. And almost all publications have a wine column, plus there are food and wine magazines. The popularity of wine in Denmark has placed Denmark high on the list of both consumption and import of wine (Lohfert, 2007).

## Import

Because of its limited possibility to produce wine, Denmark is a large importer of wine. “Sud de France Développement” estimates that Denmark in 2007 imported 220.17 million litres of wine – making it the ninth-largest importer of wine by volume with a share of its imports in world exports of wine in the range of 2.7%, and 11th in value a share of its imports in world exports of 2.5%.<sup>9</sup>

With this high import of wine, Denmark is characterized as an important but also highly competitive wine market as wines are sold at low prices by three big chains and hundreds of boutique importers. (Lohfert, 2007)

## Retailing Distribution: The Big Three



The three biggest wine importers in Denmark are the three supermarket chains COOP, Dansk Supermarked and SuperGross. Together they are estimated to be responsible for more than 80% of total imports and sales. According to Lohfert, a major positive effect of having three big players able to offer so many attractive wine deals to the market is that it is democratising wine drinking. (Lohfert, 2007)

### 1. COOP

COOP is Denmark's biggest wine retailer and distributor, with a market share that is close to 40%. Erik Larsen is head of the wine department, where he and three others buy wine for a total of 821 COOP shops. In his view the Danish consumers have become more aware of what they want and are more differentiated in their wine choice.

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<sup>9</sup> <http://www.suddefrance-developpement.com>

COOP has imposed a low price strategy which is shown by the fact that 70-80% of COOP's wine is sold as special offers (Lohfert, 2007).

## **2. Dansk Supermarked**

Denmark's second biggest multiple is Dansk Supermarked. The wine division is run by Henrik Dahlgaard, responsible for buying the wines sold in 464 shops, divided into three chains; Føtex (77 shops) Bilka (14 big warehouses) and Netto (371 shops). According to Dahlgaard, the total represents around one third of wines bought in Denmark (Lohfert, 2007).

## **3. SuperGros**

SuperGros a/s is Denmark's third biggest wine importer and distributor, being the joint buyer for the three big supermarket chains of SuperBest, SPAR and ALTA Discount. SuperGros is also a major supplier of wine to the convenience market, which represents around 50% of the market and includes the chains of Shell, Statoil, DSB, DK Nærkøb, Nærkøb, Letkøb, or 2,500 stores in total.

Kristian Andreasen, SuperGros's division manager for Wine & Spirit also finds that price is one of the most important parameters in the Danish wine market:

*"If a label does not keep the same price for a longer period of time you can be sure to see a decrease in turnover – and very often a rather dramatic fall." (Lohfert, 2007, p. 34)*

The issue of price is a general element in the selling and marketing of wine in Denmark. All of the three retailers point to the fact that the majority of wine is sold as special offers. This partly explains why the supermarket chains send out leaflets with special wine offers, which Danes receive in their mailbox every week (Lohfert, 2007). It also raises the question if Danish wine consumers are more price-oriented rather than focused on the quality of the wine. And if so, how this could have potentially influenced the success of the New World wine countries<sup>10</sup>

All three of the wine responsible managers also emphasise the relatively new trend of wine in a box – also known as Bag-in-Box.

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<sup>10</sup> For an in-depth review on the term New World wine countries please go to the theoretical section.

## **Danes Love Bag-in-Box**

Bag-in-box is the term for wine sold in cardboard boxes at typically 3 litres or more. The Australian winemaker Thomas Angove invented this form of packaging in 1965.

Wine producers of less expensive wine prefer bag-in-box packaging, as it is cheaper than glass bottles.

Bag-in-box has also gained great commercial success among the consumers in Australia and Europe (Lohfert, 2007).

Erik Larsen, category manager for COOP, Denmark's biggest wine importer, states that COOP's bag-in-box sales have risen from 2% just five years ago, to almost 20% today and adds that one in five glasses of wine sold by COOP comes out of a bag-in-box (Lohfert, 2007).

This increasing tendency is also seen at Dansk Supermarked where Henrik Dahlgaard works as division manager for Wine and Spirits. He predicts that:

*"(...) within the next few years, 40% of the wine in Denmark will come from bag-in-box sales."*<sup>11</sup>

This concludes the factual section of the thesis that should have provided the reader with a general knowledge of the Danish wine market.

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<sup>11</sup> <http://livsstil.guide.dk>

## SCIENTIFIC APPROACH & METHODOLOGY

*“Different views of reality (ontology) can lead to different ways of investigating it (epistemology), and consequently, create different knowledge”*

*- Harzing & Pinnington, 2011, p. 81*

### Epistemological Considerations

The epistemological and ontological stances one has, as a researcher, will affect all aspects of a written project: From the problem formulation, to the choice of methodology as well as the approach to the analysis of the empirical data. This present thesis will adhere to the epistemological tradition of interpretivism.

Interpretivism has its roots in the ontological tradition called constructivism which:

*“[...] asserts that social phenomena and their meanings are continually being accomplished by social actors”* (Bryman, 2008).

In contrast to the epistemological position of positivism, adherents to interpretivism believe that the social world is ever changing and context dependent. Therefore the goal for interpretivists is not to find an absolute truth or a definitive solution to a problem. As reality is constructed by human interaction, it is only possible to gain understanding of a social reality by trying to understand it from the point of view of the social actors involved (Bryman, 2008). In other words, the goal of research, within interpretivism, is to understand reality's meaning, i.e. what sense the reality is making to the people dealing with it (Harzing & Pinnington, 2001). For that reason, an interpretivist's research result will always be subjective, depicting a “here-and-now” situation that is affected by context.

Due to the overall objective of the present thesis, which is to *“explore to which extend the packaging of a bottle of wine affects consumers' wine purchase decision”* the thesis will adhere to the epistemological tradition of interpretivism as the findings and results of the analysis are based on views and opinions of a small group of social actors – the interviewees. Because the problem formulation lies within the field of human emotions and attitudes, the result is bounded to be subjective and will therefore not provide a definitive and absolute answer. The findings should be able to depict an understanding of the interviewees' “here-and-now” attitudes towards the given subject. The overall theme of the thesis is embedded in the human

world and needs a human sciences paradigm to address it in context, which is exactly what the interpretive paradigm allows.

## **Data Collection**

In order to answer the problem statement of the present thesis both desk-research and field-research will be employed. The desk-research consists of secondary sources such as websites, publications, academic articles and reports, which will be used to describe the general wine market and its tendencies. This material served as foundation and background for a part of the questions used in the two focus group interviews. However, the largest part of the questions was based on the theoretical framework, which will be presented shortly in this section and much more thoroughly in the ensuing “Theory” section.

For the present thesis, the theoretical framework played an extremely important role as it was used, not only, to formulate the majority of the questions for the two focus group interviews, but the different theories and studies were also used in order to analyse the findings and results gathered from the focus group interviews.

One of the most important studies in relation to the present thesis was found to be the one on the importance of wine label information by Thomas and Pickering (2003). Their research aimed to identify the importance given to wine label information by wine consumers. This study used a theoretical framework designed by Crawford in 1985, which was further developed by Shaw et al. (1999).

In the thesis the framework by Thomas and Pickering (2003) will be used, firstly to form the majority of the questions for the interview guide used in the two focus group interviews, which will serve as the empirical data. Secondly, the results and findings from the study by Thomas and Pickering will be used to compare and analyse the findings for the present thesis in order to answer the problem formulation.

In addition to the study on the importance of wine label information, several other studies and research articles were used in order to paint a picture of the current situation within the field of wine marketing. For instance, the study done by McKinna in 1987, who used the topic of consumer expectation/risk in relation to wine purchase in order to segment the Australian

wine market. This particular research will serve as a way of indentifying the chosen respondents for the two focus group interviews.

Another important topic in relation to the present thesis is the one of consumers' uncertainty in regard to a wine purchase. This issue was formulated in the following research questions:

*"Does the issue of self-confidence in fact play a role in the purchase of wine?" and "Is there a difference in how new wine consumers value the importance of wine packaging, as opposed to the consumers purchasing wine before the emergence of the new world wine countries?"*

Naturally, these two 'hypotheses' did not emerge out of thin air, but have achieved their legitimacy through the extensive theoretical framework on consumer self-confidence in wine purchases.

In regard to the present thesis the study by Olsen et al. (2003) was found to be relevant to the matter at hand and well worth discussing.

Olsen et al. (2003) found that previous research suggested that the construct of self-confidence may be distinct from wine expertise and involvement and is very important in understanding consumer behaviour when it comes to wine consumption. In 2003 they did a study on consumer self-confidence in wine purchases by tailoring the Bearden et al. self-confidence scale for use in a wine-related context.

Much like Olsen et al. (2003) Mitchell and Greatedorex (1993) point to the fact that self-confidence plays an important role when it comes to making a wine purchase decision. Mitchell and Greatedorex (1993) have examined the risks perceived within wine buying markets, as well as if these risks varied with the place of purchase (on-licence, i.e. restaurants, wine bars, pubs, etc., and off-licence, i.e. supermarkets, wine shops, etc.) Their study showed that consumers experience different forms of risk in buying wine. These risks pertain to functional (taste), social (family and friends), financial (price) and physical (hangover) conditions. This research becomes interesting when examining if there is a difference between new and old wine consumers' self-confidence and the role it plays in wine purchases.

The last main theoretical framework used for the thesis concerns the issue of information in regard to a wine consumer's decision-making process. In the present thesis it is the packaging and the label of a wine bottle that are considered to be the most important sources of

information about a wine. Reidick (2003) is a psychology undergraduate student who has written a study on the influence of one of the major characteristics of wine bottles – the wine label. Though his research can be argued to be somewhat deficient<sup>12</sup>, it is believed to depict some relevant points in relation to the present thesis. For instance, how the perceived visual difference helps a bottle of wine to stand out against the ‘competing’ bottles and that the label design is an important communication tool providing the individual with a message (Reidick, 2003). This particular study will play a big part in the analysis of the empirical data.

When using focus groups interviews to collect the empirical data for a project one has chosen to use ‘a deductive approach’, as it is called within the social research tradition (Bryman, 2008). By using the knowledge of existing theory, questions for the interviews are created and then posed to the interviewees and their answers will then serve as the empirical data.

### **Focus Group Interview**

*“In the context of a focus group, individuals will often argue with each other and challenge each other’s views.”*

*- Bryman (2008, p. 475)*

The focus group interview had its breakthrough in the US in the 1930s and 40s, where the interest of group dynamics was developing among social researchers. What differs focus group interviews from traditional qualitative interviews is the fact that in a group interview, the interviewees can form and inspire each other, which can provide the researcher with different data than what could be collected from a qualitative one-on-one interview (Bloksgaard & Andersen, 2012). For the present master thesis the choice to use focus group interviews instead of traditional interviews was based on several factors: First of all there was a time issue to consider – due to unfortunate circumstances the start-up phase of the thesis became somewhat longer than intended and time therefore had to be cut from the actual writing process.

However, the decision should not be seen as just taking the easy way out. The use of focus group interview in the collection of empirical data for the present thesis has its validation in the fact that this method is very popular in the field of market research, where it is employed for such purposes as testing responses to new products and advertising initiatives (Bryman,

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<sup>12</sup> For further information on this subject please see the review of Reidick’s study under the “Theory” section.

2008,). As the present thesis falls within the framework of marketing and advertising it is believed that the method of focus group interviewing is very valid for the collection of data.

The objective is to use the group as the tool in the production of the empirical data. In one-on-one interviewing, interviewees are rarely challenged, but in a focus group interview the respondents are likely to challenge each other's views and may even qualify or modify a view based on the other interviewees' answers (Bryman, 2008).

The issue of group dynamic – how meanings and identities are formed through social interaction – is often seen as one of the most important parts of a focus group interview. However, in regard to the present thesis the focus will be to use this particular form of interviewing as a way to bring forth underlying experiences and opinions that the interviewees may not have thought of, had the interview been a traditional one-on-one, and the topic of social interaction between the interviewees is therefore not the main concern.

### **Selection of Respondents**

*"[...] the number also depend on whether the aim is to gain as many perspectives as possible or to obtain more in-depth responses from the selected respondents."*

- Bloksgaard & Andersen (2012, p.35)

There are many different views on the selection of respondents for a focus group interview. Some researchers prefer that the group participants do not know each other based on the apprehension that pre-existing styles of interaction or status differences may contaminate the session. Others prefer to select natural groups (such as friends, co-workers, students of the same course), as they believe this will make the discussion as natural as possible (Kitzinger, 1994).

For the present thesis it was decided to conduct two focus group interviews with two natural groups consisting of friends. The two groups resemble in their nature of social interaction, as they are both so-called "Dinner Clubs" where the participants meet every week for dinner at each other's home. It was found that these particular groups would have some valid views on the topic examined in the thesis. Gender and ethnicity of the interviewees are of little importance to the thesis – the crucial factor is that all the interviewees, from both groups,

resembled in terms of age, education and profession. This was important to the premise of the thesis, as one of the research questions was to examine if new wine consumers would have a different view on wine packaging as opposed to the generation of wine consumers before them. Therefore there had to be a frame of reference between the two groups.

The respondents for the two focus group interviews conducted are as follows:

**1. Dinner Club Junior (DCJ):**

- i1: Female, 25 years old, Postgraduate Student
- i2: Female, 26 years old, Nurse
- i3: Female, 23 years old, Studying to be a teacher
- i4: Female, 23 years old, Bachelor in Social Education

**2. Dinner Club Senior (DCS):**

- I1: Female, 55 years old, Speech Therapist
- I2: Female, 56 years old, Dentist
- I3: Female, 45 years old, Health Visitor
- I4: Male, 57 years old, Trade Promotion Officer

The number of interviewees in each focus group, four persons, can seem somewhat small but this was decided for two reasons: Firstly, the limited time for this master thesis set boundaries for how much time could be devoted to the transcription of the interviews. Secondly, a small number of interviewees can be considered as a better choice when the researcher is looking for in-depth responses as opposed to a gathering of as many perspectives as possible (Bloksgaard & Andersen, 2012).

It would have been interesting to conduct more interviews in order to gather a broader perspective of the topic examined, but once again the limited timeframe set some boundaries for the collection of empirical data.

As mentioned before, the acquaintance between the respondents can have both its advantages and disadvantages. This thesis adheres to the view that a natural group of interviewees will provide a more natural discussion and a more realistic account of what people think, because they are surrounded by friends with whom they feel comfortable and given the nature of their friendship they are likely to be used to conversations and discussions with each other.

Naturally, there are also some risks related to this approach – when the group consist of people who know each other in advance there is a risk that pre-existing styles of interaction or status differences may contaminate the session. Morgan (1998) also suggest that one problem with using natural groups is that people who know each other well are likely to operate with taken-for-granted assumptions that they feel do not need to be brought to the fore. In situations like this, the authenticity of the empirical data is naturally compromised (Bloksgaard & Andersen, 2012). That is when the role of the researcher/interviewer becomes very important.

### **The Author's Role as Interviewer**

Some researchers see the group dynamic as the biggest disadvantages within focus group interviewing, as it can be very difficult to control. However, if the researcher succeeds in controlling the interview process, different viewpoints and differences of opinions among the interviewees can create more arguments and reasons for these opinions. This means that disagreements can be confronted and elaborated, which in the end gives the researcher more reliable empirical data.

For the present thesis the author's role as interviewer for the two focus groups was a little unusual as the interviewees were all acquaintances of the author. One could fear that knowing the respondents beforehand could contaminate the data gathered through the interviews due to the risk of pre-existing styles of interaction (Morgan, 1998). However, it must be stressed that the author was well aware of this issue and was very attentive to the fact and made sure to be as subjective as possible as well as assuring that the existent roles of the members of the group did not influence or distort their opinions.

### **Interview Guide**

The interview guide is created on existing knowledge of the French, Danish and general wine market as accounted for in other sections of the thesis. Theory on wine label information, consumer self-confidence and the decision-making process as accounted for in the theoretical section have also been used in order to formulate questions for the interviews. The interview

guide has six subheadings, each of which has its basis in a section or an aspect of the present thesis<sup>13</sup>.

- 1. Introduction:** *Gives the interviewees the opportunity of introducing themselves in their own words.*
- 2. About Wine:** *The interviewees' attitude towards wine in general. By asking the interviewees to mention five wine countries of the top of their head it is hoped to provide an idea of the interviewees' brand awareness in relation to wine.*
- 3. Comparison of Wine Bottles and Labels:** *The interviewees were shown seven bottles of wine and each were asked to rank them from most preferred to least preferred. Solely based on the look of the bottle and label.*
- 4. Wine Labels' Effect on Purchase Decision**
- 5. Wine Label Information (Front & Back labels):** *Subheadings 4 and 5 seek to explore the interviewees' need for information and where to find it when purchasing a wine.*
- 6. Self-Confidence in Wine Purchases:** *Questions under this subheading are meant to reveal differences between the two generations of wine consumer in relation to wine purchases. It also seeks to explore the interviewees' attitude towards their own self-confidence when purchasing a bottle of wine.*

The interview guide had the purpose of being a red thread for the interviewer, securing that the interview followed a logical development. The guide was also used to ensure that the interview went in the desired direction, which would ensure answers relevant to the overall subject and problem formulation of the thesis. The interview guide was not considered to be a complete recipe for the focus group interviews and it was not followed blindly during the interviews: The order of the questions was changed to fit into each conversation in each group and new questions were added in order to help the conversation along or to further explain a given answer by one of the interviewees.

A focus group interview is supposed to have the form of an informal conversation between the interviewees, which is the reason for the relatively low number of questions in the interview guide. The purpose was not to gain many superficial answers, but to receive complete and thorough answers to fewer important questions. The questions posed in the

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<sup>13</sup> The entire Interview Guide can be found in the appendix

interview guide were chosen after much reflection as the ones believed to best help answering the overall problem formulation of the present thesis. However, during each interview it became evident that some questions were missing and these were then added as a natural continuation of the conversation.

### **The Wines Used in the Interviews**

As shortly mentioned in the review of the interview guide, the interviewees were shown seven bottles of wine and each were asked to rank them from most preferred to least preferred - solely based on the look of the bottle and label. This was done in order to demonstrate the importance of the packaging of a bottle of wine. The interviewees were not allowed to look closely at the bottles, touch them, turn them around nor read the information on the back label. The interviewees were not informed of the origin of the wines, though on some of the bottles this was clearly indicated and therefore difficult to avoid. The desired goal was to gain the immediate and unbiased opinion of the interviewees – free from any personal preferences in regard to wine.

Due to the overall problem formulation of the thesis it was decided to use seven different wines. Three from old world wine countries: Italy, Spain and France. And four from new world wine countries: Australia, South Africa, California and Chile. It was considered important that the wines resembled in terms of price, grape variety and vintage. The initial goal was to find red wines in the price range of 50-60 DKK<sup>14</sup> that were all a Cabernet Sauvignon. However, in reality this turned out to be more difficult than first anticipated. The wines were all purchased at Super Best and are as following:

- 1) France, 2008, Gamay, 64,25 DKK.
- 2) Spain, 2010, Tempranillo, 63,45 DKK.
- 3) Italy, 2010, Corvina Veronese 69,95 DKK.
- 4) California, 2010, Cabernet Sauvignon, 54,25 DKK.
- 5) Australia, 2011, Cabernet Sauvignon, 69,95 DKK.
- 6) South Africa, 2010, Cabernet Sauvignon, 64,95 DKK.
- 7) Chile, 2010, Cabernet Sauvignon, 59,95 DKK.

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<sup>14</sup> No attention was paid to whether or not the wine was part of an offer at the time of the purchase.

It is evident that the initial criteria for the wines were not met, but it proved very difficult to find a Cabernet Sauvignon from Italy, Spain and France as well as finding wines in the price range of 50-60 DKK. However, the difference between the most expensive and the cheapest wine is not more than 15,70 DKK and this was considered to be acceptable.

It is very important to state that all the wines were chosen without any kind of beforehand preferences and with the highest amount of objectivity.

As the wines could not be attached, the reader will find a thorough description of the wines, including pictures, in the appendix.

All the general facts about the wine are listed at the top. In addition, three pictures of each wine were taken to provide an accurate visible presentation: one picture of the entire bottle, one of the front label, and one of the back label. The text on the back label was written down word-by-word and lastly the three elements: "Endorsements, Bottle Shape and Enclosure" were filled out.

"Endorsements" refers to any kind of expert opinions or the recognition of awards and medals displayed on the wine bottle.



The shape of the bottle will be categorised as either 'Bordeaux' or 'Burgundy'.

Bordeaux bottles have straight sides and tall shoulders and Burgundy bottles have gently sloping shoulders<sup>15</sup>

"Enclosure" is the term used in the wine industry to refer to a stopper, the object used to seal a bottle. The issue of wine enclosures is a huge and much debated topic within the field of wine and wine marketing. However, in regard to the present thesis the wines in question will only be described as having 'Screw cap' or 'Sealed, natural cork'.

As it will be revealed later, the focus of the interviewees was, in fact, not if the wines had a natural cork, but rather if it did not!

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<sup>15</sup> <http://www.thewinedoctor.com>

## Transcription of the Interviews

In focus groups interviews, where the objective is to get the interviewees to engage in an informal discussion and thereby share experiences, many sidetracks and personal accounts will inevitably be made, which have no direct connection to the question posed or the problem formulation that lays behind the interview. Therefore, according to Bryman (2008), it is acceptable to not transcribe these passages, which are unlikely to be fruitful for the later analysis. That is why there are certain passages in the transcripts<sup>16</sup> of the interviews that were chosen not to transcribe. Instead, a short paragraph was made explaining what was said and done in the missing passage.

The focus groups interviews are transcribed word by word in order to avoid paraphrasing and thereby ending up with misleading empirical data. Regrettably, this entails that some sentences made by the interviewees might initially be difficult to understand for the reader. However, this was considered to be a necessary sacrifice as it was found to be the only way to ensure the true meaning of the interviewees' statements.

In the transcripts, a pause made by an interviewee is indicated with this symbol (...). When an interviewee says øhh, arh, øhm or other small sounds it will be indicated with this symbol (øhh). When something is inaudible it will be indicated with the Danish word (uhørligt).<sup>17</sup> When the interviewee makes a movement or points to e.g. a bottle this will be written in a [...] When a specific word is – or sentence – is underlined by the interviewee's voice the word – or sentence – is written in *italic*.

Because Danish is the first language of all the selected interviewees and because the interviewer adhere to the belief that answering in one's native tongue ensures the most nuanced and precise answers as well as reduce the possibility of language barriers and misunderstandings, both of the focus group interviews were conducted in Danish.

So when quoting the interviews in the analysis, the statements will be translated into English with caution to neither losing nor altering the original meaning.

The reader should note that quotations from members of the first focus group interview

**Dinner Club Junior** will be indicated with the abbreviation DCJ, whereas statements from the

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<sup>16</sup> The transcripts can be found the Appendix

<sup>17</sup> *Inaudible* in English

members of the second interview **Dinner Club Senior** will be indicated with the abbreviation DCS. The number of the line(s) will likewise be indicated when quoting from the transcripts.

During the analysis quotes from both interviews will be employed at the same time. One could have chosen to separate the analysis in a way where the viewpoints from the **Dinner Club Junior** separate from those from the **Dinner Club Senior**. However, for the present thesis and its overall problem statement and research questions it would make little sense to do so. All of the interviewees – from both groups – reinforce each other's statements and due to the fact that a big part of this thesis is to examine and analysis the difference between these two groups and their attitudes towards wine packaging it was found most natural as well as interesting to analyse both focus group interviews together.

## Hermeneutics

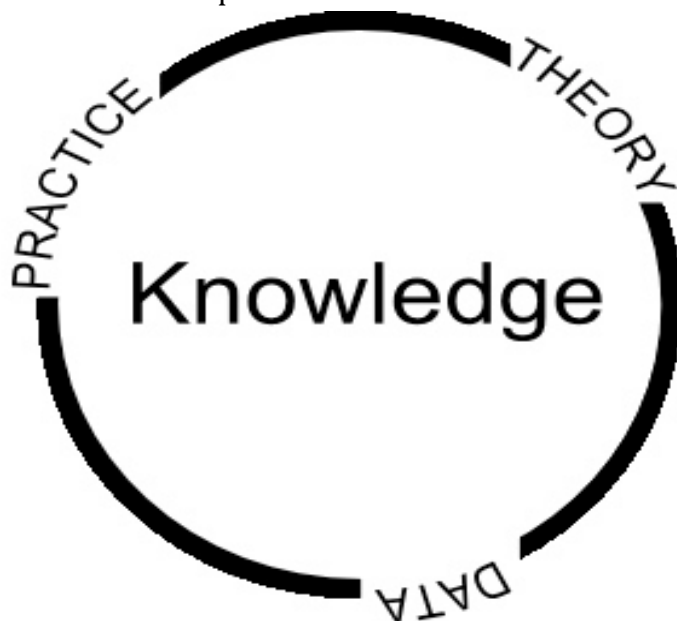
Hermeneutics is the theory and practice of interpretation. The name is derived from Hermes, the Greek messenger of legend who bore knowledge and understanding between the gods and mortals. In the 17th century, hermeneutics became associated with the interpretation of text, particularly in the context of biblical studies. Since then, a number of theologians and philosophers such as Dilthey, Gadamer, Heidegger, Ricoeur, and Schleiermacher have argued for, elaborated on, and developed variations of hermeneutic philosophy and subsequent methodologies. Schleiermacher has been acknowledged as the founder of modern hermeneutics, moving beyond the illumination of biblical text to the illumination of human understanding (Paterson & Higgs, 2005).

As it has been mentioned earlier, this thesis adheres to the interpretive paradigm where the central goal is:

*“to seek to interpret the world, particularly the social world, (and where) knowledge ... comprises constructions arising from the minds and bodies of knowing, conscious and feeling beings ... generated through a search for meaning, beliefs, and values, and through looking for wholes and relationships with other wholes.” (Higgs, 2001, p.49)*

## The Hermeneutic Circle

Perhaps the most well known aspect of hermeneutics is the hermeneutic circle, whereby the researcher attempts to understand: *“the whole through grasping its parts, and comprehending*



*the meaning of the parts divining the whole” (Crotty, 1998, p.92).*

In practice this involves repeatedly and cyclically moving between the parts or aspects of the phenomenon and the whole, with the objective of gaining a growing understanding of the phenomenon (Paterson & Higgs, 2005).

Using the concept and practice of the hermeneutic circle, researchers recognize that the phenomenon or

object of comprehension is understood as a whole because its parts are integrated in the

whole and define it. At the same time researchers recognize how the world contextualizes each of the parts, seeking to illuminate the phenomenon within its context. The process involves an examination of the parts, defining each component before it is reintegrated into the whole (Paterson & Higgs, 2005).

The German philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer believed that the hermeneutic circle of interpretation is never closed but is ongoing, with movement of understanding from the whole, to the part, and back to the whole. Gadamer introduced the concept of understanding research findings through a fusion of horizons, by which the historical horizon of the past and the present horizon of the current interpreter bridge the gap between the familiar and the unfamiliar (Paterson & Higgs, 2005). In the present thesis, the historical horizon is the material found in the existing literature on topics related to the overall problem statement. The present horizon is the text in the form of transcribed interviews, embedded in the emerging interpretation of the researcher.

Gadamer's approach to hermeneutic is particularly interesting because of the use of question and answer in text analysis:

*"The logic of question and answer is special to the hermeneutic sciences ... they do not build generalizations from particulars in a linear, incremental, and inductive manner, but rather begin with the whole, the general, the prediction and work toward the part and then return to the whole again." (Weinsheimer, 1985, p.22)<sup>18</sup>*

This approach plays a major role in the present thesis, not least in regards to the analysis of the empirical data. According to Yin (2003):

*"Data analysis consists of examining, categorizing, tabulating, testing or otherwise recombining both quantitative and qualitative evidence to address the initial propositions of a study" (Yin, 2003, p.109).*

For the analysis of this thesis, the transcribed interviews were read closely and repeatedly in order to attain a deeper understanding of the data and the topics being explored. Then common themes were identified along with supporting quotations to produce answers. By understanding these themes/parts individually and at the same time always keeping the whole as a frame of reference, the parts could be put together in order to create a new whole.

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<sup>18</sup> Paterson & Higgs, 2005, p. 346

With the conclusion of the methodical section wherein the epistemological and ontological considerations, the theoretical framework, the data collection and analysis have been presented, it is time to review the theory used for the present thesis.

The theoretical framework was used to formulate the majority of the questions for the two focus group interviews, as well as to analyse its findings and results in the principal section of the thesis – the analysis.

## **THEORY**

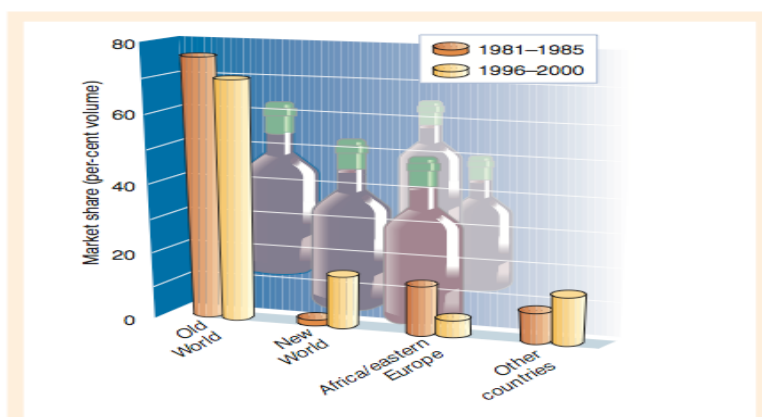
The first part of this section presents an account of the French, as well as the general, wine market. This information will serve as a frame of reference throughout the thesis.

The second part of the theoretical section will present the theory used in order to answer the problem formulation.

### **New World Wine Countries**

New World wine countries is the term used about the countries that produce wine outside the traditional wine-growing areas of Europe: Australia, Argentina, Chile, New Zealand and South Africa all fall under this category of wine countries.

During the last third of the twentieth century the world wine market became significantly more competitive. Consumption declined in the traditional wine producing and consuming countries, while competition emerged from New World nations.



In 2001, France, Italy and Spain combined produced slightly more than half of all the world's wine, but in the past 30 years their own per capita consumption has fallen 40–50%, leading to an oversupply of Old World wine (Bisson et al., 2002)

Denmark, whose consumption of wine is relatively high per capita, has in particular welcomed New World wines. In 2008 Chile became the biggest supplier of wine to the Danish market. A position otherwise held by France - one of the world's oldest wine countries.

According to Ole Paustian, deputy chairman for VSOD,<sup>19</sup> New World wines appeal to the Danish consumers because of their light sweetness and taste of fruit. Henrik Dahlgaard, purchasing manager of wine in Dansk Supermarked, believes that wine from New World countries has become such a commercial success in Denmark, because of the change in wine consumption among the Danes:

*“Earlier, wine was something you would drink with a meal, and it therefore had to stand well with meat and a greasy sauce. Today, wine is increasingly something that you drink without food - maybe even while you're lying on the couch and eating Matador Mix<sup>20</sup>”<sup>21</sup>*

One of New World wines' biggest strengths is their ability to meet the demand of cheap wines that taste good and which are easy to “understand”. For a long time it was quite difficult to find a decent cheap everyday wine, and winemakers from new wine nations glimpsed an opportunity of exploiting this product category. They did so by creating wine that was cheap, tasty and reliable and they branded their wines by using:

*“ (...) the name of the producer [...] the ‘brand’ that signals something to the consumer about the quality of the product.”<sup>22</sup>*

Australia was one of the first New World countries to use branding as a way to market its wine. Names like Jacob's Creek, Lindemans, Penfolds and Rosemount are all examples of well-known Australian wine brands. Wine from old wine countries with a rich traditional heritage has traditionally been marketed based on geography. However, the focus of New World wine is not on the place of production (vineyard or region) or the ‘sense of place’ (regional influences such as cultural and viticulture), but much more on winemaking style. The degree of marketing also causes for a huge difference between the old and the New World wines. New World wine is produced in the sorts of quantities to match the demand, whereas old world wine, for a long time, was made without any consideration for the market.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> The Wine & Spirits Organisation in Denmark (Vin & Spiritus Organisationen i Danmark)

<sup>20</sup> Danish sweets

<sup>21</sup> <http://livsstil.guide.dk>

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.wineanorak.com>

<sup>23</sup> *ibid.*

The following will give a presentation of one of the world's oldest and most important wine countries: France. It is meant to provide the reader with an overview of the most significant differences between France and New World wine countries' attitudes towards winemaking.

## **French Wine: Traditions & Regulations**

France is a country with long-rooted traditions of wine drinking and historical heritage. However, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century things started to change for the French wine industry. The domestic wine consumption is on decline, and in terms of exports French winemakers are also losing market shares all over Europe. This is also the case in one of the country's traditionally most loyal export markets: Denmark.

Since the 1970s French wine has been the preferred in Denmark and was once market leader commanding two thirds of the Danish wine market. However, for the first time, in 2008, France lost its leading position as the country exporting most wine to the Danish consumers.

Nr. Import fordelt på lande	mio. liter	Markedsandel	mio. liter	Markedsandel
1. Chile	31,3	15,9%	28,2	14,0%
2. Frankrig	29,8	2008 15,2%	39,6	2007 19,6%
3. Australien	25,9	13,2%	25,1	12,4%
4. Italien	24,5	12,4%	28,2	14,3%
5. Spanien	20,3	10,3%	22,7	11,3%
6. Sydafrika	15,2	7,7%	12,9	6,4%
7. Tyskland	14,2	7,2%	11,5	5,7%
8. Argentina	9,1	4,6%	8,8	4,4%
9. USA	6,8	3,4%	7,0	3,5%
10. Portugal	2,4	1,2%	2,8	1,4%
11. Cypern	0,7	0,4%	0,3	0,1%
12. New Zealand	0,7	0,3%	0,7	0,3%
13. Grækenland	0,3	0,2%	0,4	0,2%
14. Mexico	0,0	0,0%	0,1	0,0%
15. Andre	15,6	7,9%	12,9	6,4%
<b>I alt import</b>	<b>197,0</b>	<b>100,0%</b>	<b>200,8</b>	<b>100,0%</b>

*The Danish Wine Import*

*Source: V.S.O.D. based on data from Statistics Denmark*

It is important to note that within the fine wine category French wine has nothing to fear – here they are still considered to be at the top of the scale.<sup>24</sup>

This can be established when looking at the statistics of Danish wine import where it is demonstrated that French wine is still market leader in Denmark in terms of value.

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.wineanorak.com>

		2008			2007			2008 ifht. 2007
		Liter	Kroner	Kr/L	Liter	Kroner	Kr/L	Prisændring i pct.
1	Chile	31.287.126	382.150.294	12,21	28.178.730	326.969.573	11,60	5,26%
2	Frankrig	29.847.165	756.226.175	25,34	39.558.787	891.511.173	22,54	12,43%
3	Australien	25.909.973	378.250.738	14,60	25.061.377	310.905.047	12,41	17,68%
4	Italien	24.507.277	695.955.035	28,40	28.180.843	709.922.760	25,19	12,73%
5	Spanien	20.325.011	270.384.992	13,30	22.680.803	305.429.680	13,47	-1,21%
6	Sydafrika	15.212.659	205.194.352	13,49	12.847.479	179.704.646	13,99	-3,57%
7	Tyskland	14.190.221	153.444.266	10,81	11.457.638	122.704.658	10,71	0,97%
8	Argentina	9.109.275	133.188.300	14,62	8.790.386	125.684.569	14,30	2,26%
9	USA	6.785.510	87.219.179	12,85	6.958.647	92.771.196	13,33	-3,59%
10	Portugal	2.428.247	37.657.873	15,51	2.749.450	41.139.137	14,96	3,65%
11	Cypern	727.058	10.521.159	14,47	273.371	1.906.312	6,97	107,52%
12	New Zealand	661.131	26.807.927	40,55	645.684	26.822.914	41,54	-2,39%
13	Grækenland	321.231	5.303.041	16,51	426.809	6.155.520	14,42	14,47%
14	Mexico	44.395	1.226.456	27,63	55.478	1.414.257	25,49	8,37%
	Andre	15.593.347	275.823.324	17,69	12.900.440	199.831.026	15,49	14,19%
	<b>I alt import</b>	<b>196.949.626</b>	<b>3.419.353.111</b>	<b>17,36</b>	<b>200.765.922</b>	<b>3.342.872.468</b>	<b>16,65</b>	<b>4,27%</b>

Prices for Imported Wine

Source: V.S.O.D. based on data from Statistics Denmark

However, the change in the consumption of wine and the introduction of wines from New World countries has resulted in France's loss of market shares in the cheaper wine category.

Experts within the field of wine and wine marketing all point to the French winemakers' inability to market their products to match the new wine consumers in the way their competitors from New World wine countries are doing it:

*"Whereas France has historically considered its wines to be products of various regions (Burgundy, Bordeaux, Médoc), other major wine markets frequently market wines as products of specific grape types (Chardonnay, Merlot, Cabernet, among many others)."*<sup>25</sup>

The new tendency of market wine by grape types instead of regions is claimed to be a hard adjustment for the old and traditional wine countries. However, when looking at one of the world's oldest wine countries Italy one will learn that Italian winemakers do not have tradition for systematising their wines. Historically, Italian wine has been sold as bulk wine without specification of either origin or producer. Besides, there have been a number of scandals<sup>26</sup> connected to Italian wine over the last couple of years, which has demonstrated a focus on quantity rather than on quality.<sup>27</sup>

This subject would be interesting to examine further, but it is without relevance to the overall topic of the present thesis. Therefore, focus will be placed on another old wine country with a

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.france24.com>

<sup>26</sup> <http://ekstrabladet.dk>

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.vinlex.dk>

proud wine tradition such as France. French wine has traditionally been marketed by its origin, so the change in marketing made by the new wine counties has caused problems for French winemakers' traditional mindset. On top of that, there are also laws and regulations in France that act as a barrier for the export of French wine.

### **The AOC System**

The AOC system (in French, Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée)<sup>28</sup> is a control system implemented by a committee of French authorities and winemakers back in 1935. AOC is a guarantee for name and origin, but the term also means that the wine is produced according to local custom solid traditions. There are rules about the use of certain grape varieties and their care, the size of the vintage and the minimum content of alcohol. AOC can cover an entire area as Bordeaux, a sub-district as Médoc or a municipality as Margaux. In France, more than 467 wine names are covered by AOC rules. The smaller the wine district, the harder the requirements – For instance, are the requirements for Margaux stricter than those of Bordeaux. However, a taste panel, composed of national and local experts, must every year approve all AOC wines<sup>29</sup>.

### **Terroir**

The underlying philosophy of the AOC is the importance of "terroir". In short it is the notion that certain wine sites have specific characters that transmit themselves to a wine. Even though, geography and geology are proven to affect wine flavour, experts claim that the French overstate the influence of the vineyard site and downplay the role of the winemaker. The French assumption is that great wine is a consequence of a great vineyard site and that all the winemaker has to do is allow this greatness to show by not interfering too much. This leads to the belief that a set of production standards, as stipulated by AOC regulations, will result in wine of character and quality that is typical of the AOC in question.<sup>30</sup>

The valuable function of the AOC system is thus to ensure product authenticity and preserve diversity, however it is argued that there is great problems with the system. A survey done in the town of Angers (France) with a generally well-educated population revealed that 95.7% of

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<sup>28</sup> Can be translated as " Appellations of Controlled Origin "

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.vinlex.dk>

<sup>30</sup> <http://www.wineanorak.com>

respondents had little to poor knowledge of the AOC system (Gamble & Taddei, 2007). With more than 467 appellations of controlled origin, inexperienced consumer might find it really difficult to navigate through that many AOCs. In 2002 the Audit Controller General Jacques Berthomeau stated that:

*"(...) too many of the designations of whatever kind on a wine label are unknown to buyers and many of them are illegible at the point of purchase."*(Gamble & Taddei, 2007, p. 135)

### **The French Labeling System**

French winemakers have used the AOC system to market their wine by focusing on region of origin and place of production. As it is believed that the association of brand with region of origin can strengthen brand identity and contribute to brand equity (Durrieu, 2008) it is not surprising that many French winemakers feel very protective of their AOCs and struggle to get their AOCs officially approved. However, winemakers producing wines that bear AOC sign are not allowed to make any technical interventions to improve their wine without approval of INAO<sup>31</sup> (Gamble & Taddei, 2007). Thus, new world countries which do not have a comparable protected designations of origin system, for example Australia, are free to make technological changes in wine production processes which may lead to competitive advantage in a fiercely competitive wine industry (Gamble & Taddei, 2007).

The following part of the theory section will review, in detail, the theoretical framework used to gather the empirical data as well as to answer the problem formulation of the thesis.

### **The Importance Of Wine Packaging**

*"In wine marketing, packaging plays an integral part in delivering information and a manufacturer's promise."*

- Thomas & Pickering (2003, p. 60)

A wine's packaging, consisting of several inter-related factors (e.g. bottle shape, colour and labels) interacts with consumers' varying experience and knowledge of wines, and can have great influence on the decisive purchase decision. Although there are consumers who know exactly which wine they want based on their experience, or the wine's variety, region, or

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<sup>31</sup> "Institut National des Appellations d'Origine" – the institute which governs wine production processes

maker, there are also the consumers who are uncertain when making a wine choice and use a bottle's labels to satisfy their information requirements. The information on the labels is meant to act as an aid to the purchase decision (Thomas & Pickering, 2003).

Purchase behaviour can be influenced by the manner in which information is presented and by the way it is perceived or processed. It is also guided by the extent to which various information elements are available and used (Thomas & Pickering, 2003).

Wine consumers are exposed to a variety of information sources and these are recognised as important because consumers use information to minimise uncertainty when buying wine. Mitchell and Greatedorex (1989) established that consumers experience different forms of risk in buying wine. To cope with these risks, consumers seek information, become brand loyal, trust others (e.g. a sales person) or a well-known brand and use price as an indicator. The issue of 'trusting others' in relation to a wine purchase has been examined further by Chaney (2000) who attests that the influence of friends and family is found to be a strong and trustworthy influence.

### **The Importance Of Wine Label Information**

*"Consumers may decide to make their wine choice primarily on the basis of the objective characteristics (appearing on the label of the wine bottle)"*

*- Combris et al. (1997, p. 401)*

Several authors (Shaw et al., 1999; Jennings & Wood, 1994; Kidd, 1993; Lochshin & Rhodus, 1993; Cawley, 1992) have commented on the importance of labels and the role they play. More recently, Charters et al. (2000) have examined wine course students' attitudes to wine bottle back labels. They found that back labels were seen as interesting, providing useful information and received variable use in purchase decisions.

Crawford (1985) established a number of positioning statements that identified product information. His work centred on a positioning typology based on product features, benefits and surrogates. Surrogate information suggests that a product is better or different from others on the basis of it being unequalled, from a respected source, or endorsed by a respected personality. Shaw et al. (1999) adapted Crawford's work and applied it to wine

label information as positioning statements. These positioning statements consist of seven, consolidated pieces of information found on front and back wine labels (Thomas and Pickering, 2003)<sup>32</sup>.

1. Attributes: *The features or benefits of a wine. The information describes the character of the wine in terms of how it appears, smells or tastes.*
2. Nonpareil: *A reflection of quality in that the product is without equal, unrivalled or unique.*
3. Parentage: *This reflects history of the growing region or the history of the winemaker. Sub-categories include brand, company or person.*
4. Manufacture: *This is how the product was made including sub-categories of process, ingredients, and design.*
5. Target end-user: *This identifies who the product was made for in terms of a person type.*
6. Target end-use: *The identification of the types of situations or end uses for which the product was made.*
7. Endorsements: *This highlights expert opinions or the recognition of awards and medals.*

Thomas and Pickering (2003) used the framework of Shaw et al. (1999) for their study on the importance of wine label information. Out of the seven positioning statements derived from Shaw et al. (1999) Thomas and Pickering (2003) identified 11 pieces of information. Four pieces were derived by 'parentage' (wine region, wine maker, brand name, wine company) and two information elements were found within 'end use' (type of situation and how a wine should be used).

The somewhat peculiar 'type end user' from Shaw et al.'s framework has, in the study of Thomas and Pickering, been changed into 'type of person wine would appeal', which is more comprehensible. The two authors also translated the French word 'nonpareil' into English by using the words 'unique' and 'unrivalled'. The two authors kept the last three pieces from Shaw et al.'s original framework, being 'a wine's attributes', 'endorsements' and 'manufacture'.

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<sup>32</sup> Thomas and Pickering, 2003, p. 61

Besides the 11 pieces of information derived by Shaw et al. (1999) Thomas and Pickering also included three other information elements to their list of information on label items<sup>33</sup>.

1. Wine company
2. Wine brand name
3. Expert opinion, awards, medals,
4. Wine's attributes
5. History of winemaker
6. How wine was made
7. History of wine region
8. How wine should be used
9. Image, picture, logo
10. Colours used on labels
11. Alcohol level
12. Unique, unrivalled wine
13. Type of situation wine made for
14. Type of person wine would appeal

The study of Thomas and Pickering was carried out amongst people from a wine distributor's mailing list and staff and students at a tertiary institution. These are people one would assume to have a qualified opinion about wine and wine labels. Had the study been carried out among e.g. a group of industrial workers, it is likely that the results of the study would have been different. Furthermore, it has to be stated that the study was carried out in New Zealand which, as pointed out in the above, is characterized as a New World wine country with much less history and traditions than the old wine countries. The issue of wine packaging and wine label information is therefore given a lot more focus in these new wine countries as:

*"...it's easier for countries with less wine history. They can invent a system for marketing their wine from scratch. They're trying to sell to the entire world. In France, when wine sales first started, the point was to sell to the next village over, and then the next region, and so on."*<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Thomas and Pickering, 2003, p. 65

<sup>34</sup> <http://www.france24.com>

In their study, Thomas and Pickering (2003) also provided space for the respondents to specify other information they felt was important in their wine buying decisions. This resulted in seven additional information characteristics:

1. Grape variety/blend
2. Vintage/year
3. Region information
4. Bottle colour
5. Cellaring information
6. Bottle shape
7. Additional advice

The authors believed this to support the view that label design must be considered within the total packaging context and the social context in which purchase decisions are made (Thomas & Pickering, 2003). Though the study was on wine label information it can appear strange that none of the respondents added the issue of price. One would imagine this to have been different had the study been carried out among a different selection of respondents, who did not have a 'professional relation' to wine but were merely wine consumers.

### **Consumer Self-Confidence in Wine Purchases**

*"Many consumers still find wine selection to be a difficult and uncomfortable activity (...) these wine consumers appear to lack confidence in their decision-making abilities."*

*- Olsen et al. (2003, p. 40)*

Palmer (2001) found that many consumers express high levels of intimidation when it comes to making wine purchases. Consumers often doubt their ability to choose the right appropriate wine for a particular setting, and fear social rejection if the wrong type of wine is selected. However, according to Lockshin et al. (1997) there are consumers who may not know a lot about wine, but are not particularly worried about the negative consequences of making a poor selection. They appear to have high self-confidence that everything will turn out just fine with their selection and, thus wine purchases involve little anxiety.

Olsen et al. (2003) found that this previous research suggested that the construct of self-confidence may be distinct from wine expertise and involvement and is very important in understanding consumer behaviour when it comes to wine consumption. In 2003 they did a study on consumer self-confidence in wine purchases by tailoring the Bearden et al. self-confidence scale for use in a wine-related context, in order to show how the potential usefulness of both the construct and the scale to empirical wine consumer studies (Olsen et al., 2003).

In 2001, the consumer behaviour researchers Bearden, Hardesty and Rose developed and validated a six-dimension scale to measure consumer self-confidence. The scale refers to shopping in general and does not specify a particular category, but Olsen et al. (2003) adapted it to the context of wine purchasing and consumption and named it the WSCS<sup>35</sup>.

Previous research has demonstrated that product involvement interacts with the situation to influence the importance of different criteria being used to select wine. According to Quester and Smart (1998) there are three distinct situations in which self-confidence may impact wine purchases: wine purchases at a restaurant, wine purchased as a gift, and wine purchased for home consumption. Olsen et al. (2003) adapted the generalised self-confidence scale to the wine context and used it to examine the influence of these three situations on consumer self-confidence. Their study demonstrated that the willingness to try a new brand of wine was highest when it was for one's own consumption. During a business dinner or purchased for a present the tendency was to buy a familiar bottle of wine (Olsen et al., 2003).

Though, the study on the issue of self-confidence in wine purchases by Olsen et al. proves to have some eligibility, it should be stressed that the primary purpose of the study, first and foremost, was to adapt, refine, and assess the measurement qualities of the WSCS. The small sample size of the study was adequate for assessing scale properties but not for testing hypotheses (Olsen et al., 2003).

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<sup>35</sup> "Wine Consumer Self-Confidence Scale" - In relation the present thesis the WSCS is beyond the relevance of the problem formulation and it will therefore not be accounted for.

## Consumer Expectations & Risk

*“Consumer behaviour involves risks in the sense that any action of a consumer will produce consequences which he cannot anticipate with anything approximating certainty, and some of which, at least, are likely to be unpleasant.”*

*- Bauer (1960, p. 389)*

The quotation above is Bauer's, now classic, conceptualisation of consumer behaviour and is based on the idea that any choice situation always involves two aspects of risk: the uncertainty of how likely a choice is to be wrong, and the uncertainty of how severe the consequences are if it is. Bauer's theory was that, all things being equal, consumers would purchase those goods which had the least amount of perceived risk associated with them (Bauer, 1960).

According to Bettman (1973), the amount of risk perceived and its importance in the buying decision, is likely to be greater when:

- There is little information about the product category
- There is little experience with brands of a product category
- The product is new
- The consumer has little self-confidence in evaluating brands
- There are variations in quality between brands
- The price is high
- The purchase is important to the consumer

Mitchell and Greatedorex (1993) have examined the risks perceived within wine buying markets, as well as if these risks varied with the place of purchase (on-licence, i.e. restaurants, wine bars, pubs, etc., and off-licence, i.e. supermarkets, wine shops, etc.). Their study showed that consumers experience different forms of risk when buying wine. These risks pertain to functional (taste), social (family and friends), financial (price) and physical (hangover) conditions.

The authors found that the top three perceived risks were:

1. Taste of the wine
2. Whether the wine complemented the meal
3. The approval of family and friends.

The least important risks were whether or not the wine was the best use of one's money, whether people they respected or admired drank the wine, and lastly, the risk of hangover. This emphasis on the functional importance of wine is perhaps not surprising, since the main reasons for purchasing are to drink the wine or add flavour to a meal. This functional importance is reinforced when considering the second most important risk, that of whether the wine complements a meal. The fact that wine is a social drink for social occasions is emphasised in the ranking of social approval as the third most important perceived risk (Mitchell & Greatedorex, 1993).

Much like Olsen et al. (2003) Mitchell and Greatedorex point to the fact that self-confidence plays an important role when it comes to making a wine purchase decision. Using the UK as an example the two authors demonstrate that perceived risk has an effect on wine buying in countries, which are in the introductory or growth phase of their product life cycle for wine. Thus, suggesting that perceived risk would be an important factor in purchasing behaviour in other countries of similar per capita consumption and inexperience with the wine product (Mitchell & Greatedorex, 1993).

The emerge of many new wine countries has created a selection of wine that is bigger than ever and one can only imagine this has increased consumers' uncertainty when buying wine – especially the new wine consumers who are only at the beginning of the experience curve (Mitchell & Greatedorex, 1989).

### **New Generation of Wine Consumers**

*“For most of the industry, the target market has been the Baby Boomer generation. However, a new generation is taking the wine industry by storm and making wine marketers rethink their strategies.”*

*- Wolf & Thomas (2007, p.17)*

Mckinna (1987) used the topic of consumer expectation/risk in relation to wine purchase in order to segment the Australian wine market. The study identified four major segments:

### **1. Connoisseurs:**

- The wine knowledgeable segment, the primary purchasers of fine wines. These people consume wine on a regular (daily) basis. They have a broad spectrum of tastes and like to experiment, although adoption of new tastes may be slow. They are brand-loyal, have strong preferences and make their decisions in advance of purchase. These consumers see wine education as a hobby, read wine journals and are not price-sensitive.

### **2. Aspirational Drinkers:**

- Members of this segment are concerned with the social aspect of wine drinking. They purchase fashionable wine styles and are attracted to the more fashionable brands and labels. Brands act as symbols of status and for reassurance. These buyers are highly risk-averse and will spend considerable time in the search process. They will often need the confidence of the retail assistant and will therefore choose outlets dependent on convenience and their confidence in the retail stall.

### **3. Beverage Wine Consumers:**

- These are avid wine consumers with little desire to appreciate wine. They are loyal to a wine style and are not prepared to experiment. They buy wines in an impersonal supermarket environment. They are brand-loyal to a range of “safe brands”, where choice is dependent on a consistent taste, price and price-related promotions.

### **4. New Wine Consumers**

- These are the young people who are attracted to wine based on the behaviour of their parents or peer group. Preferences are not yet established but sparkling wine and coolers may feature strongly in the choice of product consumed. They are strongly influenced by the occasion where wine may be consumed. They are unsophisticated and have limited parameters for choice, but often use price as a determinant for purchase.

As pointed out earlier, one efficient way to help consumers ease their uncertainty in regard to a wine purchase is to provide them with information about the product. In the present thesis it is the packaging and the label that are being considered as the most important sources of information about a wine. This next, and last, part of the theory section will explore the issue of information in regard to a wine consumer's decision-making process.

## Consumer Behaviour

*"[...] individuals or groups acquiring, using , and disposing of products, services, ideas, or experiences."*

*- Arnould et al. (2003, p. 9)*

The purchase decision process is the stages a consumer passes through in making choices about which products and services to buy.

There are five stages of Consumer Behaviour:



As consumers do not necessarily go through all five steps, the model is meant as an idealized version of how the buying decision process works (Reidick, 2003).

In his study from 2003 Reidick examined how a wine's label could affect consumers purchase decision. He found that the most important stages that have impact on consumers during the decision making process in regard to wine are:

- Information Search
- Evaluation of Alternatives
- Product Choice

### Information Search

Perception is an important concept in the second stage of the decision process. Perception in general is the process by which people select, organize and interpret information from the outside world. The perceptual selection works as a filter to draw the individual's attention to those messages that speak to his current need. As a result, it is important that there is information about the product available when consumers are at the stage of information search and that it is placed where they are likely to search (Reidick, 2003).

According to Reidick (2003) there are several major channels for wine marketers to reach their consumers:

- Specialty wine shops (expertise)
- Brochures & Catalogues (helpful information)

- Print advertising & TV (the mere exposure effect)
- The label itself (attract attention)

## **Evaluation of Alternatives**

Another possibility for attracting and influencing consumers occurs in the next step of the decision process, the evaluation of alternatives, as the consumer uses his set of evaluative criteria to narrow down the alternatives and thus to finally decide which product to purchase. Reidick (2003) also suggests that the design of a wine bottle/label can serve as a criterion almost as important as price and the country of origin:

*"[...] it might be a top criterion itself or at least simplify the decision between otherwise identical products." (Reidick, 2003, p. 22)*

Reidick (2003) argues that the issue of the design is particularly important for consumers who have a "good eye". Bloch et al. (2003) proved that there are consumers who have a "good eye", a higher level of response to visual design aspects of products that strongly affected their product preferences and post-purchases satisfaction. For consumers with a "good eye" it is a source of positive feelings when they are confronted with good design. However, as Reidick also states:

*"It seems impossible to think of all the groups and subgroups of consumers and their various sets and hierarchies of evaluative criteria." (Reidick, 2003, p.22)*

Due to individual differences, it is extremely difficult to predict the evaluative criteria of consumers. Furthermore, they are not stable but can change with every purchase (Reidick, 2003). Reidick goes back and forth on which criterion is most important – price or design. He states that there is a strong need for good design on wine bottles as they help to sell the product, since the majority of consumers has no expertise in wine whatsoever and therefore relies on visual cues as well as the written information on the wine labels. But at the same time Reidick acknowledges that a well-designed good can be easily beaten by the price:

*"For many people, the price of a product has a higher rank in their evaluative criterion hierarchy than the design, so it is quite usual to decide for a cheaper product, although, on the same time, one acknowledges the superior design of the more expensive good." (Reidick, 2003, p. 22)*

Though Reidick's points in the above-mentioned make good sense it should be noted that Reidick does not base his statements on any specific research, which is why his study lacks objectivity and can only be characterised as somewhat generalising.

### **Purchase Decision**

In this step, the product choice and the final purchase decision is made. A consumer with a very clear idea of his evaluative criteria might come to a completely rational decision after going through the third step in the process. In a deliberate attempt to find the best match to his criteria, he compares the alternatives and purchases the best fitting product. If the most important criterion was price or a special winery - the design of the wine bottle is of little relevance - all that counts is that his specific criterion is met (Reidick, 2003).

However, for a consumer who is not exactly sure about what his evaluative criteria are and who finds it difficult to juggle all the product characteristics, wine marketers still have a chance of influencing the consumer in his purchase decision. According to Reidick marketers have to understand choice heuristics used by consumers and consequently provide communication that encourages brand decision:

*"If a marketer wants to stress the high quality of his product, he might emphasize the long history of the winery and moreover give the customer a visual clue by printing a seal on the label or using ancient type lettering. A consumer looking for a qualitatively good wine might think to himself: "Well, a winery that has been making wine for over 60 years can't be bad." and buy the bottle. " (Reidick, 2003, p. 23)*

Though Reidick cannot definitively conclude that the packaging of a wine can determine a consumer's purchase decision as there will always be strong interpersonal differences in consumer response, he is convinced that:

*"[...] the design of a wine bottle consisting of the label, typography and shape and colour, indeed will be a good help in their decision" (Reidick, 2003, p. 24)*

Like with all other products, the perceived visual difference helps a wine bottle to stand out against its competitors and can in fact, sometimes, be the only existing difference between the products. The label is an important communication tool providing the consumer with a message about a good that everybody wants to have but few know about (Reidick, 2003).

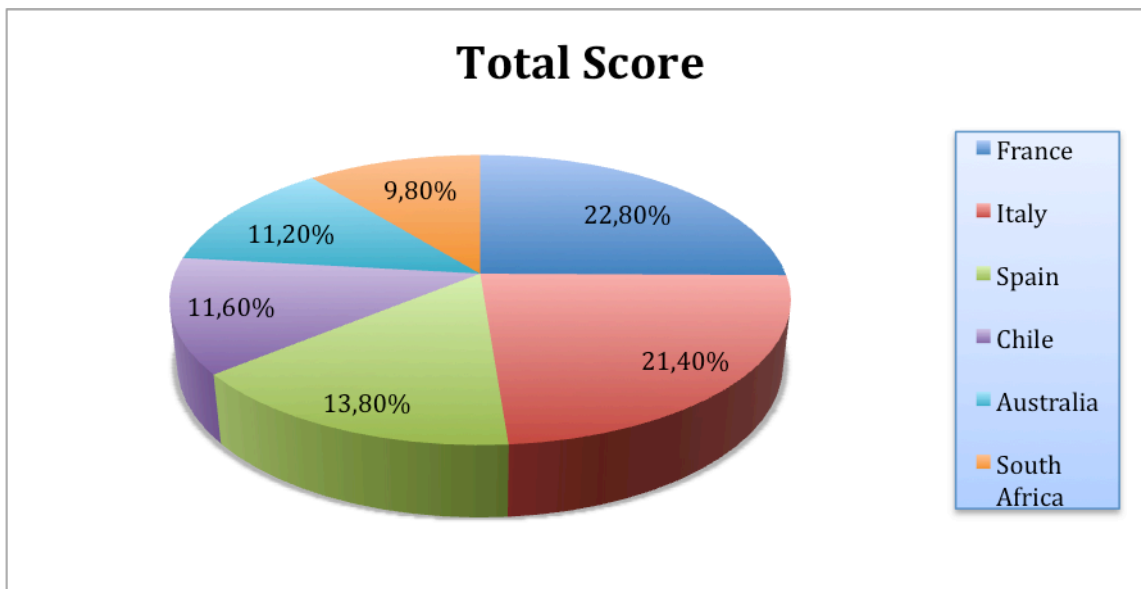
With this, the analysis will commence wherein all of the factual data, the theoretical framework and the empirical gatherings will be used in order to answer the problem formulation, which is the following: *to which extend does the packaging of a bottle of wine affects consumers' wine purchase decision?*

## ANALYSIS

In this section, the theoretical framework and the empirical data collected through the two focus group interviews will be employed in order to gain understanding of the overall problem statement. The previous sections of the thesis have presented the ontological and epistemological stances, and naturally these will influence the way the empirical data will be analysed. All of the above, as well as the many factual data presented earlier, will form the foundation of the analysis. There will be no sub-conclusions in the analysis, but the overall conclusion can be found in the section following this analysis.

### People Buy the Wine, Not the Bottle – Don't They?

As it will be used as a frame of reference throughout the analysis, this first thing that will be presented and evaluated on is the interviewees' positioning of the seven wine bottles.



The figure above shows how the interviewees from both focus group interviews ranked the wine bottles from a scale to 1-7 (7 being the highest). The French wine bottle is ranked as number one, closely followed by Italy in second place. It would then seem that the wine bottles from the old traditional wine countries still rank higher, based on the physical

appearance of the bottles, than their competitors from new wine producing countries. As the interviewees were not allowed to carefully examine the bottles during the process of ranking the wine bottles, it is then only the issue of the wine's packaging that is at play. The question of information on the bottle does not figure in the total score of the wine bottles. The two major elements of a wine's packaging consist of bottle shape and label (Thomas & Pickering, 2003). In regard to the shape of the bottles interviewee i4 made an interesting observation:

*"It's kind of funny [...] because I did in fact not consider the shape of the bottle when I chose which ones were pretties, but we have all chosen the two chubby bottles ..."* (DCJ, 189-191)

When interviewee i1 is talking about the chubby bottles she is referring to the two bottles categorised as having the "Burgundy" bottle shape - In this case, the Italian and the French wine. Interviewee i4 gives the following explanation as to why she gives the chubby bottles a higher score:

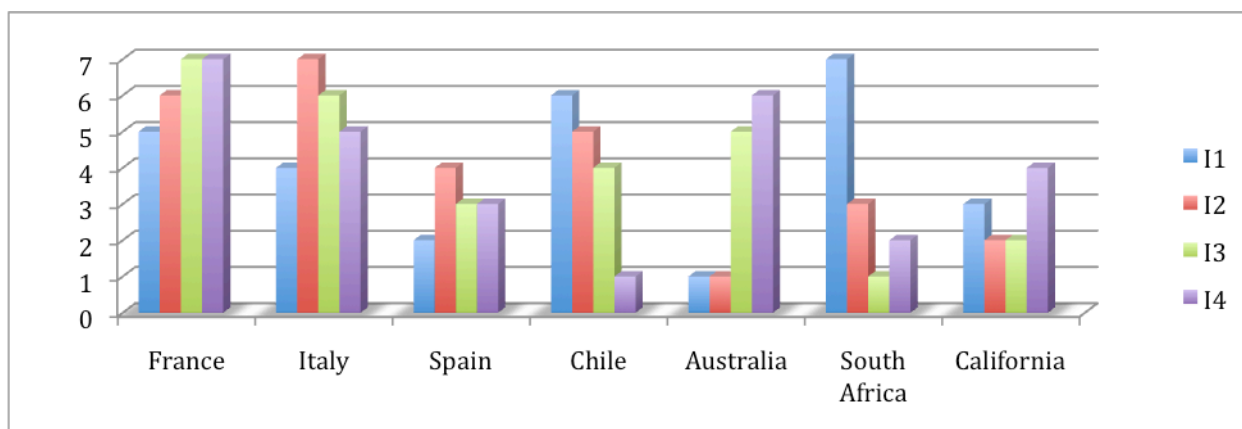
*"It's just because the slender bottles - they are so normal. I mean, a slender bottle with a white label, it's just kind of..."* (DCJ, 192-193)

The interviewees in the second interview (DCS) also noticed the difference in bottle shape when ranking the seven wine bottles and to one of the interviewees this served as an interesting cue:

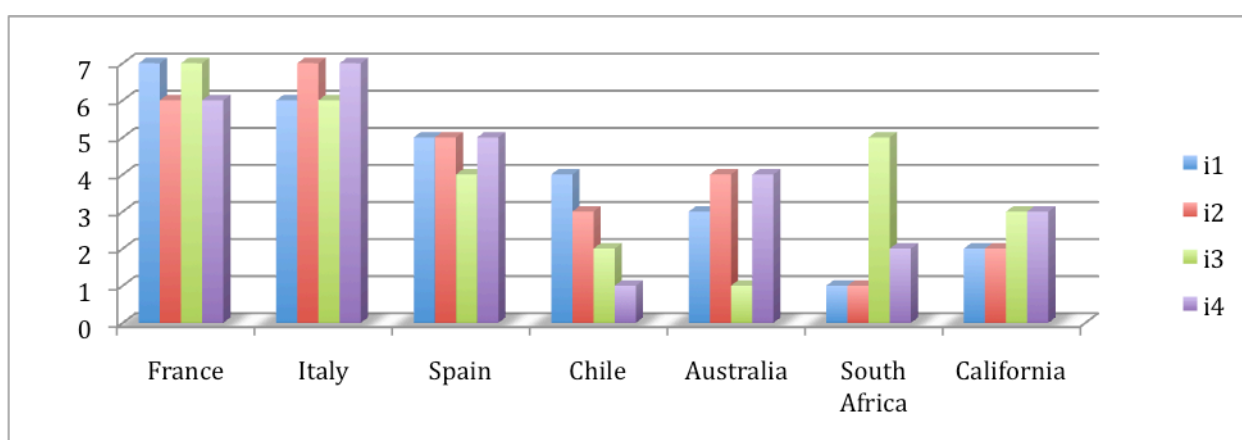
*"The chubby [bottles] - they seem more expensive to me."* (DCS, 321)

As presented by Thomas and Pickering (2003) the shape of a wine bottle is just one of the many interrelated factors. Though this particular element was not included in the two authors' study, they do point to the fact that the interaction between wine label information and the entire wine packaging (particularly label colour and imaging, and bottle colour and shape) provides an interesting area of research.

Though the aim of the present thesis was not to examine the relationship between wine packaging and label information, it is, however, interesting that the two bottles with the "Burgundy" bottle shape are ranked first and second in both interviews, as the two graphs here demonstrate.



*Dinner Club Senior's positioning of the seven wine bottles*



*Dinner Club Junior's positioning of the seven wine bottles*

The importance of the physical appeal of a wine bottle seems to be greater when the wine is not only for oneself:

*"For instance (...) if I am going to throw a birthday party I wouldn't want an ugly wine [bottle]"*  
(DCJ, 56-57)

The front label is of course one of the main attributes of a wine's physical appearance, however, it is difficult to analyse upon this particular element as the response to visual design is strongly influenced by personal preferences (Reidick, 2003). This is evident when two interviewees, from different interviews, discuss the Australian wine's front label:

*"And it's just so boring. For instance, that one [the Australian wine] it's just so typical – I mean, a slender bottle with a white label and black lettering. I would never even pick it up."* (DCJ, 415-416)

*"... It's kind of – a little romantic, it's a typical quality wine label I think. [...] It's a modern classical label, which I think is beautiful graphically."* (DCS, 606-610)

Interviewee I4 from DCS, who made the second comment, was the only male respondent and it would have been interesting to examine if there were more of these sorts of contradictions between male and female respondents' attitudes towards wine labels. However, this falls out of the overall frame for the present thesis and is therefore only a perspective to further research.

Another interesting observation is that the bottles with a label in a different shape also caused for certain interviewees to rank these higher:

*"I made me, I think, choose the one from Spain as my third because it looked different. Actually, I thought that the bottle was different than the boring slender ones but it's really not." (DCJ, 446-448)*

The issue of label and bottle shape is a totally visual matter and it was interesting to see that the topic was well discussed among all of the interviewees. It was demonstrated how the shape of the wine bottle and its label can have obvious appeal and subsequent importance for some consumers.

### **Message on a Bottle**

After examining the respondents' immediate attitudes towards the wines and their physical appearance, this next section will be concentrating on the issue of the information found on the bottles.

When Thomas and Pickering (2003) carried out their study, they found that the information found on the back label, consisting of parentage, endorsements and wine attributes, was the one that had largest influence on consumers' purchasing decision (Thomas & Pickering, 2003). The following analysis and discussion will be based on these findings.

When asked what kind of information the respondents valued to be most important to their wine purchase decision there was almost complete agreement among the youngest group of interviewees, who all pointed to the issue of taste:

*"[...] then I look at the back [of the bottle] and then it has to say that it [the wine] is sweet. And if it says anything about it being dry I will put it down again." (DCJ, 51-52)*  
*"To me, it's most important that it [the wine] is sweet and fruity." (DCJ, 379)*

In the study of Thomas and Pickering (2003) taste falls under the element of wine attributes.

Though 'attributes' was placed on a second place in the study on the importance of wine label information, it should be pointed out that 'company' and 'brand' scored highest in importance. But the two authors had deduced four elements from the original 'parentage' statement (Shaw et al., 1999) and the placement of the last two items ('history of winemaker' and 'history of wine region') caused for 'parentage' to slip to third rank behind 'endorsements' and 'attributes' (Thomas & Pickering, 2003).

Perhaps the reason as to why the respondents from the study by Thomas and Pickering (2003) did not demonstrate a larger interest in the issue of a wine's taste (attributes) is that they were all recognised to fit a wine consumer profile – suggesting that they possess a larger, existing knowledge on wine than the interviewees for the present thesis - at least compared to the youngest group of interviewees.

When looking at the interviewees' attitudes towards the two elements of 'parentage' that score highest in the study of Thomas and Pickering (2003) it would appear that there are yet again differences between the findings of Thomas and Pickering (2003) and those from the conducted interviews for the present thesis.

The respondents in the study by Thomas and Pickering (2003) saw 'wine company' as being the most important item on a wine label. This, however, seemed to cause some contradictions among the two group of interviewees:

*"[...] the fact that it has been [existing] for three generations this wine place and stuff like that – it does do anything for the wine. It's fine that you have some traditions, but it's how it [the wine] taste I am interested in." (DCJ, 271-273)*

*"I think it's nice that it says "Third Generation" [...] and then there is an explanation on the back [label] – what the third generation is all about. [...] and then you get the feeling that you know something about – what this family has made for three generations." (DCS, 552-556)*

It's interesting to note that the quotations here are concerning the Australian wine. Australia was one of the first New World countries to use branding as a way to market its products. Looking an example of the marketing of an Australian wine brand, its facebook page<sup>36</sup>, it is evident just how greatly Australian wines are being branded.

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<sup>36</sup> <http://www.facebook.com/jacobscreek>

It is not so much the wine in the bottle, as the brand and its values that are being highlighted. Wine producers have created a place for their consumers to meet and discuss wine, thus creating a high degree of consumer knowledge and involvement, which is argued to be quite important in relation to the purchase of wine (Olsen et al., 2003).

In this relation it seems important to stress that the study on wine label information by Thomas and Pickering (2003) was carried out in New Zealand. New Zealand is another New World wine country, which one would assume to have a similar marketing strategy as the one of Australia.

When talking about the differences between the front and the back label of a wine bottle it appeared that the youngest group of interviewees shared the feeling that the front label was most important:

*"It kind of important. Because if you are in Føtex, then there are perhaps 100 wines on a shelf, and then you will take the 5 you think are the prettiest, and then out of the 5 you will take the one best suited ..."* (DCJ, 383-384)

*"You would only read [the back label] on the one you think is pretty. Yes, I would never take down a very ugly bottle and think, "Well, maybe it says something good on the back""* (DCJ, 391-392)

This supports the view that the front label is the first line of communication to entice the consumer and it is therefore very important that the characteristics appearing on the label meet certain basic standards yet are visually attractive to stand out from the large number of competing bottles available (Barber & Almanza, 2006). This is further confirmed when looking at some of the interviewees' first choice of wine – strictly based on the physical appearance of the bottles:

*"Then I would buy [...] the Italian one. And that's only because I think it's pretty."* (DCJ, 164)

However, this should not be seen as if the content on the back label is not important. As the following statements will show, the information found on a wine's back label could either cause a positive or a negative attitude towards the wine, thus affecting the purchase decision:

*"But I don't think I would buy this one. [...] There is a lot of text here but it's only three and a half of the lines I need, and there is probably 20 lines. So when I where to grab this I would be like, "No, I can't be bothered reading all this.""* (DCJ, 317-320)

*"I actually think I would buy this one [the South African wine] if I were to read on the back. Even though it scored last because it's not very pretty in the front." (DCJ, 298-299)*

It is important to note that the two quotations above both derive from the youngest of the two interviews. This would suggest that young – or perhaps more inexperienced – wine consumers rely heavily on the information provided by a wine's back label. However, it does not seem to be the element of parentage that is important to these consumers:

*"And then it says something about the 'Nugan' family, which I really don't care about. In fact, that's five lines I have wasted my life reading." (DCJ, 244-245)*

This confirms the results of studies by other researchers: Barber and Almanza (2006) found that wine producers should focus their marketing towards simple back label designs. Labels should have basic information on style of wine (sweet, semi-sweet, or dry), type of grape, location of winery, description of the winery, and food pairings. Barber and Almanza (2006) also suggest that symbolic, figurative and romantic descriptions do not add read value for consumers who are still uncertain about their wine choice. This is backed up by several of the interviewees:

*"But I think it's annoying that there are adjectives. It uses [the word] 'lovely' and stuff like that. I will decide that myself." (DCJ, 249-250)*

*"Well, I would very much like to know if it's a dry wine or if it's a sweet wine [...] and then I really don't care about the atmosphere they are creating." (DCS, 463-466)*

The packaging of a wine can be considered as a quality cue contributing to define the expected quality of a product. According to Chaney (2000), Jennings and Wood (1994) and Reidick (2003), the design of the wine packaging enhances the look of the product and most consumers will consider the package as a direct reflection of the quality of the product. This is confirmed when the interviewees discuss the issue of wine closure and boxed wines:

*"Yes and a screw cap. I would never pick up one like this and look at it." (DCJ, 418)*

*"But [...] when I see bottles with a screw cap, then I think we are in the cheaper end of the scale." (DCS, 358-359)*

*"Sometimes I will buy – what you can call 'pizza wine'. It could be a box." (DCS, 132-133)*

This confirms the view that elements such as screw-top closures, non-glass containers, label logo and design, large formatted bottles or boxed wines indicate a lesser quality product to consumers (Reidick, 2003).

Thomas and Pickering (2003) found that ‘endorsements’, consisting of *expert opinion, awards and medals*, was an important issue, however when examining this particular element among the interviewees for the present thesis, once again a noticeable difference occurs between the young and the older respondents:

*[...] if they [wines] get one of those medals it's often because they are one of those awful dry wines because good wines are often such very dry ones [...]" (DCJ, 349-359)*

*"Well, you do consider a little. It's probably not so bad when there's a little additional label."  
(DCS, 490-491)*

What is interesting to note in this relation, is that Thomas and Pickering found that ‘New Wine Drinkers’ are outside the general pattern and do not place ‘endorsements’ higher than ‘alcohol level’ or ‘attributes’. Thus suggesting that the elements of perceived risk and low confidence are higher within this group of consumers (Thomas & Pickering, 2003).

This topic will be elaborated upon later in the analysis.

This review of the interviewees’ attitudes towards a wine’s packaging has demonstrated that this element is ascribed considerable value by wine consumers in guiding them in their purchase decision.

The back label was proven to have the potential to change consumers’ first immediate perception about the wine by providing useful information. However, all the young interviewees agreed that the importance of the front label was higher than the one of the back label because:

*"The ones [wines] that are ugly at first sight never get the chance to prove themselves [...]" (DCJ, 395)*

The next part of the analysis will examine how the wine ranked highest in terms of physical appearance, the French wine bottle, will handle a closer review.

## It's French – Enough Said

It was demonstrated earlier how the French wine bottle scored the highest score when it came to the physical appearance of the bottles. The interviewees indicated bottle shape and the design of the label as the most important factors. However, when looking closely at the bottle none of the interviewees from the first interview (DCJ) would in fact purchase the wine:

*"I would never buy it [the French wine] because I have no idea what is in the bottle." (DCJ, 222)*

The quotation refers to the fact that the French wine bottle has very little information on its



back label:

*"Well, it does even say (...) I mean it says which castle is from and of course the grape. And the year – which I assume has to be written on a wine. And then it says absolutely nothing else." (DCJ, 218-220)*

It is evident that this lack of information on the back label of the French bottle plays a large role to the interviewees in the first interview:

*"No, it's like with the French one, which is so beautiful on the front and then you turn it around and are told nothing. I would never buy it because you have no idea what is in it (...) Then it doesn't matter how pretty the bottle is." (DCJ, 400-402)*

The interviewees from the second interview do not seem as thrown off by the missing information:

*"Well, I think that if I were to buy this wine [the French] it would be because I know how a Beaujolais wine taste. And then I would buy it for that reason." (DCS, 645-646)*

This would suggest that the older generation of wine consumers possess a greater knowledge about French wine – or simply wine in general.

As it was presented in a previous section of the thesis, France has for many years been the main supplier of wine to the Danish wine market. And it is interesting to see just how influenced all the interviewees were by this fact:

*"[...] when wine started being commonly popular in Denmark [...] back then it was French wine one drank." (DCS, 774-778)*

This particular statement came from the eldest of all of the interviewees, I4, but also among

the youngest respondents France has a well-established reputation as a good old wine country. All of the interviewees named France as the first or second choice when they were asked to mention the countries that first came to mind when talking about wine (DCJ, pp. 1-2).

Theory suggests that there is a relationship between country image and product image. A positive image of a country will tend to lead to positive attitudes towards products from that country (Chaney, 2000). When transferring this to the topic of wine and its country-of-origin, it is interesting to see that many of the interviewees, from both interviews, have a personal positive relation to France and subsequently French wine:

*"I would always choose French [wine] above all else because that's where I am use to travelling.*

*And then it's in your head that that is the best."(DCJ, 153-155)*

*"Well, I am probably more fond of French wines – unconsciously! It's not because I want to support France more than other countries [...] but we have travelled in France, and Vacqueyras – that's the favourite." (DCS, 997-998)*

This could suggest that because France is a popular destination for Danish tourists it is likely to have a positive image, which could be transferred to one of its main export products – wine. Another perspective to further research would be to examine the relationship between country image and product image among Danish wine consumers. Several of the interviewees indicated that their perception of a country would influence the choice of wine:

*"Well, I don't think that I would choose a South African wine [...] because it's kind of far away, right? I don't think I would chose an Australian wine either because I don't really know what it is." (DCJ, 607-609)*

Based on the above mentioned, it seems that French wine has a competitive advantage, as their brand-awareness among the new generation of Danish wine consumers is already relatively high. The young interviewees have different explanations as to why they all recognise France as a good wine country:

*"[...] I have the idea that you always know more when it's closer – I mean, you know more about European things because you live in Europe. [...] So you also know more about European wine." (DCJ, 615-618)*

Another interviewee from the first interview (DCJ) explained how she had been strongly influenced by her father into thinking highly of French wine:

*"[...] but as a rule that it [the wine] should be French because we have always been [travelling] in France and dad he [says], "French wine is amazing." (DCJ, 512-514)*

It would seem that France for many years could simply rely on its reputation as one of the world's greatest wine countries. But with the emerge of the many new wine producing countries, several experts within the field claim that France is now falling behind and losing market shares because of its inability to market its products to the new generation of wine consumers. This group of consumers has more wine options than ever before and has not yet established a personal preference in regard to wine.

According to a French wine business student, Benoît Pétry, one of the most obvious differences between France and the new wine countries, is the way the New World labels its products. It is simple, easy to read and consumer friendly - You do not have to be an expert to know how to read the label<sup>37</sup>. As pointed out in the above, the new Danish wine consumers rely heavily on the information concerning a wine's attributes in particular the taste:

*"I don't want one that is dry and sour." (DCJ, 242)*

And as demonstrated by one of the interviewees, i3, French wine producers are doing themselves a great disservice by counting on their wines to speak for themselves – providing the consumers with very little information about the product:

*"Then I would put it [the French wine] down. I need to know if it's sweet." (DCJ, 241-242)*

### **Parlez-vous Français?**

Perhaps an equal important issue regarding the French wine bottle is that besides lacking helpful information to its consumers, the information found on the bottle, however little it may be, is all written in French:

*"[...] if you know French – but in fact, you would have to because there is zero information on it [the French wine bottle's back label]. There is absolutely none! (DCS, 628-629)*

During the interviews it was revealed that on all the other wine bottles the information was written in English, first and foremost, but also in several other languages. It is interesting to see that none of the respondents from the first interview (DCJ) pointed out the issue of languages when talking about the different wine bottles. Only one interviewee noticed it and had the following to say:

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<sup>37</sup> <http://observers.france24.com>

*"It's important to me that's written in a language I understand." (DCJ, 91)*

Thus, the issue of the information only being available in English – or other languages – was not viewed to be of any particular interest to the young interviewees. However, it did cause for quite a discussion among the respondents from the second interview (DCS):

*"Well, one of the first thing I notice is that you have to speak and read English in order to know what this wine is about." (DCS, 446-447)*

*"Actually is choking how little is in Danish. I have never thought about that before." (DCS, 802-803)*

The fact that none of the young interviewees did not mentioned the issue of language in relation to the French wine could be seen as if the youngest group of interviewees did, in fact, not consider the French text on the bottle as useful information about the wine, as they, unlike the older respondents, do not have an existing knowledge on French wine:

*"'Appellation Morgan Contrôlée.' I have been taught that that is – that it's posh. Well, that's better than if it was a 'vine du table', which is a table wine." [...] "And you would have to know that Beaujolais is a fine wine." (DCS, 617-619 & 639-640)*

This is perhaps one of the most explicit examples on the major difference between the young and the older wine consumer generation. This next part of the analysis will investigate this topic further as well as examine if there is a difference in how new wine consumers value the importance of wine packaging, as opposed to the consumers purchasing wine before the emergence of the New World wine countries?

### **Wine Improves With Age - The Older You Get, the Better You Like It**

Based on McKinna's study from 1987, the interviewees from the two focus group interviews can be categorised as follows:

Interviewees from **Dinner Club Junior** = New Wine Consumers

*"(...) attracted to wine based on the behaviour of their parents or peer group. Preferences are not yet established but sparkling wine and coolers may feature strongly in the choice of product consumed. They are strongly influenced by the occasion where wine may be consumed. They are unsophisticated and have limited parameters for choice, but often use price as a determinant for purchase."*

Interviewees from **Dinner Club Senior** = Beverage Wine Consumers

*"(...) They are loyal to a wine style and are not prepared to experiment. They buy wines in an impersonal supermarket environment. They are brand-loyal to a range of "safe brands", where choice is dependent on a consistent taste, price and price-related promotions."*

The youngest interviewees can then be described as being at the beginning of a wine learning curve. Where they, as pinpointed by McKinna, are strongly influenced by the occasion where wine is consumed and are unsophisticated in their choice of wine:

*"I drink wine to get drunk." (DCJ, 14)*

Mitchell and Grotto (1989) believe that as consumers gain experience and knowledge they feel more able to make a purchase with less risk and this results in their purchasing quality wines of a higher quality. One of the interviewees, i1, is well aware of her role as a New Wine Consumer and explains her choice of buying cheap wine like so:

*"[...] because I'm not an inveterate wine drinker, I do, in fact, not like the good wines." (DCJ, 351-352)*

It is interesting to see the older generation of respondents has also been at this stage of the curve before becoming Beverage Wine Consumers:

*"Yes, but we only drank that one to get drunk." (DCS, 784)*

*"But tell me what has happened to Beaujolais Nouveau, which we drank plenty years back." (...)*

*"That tasted dreadful." (DCS, 963-965)*

Though the respondents from the second interview (DCS) are not categorised as 'conisseurs' it is evident that they have gained greater experience and subsequently greater knowledge about wine. They have developed a certain taste for a particular wine style, country, and or brand. Particularly one of the interviewees, I2, displays great country and brand loyalty towards Rhône wine throughout the interview (DCS, 970-972). According to Barber & Almanza, (2006), the age, income, education level, and number of years drinking wine of consumers all affect their wine purchase decision, and perhaps it is then too late to change the patterns of these consumers. However, the interview with the Beverage Wine Consumers revealed that the topic of wine packaging is not yet a lost cause for this group of consumers:

*"Because I do not know that much about wine, but I would remember the label." (DCS, 383-384)*

This supports the research suggesting that wine producers should continue to further understand exactly what motivates a wine consumer to purchase their brand versus that of a

competitor (Barber & Almanza, 2006).

It has been established that the major difference between New Wine Consumers and the generation before them is that the age and number of years drinking wine has provided the older wine consumers with a general knowledge about wine and they have developed own personal preferences in taste etc.

These consumers have a great focus of the origin of a wine, which is traditionally how most wine has been marketed:

*“Whereas France has historically considered its wines to be products of various regions (Burgundy, Bordeaux, Médoc), other major wine markets frequently market wines as products of specific grape types (Chardonnay, Merlot, Cabernet, or Malbec, among many others)”<sup>38</sup>.*

However, in studying the answers from the youngest of the interviewees it is shown that these New Wine Consumers do not share this point of view. To them, it is sufficient to know simply the country-of-origin:

*“No, but it’s still important where it [the wine] is fro. But I don’t care where in the country, but that’s probably because I don’t get it.” (DCJ, 366-367)*

As discussed previously, it is primarily the taste of a wine that is of importance to the New Wine Consumer and it can be argued that it is more simple knowing how different types of grapes would taste rather than how wines from different regions in the same country. This would also provide a challenge for the French wine industry in order to reach this new group of consumers, as most traditional French wines do not even display the name of the grape on the bottle. And despite a 2004 reform that authorised in France the sale of wine marketed by grape type rather than region, there is resistance to adopting that practice<sup>39</sup>.

The issue of taste being a main concern before the purchase of a wine has been examined by several researchers (Mitchell & Greatedorex, 1989; Mitchell & Greatedorex, 1993; Spawton, 1991), who have concluded that this functional risk is ranked the highest in the order in which consumers perceive risks in the wine buying process.

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<sup>38</sup> <http://www.france24.com>

<sup>39</sup> *ibid.*

## **I Think I'll Take This One... No Wait This One**

Mitchell and Greatedorex (1989) found that the general order of importance of perceived risk in the wine buying process is as following:

1. Functional (taste)
2. Social (family and friends)
3. Financial (price)
4. Physical (hangover)

Though impossible to measure, as the data for the present thesis was gathered through a qualitative approach, all of the interviewees did relate to the same types of risks as demonstrated by Mitchell and Greatedorex (1989). The functional risk of taste was overwhelmingly the most important, as also demonstrated by the many previous quotations. However, what is interesting is that this risk was perceived as even greater in connection with both the second risk of social approval as well as the third concerning price:

*"It depends on if you are buying a wine to drink on a Friday night where you are going out, or if you are buying one to serve with food. If it's just for myself I want something cheap [and] sweet, but if it's for a dinner, then I want one that says, "goes well with fish or red meat"."(DCJ, 67-70)*

It is demonstrated here, how the risk, also mentioned by Mitchell and Greatedorex (1993), of rather or not the wine complements a meal was also a concern for the interviewees. As interviewee i4 stated:

*"It's an overall experience. If you severing food and wine, then the wine can't taste really bad."*  
(DCJ, 78-79)

Both groups of interviewees mentioned the issue of price as a substantial point of concern:

*"Naturally, the price is a contributing factor in deciding which one [wine] to buy." (DCS, 78)*

*"Yes, but also the price. Because if this one is 250 DKK and this one is 50 DKK and I think they are both nice, then I would, in fact, choose the one to 50 DKK." (DCJ, 640-641)*

*"Price is the first thing you consider [...]" (DCJ, 644)*

However, just like in the study by Mitchell and Greatedorex (1989) it appears that the approval of family and friends (the social risk) is perceived as greater than the financial one:

*"Then I have to be sure that what [wine] I buy is decent because it would simply be embarrassing if they think, "Ah, you couldn't have spent 20 DKK more on a bottle of red wine?" (DCJ, 546-548)*

This psychological aspect of the social risk in fearing to make the wrong wine choice can be potentially damaging to the buyer's own self-esteem. This was indicated by several of the young interviewees, who viewed the purchase of a bottle of wine as a very complex and even intimidating experience:

*"[...] there is something posh about wine, so I would be mortified if I bought a red wine and then it just tasted like "rævepis" [a Danish word for a very sour wine] (DCJ, 84-85)*

The least important, or at least the least discussed, risk was the risk of hangover (physical). As one of the young interviewee proclaimed:

*"You get a horrible headache by drinking red wine – no matter which one, I think." (DCJ, 358)*

However, it is interesting to note that the only one of the interviewees from the second interview (DCS), who talked about the physical risk, stated:

*"[...] those 'heavy' wines gives me a headache – so I would like to avoid them." (DCS, 1005-1006)*

Once again, this could prove the difference in wine knowledge among the interviewees, as the youngest interviewee does not realise that certain wines can lead to worse hangovers than others – or the fact that she has not yet gained enough personal experience to know which wines she is more affected by personally.

There are several risk-reducing strategies by which consumers can reduce the amount of perceived risk in relation to a wine purchase.

For the New Wine Consumers who are only at the beginning of the experience curve it would seem that recommendations of family serve as a strong and trustworthy influence in relation to wine purchases:

*"[...] we have always had it [Chilean wine] a lot at my parents." (DCJ, 171-172)*

This, as well as the section about French wine in this analysis, demonstrate how the young group of interviewees has become aware of a particular type of wine based on the knowledge and experience of their parents, and that this source of information is trusted faithfully:

*"[...] then I'll go down to Fakta and then I'll call dad from there." (DCJ, 490)*

As suggested by Olsen et al. (2003) there is great insecurity related to the purchase of a wine. However, in the context of the present thesis this seems mostly true in the case of the young

wine consumers, who possess little personal experience and knowledge in relation to wine. They all express low self-confidence when purchasing wine, but in particular when the wine is to be served for others:

*“And there’s even more [...] anxiety in choosing a wine if you are having grown-ups over, like dad for instance, who cares about wine. And most grown-ups can taste if it’s a good wine or not.”*  
(DCJ, 542-544)

Research suggests that the most logical and straightforward strategy for consumers who experience uncertainty in any purchase decision is to seek information. Besides the powerful source of word-of-mouth consisting of recommendations of family and friends, consumers can also seek information at more formal sources like sales-assistants. However, the respondents from the first interview (DCJ) agree that there is a great difference between the credibility of different sales persons:

*“I have tried in Føtex where I asked a ‘wine man’ and what he said was really true.”* (DCJ, 482-483)

And when the wine is for something as important as a present for one’s mother the need for expertise and credibility is crucial:

*“[...] then I would go to a proper wine store and say, ‘I need to bottles of really good red wine at this and this price – which one should I choose?’”* (DCJ, 568-569)

The issue of wine purchased as a gift has been discussed by researchers (Quester & Smart, 1998) who claim that this particular setting of wine purchase is important to wine marketers. Olsen et al. (2003) build their study on this notion and found that many people would feel uncomfortable selecting a wine for people whom they believe are more knowledgeable about wine than they are. What is interesting to see in this relation is that all the young interviewees would seek help from an expert on wine before purchasing a wine for a gift. However, the older generation of respondents did not feel that choosing a wine for a gift was a particular difficult task:

*“You would always want to give a gift that you like yourself [...] so I would like to give a Vacqueyras to someone I would like to give a nice present.”* (DCS, 836-838)

*“And I would like to give a Ripasso to someone because I like Ripasso.”* (DCS, 842)

That the interviewees from the second interviews (DCS) did not express any particular anxiety in this relation suggests that their self-confidence is higher. They trust their own

personal preference in wine, hence relying on their existent wine knowledge. Knowledge not yet developed among the New Wine Consumers.

## CONCLUSION

The objective of the present thesis was to examine if *the packaging of a bottle of wine affects consumers' wine purchase decision*. In order to gain understanding of this problem statement, two focus group interviews were conducted. The data generated from these interviews was employed in the previous analysis section in order to find the most important and interesting viewpoints among the eight interviewees. By comparing these viewpoints with each other as well as the findings from previous research on wine label information, both agreements and disagreements on certain key topics were highlighted. This section will provide the reader with a conclusion on the findings made throughout the analysis.

The interviewees ranked the French wine bottle highest in terms of physical appearance. According to the interviewees this was done because of the shape of the bottle, which was defined as having a 'Burgundy' shape, as well as the front label:

*"[...] it looks like a typical good wine. And then [it's] a cute bottle." (DCJ, 158-159)*

That this one interviewee categorises the French wine bottle to look like *"a typical good wine"* is interesting when examining the respondents' attitudes towards French wine in general. As stated several times, French wine has always had a good and strong reputation among Danish wine consumers and it seems that the older generation, illustrated by the respondents from the second interview (DCS), has passed on their positive attitudes towards French wine to their children. The respondents from the first interview (DCJ) all expressed brand-awareness in relation to France and wine and several of them pointed to the fact that they would choose French wine due to personal relations:

*"We have been in France all our lives [...] he told me that they [the wines] tasted good and he said Bordeaux [...] I'm hooked." (DCJ, 597-599)*

A study on the relation between country image and product image in relation to wine among Danish consumers was found to be an interesting area for further research.

Despite the youngest interviewees' immediate positive attitude towards the French wine none of them expressed willingness to purchase it, as it did not meet their primary requirement, which was to provide useful information about the wine:

*"It says nothing! It's typical French – LOOK at our castle! And then you don't get any more information because then you should know what it is. That's really bad on the French [bottle]."*  
(DCJ, 214-216)

By investigating the interviewees' need for information about a wine it became evident that there is a big difference in the need for information between the two age groups. The youngest of the interviewees all pointed to the functional element of a wine, as being the most important information about a wine. Should a wine fail to provide this information element none of the interviewees would in fact feel confident buying this wine:

*"I have to know if it's sweet."* (DCJ, 242-242)

Though a couple of the interviewees from the second interview also mentioned the issue of taste, it was very clear that this group of wine consumers had already established personal preferences in relation to wine. They would be able to depend on their existing knowledge about wine when making a wine purchase decision, thus not valuing the information on a wine's attributes equally high as the young group of interviewees.

This supports the research suggesting that given the age, income, education level, and number of years drinking wine of the respondents, wine consumers may have developed a certain taste for a particular wine style, country, and brand, consequently wine producers should continue to further understand exactly what motivates a wine consumer to purchase their brand versus that of a competitor (Barber & Almanza, 2006).

The issue of self-confidence in relation to a wine purchase was examined further by looking at the perceived risks, suggested by previous research, which consumers fear when making a wine purchase decision. Once again the functional risk of taste was overwhelmingly the most important along with the social (approval of family and friends) and financial (price) risks. It was demonstrated that the most popular risk-reducing strategy among the youngest interviewees was to seek information from informal sources such as parents and friends or more formal source such as a wine sales-person.

The two groups of interviewees were categorised, by using the study of McKinna (1987), into New Wine Consumers and Beverage Wine Consumers. From this, it was established that the youngest interviewees were only at the beginning of the wine experience curve and had not yet established any personal references in relation, nor gained a general knowledge on wine unlike the older group of interviewees. This here is the most significant difference between the two age groups.

Even though it was demonstrated that the respondents for the two interviews did not attach the same amount of importance to the same elements of a wine's packaging, it is believed that the results of this thesis has proven that wine consumer are likely to be affected by the packaging of a wine bottle. This knowledge is important to wine producers and wine marketers as it shows that consumers are aware of the physical characteristics of a wine bottle such as shape and closure. However, wine marketers should also be aware of the importance that New Wine Consumers attach to a wine's label. Using it as an important information source and an integral part of the wine purchasing decision:

*"[...] it's like with the French one, which is so beautiful on the front and then you turn it around and are told nothing. I would never buy it because you have no idea what is in it (...) Then it doesn't matter how pretty the bottle is." (DCJ, 400-402)*

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## Reports

*The report has been printed and can be found in the following appendix*

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## Web Pages

*The pages have all been printed and can be found in the following appendix*

- <http://ekstrabladet.dk/vin/inspiration/article1506662.ece>
- [http://livsstil.guide.dk/Vin/Inspiration/Her\\_er\\_det\\_nye\\_favoritvinland\\_2191536](http://livsstil.guide.dk/Vin/Inspiration/Her_er_det_nye_favoritvinland_2191536)
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**APPENDIX**