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STUDY ON THE IDENTITY OF A WINE BETWEEN VARIETY AND GEOGRAPHICAL SPACE

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Abstract

The identity of a wine is the result of complex interactions between the grape variety and the geographical space in which it is grown. Understanding and capitalizing on these interactions are essential in the production of wines, which, beyond the exceptional quality, must reflect the specificity and authenticity of the place of origin, becoming an ambassador of the region and culture from which it comes. The sensory profile analysis in determining a wine's identity offers consumers an unparalleled multisensory and cultural experience by creating a unique and valued consumption experience. In this paper, the sensory characteristics that contribute to the identity of a wine were analyzed in detail, emphasizing aspects such as aromas, tastes, and the general structure of the wine. The results obtained provide a deep understanding of the organoleptic qualities of the wine and suggest distinct promotion strategies for each region, highlighting the specific strengths of each wine to satisfy varied consumer preferences.

Key words*: region, sensorial profile, terroir, variety, wine.*

INTRODUCTION

In the context of increased competition on the world wine market, against the background of globalization and the implicit consumer access to an increasingly rich offer of wine, but also of overproduction, the reference to the origin of the wine and, in particular, to the concept of terroir has become a factor differentiating and valuing the product. This aspect, as it improves the consumer's perception of the quality of the product and transfers to him the image and attitude regarding the region of origin (Aurier et al., 2005; Zindy et al., 2017). The prevalence of the notion of terroir as a marketing tool, particularly in the wine industry, indicates that this concept has an intrinsic commercial value, i.e. that it influences the consumer's purchase decision. In this sense, it was found that the perception of the authenticity of terroir products and the value associated with it by consumers have a positive and significant influence on consumer loyalty towards these products (Lacœuilhe et al., 2017). Although the definition of the concept of terroir is still a controversial academic topic, it is generally accepted that terroir products are perceived as authentic because they refer to a limited geographical area of production, within which the natural conditions and the know-how of the producer give special characteristics, defining the product. The preference for a certain product depends on the perception of the product's attributes, which in turn is significantly influenced by the attitude towards its region of origin (Laville, 1990; 1993; Zindy et al., 2017). However, despite the fact that the association of wine with terroir influences the decision to purchase it, it is difficult to appreciate to what extent consumers actually perceive the defining and specific attributes of a terroir wine to the extent that they do not know its origin in advance. Regardless of the definition given to terroir and despite its complexity, the concept of terroir is a valuable one, and the fact that controlled designations of origin, as a way of certifying quality, are relatively constant in terms of area covered, regulation and recognition, certifies the value of this concept. It was also found that terroir products are perceived by consumers as unique, having non-reproducible qualities: artisanal, recognizable, qualitative or different (Cadot et al., 2010; Casabianca et al., 2006; Spielmann & Gélinas-Chebat, 2012). As a consequence of this perception, consumers are willing to pay more to consume these products (Cross et al., 2011). Practically, in every wine-growing country,

where there are scientific arguments regarding the production of iconic wines, in different ecopedoclimatic conditions, it proves that each ecopedological factor involved contributes differently, leading to unique terroirs, different from each other (Barham, 2003; Gladstones et al., 2011; Stroe & Barcanu, 2011, Fabres et al., 2017; Van Leeuwen, C. & Seguin, 2006). In other words, in these areas there is a set of factors that interact and intervene, in a particular way, individualizing the terroir and giving the wine its originality. The development of this concept, the interaction between variety and terroir is one of the factors that, under the conditions of increased global competition, can lead to the increase in the production of original and authentic wines, bearing the signature of the place (Riou C. et al., 1995). The fact that one and the same grape variety can give rise to very different wines depending on where it is grown is a challenge, but also an opportunity for winegrowers and winemakers to experiment and optimize combinations of varieties and terroirs to obtain special and authentic wines. Descriptive sensory analysis is one of the most powerful, sophisticated and extensively used tools in sensory science, which provides a complete description of the sensory characteristics of food products that affect and direct consumer preferences (Varela & Ares, 2012). In general, professional evaluators are used, but considering the economic and time implications of training evaluators for descriptive analysis, they can be used with semi-trained evaluators or even consumers using the organoleptic description of red wines based on intensity scales, being able to appreciate the general and specific composition, color structure and indices of phenolic typicality, allowing a detailed and precise evaluation of each aspect of the wine. Sensory profile analysis in determining a wine's identity provides consumers with an unparalleled multisensory and cultural experience by creating a unique and valuable consumption experience. In this paper, the sensory characteristics of two wines obtained from the 'Merlot' variety, with different identities, were analyzed in detail, highlighting the general structure of the wine, as well as aspects related to their olfactory and gustatory notes.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The wine world is full of grape varieties, each with its own unique characteristics, but in this work we have studied one of the most famous and appreciated varieties for red wines - 'Merlot'. This variety has spread throughout the world, and has become iconic due to its productive qualities and outstanding attributes highlighted by balanced, velvety and full-flavored wines. The variety is native to France (Bordeaux region), with origins in the 18th century, when it was first mentioned in historical documents (Burdea R.O. et al., 2020; https://www.vivc.de/index.php?r=passport%2Fview&id=7657. What makes it interesting for the wine-growing landscape in Romania is the high degree of adaptation in various regions, being cultivated in many wine-growing centers (76) practically in all those wine-growing areas favorable to the cultivation of varieties for red wines, in the south of Moldova, in the Region of the Muntenia and Oltenia Hills, in Dobrogea and insular in the eastern part of the country. In all these areas, quality wines are obtained that reflect the characteristics of the local terroir, being popular both as a single varietal and in blends, where it brings roundness and harmony. In Romania, it is grown on 11,108.71ha and the following synonyms are allowed for labeling: 'Plant Medoc' and 'Bigney rouge', according to the OIV 2013 list (number 2115) https://winesofromania.com/merlot-un-povestitor-de-cursa-lunga/. The aromas and taste profile of 'Merlot' wine can vary depending on the terroir, the production methods and the maturation process, and the predominant aromas include (Figure 1):

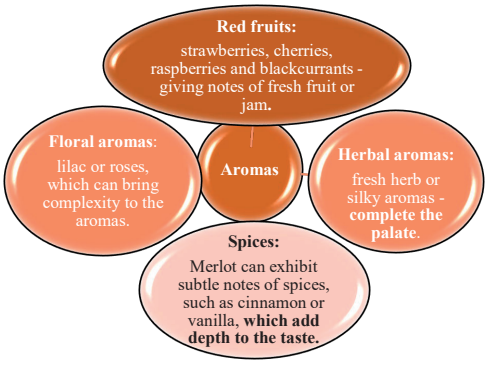

Figure 1. Specific aroma 'Merlot' variety

In this paper, the analysis focuses on the testing of two distinct 'Merlot' wines from the 2018 harvest: one from Bordeaux, France (Château Marsau), and the other from the Drăgășani vineyard - Romania (Stirbey 'Merlot' Reserva Ordinul de Malta). Both wines were subjected to rigorous analyzes to determine their chemical parameters and, implicitly, the sensory profiles that define their identity.

Table 1. Experimental Variant (VN_1)

	Country of Origin	France
	Area	Bordeaux
	Vintage	2018
	Sugar	Dry
	Color	Red
	Serving temp.	16-18°C
	Volume	0.75 L
	Alcohol	14.8%
	Grape variety	Merlot
	Color	Ruby red
	Nose	Cherries, wild berries, black olives, lightly roasted coffee beans
	Taste	Bouquet of wild berries, cinnamon, and coffee beans
	Food paring	Cheeses, mutton, pork, game, beef
	Price:	43.55 EUR (supermarket)

The tasting was attended by 10 tasters, of which 5 hold internationally recognized certifications such as WSET (Wine & Spirit Education Trust) Level 3 or higher, and have attended advanced oenology and sensory analysis courses, and these qualifications demonstrate in-depth knowledge of wine chemistry, the winemaking process and tasting techniques, and 5 consumers.

Before the tasting session, the tasters were instructed in detail about the descriptive tasting sheet used for the red wines, the methodology and the objectives of the study.

Participation was voluntary and anonymous, and no personal data that could be linked to respondents was collected.

The analyzes were carried out at a private laboratory in Urlati, county Prahova and the that were methods used are presented in Table 3. The terroir elements (other than the cultivated variety) specific to the two areas subject to the study (Bordeaux and Dragasani) are presented synthetically (Table 4) in order to be able to later, when the results of the study reveal a distinction in the sensory profile for the two wines, draw certain conclusions regarding their contribution to the degree of distinction.

To analyze the distinctiveness of the wines under study, the One-way ANOVA analysis was used to evaluate the significant differences between the various aromatic, olfactory and gustatory characteristics.

Table 2. Experimental variant (VN_2)

	Country of Origin	Romania
	Area	Dragasani
	Vintage	2018
	Sugar	Dry
	Color	Red
	Serving temp.	15-18°C
	Volume	0.75 L
	Alcohol	14.7%
	Grape variety	Merlot
	Color	Ruby red
	Nose	Fine tannins, aromas of black pepper and dark chocolate
	Taste	Bouquet of ripe blackberries and plums, cinnamon and coffee beans
	Food paring	Cheeses, mutton, pork, game, beef
	Price:	25.33 EUR (supermarket)

Table 3. Parameters analyzed and methods used

Parameters	Methods used
Alcohol concentration	Standard 6182/6-70
Relative density at 20°C	Standard 6182/8-71
Total dry extract	Standard 6182/9-80
Total acidity	Standard 6182-1:2008
pH	SR 6182-14:2009
Volatile acidity	SR 6182-2:2008
Sucrose+D-Glucose+D-Fructose	SR 6182-18:2009 Enzymatic determination
Free sulphur dioxide (free SO_2)	SR 6182-13:2009
Total sulphur dioxide	SR 6182-13:2009
Calcium	Colorimetric determination
Copper	Colorimetric determination
Potassium	Turbidimetric determination
Iron	Enzymatic determination
Glycerol	Colorimetric determination

Table 4. Terroir elements specific to the studied areas

	Bordeaux	**Drăgășani**
The delimited geographical space	The Bordeaux region is located in the southwest of France. Along the Gironde estuary, being crossed by the Garonne and Dordogne rivers, located on the parallel of 45 degrees (44.84 north latitude). 120,000 hectares of vineyards, 32% of the cultivated area is cultivated with the Merlot variety.	The Drăgășani vineyard is located in the region between the Getic Subcarpathians to the north and the Romanian Plain to the south and southeast, which stretches for a length of approximately 50 km, and a width of up to 30 km in the east-west direction, it is located between parallels 44°30´ - 44°55´ northern latitude.
Relief	The relief is varied, with hills and valleys providing different sun exposures and microclimates, thus influencing the styles of wine produced in different parts of the region.	Located on hills and hills, the region benefits from varying sun exposures and diverse microclimates, similar to those of Bordeaux, contributing to the variety and complexity of the wines produced.
Soil	Soils vary, including clay, limestone and gravel. These soils allow good drainage, essential for the vines, contributing to the development of deep roots and a wine with a distinct character.	The soils are diverse, but clayey and calcareous predominate. These soils are favorable for growing vines, ensuring adequate drainage and providing important mineral elements that contribute to the complexity of the wines.
Climate	It has a moderate oceanic climate, influenced by its proximity to the Atlantic. Temperatures are relatively mild, with hot summers and mild winters, and rainfall is evenly distributed throughout the year.	It has a temperate-continental climate with Mediterranean influences. Summers are hot and dry and winters are mild, similar to Bordeaux in moderating thermal extremes.
Qualities and peculiarities imprinted on the wines, typicality and authenticity	'Merlot' from Bordeaux, especially from areas such as Saint-Émilion and Pomerol, benefits from clay soils and a moderate climate, producing round wines with black fruit flavors and velvety tannins.	Although Drăgășani is not as well-known as Bordeaux, the 'Merlot' variety grown here can offer wines with similar characteristics, benefiting from the clay-limestone soils and temperate-continental climate. The wines can have aromas of red and black fruits, with a balanced structure and soft tannins.
The similarities between the terroir of Bordeaux and that of Drăgășani are manifested in the moderate climate, diverse soils and varied topography, all contributing to the production of quality wines. Although there are regional and specific differences in each terroir, these similarities allow the cultivation of similar grape varieties, such as 'Merlot', and obtaining wines with comparable characteristics in terms of complexity and balance.		

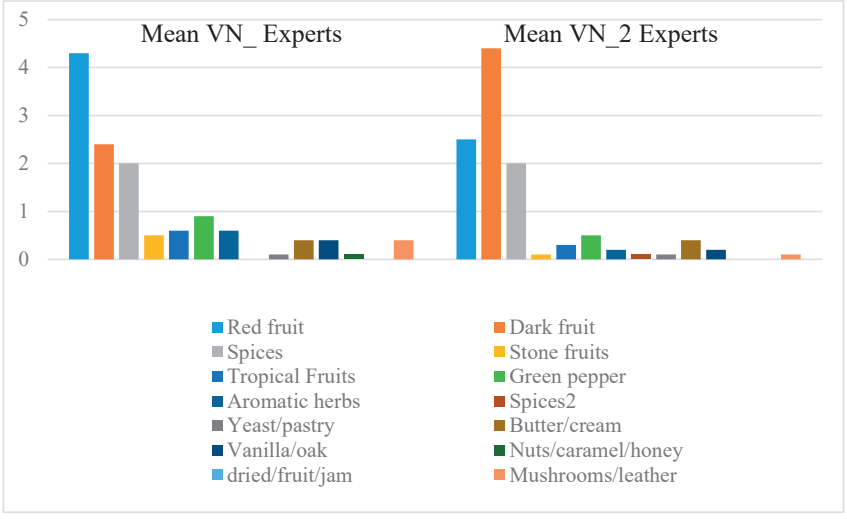

Figure 2. Average of the main olfactory characteristics according to experts

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The main element that is consistently found in the definitions given to terroir is the delimited geographical area associated with it, but the cultivated grape variety is part of the biological factors that configure the terroir (Table 5). According to the specialized literature (Roland S., 2019; van Leeuwen et al., 2020, van Leeuwen et al., 2022) the chemical composition of 'Merlot' wine can vary depending on the harvest years and the winemaking techniques used. Thus, we can provide the general values for the main chemical parameters characterizing the two wines (Table 5).

Table 5. Chemical parameters of the analyzed wines

Parameters	VN_1 Bordeaux	VN_2 Dragasani	Specification
Alcohol concentration	14.8	14.7	% vol.
Relative density at 20°C	0.9927	0.9929	g/ml
Total dry extract	29.0	29.7	g/l
Total acidity (acid tartaric)	4.91	5.24	g/l
pH	3.61	3.42	-
Volatile acidity (acetic acid)	0.53	0.5	g/l
Residual sugar	2.35	1.31	g/l
Free sulphur dioxide (free SO_2)	5.46	6.21	mg/l
Total sulphur dioxide (SO_2)	43.77	47.59	mg/l
Calcium	64.4	72.1	mg/l
Copper	0.015	0	mg/l
Potassium	1206	816	mg/l
Iron	3.79	0.91	mg/l
Glycerol	6.81	7.63	g/l

Wine analysis VN_1. The wine from Bordeaux, 'Merlot' 2018 has an alcohol concentration of 14.80% vol, an indicator of the maturity and intensity of the fruit. Relative density at 20°C is 0.9927, which suggests a well-balanced and structured wine. Total dry extract of 29.0 g/l indicates a wealth of compounds that contribute to the complexity and body of the wine. Total acidity (tartaric acid), measured at 4.91 g/l tartaric acid, is another essential parameter that influences the freshness and longevity of the wine. With a pH of 3.61, this 'Merlot' maintains sufficient acidity to ensure a pleasant taste balance, while the Volatile acidity (acetic acid) of 0.53 g/l acetic acid suggests a well-controlled fermentation and a clean winemaking process. Residual sugar (Sucrose+D-Glucose+D-Fructose) of 2.35 g/l adds a subtle note of sweetness, balanced by acidity, contributing to a harmonious taste profile. Free sulphur dioxide (free SO_2) and Total sulphur dioxide (SO_2) is also an important indicator of wine stability and shelf life. The values of 5.46 mg/l for free sulphur dioxide and 43.77 mg/l for total sulphur dioxide are within food safety limits, ensuring adequate protection against oxidation and microbial growth. The content of calcium (64.4 mg/l) and copper (0.015 mg/l) are within normal limits, contributing to the stability of the wine, while potassium (1206 mg/l) and iron (3.79 mg/l) play essential roles in biochemical and sensory processes. Glycerol, with a value of 6.18 g/l, adds body and a feeling of softness to the taste, thus amplifying the positive sensory perception. All these chemical components combine to create a complex wine with intense fruity aromas, soft tannins and a balanced structure, reflecting the unique terroir of Bordeaux.

Wine analysis VN_2. On the other hand, the 'Merlot' wine from Drăgășani presents distinct characteristics, influenced by the Romanian terroir (Stroe & Dîmboviceanu, 2020). With an alcohol concentration of 14.70% vol and a relative density at 20°C of 0.9929, this wine shows a similar balance to its french counterpart, but with different subtle nuances. Total dry extract of 29.7 g/l suggests a slight superiority in terms of the richness of solid compounds, which may influence the texture and complexity of the taste. Total acidity (tartaric acid) of 5.24 g/l tartaric acid and pH of 3.42 indicate a more acidic and fresher profile, which can contribute to a more vibrant feel and increased longevity of the wine. Volatile acidity (acetic acid) of 0.50 g/l acetic acid is slightly lower, reflecting a well-managed fermentation. Residual sugar (Sucrose+D-Glucose+D-Fructose) of 1.31 g/l is lower compared to Bordeaux wine, which can influence the perception of sweetness and taste balance. Free sulphur dioxide (free SO_2) and total sulphur dioxide are 6.21 mg/l and 47.59 mg/l, respectively, slightly higher than the values corresponding to French wine, providing additional protection against oxidation. The levels of calcium (72.1 mg/l) and copper

(0 mg/l) show significant differences in the mineral composition, while potassium (816 mg/l) and iron (0.91 mg/l) reflect the natural variations of the terroir and the winemaking techniques used. Glycerol, with a value of 7.63 g/l, is significantly higher, contributing to the sweetness and body of the wine. These chemical and sensory differences create a wine with distinct aromas, which reflect the influence of the terroir and the craftsmanship of the Drăgășani winemakers. In general, the 'Merlot' wine profile can include notes of red and black fruits, with well-integrated tannins and a fresh acid structure. Regarding the evaluation of the impact of chemical parameters on the sensory profile, the comparative analysis of these two wines highlights how the terroir, viticultural traditions and winemaking techniques can influence the final characteristics of the wine. Bordeaux wine, with an emphasis on aromatic complexity and taste balance, reflects a well-established tradition of producing superior quality wines. The wine from Drăgășani, with its acidic profile and velvety texture, shows the potential of the Romanian region to produce distinctive and high quality wines. These observations underscore the importance of the sensory profile in defining a wine's identity, providing both producers and consumers with a deeper understanding of the qualities that make a wine unique. The rigorous analysis of these chemical parameters and their correlation with the sensory characteristics, from this study contributes to the identification and comparison of the sensory characteristics. The identity of a wine between variety and geographical space is highlighted in the sensory profiles of the two wines from the perspective of the main olfactory characteristics according to the experts (figure 2), the VN_1 variant shows a greater intensity of red fruits compared to VN_2 indicating a more pronounced presence of these notes in its olfactory profile. Both wines have high values for red and black fruit aromas, but the Bordeaux wine is rated as having a slightly higher intensity, identifying empyreumatic notes. Spices aromas, such as blackpepper and dark chocolate, are more evident in the Dragasani Wine. These aromas are less perceived, suggesting that the maturation processes and oak influences are less dominant in the profile of this wine.

Profiles configured by experts provide a detailed insight into the dominant notes and contribute to a better appreciation of the sensory quality of wines. Analyzing the average of the main olfactory characteristics according to consumers (Figure 3) VN_2 presents a greater intensity of dark fruit aromas compared to Bordeaux wine (VN_1) indicating a more pronounced presence of these notes in its olfactory profile. Basically, both wines have high values for dark fruits and red fruits aromas, VN_2 having a slightly higher intensity, and VN_1 having a higher intensity of spices aromas. Regarding the perception of the taste characteristics - from the point of view of the experts (Figure 4) VN_2 presents a greater intensity of dark fruits (blackberries and plums), aromas compared to VN_1. Both wines have quite high values for the aromas of dark fruits and red (cherries, raspberry) VN_1 also having a higher intensity for the aromas of aromatic spices. Green pepper and aromatic herbs are present in both wines, but with reduced intensities. The other flavors of spices, yeast/pastry, butter/cream have low intensities in both wines, reflecting an aromatic profile more focused on fruit and citrus notes. Vanilla/oak, nuts/caramel/ honey, dried fruits/jam, mushrooms/leather are barely perceived, suggesting that maturation processes and woody influences are less dominant in the profiles of these wines. From the perspective of consumers (Figure 5) VN_1 and VN_2 present intensities quite close to dark fruits and red fruits, with VN_1 being slightly superior. The VN_2 wine has a greater intensity of aromas of black fruits and spices (cinnamon and coffee beans) compared to VN_1 where the aromas of red fruits predominate.

Distinctiveness check. From this point of view - one-way ANOVA analysis was used to evaluate the significant differences between the different olfactory aromatic characteristics. The results show that the highest intensity is also for dark fruit and red fruits, and herbal aromas are present in both wines, but with low and very low intensities.

Spices, yeast/pastry and butter/cream have low intensities in both wines, reflecting an aromatic profile more focused on fruity notes. Vanilla/oak, nuts/caramel/honey, dried fruits/gem and mushrooms/leather are less perceived or not at all, which suggests that the maturation processes and oak influences are less

dominant in the profiles of these wines. The average values and standard deviations show that both experts and consumers they perceived aromas of red fruits and dark fruits in both wines, with a slightly stronger intensity mare pentru VN_2 (Table 6). Experts reported a higher intensity of dark fruit flavors in VN_1 - while consumers perceived similar intensities for both wines.

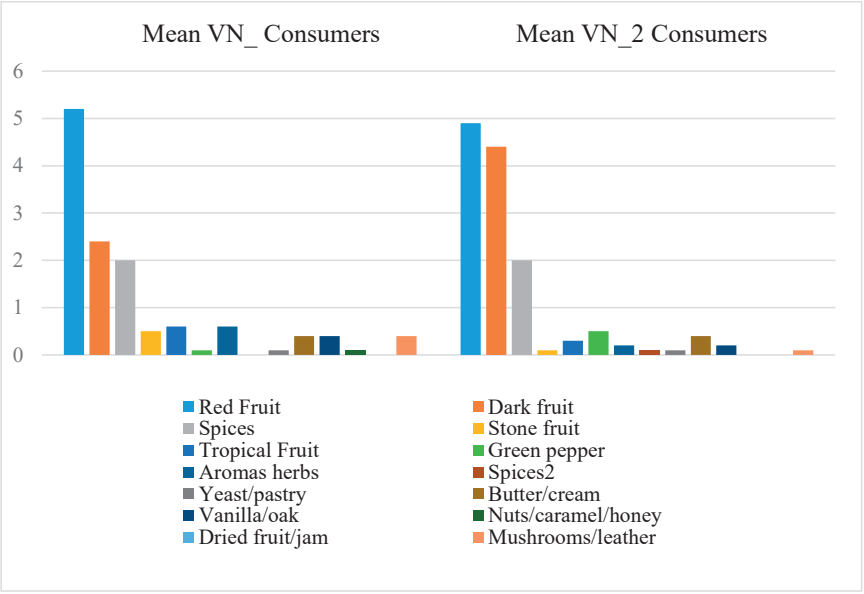

Figure 3. Average of the main olfactory characteristics according to consumers

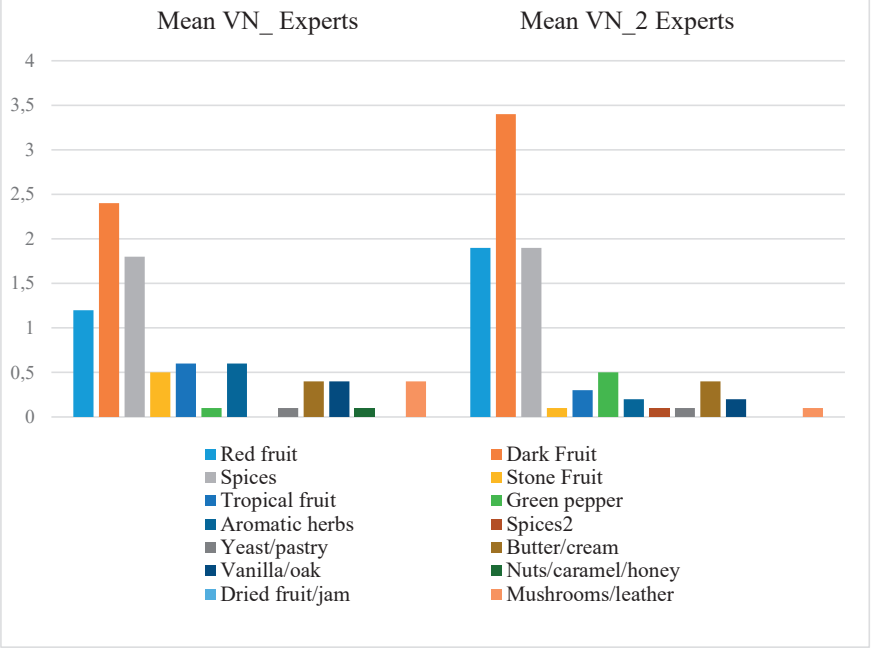

Figure 4. Average of the main taste characteristics according to experts

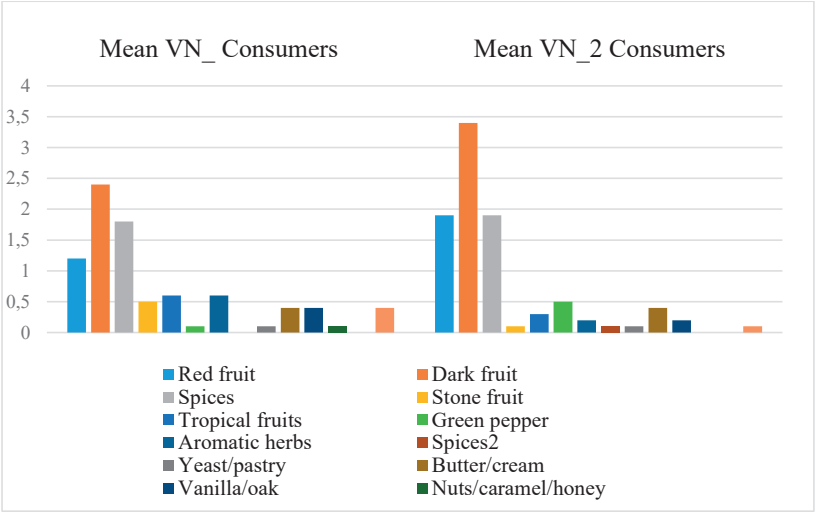

Figure 5. Average of the main taste characteristics according to consumers

Table 6. Synthesis of the aromatic olfactory characteristics of wines VN_1 and VN_2 (ANOVA test)

	Experts		Consumars	
Descriptor	VN_1	VN_2	VN_1	VN_2
Dark fruit	2.5 ± 0.5	2.6 ± 0.4	1.7 ± 0.3	2.0 ± 0.3
Red fruit	2.4 ± 0.3	1.8 ± 0.2	1.8 ± 0.4	1.9 ± 0.4
Spices	2.9 ± 0.4	2.5 ± 0.3	2.4 ± 0.3	2.5 ± 0.3
Stone fruits	1.9 ± 0.5	1.5 ± 0.4	1.0 ± 0.4	1.1 ± 0.3
Tropical fruits	1.0 ± 0.3	1.1 ± 0.3	0.6 ± 0.2	0.7 ± 0.2
Green pepper	0.7 ± 0.2	0.5 ± 0.2	0.3 ± 0.1	0.3 ± 0.1
Aromatic Herbs	0.0 ± 0.0	0.3 ± 0.1	0.0 ± 0.0	0.4 ± 0.1
Citruses	0.0 ± 0.0	0.4 ± 0.1	0.3 ± 0.1	0.4 ± 0.1
Yeast/pastry	0.3 ± 0.1	0.5 ± 0.2	0.0 ± 0.0	0.0 ± 0.0
Butter/cream	0.0 ± 0.0	0.3 ± 0.1	0.2 ± 0.1	0.3 ± 0.1
Vanilla/oak	0.3 ± 0.1	0.3 ± 0.1	0.1 ± 0.0	0.2 ± 0.1
Nuts/caramel/ honey	0.2 ± 0.1	0.0 ± 0.0	0.1 ± 0.0	0.0 ± 0.0
Dried fruit/jam	0.0 ± 0.0	0.0 ± 0.0	0.0 ± 0.0	0.1 ± 0.0
Mushrooms/ leather	0.5 ± 0.2	0.2 ± 0.1	0.2 ± 0.1	0.2 ± 0.1

Table 7. Summary of consumer preferences for wines VN_1 and VN_2

Descriptor	VN_1	VN_2
Dark fruit	1.7 ± 0.3	2.0 ± 0.3
Red fruit	1.8 ± 0.4	1.9 ± 0.4
Spices	2.4 ± 0.3	2.5 ± 0.3
Stone fruits	1.0 ± 0.4	1.1 ± 0.3
Tropical fruits	0.6 ± 0.2	0.7 ± 0.2
Green pepper	0.3 ± 0.1	0.3 ± 0.1
Aromatic Herbs	0.0 ± 0.0	0.4 ± 0.1
Citruses	0.3 ± 0.1	0.4 ± 0.1
Yeast/pastry	0.0 ± 0.0	0.0 ± 0.0
Butter/cream	0.2 ± 0.1	0.3 ± 0.1
Vanilla/oak	0.1 ± 0.0	0.2 ± 0.1
Nuts/caramel/honey	0.1 ± 0.0	0.0 ± 0.0
Dried fruit/jam	0.0 ± 0.0	0.1 ± 0.0
Mushrooms/leather	0.2 ± 0.1	0.2 ± 0.1

Both groups reported values for spice aromas, with VN_1 having a slightly higher intensity. Both experts and consumers perceived low intensities of stone fruit aromas, with a slight favorable difference for VN_1. Tropical fruits are more evident in VN_1, although the differences are not very big between the two wines. Both groups reported reduced intensities for Gren pepper, slightly reduced however for VN_2. Experts reported higher values for VN_2 compared to VN_1, while consumers perceived low and similar intensities.

Flavors of spices (lightly roasted coffee beans) are more evident in VN_2 for both groups.

Experts reported low intensities for both wines, with a slight preference for VN_2. As for the vanilla/oak aroma, they were perceived at low intensities by both groups. Experts reported low intensities for both wines, while consumers perceived these aromas as very low. For nuts/caramel/honey experts reported higher values for VN_1, imperceptible in VN_2, while consumers did not perceive these aromas in either wine. To identify consumer preferences among the wines under study (Table 7) it emerged that consumers slightly prefer the black fruit aromas of wine VN_2 - compared to VN_1 - suggesting that a more pronounced fruity

aromatic profile is appreciated. Both wines have similar intensities of black and red fruit aromas but VN_2 has a slight preference. Aromas of spices are appreciated in both wines, with a slightly higher preference for VN_2.
Consumers do not show a significant preference for stone fruit flavors in any of the wines, but VN_2 is slightly preferred. Tropical fruits flavors are appreciated at low intensities, with VN_2 having a slight preference. Consumers prefer the VN_2 wine for these aromas, although the intensities are reduced. Consumers slightly prefer the Vanilla/oak aromas in VN_2, although even the VN_1 wine has a slight intensity. Preference for nuts/caramel/honey, dried fruits/jam, mushrooms/leather is very low, with a slight preference for VN_1.
Appreciated globally, based on the results in table 7, the preferences from this point of view are similar for both wines. Analysis of consumer preferences shows that VN_2 wine is slightly preferred for most aroma descriptors, especially red and black fruit, spice and butter/cream aromas.
These preferences can help winemakers better understand which flavors are more appreciated by consumers and adjust production processes accordingly to improve customer satisfaction.

CONCLUSIONS

The identity of a wine is the result of a complex synergy between the grape variety and the geographical space in which it is grown and the wine reflects the specificity and authenticity of the place of origin.
The concordance between Experts and Consumers suggests that perceptions of wines are consistent regardless of tasters' level of knowledge.
Bordeaux Region through 'Merlot' Wine, 2018 has an identity linked to complexity, refinement and maturation potential and is preferred for special occasions, taking into account the purchase price, appreciated by consumers looking for depth and structure.
The Drăgășani Region through 'Merlot' Wine, 2018 has an identity related to freshness, accessibility and immediate pleasure, preferred for daily consumption and informal moments (with the affordable price), being appreciated by consumers looking for a pleasant, balanced wine.
Considering the price difference, the increasingly educated consumer will choose consciously, depending on the context, wanting to find the desired quality in the price.
Even if the decision-making factors in the choice of wine are basically based to a greater extent on elements external to the wine - label, brand, price, the decision in choosing a wine is rather one based on the previous experience with the wine or the recommendations of friends, which shows that consuming wine seems to be more of a social habit, which is educated over time.
In the consumer's purchase decision, beyond the price, driven or not by a well-structured marketing, there is also the concept that if you know where the wine comes from wine, what variety, how it was produced, what kind of technology was used, you will appreciate it, and finally, you will buy it.
Each bottle of wine becomes an ambassador of the region and culture from which it comes, offering consumers an unparalleled multisensory and cultural experience.
The results obtained provide a deep understanding of the organoleptic qualities of the wine, for each region, highlighting the specific strengths of each wine to satisfy the rather varied preferences of consumers.

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