



Aldo Cella Has Left the Building

Editorial Comment

Of late, there has been a great deal of interest among wine marketers in the purchase choices and trends of beverage alcohol consumers under the age of 40. Indeed, Wine Opinions has done a great deal of quantitative and qualitative research on this subject in the past two years.

While there is much more to be learned about the challenges and opportunities to increase wine's share of beverage alcohol purchases among those in their 20s and 30s, a backward glance at the choices made by Baby Boomers in young adulthood (and the marketing behind the wines they chose) provides a valuable lesson.

At an industry conference in California not long ago, Jon Moramarco of bw166 pointed out that it was not until 1969 that the sales of table wines in the U.S. surpassed the sales of fortified wines. The rise to market dominance of table wine was driven almost entirely by Baby Boomers, and most of the table wines they purchased in the 1970s were made by one of the "GAMIT" brands: Gallo, Almaden, Paul Masson, Inglenook, and Taylor. Of these, Gallo Hearty Burgundy became the iconic example of well-made and affordable wine that defined mainstream Baby Boomer taste.

Beyond the "GAMIT" brands, there were notable success stories written in the '70s and '80s. Perhaps the best-known example is Sutter Home White Zinfandel - the wine that began as a "mistake" in the cellar (as Bob Trinchero tells it) and became the best-selling premium wine brand in the U.S. Many of the Baby Boomers who "discovered" the wine in the '70s are its most loyal customers today.

Another early success story was Blue Nun, a German Liebfraumilch. An inexpensive, light, slightly sweet and utterly pleasant wine, its label pictured nuns in blue habits picking grapes. Baby Boomers, whose fondness for all things ironic lives on today in Millennials, loved it.

Blue Nun rose to annual sales of more than a million cases in the early 1980s, aided by a radio advertising campaign created by Jerry Della Femina, which featured the comedic duo of Jerry Stiller and Anne Meara. A humorous TV campaign followed, suggesting that Blue Nun "goes with everything."

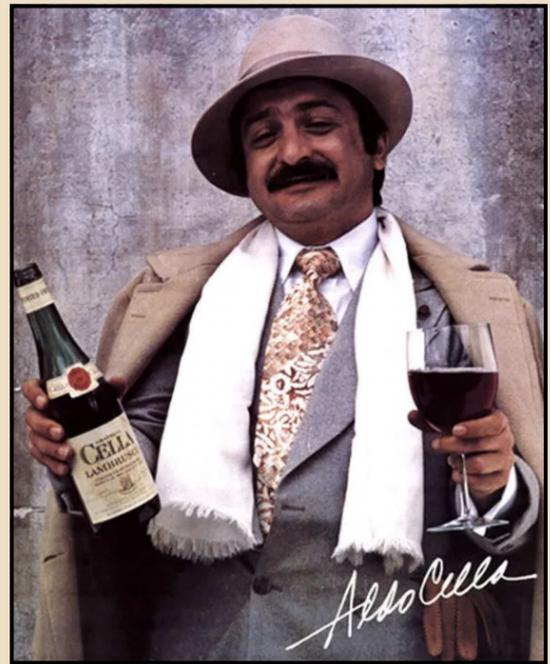
Advertising was also the prime mover of the Lambrusco phenomenon of the late 1970s and early 1980s. Both of the best-selling brands - Riunite and Cella - ran significant TV campaigns.

Riunite ran classic "lifestyle" ads: 20-somethings at a picnic enjoying Riunite with hotdogs (yes, hotdogs). Other ads were set on the ski slopes, hiking on a country trail, and at the beach. The jingle accompanying the ads was always the same: "Riunite on ice, Riunite so nice!"

Cella Lambrusco chose a different advertising approach - the faux spokesperson - who came to life as Aldo Cella. Flamboyant Aldo's advice to Baby Boomer couples dining at a sidewalk cafe? "Chill a Cella..."

If 1980s Lambrusco (inexpensive, lower in alcohol, fruity and fizzy) reminds you of today's hard seltzers, you are not alone. Katie Brown, writing for VinePair, gets it exactly right in an article you can find at [this link](#).

The Resplendent Aldo Cella



So, if the question on everyone's mind today is how to gain the favor of young adult beverage alcohol consumers, the first thing to understand is that the wine industry has literally been there, and done that. Of course, the playbook of the winning brands half a century ago must be updated - the wines that broke through in the '70s and '80s are not likely to stage a reunion tour anytime soon.

Research we've done at Wine Opinions suggests that there are two "features and benefits" that resonate especially well with consumers under 40. Wines made from organically grown grapes or by wineries with sustainability certifications significantly over-index among those in their 20s and 30s. And the "better for you" category is of much greater interest to under-40 consumers than those who are older.

Aldo Cella may have left the building, but when wine finally wins the hearts and palates of today's young adults, I am confident that brands will lead the way. And we'll have winemakers, marketers, and their social media agencies to thank.

John Gillespie
Founder and CEO, Wine Opinions

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