



Varietal Trends - Will GenZ Save Merlot?

A recent survey of 1,375 members of the Wine Opinions consumer panel focused on the evolution of favor for leading wine varieties. Respondents were asked to check from a list the varietals they used to buy often, but now buy seldom, if ever. They were then asked to check any varieties they now buy often, but used to buy infrequently, if ever. The results point to evolving tastes and purchase preferences.

The net changes in past vs. present frequency of purchase of varietal types among respondents in total are detailed in the chart at right. Sauvignon Blanc is the only white varietal showing greater purchase frequency, with significant net declines for the other white wine varieties. Among red wines, there are impressive net gains in purchase frequency for Cabernet Sauvignon, Pinot Noir, and Red Blend wines. Syrah shows a slight net gain, while Merlot show a net decline in frequent purchasers, equal to that of Chardonnay.

Male Respondents

A look at the net gains and losses among male respondents shows just a slight uptick in their frequency of purchases for Sauvignon Blanc (+2%). Net purchase frequency among males for the other white varieties showed significant declines, especially for Pinot Grigio (-28%). Among red wine varieties, the net increase in purchase frequency for Pinot Noir (+32%) and Red Blends (+33%) outdistanced the net increases in the purchase of Cabernet Sauvignon (+26%) and Syrah (+10%).

Female Respondents

Female respondents were largely responsible for the net increase in purchase frequency for Sauvignon Blanc (6%). But their net declines in purchase frequency for Riesling (-24%) were significantly greater than the net decline among males (-8%). While a smaller percentage of females were purchasing more Cabernet Sauvignon (+10% net vs. +26% net for males) and they were less frequently purchasing Syrah (-12%) their net change in purchasing red blends was an astonishing +40%.

Over Age 40 Respondents

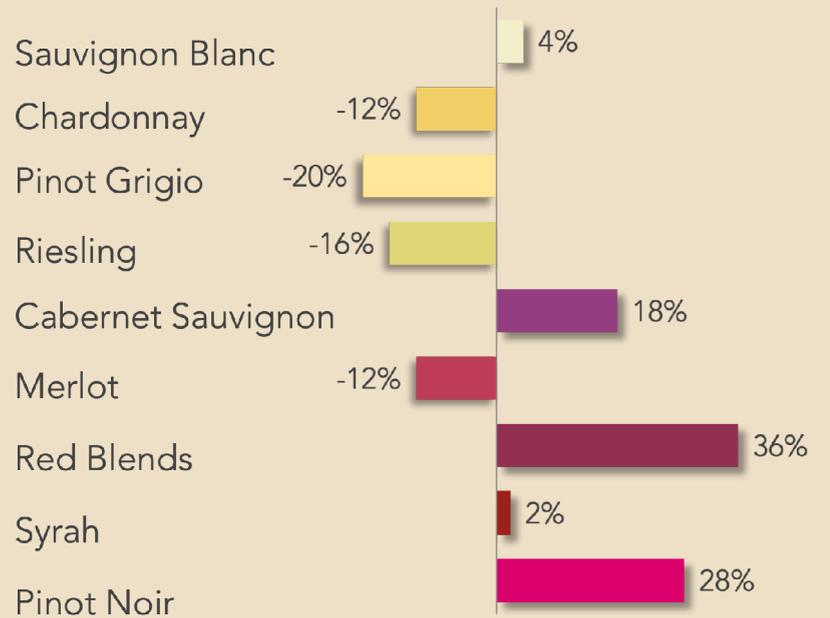
As with the other segments, Sauvignon Blanc was the only white wine showing a net increase of purchase by those over 40 (+2%). They also showed a net decline in purchase of Merlot (-14%). There was no change in their frequency of purchase of Syrah and their purchase of Red Blend wines was a net +36%. Of note was their remarkable net increase in purchase frequency of Pinot Noir (+34%).

Under Age 40 Respondents

Of all consumer segments, the under-40 group of respondents showed the highest percentage of increased purchase of Sauvignon Blanc (+14%). Like the other respondent segments, they showed declines in purchase frequency for all the other white wines.

Cabernet Sauvignon and Red Blends were the leading gainers in purchase frequency among under-40 respondents (+18% and +22% respectively). They also registered a net gain of +8% in purchases of Syrah. And under-40 respondents showed a net gain of +2% in purchases of Merlot - offering just a small ray of light at the end of the "Sideways" tunnel, perhaps.

Net Change in Purchase Frequency



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