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MADE IN ITALY PROVIDES THE AMERICAN MARKET WITH ADDED VALUE. A LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF WINE WEBSITES

1. Introduction

The ever increasing globalization and internationalization process of the last few decades has contributed to encouraging people worldwide to gradually shift from a local perspective to a wider view with a consequential greater focus on the various aspects and characteristics that can be relevant in cross-cultural interactions. Indeed, communication between interlocutors who do not share the same linguistic and socio-cultural background is an ever more frequent occurrence. Both in the world of work and in people's leisure time, encounters are involving the direct or indirect interplay of interactants from different areas of the world that sometimes have no cultural bridge.

It has been universally acknowledged that different cultures have different standards and accepted maxims about the ways in which individuals live, behave and interact. Their diversity of values, perspectives and experiences deeply influence their interactions, which are often made more difficult to manage. In each encounter, whether written or oral, interlocutors' interpretation of the context can be different, so much so that they evidently lack the skills to successfully develop communicative exchanges. Many are the cases in people's every-day lives where specific skills are required to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate services: cross-cultural encounters regarding international safety, politics, health care, engineering, sport, tourism and business are just some of the multifaceted examples of fields where participants need to be familiar with intercultural competences.

In fact, as soon as individuals enter the world of work in an international framework, they quickly realize that three qualities contribute to making a company a skilful and appreciated party within the market: professional knowledge and attitude in the specific field must be accompanied by proficient linguistic skills and interactional competences (Maude 2011; Moran, Harris and Moran 2011; Dan Landis and Brislin 2013).

Parallel to the aforementioned competences, source culture knowledge, together with target culture understanding, are highly relevant in business since culture influences every aspect of marketing. As Broderick and Pickton (2005) highlight, promotional strategies are inevitably culture-bound and affect customer response both at a national level and on an international scale. Familiarity with recipients' tastes and habits, for instance, can be a very useful resource to lure future clients and convince them to buy the product. On the other hand, highlighting socio-cultural origins of the product can positively affect sales and contribute to winning consumer loyalty.

1.2. The Country-Of-Origin effect with the cultural framework

According to many experts in the field, fully grasping the multifaceted concept of 'culture' is no easy task. Culture is indeed an extremely difficult term to define due to its heterogeneous and complex nature. Yet in the middle of the twentieth century, Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952) critically reflected upon the idea of 'culture', collecting and systematizing contrasting interpretations of the term. As a consequence, they compiled a list of more than 160 different definitions coined before the 1950s that aimed at framing the concept and gave their own definition, including the concepts they found most illuminating:

Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behaviour acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiment in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e. historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values; culture systems may, on the one hand,

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be considered as products of action, on the other, as conditional elements of future action. (Kroeber & Kluckhohn 1952, 181).

The debate on the concept of what culture means and which parameters have to be intrinsically taken into consideration when dealing with the topic, has been ongoing for decades and has produced several definitions. As Apte (1994, 2001) points out, “despite a century of efforts to define culture adequately, there was in the early 1990s no agreement among anthropologists regarding its nature” (as quoted in Katan 1999, 17): a great deal of controversy comes from the varied viewpoints, which play a part in depicting the concept of ‘culture’ as a vast and yet to be discovered field.

From the definition given by Burnett Tylor in 1871 - still regarded as one of the oldest - which labels culture as a “complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society” (in Katan 1999, 16), several attempts to offer an effective theoretical perspective of the concept have been made (see Newmark 1988; Schein 1990; Hofstede 1994; Matsumoto 1996; Spencer-Oatey 2008). Although the aforementioned theories show very different understandings of culture, they undoubtedly share some common features, namely the acceptance of concepts such as experience, beliefs, values, customs and behavioural conventions. Spencer-Oatey (2012) believes that culture can basically manifest itself at three different levels, defined as *observable artifacts*, *values* and *basic underlying assumptions*, for which he offers an eye-opening model (inspired by Schein 1984):

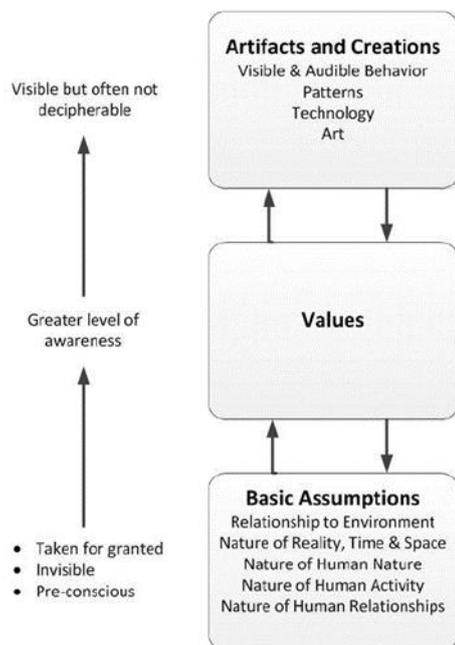


Fig. 1: The Levels of Cultures and their Interaction (Spencer-Oatey 2012, 4)

A more in-depth exploration of how cultural elements relate to human nature, scholars agree on the common assumption that culture and society are constantly intertwined although this relationship generates different nuances that most of the time are unforeseeable. In this regard, Spencer-Oatey clarifies that

culture is learned, not inherited. It derives from one’s social environment, not from one’s genes. Culture should be distinguished from human nature on one side and from an individual’s personality on the other, although exactly where the borders lie between human nature and culture, and between culture and personality, is a matter of discussion among social scientists (2012, 5).



The most successful theory, which is still considered the most influential in the Western panorama, for categorizing the complex interdependence between culture and individuals was formulated by Hofstede (1994), who focuses on three main aspects (as the model below shows):

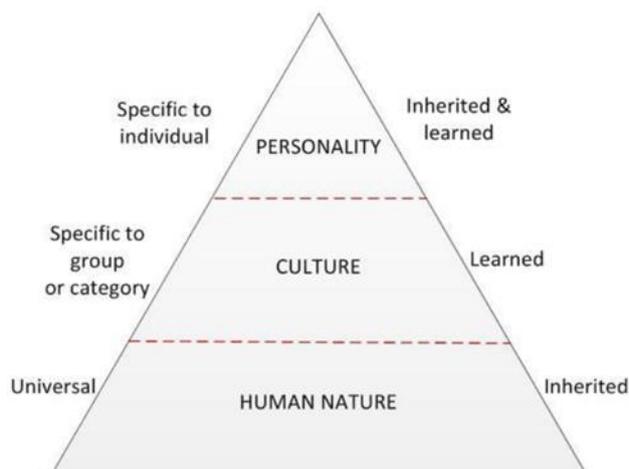


Fig. 2: Hofstede's model (1994,6)

Seeing culture as "the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another" (Hofstede 1991, 5), he interprets *human nature* as what all individuals universally acknowledge, i.e. perceiving different feelings such as anger, happiness, surprise, joy, sadness and disgust, whereas the umbrella-term *culture* contains all the nationally/locally-bound instruments which are exploited by human beings to express the aforementioned sensations. It stands to reason that cultural conventions are the vehicle through which people express themselves and which obviously vary from one particular group of people to another. *Personality*, at the top of the pyramidal model, includes a set of individual characteristics that affect the single individual and his reactions to the external environment. As the model helps to explain, cooperation between the three levels is crucial to make the influential role culture has on individuals explicit.¹

Shifting from anthropological interpretations to linguistic ones, Kramsch defines culture as "the way of life and everyday behaviors of members of speech communities, bound together by common experiences, memories and aspirations" (2013, 64), summarizing a useful distinction within the concept. "Big C culture" includes the general knowledge of national cultural tastes, habits and manners, while what has been labelled as "little c culture" focuses interest on native speakers' "ways of behaving, eating, talking, dwelling, their customs, their beliefs and values" (2013, 66). Although such a definition is basically linked to teaching implications, Kramsch's theories are worth taking into account because the interconnection between the source and the target culture has become of greater importance in the last few decades, thanks to ever increasing international economic exchanges, specifically those between Italy and the USA, as analysed in this essay.

In the light of the aforementioned observations, the source culture can have a great impact on the effectiveness of promotional discourse in the target cultural background and the Country-Of-Origin (COO) effect has been proved to be one of the essential ingredients of marketing. Gaining scholars' interest since the second half of the twentieth century, several researches have been conducted to show how and to what extent the COO effect affects marketing and to investigate into the different roles it can play in shaping customer response.

¹ Furthering his studies, Hofstede offered six dimensions through which every culture in the world can be classified (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov 2010):

1. Power Distance, related to the different solutions to the basic problem of human inequality;
2. Uncertainty Avoidance, related to the level of stress in a society in the face of an unknown future;
3. Individualism versus Collectivism, related to the integration of individuals into primary groups;
4. Masculinity versus Femininity, related to the division of emotional roles between women and men;
5. Long Term versus Short Term Orientation, related to the choice of focus for people's efforts: the future or the present and past.
6. Indulgence versus Restraint, related to gratification versus control of basic human desires in terms of enjoying life (Hofstede 2011, 8).



Studied from varied perspectives, of which the economic and socio-cultural angles are the most widespread, different interpretations have been offered to demonstrate that “many products and services highlight their country-of-origin as a potential competitive differentiator in their respective markets” (Dinnie 2004, 166). Recognized by Schooler (1965) as the essential manipulating factor within the process of customer loyalty, for almost twenty years, the COO effect was at the centre of scholars’ interest since they perceived it as a “single-cue” parameter (Vianelli and Marzano 2012, 5). Completing their predecessors’ theory, other experts in the field agreed that there were other components within the customers’ decisional process and opted for a “multi-cue” approach in which specific product attributes (Yaprak 1978), i.e. price (Ettenson et al. 1988) and national image (Han 1989), were statistically significant. More recent studies propose the term “product-country image” (PCI) to highlight the multidimensional nature of products and brands (Papadopoulos and Heslop 1993) and the “Made In” stereotypes generally associated with the source culture (Nagashima 1970, 1977; Harrison-Walker 1995; Askegaard and Ger 1998).

The brief overview on the complexity of systematizing the term ‘culture’ and the COO effect are conducive to illustrating how the two concepts are not particularly suitable for a thorough analysis that aims at understanding how the representation of such diversified topics can contribute to the promotion of Italian products on the American market. However, although exploratory in nature, this study adds interesting results to a larger investigation whose aim is to fathom out how linguistic and socio-cultural features operate in the promotional discourse of agri-food Italian products sold in the USA.

So many Italian products are sold in the international context that Bertoli and Resciniti (2013) group them into two categories: agri-food products, clothing items, televisions, radios, footwear and home furnishings are defined as shopping consumer goods, whereas the second category groups together specialized suppliers offering ad hoc machinery or devices for the textile, mechanical, medical and chemical industry worldwide.

In the first case, which includes Italian food and drinks, Italy is a “style setter” (Bertoli and Resciniti 2013, 21), as the country symbolises originality, quality and excellence. Research in this field demonstrates that such a perspective is supported by two intrinsically linked attributes: different stages of production processes must be carried out locally and the transforming resources involved in the process must be originally produced in the peninsula (Ferraresi, Mortara e Pomodoro 2011). That means that customer perception of the quality of the product directly depends on where primary resources and manufacturing come from: Italian ingredients and local production are perceived as added value and guarantee the highest quality of the product to be eaten or drunk. In regard to these reflections, Italy’s wonderful artifacts and natural landscapes, the great expertise of its craftsmen in handcrafted production and the Italian way of life (Bucci, Codeluppi and Ferraresi 2011) have all contributed to creating and maintaining the vision of Italy as a symbol of quality, refinement and authenticity.

2. This study: methodology

The purpose of this work is to analyze the official websites of a restricted number of Italian Wineries to investigate whether, and to what extent, the promotional representation of the products - and its intrinsic image given by their origins – faithfully reproduces the Made in Italy conceptual framework, contributing to transmitting the aforementioned values associated with the Italian peninsula. Therefore, a pervasive use of words related to the concepts of authenticity, quality and artisan craftsmanship should be present.

Data were collected from sixteen official Italian winery websites, chosen from the 2017 *Wine Spectator’s* top 100 wines list. Each year, American lifestyle magazine editors compile a list of the most exciting wines, selecting from alcoholic beverages produced all over the world. In 2017, sixteen Italian wines were included in the archive. Being one of the world’s most influential wine publications, inclusion in the annual list symbolizes excellence and value, guaranteeing the quality of the product as well as rewarding the complex productive processes behind it. Such wines are supposed to originate from specific vineyards, selected grapes and expert vinification.

Therefore, the following Italian winery websites were chosen for the creation of the corpus:

1. Casanova di Neri (CdN)
2. Altesino (AL)
3. Agricola San Felice – Campo Giovanni (CG)
4. Mazzei - Belguardo (MB)
5. Poderi Luigi Einaudi (PE)



6. Tenuta in Poggione (TP)
7. Cantina del Pino (CP)
8. Cantina Scacciadiavoli (SD)
9. Gini Vini (GC)
10. Donnachiara (DC)
11. Michele Castellani (MC)
12. Tenuta Le Calcinaie (TC)
13. Garofoli Vini (GV)
14. Azienda Agricola Di Meo (DM)
15. Domini Castellare di Castellata - Feudi del Pisciotto (FP)
16. Cantina Odoardi (OC)

In order to investigate how cultural stereotypes linked to the Made in Italy concept are included and to analyse how the country-of-origin effect may have had a hand in shaping the image of the awarded wines for the American consumers, specific sections of the aforementioned websites were selected. Considered as the most relevant for this study, three areas were therefore taken into account. First of all, descriptions of the families involved in winemaking were worth examining: for this reason, all those explanatory passages entitled “(the/our) family”, “(our) philosophy”, “(our) history” and “(our) company” and related sections were included in the study. Secondly, since the analysis sought to determine the extent to which promotional discourse succeeds in depicting positive qualities connected to the Italian socio-cultural background, extracts illustrating “the estate”, “the building”, “vineyards”, “territory” and sections with similar titles seemed extremely significant. Finally, the third category taken into consideration consisted of descriptive paragraphs related to wines produced in the selected wineries. Due to their irrelevance for the purpose of this study, technical properties were excluded. In addition, other sections containing directions on how to reach the destinations, book wine tours in the different vineyards and links to specific events and awards were also ignored.

In terms of territorial coverage, the selected wineries were located in different Italian regions, giving this study a national perspective rather than a regional/local angle. On closer inspection, eight regions were involved: Lombardy, Piedmont, Veneto, Tuscany, Umbria, Marche, Campania and Calabria.

Drawing on Corpus Linguistics and Critical Discourse Analysis, data were investigated both from a quantitative and a qualitative perspective. In the first phase of the project, the corpus tool SketchEngine was chosen to automatically calculate single-word and multiple-word keywords. This process made it possible to identify the most significant terms in the promotional discourse of wineries and Italian wines. As a reference corpus, English Web 2013 (enTenTen13) was selected.

Terms not pertaining to the purpose of the present study were excluded from the final list, in other words, references to family names, technical characteristics of the products and general descriptive words were not taken into consideration.

After the aforementioned analysis, the remaining keywords were grouped according to the three main thematic areas symbolising the concept of “Made in Italy”: originality/authenticity, quality and tradition (see Fortis 1998; Bacattini 1998, 2000, 2007; Castrono 2013; Bertoli and Resciniti 2013). Such classification demonstrated that the promotional discourse on the websites tends to rely on Made in Italy-related themes, being in favour of bucolic representations that highlight the pleasant aspects of the Italian countryside as well as detailed descriptions of the winemaking processes and winemakers’ expertise.

2.1. Autochthonous grape varieties as markers for authentic experiences

Relying on the research mentioned in the previous paragraph, wine authenticity is one of the main pillars of the Country-Of-Origin effect, so that the origins of the product should be emphasized to maintain the strong connection between what consumers have on their tables and the identity of alcoholic beverages. People do not choose Italian wines because there is simply no other option. Their choice is driven by the specific taste and the undisputed relation that the raw materials have with their places of origin. For this reason, the Italian territory plays a crucial role in the descriptive sections of the website in order to demonstrate local soil peculiarities as well as to reinforce one of the most popular Country-Of-Origin stereotypes, which describes Italy as a pastoral land representing a longing for escape from chaotic city life. References to territory invite



readers to critically reflect upon the importance of preserving an uncontained nature that gives the impression of entering a lost and timeless world.

1. Here man knows how to develop a respectful relationship with nature, protecting it over the years from illegal construction and property speculation, leaving unchanged over time the charm and magic of an uncontaminated **territory**. (AL)
2. Its production style accentuates the uniqueness and typical character of its **territory** by retaining a close attachment to tradition. (ASF)
3. The geographical framework offers everything: magnificent beaches, plains that are not extensive, but luxuriant with crops of numerous colours and communities that testify the industriousness of their inhabitants, expanses of gentle hills, mountains that are not overwhelming and streams that fan out across the **territory**. (GV)

Parallel to these descriptions, references to regional geographic features are glorified in order to support the iconic representation of the peninsula as a place of spiritual rebirth where individuals can spend their time in relaxing and picturesque natural locations:

4. Over the last forty years, an intense relationship has been developed with the **land** full of history, with its almost sensual beauty that is physically perceived and its subtle charm that reaches the body and soul. (AL)
5. And nowhere else in the world are the light (the sun) and the moods of the **land** so extraordinary as in Sicily: it is no coincidence that thousands of years ago it was called Enotria, which by transposition gave the word "enos" the meaning of wine (thus oenology). (FP)

To reinforce the iconic representation of the locations, the adoption of many terms connected to the typical landscape is very common across the corpus: prospective clients are invited to immerse themselves into a typically Italian framework in which they can benefit from a mild climate, the sea, sunny weather and a rural oasis.

6. It is here the Fiano di Avellino slopes steeply lie and surrounded by green **hills** with ancient villages and the beautiful **mountains** of Montevergine and Chiusano. This view completes the spectacle of a magical corner of Irpinia. (DC)
7. Close your eyes and imagine a light breeze coming from the sea which is unusually blue and slightly choppy and moves the olive branches while brushing the whole vineyard. (OC)

The magnificence of natural treasures is also taken into consideration with the widespread presence of adjectives related to the theme of beauty: expressions like "beautiful mountains", "beautiful hills", "wonderful landscapes" and "the charm and magic of" Italian vineyards can be constantly read throughout the texts.

As the following example shows, this strategy also attributes great importance to traditional architectural buildings and historical sites: while not listed among the keywords, "**Roman times**", "**Roman villas**" as well as "**Etruscan era**" and "**Etruscan civilization**" can also be found in the descriptions of the areas in which the estates were built. "Small **ancient villages**", "**old manors**", "**castles**" and "**springs**" are often included too.

8. that can be traced to the fractured development of the region. Its ensemble of **architectural and historical attractions**, its wealth of natural marvels and a landscape that is among the most attractive in Italy make this region a magnet for all those who want to deepen their cultural experiences in a tranquil setting. (GV)

A closer look at the data also demonstrates that specific regions/locations are often mentioned to make it easier for foreign customers to identify the wines they are drinking:

9. Campogiovanni's vineyards are sited on the South quadrant of the **Montalcino** hill, where weather conditions and a particular combination of soils favour optimal ripening of the Sangiovese grosso grape. (ASV)



10. The traditional red varieties of the **Marches, Sangiovese and Montepulciano**, are used in varying amounts in the composition of this wine, which features good body and structure. (GV)

More specifically, autochthonous grape varieties are accurately mentioned within websites due to the fact that they guarantee product authenticity. It is generally acknowledged that grapes are distinguishable by their place of origin and genetic properties such as colour, flavour, sweetness and texture. Moreover, growing grapes naturally without chemical fertilizers or other chemical treatments not only fosters the vitality of the soil but also that of the whole planet. The uniqueness of Italian local grapes is meticulously described, as the following extracts show:

11. The result is an utterly unique blend, unmatched anywhere in the Chianti Classico zone. Made only from the finest Sangiovese **grapes** carefully selected from the estate Chianti Classico vineyards, this Reserva represents the perfect blend between the traditional and the modern. (ASF)
12. This diverse combination of soil-climate conditions allows for the cultivation of quite different **grapes**, yielding wines with high complexity and concentration, but also extraordinarily elegant and aromatic. (MB)
13. In order to maintain the typicality and characteristics of the traditional **Verdicchio**, yield per hectare is kept low and harvesting is slightly delayed. (GV)

To conclude this section on the different lexical items used to explain the ways in which promotional discourse contributes to associating the Italian panorama with pastoral life and agri-cultural traditions, it is worth noting how winery promotion often depends on olive oil, another typical Italian product with high market potential. Although for most of the companies that also produce olive oil, this production tends to be of less importance, they include explicit references to olive trees and organic olive oil as a symbol of 'Italianness'. The passion for Italian wines is also due to the dissemination of local culinary habits, which are traditionally linked to what is available based on the season's bountiful crops and nearby resources, including oil, cheese and cereals as some of the commonest examples.

14. The vast property spans from the river Savuto to Falerna, with Nocera Terinese at its core, a land particularly suited for **olive** growing and viticulture. (OC)
15. A greater proportion of the Moraiolo variety softens somewhat the strong pungency of the Frantoio **olive** and increases the voluptuous aromas of a freshly-pressed **oil**. Bottled with no filtration. (ASF)
16. This **oil** eloquently expresses its Chianti pedigree. A sparkling green hue, it is refined and elegant, redolent of pungent artichoke, and just the right degree of piquant, bitterish tang on the palate. (ASF)

As testified by the aforementioned examples, in wine discourse promotion, authenticity is not only desired but also strongly required. Indeed, wines are not just products, they represent the particularities of local soil, climate and location, thus preserving national identity.

2.2. Italian wines as a symbol of quality and excellence

As stated above, Made in Italy also means quality, elegance and uniqueness. These characteristics became progressively more enhanced in the last part of the twentieth century, when the Italian government decided to establish a set of laws aiming at safeguarding the quality and authenticity of autochthonous grapes. Substantially, such a relatively recent series of laws took the form of protected zones where growers and winemakers were obliged to adhere to strict regulations in order to preserve both the territory and the traditional production processes². Seeing the acronyms DOC or DOCG on the label of a wine bottle means that producers followed the regulations outlined by the Italian government to make that wine, preserving the uniqueness of the product.

Through the promotional strategies for launching Italian wines worldwide, and specifically in the American context, the high quality of the products is generally reinforced: while many illustrative passages meticulously describe the complexity of the elaboration processes, others specify the accurate grape selection, which in

² See the abbreviations DOCG, DOC and IGT for a more detailed explanation.



most cases is carried out manually. Thus, both DOC wines and table-grape varieties have a limited annual production and mirror the regions to which they belong.

17. The company philosophy has always been to create high **quality** wines and this is why so much attention is devoted to every single detail, not only at each stage of production, but also to their marketing, including communications and image. (AL)
18. It has safeguarded a certain level of **quality** in terms of environment and lifestyle. While the landscape has changed profoundly, it still provides a liveable setting, reflecting a relationship between man and the environment that has not deteriorated. (GV)
19. All my efforts go towards a continuing qualitative improvement of the wines we produce: **quality** above all. (TC)

As mentioned above, vineyards and grape selection are two key elements in the construction of promotional discourse with the purpose of celebrating the peculiarity of the different products:

20. Its vines, used as a clonal reference when planting new vineyards, produce high quality grapes which are picked by the individual **selection** of the best and ripest bunches. (PT)
21. This is the best result that it's possible to obtain from a careful **selection** of the grapes Corvina, Corvinone, Rondinella and Molinara grapes and after a drying process for about 3-4 months. (MC)
22. During the harvest the grapes are carefully **selected** by a qualified team of people and carried in boxes. (MC)
23. This highly structured wine is produced only in exceptional years, after careful **selection** of the finest grapes and with vineyard yield deliberately kept low. (GV)

Last but not least, specific attention to the limited production of wine is often pointed out. In favour of a precise explanation of the complexity of the elaboration processes and of the many efforts made to produce excellent wines, the specific number of bottles produced annually is sometimes included.

24. This wine, produced in **limited quantity**, is the result of a special selection made by Leopoldo Franceschi, owner of Tenuta Il Poggione, from the winery's Rosso di Montalcino barrels. (PT)
25. Studies involving the DNA mapping of all the varieties present are currently under way with a view to identifying those forgotten indigenous varieties which, even in **small quantities**, are capable of personalising and enhancing the characteristics of Sangiovese. (ASF)

As the examples show, the importance of high-quality wines determines the success of Italian wineries worldwide, which are seen as reliable, selling excellent products. In other words, wines produced in Italy cannot be produced anywhere else: grapes originating from determined areas contribute to increasing the reputation of wines, which are produced in small quantities that can vary according to (un)foreseeable climatic changes, as the last three extracts show:

26. Not surprisingly, the **climate** and soil offered by this island are a guarantee of quality, as well as quantity. (FP)
27. This diverse combination of soil-**climate** conditions allows for the cultivation of quite different grapes, yielding wines with high complexity and concentration, but also extraordinarily elegant and aromatic. (MB)
28. The estate therefore benefits from two **climate** related moderators: its altitude, where it can take advantage of the sea breezes and the significant temperature compensator, which is the sea itself. (DC)

2.3. Italian wineries: anonymous wine producers or expert families?

Wine identity is inherently tied to Italian geography, history, culture and tradition. People who collaborate to produce wines are perceived as part of the territory in which grapes annually grow. In regard to this aspect, family businesses are so common in the wine sector that they seem to outnumber non-family firms. The strengths of such teams depend on different, yet intertwined, components.



First of all, as the data demonstrate, atavistic passion for winemaking is transmitted from generation to generation. Most winery websites devote a specific section to the family history, giving prominence to ancestors that tried their hand at producing wine for the first time. In line with previous reflections, illustrative passages do not merely report dates and facts but also aim at seducing readers by guiding them into a nostalgic past where everything was associated with peaceful nature and uncontaminated countryside. Symbols of the winery's past and its passionate ancestors are depicted as bucolic icons living in a quiet rural area.

29. Since more than six hundred years, the Mazzei family produces unique wines with spirit and **passion** renewed from generation to generation (MB)
30. After more than a century, Lavinio Franceschi's work is still a fundamental point of reference for his successors, Leopoldo and Livia, who continue to develop the business with that same dedication and unrelenting **passion**, combining the ancient skills of winemaking crafts and tradition with the latest, most innovative techniques. (TP)

The ancient passion of predecessors is generally combined with specific references to the past, a bygone era traditionally seen as perfect and lost. Passages like “the **oldest** properties in Montefalco”, “**old** country house” and “**old** handmade product” connect the passion transmitted from generation to generation with the conscious desire to preserve the inhabitants' origins and to maintain the flavour of traditions.

31. Yet the Einaudi family kept many country **traditions** alive, leaving the running of the estates, for example, to the families who had always lived in the farmhouses. (PE)
32. Thanks to our passion for this work, we make products which are representative of the **tradition** of our territory. (MC)

Predecessors and “grandfathers”, as quoted in more than one website, handed down the secrets of the tradition from generation to generation, giving life to centuries-old winemaking processes that are now considered an art. Vinification, starting from the selection of grapes, their fermentation into alcohol and the bottling of the final product, are therefore carried out by respecting traditional methods. As in the following extract, many similar descriptions give prominence to this aforementioned aspect:

33. After more than a century, [XY]'s work is still a fundamental point of reference for his successors, [LP] and [LV], who continue to develop the business with that same dedication and unrelenting passion, combining the **ancient skills** of winemaking crafts and tradition with the latest, most innovative techniques. (TP)

Descriptions demonstrate that “manual grape picking”, “**traditional** fermentation practises” and “**traditional and historic** winemaking methods” are preserved. Specifically, although not included in the keyword list, “**traditional** oak casks” and “small oak vats” are often mentioned as well as “**indigenous** yeasts” and “**native** fruits”.

Passages illustrating the cellars offer distinguishable elements that match the promotional strategies adopted: one underground cellar is excavated into volcanic substance and the “**typical** black rock remains visible” (CG), another cellar is “situated within the **historic** walls of Palazzo Altesi” (AL), while others “are located near the village of Salza Irpina, in the province of Avellino, Campania, in the winemaking **heart** of southern Italy” (DM). Besides passion and attachment to tradition, vintner philosophy also embraces a third component, i.e. their excellent know-how – which, just like the other aforementioned values, is also handed down to new generations. Old vintners share their expertise with sons and grandsons, teaching them everything they know to make a top-quality product. How to carefully decide which grapes to plant, which growing methods to choose, how to prune, when to harvest, how long to macerate and which containers to use for fermentation and which bottles to use at the end of the process. Their choices give the product personality, so much so that they manage to shape wines not only due to the good result of the wine-making process, but also as an unequivocal symbol of local people and culture. Aiming at providing customers with a convincing explanation of their competence and expertise, many passages focus on the skill of Italian producers: thus, “**expertise** has



been passed down through the centuries, from generation to generation” (GC), and excellent wines are made thanks to “the **experience** of the agronomist and the **experience** of the oenologist, who both know the terroir, [and] know what they want to produce” (DC).

3. Concluding remarks

The various programmes promoted by the Italian government in the last two decades have strongly contributed to disseminating Italian products around the world. Thanks to this recent orientation towards the international market, many sectors, including those related to shoes and clothes, metals and chemicals as well as food products and beverages, have gradually developed by shifting from a national way of working to a more globalized perspective. The need to sell products worldwide has forced producers to review pre-set locally-based assumptions and set new plans of action that aim at presenting their products to foreign audiences and convince them to buy. Among the many strategies that have emerged, recent approaches have generated what nowadays is popularly known as the “Made in Italy” component. While several decades ago, no one spoke of such an idea, in recent years, Italian citizens and foreign people alike are familiar with the concept. Mentioning “Made in Italy” products refers to a series of specific qualities that are part of the items themselves. Authenticity, originality, quality and attachment to local tradition are the main pillars of the “Made in Italy” theory, whose roots are inevitably linked to national identity and the culture and customs of the Italian people. As the websites analysed demonstrate, the “Made in Italy” concept plays a central role in promoting products worldwide, where customer choices are deeply influenced not only by the quality of the products but also by what they represent and the values they transmit. Data have shown that promotional discourse does not move away from the theoretical background (Fortis 1998; Bacattini 1998, 2000, 2007; Castrono 2013; Bertoli and Resciniti 2013) and great emphasis is given to all those aspects that play a role in reinforcing the country-of-origin effect. To maintain and promote prospective customers’ perception of Italian wines as top-quality products, they make wide use of terms related to Italian geography and landscape and specifically refer to the uniqueness of indigenous vineyards. The competence and passion of the winemakers are often stressed to celebrate the quality and taste of the wines. The keywords identified in this study show that wineries are presented as ancient estates where time does not seem to follow conventional standards, inviting visitors to enter into an uncontaminated rural paradise in which vintners hand down the secrets of vinification from generation to generation, making wines with healthy grapes.

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