

In this fourth instalment of our new monthly series of interviews with leading personalities in the global wine and agriculture industries, Anton Pretorius chats to wine and water expert, Jessica Altieri.

MAKING WINE FOR MILLENNIALS



Wine and water sommelier, and wine personality Jessica Altieri.



Beverage Trade Network recently identified certified wine and water sommelier, social media entrepreneur and wine professional/personality Jessica Altieri as a top wine influencer you need to pay attention to this year. Anton Pretorius spoke to her about how today's conscious consumer is changing the landscape of the wine industry.

AP: HOW HAS TODAY'S WINE CONSUMER CHANGED FROM A DECADE AGO?

JA: It's all about choice and access with an engine called "choice editors". Technology has been the driver of change for wine consumers who continue to seek and find tools to navigate a world of choices that was once overwhelming to them. Consumers are learning at a rate never seen before and their willingness to learn enables wine brands to justify higher price points.

AP: WHAT NOTABLE CONSUMER TRENDS DO YOU FORESEE FOR THE GLOBAL WINE INDUSTRY THIS YEAR?

JA: I believe 2019 will see wine consumers trading up from their everyday wine to higher-end wines. Both 'baby boomers' and millennials will learn more and taste in new interactive ways with co-branded lifestyle experiential partners. Sustainability is also a key trend this year. Belief in the value of sustainability has crossed a threshold. A significant minority is now willing to pay more for environmentally friendly products. Wine has a sustainability story to tell which will reap big dividends for wine brands.

AP: HOW HAS THE EMERGENCE OF THE CONSCIOUS CONSUMER FORCED WINERIES TO DO THINGS DIFFERENTLY?

JA: Wine consumers are armed with the power of knowledge and research thanks to their cellphones. With a few clicks, they can do their own wine research and learn about the winemaking process, from where the grapes came from to how the wine was made. By showcasing the history and legacy of a wine brand winemakers are assuming a greater role as the voice of the brand. Good news for wineries and winemakers is that recent studies suggest that sustainability is a key factor for millennials when considering a purchase and they're willing to pay extra for sustainable products.

AP: HOW ARE MILLENNIALS CHANGING THE LANDSCAPE OF THE WINE INDUSTRY?

JA: Millennials are explorers. They love doing their homework, reading labels and searching for information on wine

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brands by visiting various websites and social media sites. It's about tapping into an explorer's mindset. As a millennial myself, I like French novelist Marcel Proust's quote: "The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes but in having new eyes." Wine is in a good position to help millennials tap into their inner explorer.

AP: AS MORE CONSUMERS CHOOSE TO REDUCE THEIR ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION FOR THE SAKE OF THEIR HEALTH, HOW CAN WINERIES SUCCESSFULLY QUENCH THE THIRST OF TODAY'S EVOLVING CONSUMER?

JA: The value consumers place on health and wellbeing continues to grow, both in terms of the type of products they buy and healthier habits overall. I think wineries need to tap into sensory elements such as sight, sound, touch, smell and taste to attract and educate consumers about their health-conscious approach to making wine. Tasting rooms and online educational content are great ways to connect and share winemaking knowledge with consumers. Social

media, especially with video and mobile access, is an instant-access learning opportunity for wine brands to explore.

AP: FREQUENCY AND QUANTITY OF ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION ARE DECLINING, CREATING AN OPPORTUNITY TO IMPROVE QUALITY AND PREMIUMISE PRODUCTS. DOES THIS MAKE CONSUMERS MORE INCLINED TO CHOOSE BOUTIQUE BRANDS AND PREMIUM NICHES?

JA: The short answer is yes! Large and small boutique wine brands are moving quickly into the premium market for wine. Wine consumers are trading up in categories where they feel an emotional attachment, especially with beverages. It's often referred to as the stress release factor for dealing with today's 24/7/365 always-on lifestyle. The demand for luxury is growing, but the key defining traits are also evolving. Consumers want more than merely owning the product. They want the experience of using it in a lifestyle setting. Consumers have evolved from simply knowing what to buy to knowing why to buy it. The wine brand's story is critical for consumers looking for the why. **W**

ABOUT JESSICA ALTIERI

Jessica is the wine director, and resort wine and water sommelier at the Four Seasons Resort in Palm Beach, Florida. She is an internationally trained and certified wine and water sommelier, wine entrepreneur, author and innovator with more than 10 years experience in the wine, food and culture market industry. Wine Enthusiast Magazine's '40 under 40 Tastemaker' is experienced in curating wine lists for top restaurants and resorts, creating unique tasting experiences worldwide. She is the founder of Wine Channel TV.