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Wine Raves: The Surprising New Trend Taking Gen Z by Storm

Gen Z Ditches Traditional Wine Tastings for Electric Wine Raves

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Move over traditional wine tastings—there's a new approach in town, and it's turning heads across London, Europe, and beyond. The latest trend captivating Generation Z is none other than the wine rave. This innovative fusion of wine appreciation and rave culture is redefining how young people experience and enjoy wine.

At the forefront of this movement is New Theory, founded by Charlie and Thom Bradley. The Bradley brothers have taken a bold step away from the typical wine tasting format, opting instead for vibrant, high-energy events. They produce low-intervention wines from South Africa, which you can find at upscale retailers like Selfridges. But their real claim to fame is the introduction of 'wine raves.'

Picture this: a pulsating warehouse in Hackney, filled with the beats of local DJs, neon lights, and a crowd that's ready to dance the night away. Instead of the usual setup with rows of glassware, spittoons, and cheese boards, wine raves offer a lively, immersive experience. These events attract a young, dynamic crowd eager to explore wine in a setting that's anything but conventional.

The first New Theory wine rave took place last year, priced at an accessible £26. This covered a glass of wine, food, and, of course, the music. The event was such a hit that The Times dubbed it one of the "golden tickets" for the summer. Given its success, it's no surprise that the producers plan to return this year.

New Theory isn't the only player in the game. This coming bank holiday weekend, Joshua Bratt of Fitzrovia's Carousel and Jake Norman from Italian restaurant Trullo will host the tenth edition of their own wine rave through their pop-up concept, Close Ties. Alongside Diarmuid Goodwin from Sager+Wilde, they'll take over Carousel's wine bar with an array of snacks and wines, all while DJs spin tunes back-to-back.

What starts in London often finds its way across the pond, and the wine rave phenomenon is no exception. In New York, so-called 'wine jockeys' are shaking up the traditional wine party scene. Clubs that once catered solely to beer and cocktail drinkers are now offering curated wine experiences. Bêvèrãgęš, a whimsically named venue, aims to introduce clubbers to the joys of wine, offering an alternative to standard nightclub fare.

No rave scene would be complete without Berlin, and the German capital has indeed embraced the wine rave trend. Known for its legendary club scene, Berlin is now home to wine raves that attract both wine lovers and dance enthusiasts. One producer even named its Riesling after the iconic Berghain club, symbolizing the merging of these two vibrant cultures.

The pandemic may have briefly slowed down the trend, but it didn't take long for wine raves to pick up steam again. Back in 2018, DJ Magazine covered Machine du Vin festival, which combined wine, food, and music over three days at the medieval L'Abbaye-Chateau de Camon.

Australia is also getting in on the action with Wine Machine, an event that transforms from a relaxed daytime gathering into a night-time dance party. This festival aims to highlight Australia's premier wine regions while featuring top local musicians, offering a unique blend of sensory pleasures.

As wine raves continue to gain popularity, they are redefining how the younger generation engages with wine. By merging the energy of a rave with the sophistication of wine tasting, these events offer an exciting and accessible entry point for Gen Z. Whether in a warehouse in London, a club in New York, or a vineyard in Australia, the wine rave is making its mark as the newest, hippest way to enjoy wine. So next time you hear about a wine rave near you, grab a ticket and join the party—you might just discover your new favorite way to enjoy a glass of vino.