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Economist Finds Lack of Information Drives Perception of High Wine Prices in Brazil

Study suggests clearer labeling and consumer education could boost confidence and reshape the Brazilian wine market

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A recent study by economist Mauro Salvo, presented at the Wine Marketing Congress at the University of Bordeaux in December 2025, sheds light on why Brazilian consumers often see wine as an expensive product. According to Salvo, this perception is largely

due to information asymmetries in the Brazilian wine market. He argues that consumers lack access to clear and reliable information about wine, which leads to uncertainty and a reliance on third-party recommendations when making purchasing decisions.

Salvo, who works at the Central Bank of Brazil and holds several wine certifications, including WSET levels 1 through 3 and a master sommelier diploma from ABS-RS, has combined his expertise in economics and wine to analyze the Brazilian market. He notes that per capita wine consumption in Brazil remains low compared to other countries, despite increased availability since the 1990s. His research suggests that one of the main barriers to higher consumption is not just price itself, but how consumers perceive value due to a lack of understanding about wine.

Drawing from economic theory, Salvo explains that an efficient market requires both buyers and sellers to have access to similar information. In the case of wine in Brazil, producers and sellers often know much more about their products than consumers do. This imbalance allows sellers to set higher prices and makes it difficult for buyers to judge quality or value. As a result, many consumers feel insecure when choosing wines and tend to rely on recommendations from friends or acquaintances rather than making independent choices based on product information.

A survey cited by Salvo found that Brazilian wine buyers frequently wish for more detailed labeling and clearer information about what they are purchasing. Many respondents said they consider wine relatively expensive, but also admitted that their lack of knowledge contributes to this perception. The study highlights that improving transparency—such as providing more details on labels about grape varieties, production methods, origin, and pricing factors—could help consumers feel more confident and make better-informed decisions.

Salvo points out that in other sectors with similar information gaps, such as finance, regulators have required companies to provide educational resources for customers. While there is no equivalent regulator for the wine market in Brazil, he suggests that industry associations could take on this role by promoting “wine literacy” initiatives. These could include clearer labeling standards and educational campaigns aimed at

demystifying wine for average consumers.

The economist believes that most of the necessary information is already available to producers and could be shared with minimal additional cost. By making this data accessible, the industry could reduce consumer uncertainty and foster a more competitive market environment. Salvo argues that as consumers become more knowledgeable about wine, their perception of price may shift—they may no longer see wine as prohibitively expensive if they understand what goes into its production and what differentiates one bottle from another.

Ultimately, Salvo’s research suggests that greater transparency and education could lead not only to increased sales but also to a healthier market dynamic where satisfaction aligns more closely with expectations. This approach could help position wine as a more approachable beverage for Brazilians and reduce dependence on third-party advice when making purchases. The findings have sparked discussion among industry professionals about how best to implement these changes and encourage broader appreciation for wine across Brazil.