

## **Abstract for Weinakademiker Thesis (D7):**

### **Oregon Pinot Noir on the European market: challenges and perspectives.**

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#### **Motivation for choosing this topic**

Pinot Noir is among the most favorite varieties for many wine appreciators. There are not that many places where this grape thrives and almost any region which successfully grows Pinot Noir gets big following.

Oregon, more specifically Willamette Valley, has been known as a world-class producer of Pinot Noir for a while now, but it is still not easy to find it in European wine stores and restaurants. Personally, I like Oregon Pinot Noir a lot so I was interested why it is happening.

#### **Objectives and of methods used**

The objective of this research is to explore the reasons why Oregon Pinot Noir (OPN) is still a struggling wine style on the European market and to discuss possible solutions. In this paper I give an overview of the region, discuss the attractiveness of OPN for the European market, its strength for the consumer, the challenges that this wine style faces as well as the ways to overcome them.

The paper was written using the information from a research trip I made to Oregon's Willamette Valley AVA and Columbia Gorge AVA in November-December 2019, the analysis of Oregon Wine Board (OWB) statistics 2009 – 2018 and the interviews with industry professionals as well as my own observations on the subject.

#### **Content**

The main body is divided into six parts. After describing the objectives of the research in the 1<sup>st</sup> part, I discuss the current industry features that may affect the market position, OPN profile and the perception of its quality level in the 2<sup>nd</sup> one.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> part is dedicated to the current position of OPN in Europe, includes the statistics of the last 10 years of export sales and concentrates on the main European markets for OPN: the UK, Sweden and Denmark.

The 4<sup>th</sup> segment is an overview of the current marketing activities on the European market held mostly by OWB.

In the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> parts I discuss the strengths and challenges of OPN and the give my opinion on the way to overcome the obstacles. The questions discussed in the 5<sup>th</sup> part show that OPN has way more attractive sides, but it is a niche market product, quite

highly priced. In order to perform successfully in a very competitive European market, it needs to have a clear identity message and be supported by the industry knowledge.

In the 6<sup>th</sup> part I give my personal commentary on the possible ways of improving the position of Oregon Pinot Noir on the European markets.

## **Conclusion**

Research revealed that OPN is considered a benchmark style, a region producing high quality wines and perceived as such by the critics and existing consumers. That said, being a very young winemaking region, Oregonians struggle with branding. OPN is still poorly understood overseas and export sales to European countries play rather an image role even in relatively successful markets like the UK, Denmark and Sweden. OPN has several very strong features of the premium wine style and its message should be properly delivered. The recommendations include the actions in education, brand-identity, and the adjustments of the industry.