

# Exploring Luxembourgish Sparkling Wine Market & The Power of Marketing in Sparkling Wine Perception

Author: Anna Sipurzynska

## Motivation

As a wine professional working in Luxembourg, I have long observed the dissonance between the intrinsic quality of Crémant de Luxembourg and its perceived value, especially when compared to Champagne. Despite being produced using the traditional method and reflecting the terroir of the Moselle Valley, Luxembourgish Crémant remains under-recognised internationally. My motivation stemmed from a desire to explore this gap—both to understand the market dynamics at play and to support the local wine industry by contributing new consumer insights. Additionally, the intersection of sensory evaluation and marketing psychology provided a rich area of inquiry that aligns with my academic and professional interests.

## Problem / Objective

This study aims to investigate whether Crémant de Luxembourg can match or exceed Champagne in consumer preference when extrinsic cues (brand, price, region) are removed, and to explore the extent to which marketing influences perception in the sparkling wine category. The core objective is to assess how Luxembourgish Crémant is positioned both sensorially and perceptually, and to identify actionable strategies for elevating its image in domestic and international markets.

## Methodology

The research employed a mixed-methods approach:

1. **Quantitative Survey:** An online questionnaire collected responses from 88 wine consumers working and/or living in Luxembourg, focusing on buying behavior, brand perception, and preference drivers.
2. **Qualitative research in a form of Blind Tasting:** A structured, professional blind tasting was conducted with 20 participants at the Institut Viti-Vinicole in Remich, supervised by staff to ensure bottle consistency and accuracy. Each participant evaluated five sparkling wines (3 Crémants, 2 Champagnes). Participants only knew that the wines served were either Champagne or Crémants from Luxembourg.
3. **Comparative Analysis:** Survey data were cross-referenced with tasting outcomes to assess discrepancies between declared and revealed preferences.
4. **Literature Review:** Theoretical frameworks on branding, regional identity, and consumer psychology provided background & supported the analysis.

## **Content**

The paper blends secondary industry analysis with two primary empirical components. First, an on-line questionnaire (n = 88, mainly high-involved consumers living and/or working in Luxembourg) measured purchasing habits, attitude statements and perceived choice drivers. Respondents were predominantly male (64 %), mid-career professionals (58 % aged 35-54) and self-rated intermediate to expert buyers (84 %). Champagne dominated symbolic associations—“luxury” (49 mentions) and “top quality” (49)—whereas Crémant de Luxembourg scored highest for “excellent value for money” (46) and “everyday enjoyment” (42). Notably, 65 % equated higher price with higher quality, signalling strong reliance on extrinsic cues.

Second, five blind-tasting sessions were organised at the Institut Viti-Vinicole in Remich (20 participants, 5 wines: 3 Luxembourg Crémants, 2 Champagnes). Participants blindly ranked samples 1–5 on overall preference. When identities were masked, Luxembourgish wines out-performed: 14 of 20 tasters preferred Crémant. Sub-group analysis showed the strongest Crémant affinity among tasters aged 25-34 and among males, hinting at generational and gendered palatal preferences. Sensory comments cited “fresh citrus-stone-fruit aromatics” and a “friendlier dosage” as appealing, whereas the Champagnes’ autolytic profiles divided opinion.

Cross-referencing the survey and tasting underscores a classic perception gap: consumers voice Champagne allegiance when labels and prices are visible, yet many choose Crémant when forced to rely on taste alone. Drawing on Aaker’s brand-equity model, Kotler & Keller’s place-of-origin effects and Bruwer & Johnson’s terroir branding, the study argues that Luxembourg’s producers possess the technical assets—Riesling-centric blends, low yields, nine-month minimum lees ageing (12 months from 2027), and largely sustainable viticulture—to occupy a premium “accessible luxury” niche between Champagne prestige and Prosecco volume.

## **Conclusion**

A three-pillar strategic framework is proposed. (1) Collective marketing: a dedicated Crémant Marketing Board should harmonise quality communication, negotiate joint participation at key fairs and pool promotional spend, emulating the CIVC’s disciplinarian role. (2) Digital storytelling: SEO-optimised websites, QR-enhanced labels and influencer partnerships can amplify the narratives of Moselle terroir, traditional method and sustainability to a mobile, experience-seeking audience. (3) Premium packaging: elevated glass look and selective foil embossing can cue sophistication without sacrificing the category’s value edge. Limited-release cuvées—extended-lees, single-parcel or late-disgorged expressions—would stretch ladder pricing while furnishing sommeliers with fresh talking points.

Limitations include the modest panel size and regional concentration of respondents; future research should replicate tastings across export markets and model price elasticity under different branding scenarios. Nonetheless, the findings already carry significant weight: Luxembourgish Crémant is not merely a cheaper substitute but, in blind conditions, a sensory rival to Champagne. By aligning collective branding discipline with the authenticity of place, producers can convert latent quality into realised brand equity, shifting Crémant de Luxembourg from a domestic curiosity to an internationally recognised symbol of cool-climate sparkling wine.