

Abstract of thesis entitled

**Romanian Sparkling Wine
Strengths, Weaknesses and Potential**

submitted by

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Motivation

This research aims to draw on my journey so far in the international world of wine and my role as co-organizer of Romania's only national competition for sparkling wines starting 2023, to contribute positively to the development of the Romanian sparkling wine sector, adding to the significant progress in quality made over the past years and furthermore, help establish a distinct identity and clear objectives for Romanian sparkling wines within the country brand.

Objective

This paper examines the potential strengths and weaknesses of Romanian sparkling wine considering factors such as climate, grape varieties used, production methods, available styles, levels of quality, and authenticity. It also explores the wine's potential in both domestic and export markets.

Methodology - Quantitative and Qualitative Research

A comprehensive list of producers and labels available on the market in May 2024 was compiled, detailing production methods, grape varieties, sweetness levels, selling prices and providing relevant observations on lees aging, production volumes, vintages and labeling choices.

The producers' presence to two important wine fairs: one international, for the trade visitors, *ProWein Trade Fair*, Düsseldorf, Germany, March 2024 and one national, *Revino Bucharest Wine Show*, Bucharest, Romania, May 2024, with 2 days dedicated to the consumers, has been documented in order to determine the number of sparkling wines presented at each different fair and the impact on the overall visibility.

Official tasting sheets, scores and jury observations from the *Romanian Sparkling Wine Competition, 5th Edition, December 4th 2023*, a concurring blind tasting organized in Bucharest and Amsterdam, were analyzed in order to determine the quality level of different styles of Romanian sparkling wine.

A survey of 4 questions with 32 respondents was carried out during the national wine fair, *Revino Bucharest Wine Show 2024*, in order to determine the visitor's perception on Romanian sparkling wine and product awareness.

Email interviews on quality, perception, positioning, price strategy have been conducted with relevant national and international wine professionals.

Content

Romania has a rich tradition in making sparkling wines, dating back to the 19th Century, marked by communism, EU fundings and foreign investments after 1991.

Through a combination of secondary research, expert opinions and ratings, this research identifies the strengths of Romanian sparkling wine, including its suitable climate, indigenous grape varieties, variety of styles available on the market, production methods employed, quality levels and international awards and medals. However, it also highlights weaknesses such as the limited number of producers and wines, approach to viticulture and base wines, volume, price and promotion.

The opportunities for growth in the industry are numerous, given by the collaborations with international sparkling wine producers, the increased demand and consumption of sparkling wines and last but not least, the leverage of Romania's EU membership to expand export markets.

Conclusion

The paper shows that Romanian sparkling wine has a great potential strongly correlated to the climate, to the authenticity given by the significant number of indigenous grape varieties used for the production of good quality sparkling wine, to the history and evident growing focus on the employment of traditional method, to the focus towards wines with lower sweetness levels such as Brut and below and to a better understanding of the younger consumer behavior and market trends.

Significant measures need to be taken in regard to viticulture and winemaking in order to improve quality and achieve product consistency.

Further investments in technology and know-how as well as improved and more efficient marketing campaigns and a unified, long-term strategy of the producers with the involvement and support of the official institutions will attract new categories of consumers, build a solid base for progress and take Romanian sparkling wine out of the shadow cone they are in at the moment.