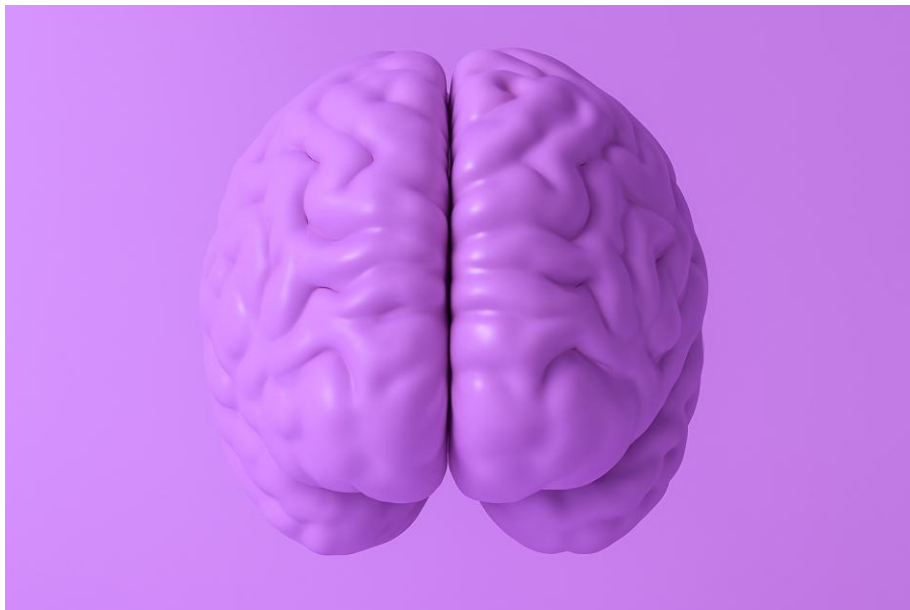


BACHELOR THESIS 2025

“Neuromarketing Strategy: How to reposition wine for the 18 to 25-year-old segment”



HES-SO Valais/ Wallis	Tourism degree program
Module	795 Bachelor Thesis
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Title page picture generated by AI, representing a 3D brain

Executive summary

This bachelor thesis explores how neuromarketing strategies can help Swiss wine producers engage and attract consumers aged 18 to 25, a segment that is increasingly distant from traditional wine culture. Despite growing interest in alternative beverages such as cocktails, beer, or non-alcoholic options, this generation represents a strategic opportunity for rejuvenating the wine market.

The study focuses on Maison Gillard, a winery located in the canton of Valais, and its sparkling white wine “La Porte de Novembre ICE,” a product specifically designed to reach 25 to 30-year-old consumers. Although the bottle adopts a more modern aesthetic and is supported by some digital communication on platforms like Instagram, Maison Gillard still struggles to generate online engagement or traffic to its physical shop in Sion. In contrast, the same wine consistently attracts long queues at pop-up events such as the Comptoir du Valais or the Marathon des Terroirs, suggesting a strong potential that is not being activated in the brand’s everyday marketing. Maison Gillard benefits from a good reputation through word-of-mouth, with young consumers travelling from across Switzerland to purchase the bottle. However, these visitors remain few. This paradox raises an essential question: why does this specific product appeal so strongly to 18-25-year-olds, when most other wines fail to capture their attention? This research seeks to analyse what Maison Gillard is already doing well, and to enhance those practices through neuromarketing insights and data-driven recommendations to attract this segment.

Although the legal drinking age in Switzerland is 16, this thesis deliberately focuses only on consumers aged 18 to 25. This ethical choice reflects a commitment to avoiding the promotion of alcohol to minors while acknowledging the cultural and commercial importance of this segment. The objective of this research is not to encourage higher alcohol consumption but to explore how wine can be repositioned in a responsible, emotionally engaging, and culturally relevant way. It argues for a communication approach that respects both public health concerns and the desire of young adults to access products that reflect their identity and lifestyle. Furthermore, this demographic is particularly interesting for the wine industry to exploit. Indeed, according to the Federal Office for Agriculture, wine consumption in Switzerland is declining significantly, with an 8 percent drop recorded between 2023 and 2024. Engaging the 18 to 25-year-old demographic could bring tangible benefits to the local wine economy. Currently, younger consumers often perceive wine as elitist, overly complex, and tied to rigid consumption rituals that no longer reflect their lifestyle or values.

To answer the research question, how can neuromarketing techniques help Swiss wine brands engage 18 to 25-year-old consumers more effectively, this thesis combines a literature review with six expert interviews, a quantitative survey involving 154 participants, and an experiment that measured System 1 reactions to visual wine packaging. These methods allowed the researcher to evaluate emotional triggers, pricing perceptions, digital behaviours, and consumer behaviour as well as general knowledge about neuromarketing and the wine industry.

The discussion chapter was structured around five hypotheses, each exploring a key dimension of the consumer decision-making process. Findings confirm that this target segment's approach to wine is guided less by technical information and more by emotional and unconscious cues. Design elements such as colour, label style, and storytelling enhance memorability. Price matters, but only when perceived as fair and transparent. Above all, young consumers seek wines that are accessible and aligned with their personal and social values, not products that feel distant, coded, or intimidating. Together, these hypotheses validate the relevance of neuromarketing as both an analytical and strategic tool for understanding and engaging 18 to 25-year-old wine consumers.

Based on these insights, the thesis proposes recommendations for Maison Gillard. These include investing in immersive, mobile-first digital content; simplifying access through beginner-friendly discovery formats; revitalising packaging and storytelling to create emotional impact; and developing sensory and educational experiences in-store to break down the elitist image of wine.

This thesis contributes to the field of applied neuromarketing by showing how emotional, sensory, and intuitive strategies can be used to connect traditional products with contemporary audiences. It also provides the Swiss wine industry with practical insights into the behaviours, expectations, and emotional logic of a generation that is too often misunderstood, but never irrelevant.

Foreword and acknowledgements

This thesis marks the final point of my bachelor studies in tourism at HES–SO Valais-Wallis. Beyond fulfilling academic requirements, this project has been a deeply formative experience. Through the research process, I discovered a profound interest in neuromarketing, a discipline that bridges consumer behaviour, cognitive psychology, and brain-based analysis. Understanding how emotional and sensory stimuli shape decisions at an unconscious level opened new perspectives for me, not only as a student of tourism and marketing but as someone deeply interested in how individuals interact with and respond to their environment. This exploration has enriched my academic journey and inspired future professional ambitions.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Monica Zumstein, for her clear guidance, thoughtful feedback and trust. Her support helped me and gave me the confidence to pursue this difficult topic with depth and clarity.

I also wish to thank Maison Gillard for allowing me to focus on their brand within this study, and particularly Mr. Julien Picard for his availability during the interview phase. I extend my appreciation to all the experts who generously contributed their insights and time: Marion Barral, Sandrine Mages, Aurélie Jouanigot, Dr. Julien Intartaglia, and Christopher Forstel. Their perspectives were more than necessary in shaping both the theoretical and applied dimensions of this research.

My heartfelt thanks go to Kate Gausi, friend and classmate, for her everlasting support and encouragement over the past three years. With her I shared doubts, laughter, tears, and moments of genuine resilience. Her presence and kindness have been a constant source of motivation and strength throughout my academic path.

I would also like to thank Xavier Metzler for the time and attention he dedicated to reviewing this thesis. His thoughtful feedback, generous encouragement, and steady support throughout this process and those three academic years were more than appreciated.

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List of abbreviations

fMRI : Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging

EEG : Electroencephalography

GSR : Galvanic Skin Response

vmPFC : Ventromedial Prefrontal Cortex

mPFC : Medial Prefrontal Cortex

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Introduction

Wine consumption is declining in Switzerland, particularly among young adults. According to the Federal Office for Agriculture, it dropped by 8 percent between 2023 and 2024. This trend is especially pronounced among 18 to 25-year-olds, who often view wine as elitist, complex, and disconnected from their lifestyle. At the same time, this generation continues to associate wine with powerful values such as social bonding, tradition, and gastronomy, suggesting that interest can be revived through adapted strategies. Neuromarketing offers tools to better understand unconscious decision-making processes and emotional triggers. By combining neuroscience, behavioural psychology, and consumer research, it provides valuable insights into attention, emotion, and memory. These dimensions are often overlooked by traditional marketing approaches. In Switzerland, where alcohol promotion is highly regulated and direct advertising of wine to young audiences is limited, neuromarketing offers an ethical alternative by focusing on how consumers think and feel, rather than pushing consumption through conventional persuasive methods. This thesis explores how neuromarketing can help reconnect wine brands with younger consumers. It focuses on the case of Maison Gillard and its sparkling white wine “La Porte de Novembre ICE,” which shows promising appeal during events but remains under-recognised in digital and retail channels. The central research question guiding this work is: **How can neuromarketing techniques help Swiss wine brands engage 18 to 25-year-old consumers more effectively?** To answer this, the study combines expert interviews, a quantitative survey, and an experimental test to assess unconscious responses to packaging and communication formats. The findings are used to generate strategic recommendations for Maison Gillard and the broader Swiss wine industry.

The thesis begins with a review of the relevant theoretical background, followed by a presentation of the methodology. The findings are then discussed in relation to the research objectives, leading to a set of strategic recommendations. The work concludes with a critical reflection on the study's contributions and limitations.

1.1. Context

1.2. General Introduction to the context

Wine tourism currently represents a dynamic and rapidly expanding sector, responding directly to contemporary demands for sustainable tourism, immersive experiences, and local economic growth (SECO, 2021). In Switzerland, this sector benefits significantly from institutional support, notably through initiatives such as the “*Swiss Wine Tour*” project, supported by the Confederation's Innotour program, which aims to establish Switzerland as a prominent wine tourism destination.

In parallel, a recent study by the Office des Vins Vaudois (OVV, 2021) highlighted that younger generations, specifically those aged 18-25, show growing interest in wine consumption but with expectations drastically different from previous generations. In this context, neuromarketing is an approach at the intersection of neuroscience and marketing. It appears particularly promising to understand consumers' underlying motivations. This discipline analyzes individuals' emotional and unconscious responses to various marketing stimuli (Plassmann et al., 2015), thereby offering valuable insights to wine industry professionals for designing memorable and effective tourism experiences (Morin, 2011). Maison Gillard, a historic winery located in Valais renowned for producing high-quality wines, is particularly interested in leveraging this opportunity to sustainably attract this emerging segment of younger consumers. Integrating neuromarketing could thus provide essential insights for strategically designing and promoting its wine tourism offerings, while respecting its core values of authenticity and tradition.

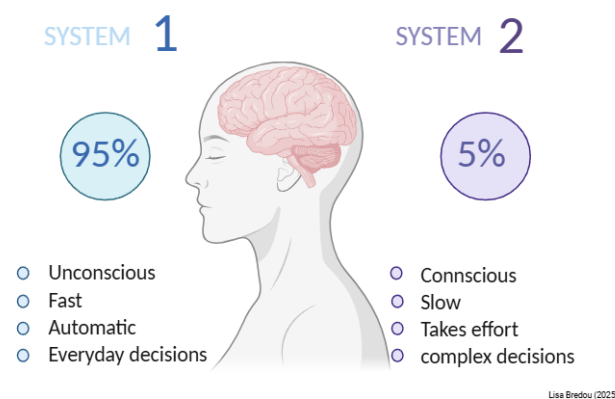
This research, therefore, aims to explore how Maison Gillard could effectively utilize neuromarketing tools and methods to capture attention and enhance emotional engagement among young adults towards its wine tourism experiences.

1.3. Introduction to Neuromarketing

A landmark study at Baylor College of Medicine in 2004 revealed the unconscious power of branding. Using functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), researchers observed that participants showed no strong preference between Coca-Cola and Pepsi during a blind taste test. However, once brand identities were revealed, Coca-Cola was overwhelmingly preferred, with increased activation in

brain regions related to emotion, memory, and cultural association (McClure et al., 2004). This experiment offered neuroscientific proof that brand influence operates largely at an unconscious level (Plassmann et al., 2015). These insights helped define neuromarketing as a discipline that combines neuroscience and marketing to examine how consumers respond to stimuli at a cognitive and emotional level. Zaltman's metaphor elicitation technique (ZMET) and Kahneman's theory of dual process thinking (System 1 and System 2) were foundational.

Figure 1 Dual cognitive systems: System 1 and System 2



Source: Designed by the author (Lisa Bredou, 2025)

System 1, which governs most decisions, is fast, intuitive, and emotionally driven, while System 2 is slower and analytical (Kahneman, 2011). Neuromarketing focuses on System 1 by leveraging tools such as EEG, fMRI, and eye-tracking to capture unconscious consumer reactions that traditional methods like surveys often fail to detect. Studies show that as much as 95 percent of decision-making occurs unconsciously (Cruz Echeverria, 2021). Since the early 2000s, companies including Coca-Cola and Nestlé have incorporated these methods into product testing and branding strategies (Morin, 2011). Although promising, neuromarketing raises ethical questions regarding consumer autonomy and manipulation (Murphy et al., 2008). Nonetheless, the field continues to grow and is now used in areas ranging from advertising to product design. Its strength lies in offering deeper understanding of consumer perception and emotional resonance, two dimensions critical for engaging younger generations.

1.4. Maison Gillard

Maison Gillard is a historic winery based in Valais, Switzerland, recognised for producing high-quality wines and maintaining a strong national presence, notably through major retailers like Coop (personal communication, Julien Picard, 2024). According to its Wine Tourism Manager, the Swiss wine industry must adapt to changing consumption patterns, especially among younger consumers who increasingly prefer alternatives to traditional wine. Mr. Picard notes that wine suffers from an “aging image” and highlights the opportunity to modernise consumption through lighter, low-alcohol, or alcohol-free options (personal communication, Julien Picard, 2024). In line with this vision, Maison Gillard has diversified its wine tourism offerings with initiatives such as the “Family Cellar Tour,” recognised by the Great Wine Capitals Network for its inclusive and accessible format (Great Wine Capitals, 2023). On the product side, the brand has revitalised its “Porte de Novembre” range, offering contemporary branding, sweeter profiles, and lower alcohol levels. These attributes aim to appeal to younger consumers seeking approachable and trendy wine experiences (Mosca Vins, 2023; personal communication, Julien Picard, 2024).

1.5. Generation Z and the wine disconnect

Generation Z, typically defined as individuals born after 1995, is reshaping consumer expectations across all industries. Digital-native, socially conscious, and highly pragmatic, they differ from Millennials in both values and behaviours. Within the wine industry, this cohort is less engaged, shows limited brand loyalty, and is drawn more to visual and emotional stimuli than to technical attributes like grape variety or region (Ogbeide, 2015; Mokrý et al., 2016). Studies also show that this group consumes less alcohol overall and is less likely to develop lasting consumption habits around wine (Higgins et al., 2015; Barber et al., 2008). However, they remain sensitive to authenticity, storytelling, and aesthetic coherence areas where neuromarketing can offer valuable insights. Despite being legally allowed to drink wine in Switzerland from the age of 16, this thesis focuses exclusively on consumers aged 18 to 25, in accordance with ethical research practices. The aim is not to promote alcohol but to understand how emotional, cognitive, and cultural factors shape consumption choices within this specific segment.

1.6. Bridging wine and emotion: A strategic opportunity

As wine producers seek to re-engage younger audiences, neuromarketing offers a compelling framework. Tools such as implicit association tests, eye-tracking, and emotional response analysis can help understand how Generation Z perceives and emotionally connects to wine products and experiences. In a market where direct advertising is restricted, this approach offers an ethical and effective way to tailor messages, packaging, and in-store experiences. For Maison Gillard, which combines strong brand heritage with a desire to innovate, neuromarketing can serve as both a diagnostic and creative tool, one that transforms sensory input into emotional engagement and cultural relevance.

1.7. Research question

How can neuromarketing techniques help Swiss wine brands engage 18 to 25-year-old consumers more effectively?

1.8. Research's objectives

To address this question, the thesis sets out to achieve the following objectives:

1. To analyse the key cognitive and emotional mechanisms that influence wine-related decision-making among young adults.
2. To examine how specific neuromarketing tools and strategies such as visual design, packaging, and digital storytelling impact the perception and memorability of wine products.
3. To evaluate the case of Maison Gillard and identify opportunities to enhance its engagement with the 18 to 25 demographics.
4. To formulate actionable recommendations based on data collected from expert interviews, a consumer survey, and an experimental task.

Development

2. Literature review

2.1. Neuromarketing

Neuromarketing is an interdisciplinary field that integrates neuroscience and marketing to analyse consumer behaviour at a subconscious level. Unlike traditional marketing, which relies on self-reported data such as surveys or focus groups, neuromarketing employs neuroscientific techniques, including functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), electroencephalography (EEG), eye-tracking, and galvanic skin response (GSR), to measure consumer responses to advertisements, brands, and product packaging in real time (Fortunato et al., 2014). By uncovering unconscious emotional and cognitive reactions, neuromarketing offers marketers the possibility of crafting more effective campaigns, tailoring messaging, and optimizing product placement in ways that traditional methods cannot. However, despite its promising potential, the field has been met with both enthusiasm and skepticism, with concerns raised about the ethical implications of manipulating consumers' subconscious decision-making processes (Stanton et al., 2017). While some researchers highlight the potential of neuromarketing to improve consumer experiences, others argue that the science behind it remains inconsistent and, at times, unreliable (Flores et al., 2014). Additionally, Thaler and Sunstein's (2008) Nudge Theory provides a useful framework for understanding how neuromarketing interacts with consumer behaviour, as it suggests that subtle cues can significantly influence decision-making without consumers being consciously aware.

2.1.1. Techniques and methodologies

Neuromarketing relies on a variety of neuroscientific methodologies to assess consumer responses, each with its own advantages and limitations. fMRI, one of the most widely used techniques, measures changes in blood oxygen levels to identify neural activity associated with emotions, decision-making, and brand perception (Pazart et al., 2014). While fMRI provides precise spatial resolution, it remains expensive and lacks the temporal resolution required to capture real-time responses to marketing

stimuli. EEG, on the other hand, is more cost-effective and measures electrical activity in the brain, offering insights into emotional engagement and attentional shifts (Cruz Echeverria, 2023). However, while fMRI and EEG both provide valuable insights, they also suffer from interpretation challenges. EEG signals are often too broad to pinpoint specific emotional reactions, whereas fMRI studies are conducted in artificial environments that may not reflect real-world consumer behaviour (Nemcová & Berčík, 2019). A possible solution to these limitations is the integration of multimodal approaches, where multiple neuromarketing techniques are combined for a more comprehensive understanding. Some researchers suggest that combining fMRI with EEG or eye-tracking can enhance the accuracy of findings, as EEG provides temporal precision while fMRI offers spatial resolution (Plassmann et al., 2012). Despite this, multimodal approaches remain costly and complex, limiting their widespread adoption in commercial settings. (Cruz Echeverria, 2023).

Technique	Measures	Strengths	Limitations
EEG	Electrical brain activity	High temporal resolution, non-invasive	Low spatial resolution
fMRI	Blood flow in the brain	High spatial precision	Expensive, immobile, low temporal res.
Eye-Tracking	Eye movement and fixation	Easy to use, good for visual attention	Cannot measure emotional response
GSR	Skin conductivity (arousal)	Detects emotional arousal	No info on emotion type or valence
Facial Coding	Micro-expressions, emotion decoding	Good for emotion classification	Accuracy can vary depending on context

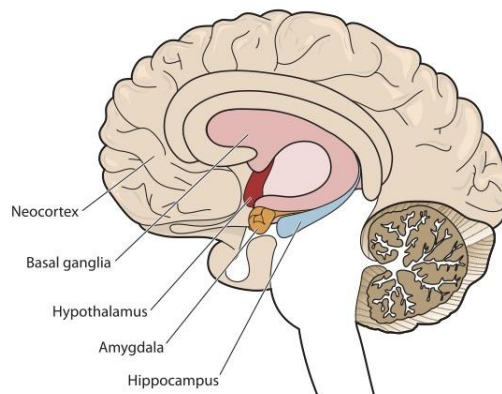
Other methodologies, such as eye-tracking and pupil dilation, help researchers analyse visual attention and cognitive load when consumers interact with advertisements or product packaging (Rozan Fortunato et al., 2014). Additionally, GSR (Galvanic Skin Response) is used to measure physiological arousal, which can indicate the intensity of emotional reactions to marketing stimuli, though it does not distinguish between positive and negative valence (Mohd Isa et al., 2019). However, one major limitation of these methods is the inability to distinguish between emotions of the same intensity but opposite valence (e.g., excitement vs. fear), making it difficult to draw clear marketing conclusions (Stanton et al., 2017). Despite the promise of these techniques, Stanton et al. (2017) argue

that neuromarketing findings are often overstated due to methodological inconsistencies and limited sample sizes. Alsharif et al (2021) claims to uncover definitive patterns in consumer decision-making, others warn that neural responses alone cannot fully explain purchasing behaviour without incorporating external factors such as cultural influences, past experiences, and social context (Alsharif et al., 2021). This discrepancy raises concerns about the reproducibility of neuromarketing studies, as different methodologies often yield varying results, making generalizations difficult (Mohd Isa et al., 2019).

2.1.2. The role of emotion in decision-making

A fundamental principle of neuromarketing is the assertion that consumer decisions are primarily driven by emotions rather than rational deliberation. Neuroscientific research has demonstrated that key brain regions, such as the amygdala, ventromedial prefrontal cortex (vmPFC), and medial prefrontal cortex (mPFC), play critical roles in processing emotions and influencing purchasing behaviour (Alsharif et al., 2021).

Figure 2 Brain areas involved in decision-making



Source: Shutterstock

These findings align with Kahneman's (2011) dual-system theory, which posits that System 1 (fast, intuitive, and emotional) dominates consumer choices, while System 2 (slow, deliberate, and rational) is engaged less frequently (Nemcová & Berčík, 2019). Consequently, advertisements and branding strategies that evoke strong emotional responses tend to be more effective in shaping consumer preferences and fostering brand loyalty.

However, not all researchers agree on the extent to which emotions drive purchasing decisions. While Alsharif et al. (2021) emphasize the dominance of emotions, Stanton et al. (2017) argue that rational factors, such as price, availability, and brand reputation, still play a crucial role in consumer decision-making. Similarly, some Researchers warn that neuromarketing studies tend to overstate the emotional component of purchasing behaviour while neglecting the impact of learned behaviours and past experiences, which can override emotional impulses in certain contexts (Flores et al., 2014). Furthermore, Reimann et al. (2011) highlight cultural differences in how emotions influence decision-making, suggesting that Western consumers prioritize emotional appeal, whereas Eastern consumers may favour collective decision-making based on social values. These contrasting perspectives suggest that while emotions are undoubtedly influential, they may not always be the decisive factor in purchasing decisions, as neuromarketing proponents claim.

2.1.3. Ethical considerations and potential misuse

Neuromarketing has been the subject of ethical debates, particularly regarding the potential for consumer manipulation. Some Researchers argue that neuromarketing enhances advertising effectiveness by making marketing messages more relevant and personalized (Mohd Isa et al., 2019). However, critics warn of the risks associated with subliminal advertising and the potential for brands to exploit subconscious triggers to influence consumer behavior without informed consent (Flores et al., 2014). A widely cited case in this discussion is Cambridge Analytica, where psychological profiling and neuromarketing-like techniques were used to manipulate voter preferences, demonstrating the potential misuse of neuroscience in persuasion tactics. As neuromarketing continues to evolve, the lack of clear ethical guidelines remains a major concern, requiring further regulatory oversight.

2.2. Switzerland and wine

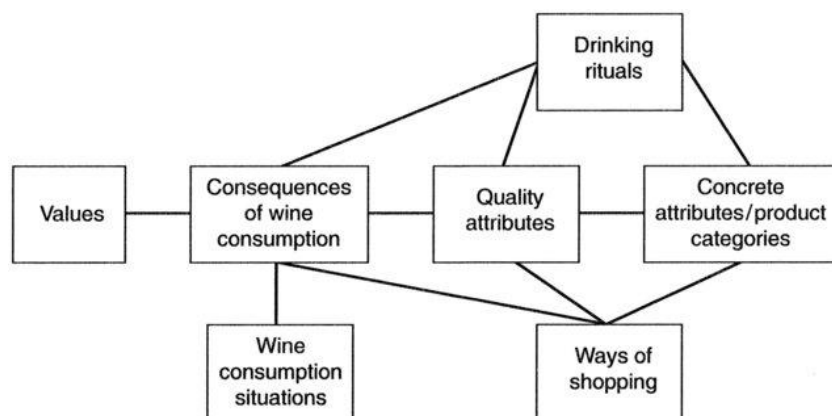
Wine tourism, defined as travel centred around the appreciation, production, and consumption of wine, has gained increasing academic and commercial attention over the past two decades (Hall et al., 2000). In Switzerland, it is recognised as a cultural and economic asset, aligned with national goals for sustainable and experiential tourism development (Swiss Wine Promotion, 2023). Initiatives such as the “Swiss Wine Tour” aim to enhance visibility, coordination, and the quality of wine-related experiences across cantons. Beyond traditional wine connoisseurs, recent studies show that wine

tourism increasingly appeals to younger and more diverse audiences. As Alant and Bruwer (2004) note, modern wine tourists are often motivated by emotional connection, sensory immersion, and the search for authenticity. Swiss stakeholders also emphasise the rise of “slow tourism” and experiential co-creation as key trends (Swiss Wine Promotion, 2023). These developments are highly relevant for brands like Maison Gillard, which seek to connect with younger consumers through both product innovation and wine tourism. While packaging and branding remain critical touchpoints, the tourism experience can serve as a complementary platform for emotional engagement (Barber et al., 2009). As Morin (2011) suggests, emotionally rich and sensorially stimulating environments enhance memory encoding and brand affinity both central objectives of neuromarketing. Therefore, wine tourism not only supports regional economic development but also provides a valuable framework for applying neuromarketing insights (Alant & Bruwer, 2004). Creating immersive, emotionally resonant experiences allows wineries to speak to the cognitive patterns of Generation Z consumers, who are particularly responsive to authenticity, narrative, and multisensory cues (Hall et al., 2000).

2.2.1. Visitor motivations and profiles

Traditional segmentation of wine tourism has evolved from knowledge-based categories (e.g., novice vs. expert) to more complex psychographic and lifestyle-oriented models. Charters and Ali-Knight (2002) identified early typologies, while more recent work emphasizes motivations such as authenticity, emotional connection, and experiential immersion (Alant & Bruwer, 2004).

Figure 3 Conceptual wine-related lifestyle model.



Source: Johan Bruwer (2017)

Swiss wine promotion (2023) underlines the increasing role of “slow tourism” and “sensorial immersion” in Swiss oenotouristic offerings. These motivations suggest that Wine tourism is no longer reserved for wine connoisseurs but is appealing to a wider audience, including casual consumers. This shift presents an opportunity for wineries to reframe their offers through co-creative experiences and cross-sector collaborations (e.g., with gastronomy, art, or local traditions).

2.3. The role of 18-25-year-olds in the wine market

Understanding the 18–25-year-old consumer segment is critical for the wine industry's long-term survival. As McGarry Wolf, Brown, and Thompson (2018) argue, this generation consumes differently with different motivations and preferences.

2.3.1. Segment characteristics and wine perception

Young adults, particularly those in the Gen Z bracket (born post-1995), often see wine not as a traditional symbol of status or connoisseurship, but as a social and sensory experience (Thach & Olsen, 2006). In a study of 108 Millennials aged 21–27, respondents cited taste (31%), food pairing (19%), and relaxation (15%) as their top reasons for drinking wine (Thach & Olsen, 2006, p. 313). Environmental and social responsibility also matter. As Barber et al. (2009) demonstrate, young consumers are more willing to pay for wines that align with their ecological values, particularly if they perceive the product and brand as authentic. “Attitude toward the environment was a significant predictor of willingness to purchase environmentally friendly wine” (Barber et al., 2009, p. 69). An eye-tracking study on Gen Z's perception of wine labels found that visual elements like typography, contrast, and minimalism significantly influence purchase behavior and recall (Mokrý et al., 2016). McGarry Wolf et al. (2018) confirm that young adults prefer practical, easy-to-consume wine formats such as cans or screw-top bottles over corked bottles and they also value creative labels and portability more than origin or vintage.

2.3.2. Brand attachment and identity

Malar et al. (2011) argue that brand attachment among young consumers is driven more by alignment with the *ideal self* than the *actual self*, reinforcing the importance of aspirational branding. Hawkins (2015) supports this through a practice-based segmentation lens, showing that Generation Z integrates wine consumption into social routines rather than fixed generational categories. The

groundbreaking study conducted at Baylor College of Medicine in 2004 illustrated this vividly: participants showed no clear preference for Pepsi or Coca-Cola when brands were concealed; however, when brand identities were revealed, the preference for Coca-Cola surged, accompanied by increased activation in brain areas related to memory, emotion, and cultural significance. This provided tangible neuroscientific evidence of System 1's profound role in consumer behavior and branding (McClure et al., 2004).

2.3.3. Neuromarketing and ethics in youth targeting

Sensory cues like sound, light, and color can subconsciously impact product perception (Barber et al., 2009). However, their use in marketing to young people raises ethical concerns. Ferrell, Beatty, and Dubljevic (2025) caution that while neuromarketing tools offer insights, they must be deployed transparently and responsibly. A study using fMRI found that wine tasted better when participants believed it had been selected by a sommelier, highlighting how perception influences experience (Sommeliers fMRI Study, 2021).

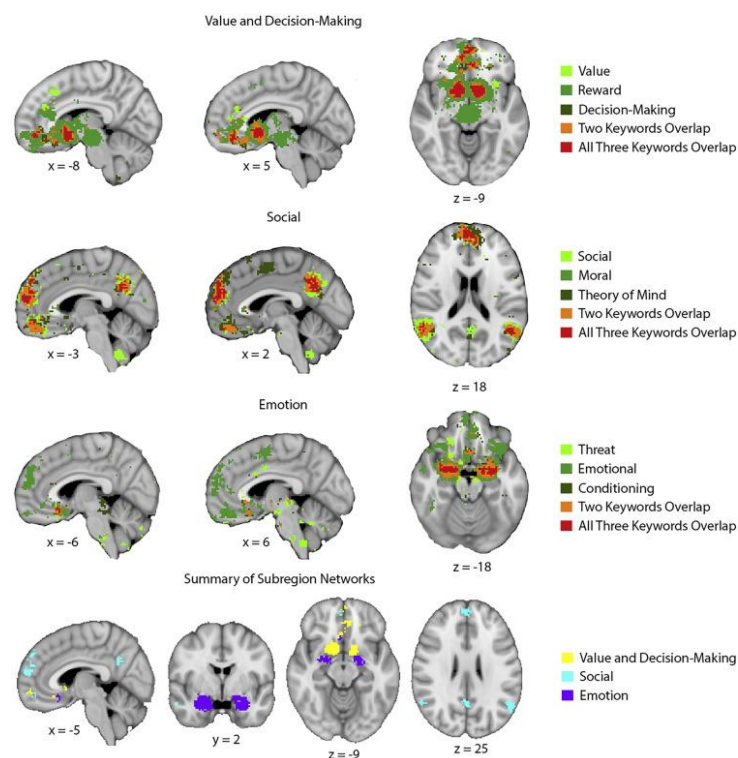
2.4. Decision-making and cognitive influence

While neuromarketing explores unconscious processes through physiological measurements, decision-making theory provides a conceptual framework for understanding how consumers mentally process choices. These theories explain why emotional, intuitive reactions often take precedence over rational analysis in consumer behaviour, particularly in complex or hedonic contexts like wine selection. Kahneman (2011) distinguishes between two systems: System 1, fast and intuitive, and System 2, slower and analytical. In everyday consumer environments, particularly those rich in emotional or sensory stimuli, System 1 tends to dominate. This aligns with Zaltman's (2003) claim that "95% of thinking occurs in the unconscious mind," a view widely echoed in marketing neuroscience. While this suggests emotion-driven decisions, others caution against overgeneralizing. For example, while Alsharif et al. (2021) highlight the dominance of emotional networks in purchasing decisions, Stanton, Sinnott-Armstrong, and Huettel (2017) argue that rational variables such as price and brand familiarity can override emotional responses, especially in repeat or high-stakes purchases.

The vmPFC is consistently implicated in these processes. It integrates emotional and reward-related information from the amygdala and striatum, helping consumers assign value to choices (Roy et al.,

2012; Hiser & Koenigs, 2018). However, as Roy et al. (2012) note, value attribution can be highly context-dependent, influenced by social setting, framing, and expectations—highlighting the complexity of translating lab results to real-world behavior. In the context of wine, Němcová and Berčík (2019) found that even when respondents claimed that varietal and price were most important, eye-tracking data revealed a visual focus on label aesthetics. This discrepancy between declared preferences and subconscious behavior underscores the importance of combining cognitive theory with neuromarketing practice.

Figure 4 Functional subregions of the ventromedial prefrontal cortex



Source: Hiser & Koenig (2018)

Figure 4 illustrates the functional specialization of subregions within the ventromedial prefrontal cortex, based on meta-analyses from Neurosynth, a platform that synthesizes data from thousands of fMRI studies using automated text mining and statistical mapping (Yarkoni et al., 2011), the figure reveals distinct activation patterns across three key domains: value-based decision-making, emotion, and social cognition. Each domain was mapped using three domain-relevant keywords, showing that the vmPFC supports a variety of cognitive and affective processes. The image also highlights how different regions within and outside the vmPFC are consistently engaged depending on whether the task involves evaluating value, experiencing emotions, or understanding social situations. This

neurofunctional differentiation supports the idea that consumer decision-making is not driven by logic alone, but is deeply rooted in emotional and social brain mechanisms (Hiser & Koenigs, 2018).

2.4.1. Sensory perception

Wine is a uniquely multisensory product. Its perception is shaped not only by taste and aroma, but by packaging, context, and expectation. Neuroscientific evidence confirms that sensory cues influence emotional response and perceived quality (Plassmann et al., 2008; Seubert et al., 2017). For instance, olfactory stimuli activate brain regions linked to emotion and memory such as the vmPFC and orbitofrontal cortex (Seubert et al., 2017). The close connection between smell and memory helps explain why wine experiences are often described in emotional terms something traditional marketing struggles to quantify. Supporting this, a study on sommeliers showed that expertise modulates flavor integration in the brain, suggesting that perception is not purely sensory but cognitively constructed (Plassmann et al., 2012). While experts rely on learned frameworks, novices are more easily influenced by visual and contextual cues a key insight for Generation Z targeting. Mokry et al. (2016), using eye-tracking with young adults, found that award stickers and producer information drew the most attention, even when respondents verbally rated them as less important. This contrast mirrors the findings of Fortunato et al. (2014), who argue that visual and emotional impact often surpasses declared importance in decision-making. Together, these findings reinforce the idea that sensory design must align with unconscious attention patterns to be effective.

2.4.2. Emotional perceptions

Emotion is not just a factor in decision-making it is often the decisive force behind it. Emotional brand connections enhance memory encoding, influence preferences, and increase post-purchase satisfaction (Malar et al., 2011; Reimann et al., 2010). According to Malar et al. (2011), emotional brand attachment is strongest when a brand reflects the ideal self of the consumer. This is especially relevant for Gen Z, who are still constructing their identities and tend to favor brands that support authenticity, creativity, and individuality. Reimann et al. (2010) demonstrate that emotional cues in packaging (e.g., color and curvature) influence neural activity in the mPFC and insula areas associated with emotional salience and approach behavior. However, not all emotional triggers lead to attachment. As Stanton et al. (2017) caution, inconsistent emotional cues can backfire, creating dissonance and reducing brand trust. This tension is evident in wine marketing: while some producers succeed in crafting a coherent emotional universe (e.g., Maison Gillard's ICE wine), others rely too heavily on disjointed aesthetics or

empty slogans. As Mohd Isa, Hamid, and Khairudin (2019) argue, emotional engagement must be holistic, combining visual, verbal, and experiential cues into a seamless narrative.

2.5. Ethics

As neuromarketing gains commercial traction, concerns over manipulation, transparency, and consumer autonomy have grown, especially when targeting vulnerable populations such as young adults in the context of alcohol marketing (Isa, Mansor, & Razali, 2019).

Fortunato, Giraldi, and Oliveira (2014) highlight its potential to improve the consumer experience by accessing non-conscious emotional responses. In contrast, Stanton, Sinnott-Armstrong, and Huettel (2017) argue that neuromarketing often lacks scientific rigor and ethical safeguards, cautioning that without proper validation, it risks becoming exploitative. Similarly, Masinter (2021), in the Harvard Business Review, shares views from researchers such as Paul Zak and Moran Cerf, who warn of “reverse-engineering attention” and misuse of brain science by marketers lacking proper understanding. Isa et al. (2019) offer a more balanced view, calling for ethical standards based on scientific validity and consumer respect. Christoph Forstel (personal communication, 2025) echoes these concerns, noting that many brands adopt simplified “neuro” strategies for budgetary reasons, without ethical reflection or scientific grounding.

These ethical tensions are intensified when neuromarketing is used in alcohol promotion. While wine has cultural significance, its marketing to young people raises public health concerns. The World Health Organization (2023) warns that emotional advertising normalizes and glamorizes alcohol among youth. Babor et al. (2020) similarly link emotionally framed alcohol ads to earlier initiation and higher consumption. As Masinter (2021) points out, targeting unconscious impulses is ethically distinct from building brand affinity, and becomes problematic when the audience is vulnerable. While Fortunato et al. (2014) view emotion as a tool for connection, others argue it can easily shift from engagement to exploitation (Stanton et al., 2017; Masinter, 2021).

2.5.1. Moving toward responsible practice

There is currently no universally adopted ethical code for neuromarketing, leaving responsibility in the hands of individual companies and agencies. Researchers such as Isa et al. (2019) and Stanton et al. (2017) call for the development of formal ethical frameworks, including informed consent protocols, disclosure of testing conditions, and independent oversight bodies. Until such measures become

standard, ethical neuromarketing relies on the intent and integrity of those who practice it. As Christoph Forstel puts it, “There’s nothing wrong with emotion what’s wrong is the absence of reflection behind its use” (personal communication, 2025). Emotional strategies should serve to enrich, not exploit, the consumer journey.

2.6. Research gaps and limitations

While neuromarketing has shown strong potential in advancing consumer research, remains a developing field with notable limitations. One major concern is the lack of standardized methodologies, which complicates comparisons across studies and limits reproducibility. Ethical debates also challenge the broader application of these techniques, particularly when used with vulnerable populations such as young adults. Moreover, most studies focus on short-term behavioural outcomes, with limited investigation into long-term effects on consumer trust and brand loyalty. A significant limitation is the outdated nature of much of the existing literature. Many foundational studies in neuromarketing were conducted in the early 2000s, and few large-scale academic replications have emerged in recent years. This stagnation may be due to the high cost and technical complexity of neuroscientific tools such as fMRI and EEG, which require considerable financial and logistical resources. As a result, many companies and institutions rely on simplified or proxy techniques, which may not fully capture the cognitive processes they claim to measure. In the context of wine and wine tourism, three additional research gaps stand out. First, there is a strong geographical bias in the literature. Most peer-reviewed studies are based in countries such as France, Australia, or the United States. Switzerland remains underrepresented, with most data coming from national reports rather than academic publications (OFAG, 2023; Swiss Wine Promotion, 2023). Second, the 18 to 25-year-old segment is critically overlooked. This age group is rarely studied in depth, even though it represents a key demographic for the future of the wine industry. Existing studies often blur the distinction between Millennials and Gen Z or fail to address the specific behaviours and values of younger consumers. Third, there is a lack of interdisciplinary work bridging tourism, marketing, and cognitive science. Although neuromarketing could provide valuable tools for measuring memory, emotion, and attention in wine-related experiences, it remains underutilised in this domain (Barber et al., 2009). Furthermore, most studies focus on digital engagement, neglecting offline discovery contexts such as festivals, in-store tastings, and real-world brand encounters.

This thesis aims to address these limitations by focusing specifically on young Swiss consumers and by applying neuromarketing principles to evaluate how wine brands such as Maison Gillard can engage this audience in a more effective and ethically grounded manner.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research approach

To explore how neuromarketing principles can increase wine consumption among young adults aged 18 to 25 in Switzerland, this study adopts a multi-method design. The research combines semi-structured expert interviews, an online consumer survey, and a small-scale visual experiment aimed at capturing intuitive decision-making. These primary data are complemented by a thorough review of peer-reviewed scientific literature. Throughout this study, the target group, individuals aged 18 to 25 will be referred to interchangeably as “young adults,” “young consumers,” or simply by their age “18–25.” While this segment overlaps with what is commonly known as Generation Z, this research deliberately emphasizes their age range rather than generational labels to ensure clarity and consistency.

3.2. Primary data collection method

3.2.1. Semi-structured expert interviews

Semi-structured interviews were selected as the most appropriate qualitative method to gather expert insights. This format offers a flexible structure in which questions guide the conversation while allowing space for participants to elaborate on relevant themes. According to Fragnière and Moresino (2016, p. 107), semi-structured interviews are ideal when the objective is to combine analytical comparability with in-depth understanding. This structure allows both consistency and depth. This is particularly useful when addressing complex topics such as consumer psychology or neuromarketing, where unexpected insights often emerge during open discussion. The choice of the experts was made based on the two core themes of this thesis, wine and neuromarketing. Between December 2024 and March 2025, six interviews were conducted with professionals in the fields of wine marketing, communication, and neuromarketing. This two-part structure was intentionally chosen to produce a

comprehensive and balanced understanding of the topic while facilitating later thematic analysis and comparison between experts. The goal of those interviews was to get insights on how to attract young consumers to the wine market, what Switzerland is putting into place to already attract them, and to understand the neuromarketing theoretical aspects, such as the definition of neuromarketing, cognitive processes involved in decision-making, ethical boundaries of neuromarketing, and the role of unconscious mechanisms.

Table 1 Experts' table

Name	Field	Date	Role	Appendix
Julien Picard	Wine	12.12.2024	Event Manager at Maison Gillard	I
Marion Barral	Wine	17.12.2024	Independent wine sector consultant	II
Sandrine Mages	Wine	18.12.2024	Communications Manager at Swiss Wine Valais	III
Aur�lie Jouanigot	Neuromarketing	17.12.2024	Founder of RedRoom, neuromarketing strategist	IV
Dr. Julien Intartaglia	Neuromarketing	12.02.2025	Dean at ICME, HEG Arc	V
Christopher Forstel	Neuromarketing	24.03.2025	Neuromarketing consultant	VI

3.2.2. Online survey

To complement the insights gained from expert interviews, a quantitative survey was distributed online to collect data directly from the target audience. Entitled *“If I say the word wine, what comes to your mind?”*, the survey aimed to explore perceptions, emotional associations, and consumption habits among young adults. It was designed using Google Forms and made available exclusively in French. The full questionnaire is provided in the Appendix. The survey was conducted between February 13 and April 1, 2025, and gathered 154 responses from individuals aged 18 to over 50. It was disseminated primarily via Instagram, Facebook, and WhatsApp, especially through student networks, to maximize reach and ensure alignment with the target demographic. Although the questions focused on subjective and emotional aspects, the survey followed a standardized quantitative format with closed and scaled questions. This allowed for the collection of measurable data related to purchase

contexts, preferred wine types, and key emotional triggers. The objective was to identify patterns in consumer discourse and shared frames of reference that could inform future communication strategies, as well as to compare generational preferences and assess awareness of the Maison Gillard brand.

In a questionnaire, you gain access to what consumers can put into words — their past experiences, their tastes, their values. But the actual purchase decision often occurs at a much faster, subconscious level. It's about reflexes, automatisms... and that's what no survey can ever fully capture.

— Dr. Julien Intartaglia, personal communication, 2025

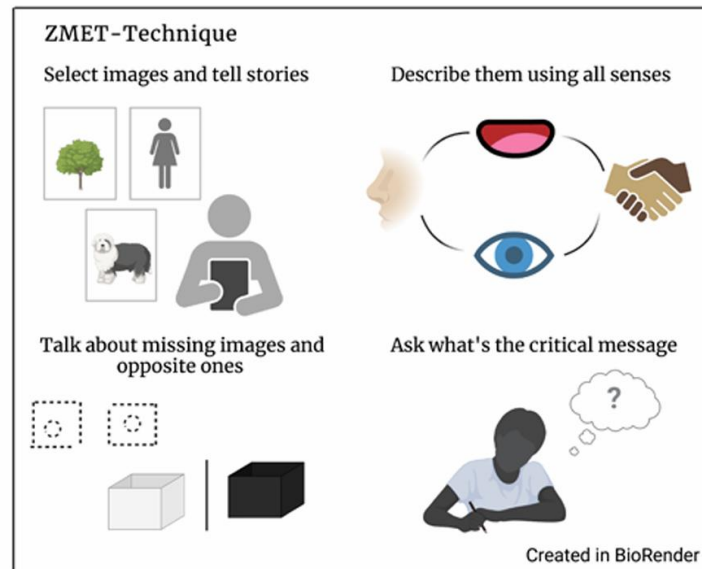
3.2.3. Experiment

To explore the emotional impact of visual elements on consumer preference, a small-scale experimental study was conducted. The method aimed to simulate the influence of packaging design by exposing participants to visual stimuli and observing their intuitive reactions. The experiment titled *“The influence of packaging on product perception”* consisted of six image sets, each displaying a pair of wine bottles with contrasting visual characteristics (typography, colour palette, shape, label minimalism vs. complexity and modern vs traditional). Fifteen participants aged 18 to 25 were invited to, choose their preferred bottle in each pair then Indicate which bottle left the strongest impression and finally Identify which bottle they liked the most and so which bottle they would be most likely purchase. Only age was recorded, allowing for a basic segmentation. No contextual information (e.g. price, origin, grape variety) was provided, in order to isolate the impact of pure visual aesthetics. This experimental design draws inspiration from classical experimental methodology, defined as a systematic procedure used to observe cause-and-effect relationships by manipulating one or more variables (Colorado State University, n.d.). While this kind of setup does not produce statistically generalisable results, it is valuable for observing cognitive and emotional tendencies under controlled conditions (Fenfen & Duy, 2012).

This experiment was designed as a resourceful and accessible adaptation of neuromarketing methodology, in the absence of biometric equipment. The goal was to explore unconscious preferences triggered by visual exposure, aligning with the principles of System 1 thinking as described by Kahneman (2011). The experiment was also directly inspired by the work of Gerald Zaltman, whose early research in the 1990s in Nepal gave birth to the Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique (ZMET).

During that foundational study, participants were asked to take photographs representing their daily lives, which were later used as discussion prompts. Zaltman discovered that images could reveal deep, unspoken insights into identity, emotion, and perception, insights often inaccessible through direct questioning.

Figure 5: Steps of the Zaltman metaphor elicitation technique



Source: Cruz Echeverria (2023), Scientific Kenyon: Neuroscience Edition

“Interestingly, the photographs showed what could not be said.”
(Cruz Echeverria, 2021, p. 6)

Zaltman’s method laid the groundwork for visual and sensory neuromarketing techniques and later influenced the integration of fMRI and other brain scanning tools in consumer research (Colorado State University, n.d). Inspired by this logic, the present study attempts to uncover implicit emotional responses to packaging by using visuals as stimuli, acknowledging that what people feel is not always what they say.

3.3. Secondary data collection method

Secondary data supported both the theoretical framework and the methodological structure of this study. The literature review, presented in Chapter 2, synthesized academic contributions on

neuromarketing, wine branding, and youth consumer behaviour. Authors such as Zaltman (2003), Kahneman (2011), Lindstrom (2011), Thaler and Sunstein (2008), and Ariely (2008) were essential in shaping the research focus and inspired the experimental approach and the logic behind testing user reactions. The literature review played a key role in: Defining the core concepts used in the interviews and experimental design, identifying emotional and cognitive drivers relevant to the wine sector and also constructing the analytical themes used in the interpretation of expert interviews. In addition, methodological guidance was drawn from the book *“Étude de marché en pratique”* (Fragnière & Moresino, 2016), which provided structure for the interview guide and helped position the survey but also *“Service Design: From Insight to Implementation”* (Polaine, Løvlie, & Reason, 2013), these works ensured a solid academic foundation and methodological coherence throughout the research.

3.4. Limitations

As with any exploratory research, this study is subject to several methodological limitations that must be acknowledged. First, the relatively small sample sizes like the six experts' interviews and the 15 participants to the experiment, limit the statistical generalisability of the findings. While the insights gathered are rich and contextually grounded, they should be interpreted as indicative rather than representative. A second limitation concerns the homogeneity of the experimental sample. Many of the participants involved in the visual experiment were close acquaintances. This familiarity may have introduced unconscious biases in their responses and raises questions about the diversity and objectivity of the sample. Consequently, the results of the experiment should be viewed as illustrative rather than conclusive. Additionally, both the survey and the interviews rely on self-reported data, which are inherently subject to various biases. These include memory distortion, post-rationalisation, and social desirability bias, all of which can affect the accuracy and spontaneity of responses. This limitation is particularly important in neuromarketing contexts, where a significant part of consumer behaviour operates at a subconscious level and may not be accessible through verbal reflection. Finally, the research is limited by its geographic and cultural scope, as it focuses exclusively on French-speaking Switzerland. Although this local focus strengthens the contextual relevance of the insights, it reduces the external validity of the study's conclusions and their potential applicability to broader or international markets. Despite these limitations, the triangulated approach adopted here allows for the emergence of patterns, tensions, and opportunities that may prove valuable for future research and strategic development in the field of wine marketing and sensory branding. As for the limitation

of secondary data, neuromarketing is not an actual subject meaning some findings may no longer reflect current industry practice or the latest scientific advances.

3.5. Tools

Digital tools supported every stage of the study. *CHATGPT* helped refine interview guides and survey wording as well as improving writing style, check grammar spelling and fluidity. Quantitative data were analysed in *Jamovi*, an open-source package that handles spreadsheet imports and offers easy demographic weighting (The Jamovi Project, 2024) As well as *Elicit* to find scientific and peer review articles. *BioRender* generated clear procedure diagrams, while *Canva* produced the thesis's graphs and visual layouts. Together, these tools improved both analytical rigour and visual clarity.

4. Data analysis

4.1. Interviews

Three semi-structured interviews were conducted between December 2024 and March 2025. These interviews involved three experts in the neuromarketing field, each bringing a unique perspective: Aurélie Jouanigot, founder of the RedRoom agency and specialist in sensory marketing applied to digital experiences, Dr. Julien Intartaglia, Dean of the Institute of Communication and Experiential Marketing at HEG Arc and Christoph Forstel, marketing consultant and trainer at the CVPC. As well as three experts in the wine industry, Julien Picard event manager at Maison Gillard, Marion Barral independent wine sector consultant and finally Sandrine Mages, communications manager at Swiss Wine Valais. The aim of this synthesis is to identify the key insights shared by each expert, highlight areas of agreement as well as differences in their viewpoints, and extract relevant recommendations or strategic considerations for the Swiss wine industry. This comparative perspective helps ground the research in both practical and ethical reflection. The expert responses have been organized thematic areas, based on the interview guide and refined according to the richness of the content

4.1.1. Synthesis of key findings

4.1.1.1. *Definition of neuromarketing*

All three experts agree that neuromarketing is fundamentally concerned with understanding how consumers make decisions by integrating knowledge from neuroscience and psychology into marketing strategies. However, each expert emphasizes a different dimension of the discipline. Dr. Julien Intartaglia defines neuromarketing concisely as "the science of influencing choice." He views it as the study of how individuals make decisions, particularly through the interplay of attention, emotion, and action. He places a strong emphasis on the dominance of unconscious processes in decision-making, noting that around 95% of our behaviors are driven by System 1 thinking fast, intuitive, and automatic. Aurélie Jouanigot offers a more applied and experience-driven definition. She sees neuromarketing as a discipline that "simply makes sense" because it reflects how the human brain actually functions. For her, it is about using neuroscientific knowledge to create communications that feel obvious and emotionally resonant for the target audience. She describes neuromarketing as a bridge between perception, cognitive effort, and emotional memory particularly relevant in digital environments where attention is limited and overload is constant. Christoph Forstel approaches the definition from a practical and entrepreneurial angle. For him, neuromarketing starts with the identification of a customer's "pain points" or frustrations. He believes the essence of the discipline lies in being able to detect these deep-rooted emotional triggers, which are often unconscious, and using them to guide persuasive communication. He also stresses the accessibility of neuromarketing: while it can involve sophisticated tools like fMRI, it can also be applied with simple techniques such as eye-tracking or layout optimization.

4.1.1.2. *Emotions in decision-making*

All three experts emphasize the dominant role of emotions and unconscious processes, often associated with what Daniel Kahneman calls "System 1", in shaping consumer behavior. They agree that most purchasing decisions are made emotionally and only later justified rationally. Dr. Intartaglia provides a theoretical foundation, explaining that System 1, the fast, automatic, emotional part of the brain, is largely responsible for the vast majority of decisions. He refers to well-established research from Harvard and the Implicit Project, which estimates that 95 percent of our behavior is unconscious. He highlights how System 1 helps consumers conserve cognitive energy in a context of time pressure

and information overload. For Dr. Intartaglia, understanding this mechanism is crucial to designing marketing messages that resonate immediately and effortlessly. Mrs. Jouanigot echoes this viewpoint and adds concrete examples from her work in UX and e-commerce. She insists that all decisions begin with emotion, even for products we think we choose rationally. She cites Apple as a brand that communicates emotionally first and rationally second, to help consumers justify their choices. Mrs. Jouanigot also emphasizes how sensory overload and design clarity influence emotional reactions, particularly in digital spaces where attention spans are short and the brain seeks cognitive ease. Mr. Forstel also places emotion at the center of neuromarketing he agrees that marketing success depends on identifying and activating emotions, particularly those linked to personal insecurities or social dynamics, such as impressing others or belonging to a group. According to Mr. Forstel, emotional resonance begins with uncovering deep frustrations, the unspoken motivations behind seemingly simple choices.

4.1.1.3. Impact of packaging and sensory touchpoints

Mrs. Jouanigot views packaging as a key emotional lever. She argues that it must reflect the values, lifestyle, and emotional aspirations of the target audience. According to her, the label, texture, and visual storytelling can either attract or alienate young consumers, and she recommends involving them directly in the design process through co-creation to strengthen attachment. Mr. Forstel also considers packaging essential, however his approach is more tactical. He focuses on visual hierarchy and unconscious cues. Mrs. Forstel explains that details such as the orientation of a bottle in an ad or the color scheme can unconsciously influence how a product is perceived. He adds that the way the price is presented can also bias perception due to anchoring effects. Dr. Intartaglia emphasizes packaging as a recognition tool, especially for routine buyers. He explains that when consumers make decisions quickly, their brain scans the environment for familiar visual cues, which makes packaging crucial for both attention and memory. He also believes packaging should be part of a broader sensory and experiential strategy, particularly in-store.

4.1.1.4. Ethical concerns and limits of neuromarketing

All three experts recognize that neuromarketing has the power to influence behavior, which makes it powerful but also potentially dangerous. They agree that ethical boundaries must be clearly defined, especially in sensitive areas like alcohol. When used respectfully, neuromarketing can strengthen the relationship between brands and consumers. When used manipulatively, it damages trust and credibility. Mrs Jouanigot warns against manipulative tactics like false urgency or artificial scarcity and

insists that any technique used should genuinely serve the customer. For her, alignment with brand values and transparency are essential. Mr. Forstel shares this concern but adds a layer of realism. He acknowledges that some companies have gone too far, citing controversial examples. However, he also defends subtle techniques like music and scent, which can enhance the experience without violating trust. He believes the boundary lies in whether the consumer is aware and has agency.

4.1.1.5. Targeting the 18–25 segment

Despite their different approaches, all three agree that young people cannot be reached with conventional marketing. Mrs. Jouanigot highlights the importance of authenticity, transparency, and purpose when communicating with Gen Z. She observes that this generation seeks brands with strong values and causes they can identify with. Price and accessibility are critical, but so is meaning. Moreover Dr. Intartaglia recommends focusing on emotional, non-moralizing content that resonates on platforms like TikTok and Instagram. He suggests building narratives around celebration, enjoyment, and emotional connection, not around product features. He believes young people are more likely to respond to content that reflects their lifestyle and offers a positive, relatable feeling. Mrs. Forstel approaches the challenge through the lens of pain points and social context. He believes the key is to identify what this age group is trying to escape, solve, or express emotionally. Whether it's a desire to fit in socially or signal personal taste, these motivations should guide the message. Like Dr. Intartaglia he insists on adapting content formats to their media habits and avoiding traditional or overly slow communication. To him, brands must adapt their tone, formats, and values. Emotional connection, meaningful engagement, and respect for their media environment are key to making wine relevant to this age group.

4.1.1.6. Challenges and opportunities in the Swiss wine industry

All three wine experts, Julien Picard, Marion Barral, and Sandrine Mages, emphasize the significant challenge posed by the declining wine consumption in Switzerland. Mr. Picard highlights the continuous reduction in domestic wine consumption, noting how this forces Swiss producers to intensify efforts to capture market shares traditionally held by foreign wines. Similarly, Mrs. Mages identifies the challenge of declining domestic consumption, stressing that this shift demands more dynamic and strategic promotional efforts aimed at revitalizing local interest. Mrs. Barral complements these perspectives, pinpointing the complexity and overwhelming variety of wines as major barriers for younger consumers, urging simplification and innovation in wine presentation. Despite these challenges, significant opportunities are identified. Mr. Picard underscores the potential for developing

innovative wine categories, including low-alcohol or even alcohol-free wines, to appeal to the health-conscious and younger generations. This perspective resonates strongly with Mrs. Barral, who also emphasizes innovation in product formats such as canned wines, sparkling wines, and packaging designed to attract younger consumers. Mrs. Mages further emphasizes strategic opportunities in wine tourism and cultural events, such as open-cellar days "*Caves Ouvertes*", which she sees as key tools for refreshing wine's image and making it appealing to younger consumers through immersive and engaging experiences.

4.1.1.7. *Target audience and consumer segmentation*

Maison Gillard, represented by Mr. Picard, broadly targets wine consumers throughout Switzerland, leveraging a significant presence in national retail chains, particularly the Coop. Within this general approach, the "Porte de Novembre" product line specifically appeals to younger consumers aged approximately 25–35, with a notable inclination toward female buyers. This demographic targeting emerged naturally due to product characteristics, rather than from an initially predefined strategy, highlighting the organic appeal of these wines among younger consumers. Mrs. Mages from Swiss Wine Valley also addresses this younger demographic, mentioning targeted digital marketing campaigns via Instagram and Google Ads designed explicitly to engage 18–25-year-olds, especially in connection with events like the "*Caves Ouvertes*." She clarifies, however, that while this group receives targeted attention, their broader communication strategy also encompasses older wine enthusiasts and general wine consumers. Mrs. Barral expands on these insights by distinguishing between various segments within younger consumers. She identifies specific profiles such as "*wine explorers*" and informed younger enthusiasts as promising target groups. Mrs. Barral stresses the importance of tailoring wine innovations to these profiles, advocating for unique, exploratory, and engaging product offerings to capture their interest.

4.1.1.8. *Preferences and perceptions*

The experts unanimously agree on young consumers' distinct preference for easy-to-drink, sweeter, sparkling, and visually attractive wines, which seamlessly fit into casual or festive contexts. Mrs. Barral specifically highlights young adults' preference for sparkling wines and sweeter flavour profiles, noting their suitability for social events. Additionally, she emphasizes the importance of convenient formats, such as cans or smaller bottles, which align with modern, mobile lifestyles and informal drinking occasions. Mr. Picard reinforces this understanding with the example of "Porte de Novembre Ice," explaining how its success among younger consumers stems largely from its approachable sweetness,

appealing sparkling character, and branding that resonates strongly with a festive and casual drinking culture. Similarly, Mrs. Mages confirms these trends, mentioning the popularity of rosé and sparkling wines among younger demographics which provide an accessible entry point into the world of wine.

However, all three experts agree that wine's current image among younger consumers is somewhat outdated or elitist. Mrs. Picard advocates strongly for modernizing the wine image through distinct branding and independent marketing campaigns, as demonstrated by the separate marketing efforts for "Porte de Novembre," aiming to establish a unique, youthful identity that distinguishes it from traditional wine imagery. Mrs. Mages confirms that modernizing the wine image requires strategic promotional efforts, such as visually engaging content, digital storytelling, and specifically targeted social media campaigns to connect authentically with younger consumers. She underscores the importance of adapting wine's traditional image to reflect contemporary values and lifestyles, thus bridging the gap between heritage and modernity. Mrs. Barral further supports these views, emphasizing that the wine industry should move beyond traditional consumer segments and explore innovative marketing strategies. She specifically notes that successful modernization will depend on wine becoming more accessible, user-friendly, and appealing to younger audiences through meaningful innovation and effective communication.

4.1.1.9. Ethical considerations and regulation

Mrs. Barral and Mrs. Mages highlight the increasing importance of sustainability, ethical production, and environmental concerns, recognizing them as influential factors in the purchasing decisions of younger consumers. Barral points out that while younger generations express strong support for sustainable and ethical practices, their buying behaviour can still show contradictions, given price sensitivity. Nonetheless, she emphasizes that genuine commitment to sustainability and ethics is crucial for brands aiming to capture younger audiences. Mrs. Mages similarly acknowledges the value placed by younger consumers in environmental and ethical issues, though she also notes practical challenges such as price sensitivity, especially among students. Julien Picard indirectly supports this theme by identifying sustainability-related challenges such as climate change and resource management as critical concerns for the future of wine production and marketing, suggesting a growing alignment between consumer expectations and production practices. One other major concern is selling wine to a younger generation, in Switzerland alcohol public promotion is controlled however Mr. Picard mentions relatively limited restrictions in Valais, allowing Maison Gillard considerable freedom in marketing strategies, including digital marketing, event sponsorship, and product promotions. Mrs. Mages mentions specific national regulations from the Swiss Federal Office

for Agriculture, emphasizing responsible drinking messages, restrictions on direct consumption portrayals, and age-related verification for online content. These regulations represent an essential consideration in their strategic planning. All three experts underline digital marketing as a primary communication channel, specifically citing Instagram and Facebook Ads as essential tools for reaching younger demographics. Mrs. Mages also highlights the importance of engaging content through blog articles designed to educate new wine consumers. Mrs. Barral particularly emphasizes the potential of leveraging influencer marketing and social media partnerships, recognizing these as powerful drivers of brand visibility and consumer

4.1.2. Interpretation and analysis

This analysis synthesizes insights gathered from six expert interviews, segmented into two categories: neuromarketing (Christoph Forstel, Aurélie Jouanigot, Julien Intartaglia) and the wine industry (Julien Picard, Marion Barral, Sandrine Mages). The purpose of this analysis is to highlight key hypotheses, thematic axes, significant obstacles, and promising opportunities identified during the interviews, specifically aimed at better understanding and engaging the young consumer segment (18–25 years) in the Swiss wine market.

Several thematic axes emerged strongly from the analysis. Firstly, modernization and innovation in brand image and product offering were consistently cited as essential. Secondly, the strategic utilization of emotional triggers via storytelling and sensory marketing was identified as critical. Thirdly, digital communication channels, particularly Instagram and TikTok, were seen as indispensable platforms for engaging young consumers. Lastly, demonstrating ethical and sustainable practices beyond basic certifications was highlighted as increasingly influential in young consumer choices. Among the significant obstacles identified, experts consistently pointed to declining alcohol consumption trends, the traditional and often outdated perception of wine, and product complexity and accessibility issues. These factors collectively contribute to the hesitancy among young adults in selecting wine as their preferred beverage. Despite these challenges, numerous opportunities were also identified. There is considerable potential in developing innovative and practical product formats, crafting strong independent brand identities (such as the "Porte de Novembre" approach), deploying targeted digital communications and influencer partnerships, and emphasizing deeper ethical and sustainability commitments.

The first major hypothesis emerging from these discussions is the urgent need for the Swiss wine industry to modernize its image and innovate to attract younger consumers. Mrs. Jouanigot and Mrs. Barral emphasized the critical need to shed the wine industry's traditional and elitist image, advocating for innovative packaging and appealing formats such as wine in cans or easy-to-open bottles. Mrs. Picard provided concrete evidence of success in modernizing brand perception through Maison Gillard's "Porte de Novembre" product line, explicitly designed to appeal to younger demographics.

The second hypothesis underscores the crucial role of emotions in purchasing decisions among young consumers. Both Mr. Forstel and Mrs. Jouanigot stressed that neuromarketing significantly depends on emotional factors, such as addressing consumers' deep-rooted frustrations and subconscious desires. Dr. Intartaglia confirmed the emotional predominance (95%) in consumer decision-making, recommending the strategic use of storytelling to emotionally engage potential buyers.

A third hypothesis identified is the general decline in wine consumption among young adults, necessitating robust neuromarketing and experiential strategies. All three wine experts reported decreasing wine consumption in this demographic, highlighting the importance of immersive sensory experiences, innovative tasting events, and festival activations as essential tools for re-engaging younger consumers.

In conclusion, the expert interviews reveal that to attract and retain younger consumers, Swiss wine businesses must blend modern, emotionally resonant, digitally savvy marketing with innovative and practical product offerings. Utilizing neuromarketing strategies to uncover and address young consumers' subconscious preferences and emotional needs will likely prove pivotal. Ultimately, combining sensory experiences, effective storytelling, and robust ethical commitments can powerfully position Swiss wine brands within this strategically essential market segment.

4.2. Experiment

An experiment was conducted to explore respondents' intuitive preferences by engaging their System 1, the fast and automatic decision-making process. The experiment involved a rapid selection between two images of wine bottles. They were then asked to choose the one they preferred

visually, and to rate the packaging of both bottles on a 10-point scale. After reviewing all ten designs, a final “overall favourite” question captured their considered aesthetic preference. A word was also demanded to describe the bottle. A total of 15 participants, aged between 18 and 25, took part in this study. Ten different bottle designs were used, with one being the original "Porte de Novembre Ice" bottle and the remaining nine being variations. Each bottle carried identical product information, with designs varying along a spectrum from traditional to modern aesthetics. This approach aimed to identify whether participants exhibited a preference for traditional or modern visual cues. Additionally, various colours were integrated into the designs to assess their potential appeal among younger consumers.

Participants were asked two concluding questions:

1. Which bottle stood out to you the most?
2. Which bottle did you prefer the most?



Figure 6 Experiment's visual (Lisa Bredou, 2025)

The first question was posed without participants viewing the images, prompting them to reflect on their initial, spontaneous impressions. The second question allowed participants to directly express their aesthetic preference after reviewing all designs.

4.2.1. Synthesis of key findings

Bottle 1 received an average score of 6.33/10. It was selected as the most striking design by 1 participant and as the overall preferred option by 3 participants. Described as elegant, cold, soft, warm, this bottle evokes both sophistication and comfort. This packaging is the original design of the bottle “Porte de Novembre Ice” no modification has been done to this design.



Figure 7 Bottles 1 & 2

Bottle 2, with an average score of 6.20/10, was considered the most striking by 1 participant and preferred overall by 5 participants. Associated with terms like dull, bland, fresh, icy, this bottle has a minimalist and cool aesthetic. The bottle is a variation of the original design, with the colour blue predominately.

Bottle 3 has an average score of 6.53/10. It was selected as the most striking by 1 participant and preferred by 3 participants. Described by the participants as formal, elegant, the design communicates refinement and premium quality. The visual wanted to inspire symmetry and luxurious gold accents but also traditional wine bottles.



Figure 8 Bottles 3 & 4

Bottle 4, scoring 4.40/10, received the lowest average rating among all designs. However, it was named the most striking by 8 participants, the highest of any bottle, and preferred by 1 participant. The words used to describe this design were: festival, basic, party, messy. The goal of this design was to be bold, colourful and original. More than modern it wanted to be contemporary. No information about the type of wine or the winery was added, just the logo of Maison Gillard stands in the middle.

Bottle 5 received an average rating of 6.8 out of 10. One participant named it the most striking design, and none selected it as their overall favourite. The bottle was created by the researcher to blend traditional wine cues with a modern look. Participants described it as formal, contemporary, original, fresh and artsy.



Figure 9 Bottles 5 & 6

Bottle 6 had an average score of 6.07/10. It was not considered the most striking by any participant and was preferred by 1 participant. It was described as lacking colour coherence and original. This indicates a unique but perhaps visually inconsistent approach.

Bottle 7 scored 6.00/10, was not considered the most striking but was preferred by 2 participants. Described as formal, old school, artsy, the design blends vintage charm with creative flair notably in the font.



Figure 10 Bottles 7 & 8

Bottle 8 received an average score of 6.07 out of 10. Five participants identified it as the most visually striking design, and three participants selected it as their overall preferred bottle. The researcher created this prototype with multiple vibrant colours and an extravagant bold typeface that is uncommon on traditional wine labels. Participants described it with the words: festival, modern and design.

Bottle 9 recorded an average score of 5.47 out of 10. No participants selected it as the most visually striking, and no participant chose it as the overall preferred bottle. The word modern was the term most frequently used to characterise this prototype. The researcher intentionally employed a clean, minimalist layout and simplified typography to create a futuristic appearance.



Figure 11 Bottles 9 & 10

Bottle 10 received an average score of 5.27 out of 10. It was not selected as the most striking by any participant nor their preferred bottle. The words most often used to describe this bottle were red, elegant, and royal. The researcher designed this prototype with deep red tones, serif lettering, and crest-like iconography to evoke a classical, luxurious style.

Table 2 Participant ratings of 10 wine bottles

	Bottle 1	Bottle 2	Bottle 3	Bottle 4	Bottle 5	Bottle 6	Bottle 7	Bottle 8	Bottle 9	Bottle 10	Striking	Preferred
Participant 1	6	4	5	3	4	7	4	8	6	5	8	3
Participant 2	7	6	7	4	7	5	7	4	7	6	5	8
Participant 3	5	6	7	4	6	6	5	4	5	4	4	2
Participant 4	5	6	6	4	7	6	5	5	5	5	2	4
Participant 5	7	6	9	4	7	9	4	10	8	6	8	3
Participant 6	7	6	9	7	8	6	8	8	6	5	4	8
Participant 7	4	7	6	3	7	2	8	7	5	3	8	7
Participant 8	10	8	4	2	6	6	8	7	4	3	4	7
Participant 9	8	10	7	6	8	7	6	7	6	7	4	2
Participant 1	7	8	7	7	8	9	6	7	5	7	4	2
Participant 1	8	7	6	8	6	7	6	6	4	7	4	8
Participant 1	7	7	5	7	6	8	7	5	5	7	8	2
Participant 1	7	3	7	3	7	5	7	5	6	3	4	3
Participant 1	3	7	6	3	7	4	5	6	5	4	4	2
Participant 1	4	2	7	1	8	5	4	2	5	7	3	6
Total	6,33	6,2	6,53	4,4	6,8	6,13	6	6,07	5,47	5,27		

Source: Designed by the author (Lisa Bredou, 2025)

To sum up, Across the ten prototypes, Bottle 5 achieved the highest visual score with a 6.80 / 10, followed by Bottle 3 (6.53 / 10) and Bottle 1 (6.33 / 10). Bottle 2 (6.20 / 10) and Bottle 6 (6.13 / 10) completed the upper tier. At the opposite end, Bottle 4 recorded the lowest average (4.40 / 10), with Bottle 10 (5.27 / 10) and Bottle 9 (5.47 / 10) also falling below the overall midpoint. When participants named the single design that first came to mind after the test images were removed, Bottle 4 was cited most often (8 mentions), indicating the strongest immediate recall. Bottle 8 followed (4 mentions), while Bottles 5, 2 and 3 each received one mention. In the separate question asking for the bottle each participant would ultimately choose, Bottle 2 emerged as the most frequently preferred option (5 votes). Bottles 3 and 8 tied for second (3 votes each), with Bottle 7 securing two votes. Bottles 4 and 6

received one vote apiece, while the remaining designs were not selected. The experiment deliberately separated “most striking” from “most preferred.” The first prompt captured rapid, System 1, the second prompt then allowed a reflective System 2 judgment, revealing which designs participants would actually choose after considering all options. This contrast provides insight into how a label can seize attention yet still be rejected, or conversely, how a quieter design can win after deliberation.

4.2.2. Interpretation and analysis

At first glance, one might have expected the more modern and vibrant bottles to dominate the experiment in terms of preference. Surprisingly, traditional designs also performed well, showing that classic aesthetics still resonate with young consumers. However, the most revealing part of this experiment was the question about which bottle left the strongest impression. Participants were asked to respond without seeing the images again, relying solely on memory. Two bottles clearly stood out: Bottle 4, which features only bold, vivid colours without text, and Bottle 8, which also uses bright colours but adds a bold, eye-catching font. Although both of these designs were criticized during the experiment, often for being too flashy or unconventional, they nevertheless left a lasting imprint on participants' minds. This suggests that colour intensity and visual boldness play a crucial role in memory retention, especially among 18 to 25-year-olds. It supports the hypothesis that vibrant visual elements, particularly colours and striking typography, can capture attention quickly and occupy a memorable place in the brain. This result points to the importance of visual salience in product design. Bright colour schemes, bold typography, and unconventional layouts appear to stimulate spontaneous attention and create lasting mental traces, even when they are not consciously appreciated or chosen as favourites.

One hypothesis emerges from these findings, that vibrant visual elements, especially strong colours and atypical typography, enhance a wine bottle's memorability among young adults. Even when a participant consciously critiques or dislikes a design, their System 1 still retain the visual impression. This suggests that effective packaging should aim to activate this fast and automatic part of the brain, as it plays a key role in shaping memory and influencing behaviour at a subconscious level, even in the absence of conscious preference.

In sum, this experiment highlights the gap that can exist between what consumers remember and what they ultimately prefer. It underscores the importance of designing packaging that not only pleases the eye but also leaves a trace in the mind, an essential consideration in neuromarketing, where memorability is often the first step toward purchase.

4.3. Survey

The following section presents the results of the survey conducted to better understand young adults' perceptions and behaviours regarding wine consumption in Switzerland. The analysis focuses primarily on individuals aged 18 to 25, as this group constitutes the core target of the study. However, responses from other age groups are also included to allow for meaningful intergenerational comparisons. The raw dataset includes 154 valid responses, of which 60 respondents (39%) fall within the 18–25 age range. To ensure representativeness and correctness for overrepresentation of younger participants, a weighting factor was applied to each respondent based on their age category. This adjustment aligns the sample more closely with the actual demographic structure of the Swiss population, where 18–25-year-olds represent approximately 12% of residents (FSO, 2024). The weights were computed using proportional adjustment and integrated directly into the dataset. While weighting adjustments were applied for analyses across the entire sample, no weighting was used when focusing exclusively on the 18–25 age group, as the aim was to capture the authentic behaviour and perceptions of young consumers without correcting for demographic proportions.

4.3.1. Definition of the target population

The target population for this study consists of Swiss residents aged 18 to 25 however the survey was open to all ages, and it received 154 valid responses, of which 60 respondents (39%) were aged 18–25. This age group is a demographic identified as critical for understanding evolving wine consumption behaviours. According to the Federal Statistical Office (2024), Switzerland had a resident population of 9,002,763 people as of the second quarter of 2024. Assuming an even age distribution, individuals aged 18–25 make up approximately 12% of the total population, which equates to around 1,080,000 people.

4.3.1.10. *Margin of error calculation*

To assess the statistical reliability of the results, the margin of error for the 18–25 sub-sample ($n = 60$) was calculated at a 95% confidence level, using the following parameters:

- Proportion (p) = 0.5 (maximum uncertainty)
- Population size (N) = 1,080,000
- Sample size (n) = 60
- z -score = 1.96

Margin of Error Formula:

$$e = z \times \sqrt{[p(1-p)/n] \times [(N - n)/(N - 1)]}$$

Result: ±12.65%

This result reflects the limitations of the small sample size but remains acceptable in exploratory research. It enables the identification of tendencies and insights specific to this segment, which is often hard to reach via traditional communication channels further justifying the value of neuromarketing approaches for the wine industry.

4.3.1.11. *Sample weighting and adjustment*

While the core analysis of this research focuses on Swiss residents aged 18–25, responses from individuals up to age 50 were also collected. Out of the total 154 respondents, 39% were aged 18–25, which significantly exceeds this group’s actual proportion in the Swiss population estimated at 12% according to 2024 data from the Federal Statistical Office. Following Dubus' approach to generalization (2024) as presented in the course on survey statistics at the HES-SO, although the sample correction formula ($n' = N \times n / (N + n)$) is often applied when the population is small, in this case the target population (young Swiss adults aged 18–25) exceeds one million individuals. As such, the correction factor remains minimal, and the margin of error was directly calculated using the finite population correction (FPC) within the standard margin of error formula. To address this overrepresentation and allow for comparative insights across age groups, a sample weighting procedure was applied. The aim was to adjust the statistical influence of each age group so that the survey more accurately reflects the actual demographic structure of the Swiss population.

Table 3 Distribution in the sample

Age Group	Respondents	% in Sample
18–25	60	39%
26–30	33	21%
31–40	44	29%
41–50	10	6%
51 and older	7	5%

A weighting factor was computed for each age group using the formula:

$$\text{Weight} = (\text{Proportion in population}) / (\text{Proportion in sample})$$

Individuals aged 18–25 were assigned a weight of 0.308, while underrepresented groups such as those aged 51+ were given weights greater than 1. These weights were then integrated into the dataset and can be applied within Jamovi to conduct adjusted analyses that correct for age-related imbalances.

Table 4 Estimated national distribution

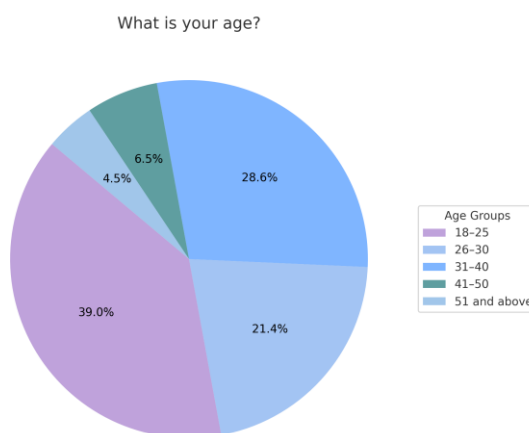
Age Group	Estimated % in Swiss Population
18–25	12%
26–30	8%
31–40	14%
41–50	14%
51 and older	52%

This procedure ensures that the results are not disproportionately influenced by any single age group and allows for more reliable comparisons between younger and older generations, a key component of this study’s objective is to assess the effectiveness of neuromarketing strategies across age segments. According to classical survey theory (Dubus, 2024), drawing conclusions about a population from a sample requires that certain statistical assumptions be met. While this study did not rely on random sampling, the principles of quota-based sampling were partially respected through the post-hoc application of weighting adjustments, aligning with practices used by professional polling institutes. Furthermore, the Central Limit Theorem allows for generalized inference from samples of 30 or more respondents, supporting the analytical validity of the 60 responses collected from the 18–25 age group.

4.3.2. Synthesis of key findings

4.3.2.12. *Age distribution of respondents*

The following graph illustrates the age distribution of the 154 survey respondents. The 18–25 age group accounted for 39% of the participants, followed by the 31–40 age group (28.6%) and the 26–30 age group (21.4%). Older respondents, aged 41 years and above, were underrepresented, representing 6.5% and 4.5% of the sample respectively for the 41–50 and 51+ categories.



Although the original aim of the survey was to focus on young adults aged 18–25, this group was overrepresented relative to its share in the Swiss population, by approximately 12%, according to the Federal Statistical Office (2024). To address this imbalance and improve the generalizability of the findings, a weighting adjustment was applied. This correction ensures that the survey results more accurately reflect the national demographic structure, preventing a disproportionate influence from younger respondents.

4.3.2.13. General question about wine

When asked whether they consumed wine, the majority of respondents answered positively. Approximately 30.5% of wine consumers were aged 18–25, 16.9% were aged 26–30, and 24.7% belonged to the 31–40 category. Older age groups (41 and above) accounted for less than 10% of wine drinkers combined.

Do you drink wine?	How old are you?	Frequencies	% Total	% cumulus
No	18 -25	13	8.4%	8.4%
	26 - 30	7	4.5%	13.0%
	31 - 40	6	3.9%	16.9%
	41 - 50	3	1.9%	18.8%
	51 and +	1	0.6%	19.5%
Yes	18 -25	47	30.5%	50.0%
	26 - 30	26	16.9%	66.9%
	31 - 40	38	24.7%	91.6%
	41 - 50	7	4.5%	96.1%
	51 and +	6	3.9%	100.0%

Out of the 154 respondents, 30 individuals (19.5%) reported that they did not drink wine. Among these, 12 individuals were aged 18–25.

- 10 respondents cited a dislike for the taste as their primary reason,
- 1 respondent mentioned confusion due to too many choices in stores,
- 1 respondent mentioned not drinking alcohol in general.

Respondents were asked to indicate the age at which they started drinking wine by selecting one of the following categories: *Before 18 years old*, *between 18 and 25 years old* and *after 25 years old*. Across the full sample, the most frequently selected category was “Before 18 years old”. Among the 18–25-year-old respondents (n = 47), 68.1% indicated they began drinking wine before the age of 18, while 31.9% reported starting between the ages of 18 and 25. No respondents in this group selected “After 25 years old”.

4.3.2.14. *Wine purchase*

Among the 18-25-year-old respondents who drink wine, the majority (74.5%) purchase their wine from supermarkets such as Coop, Lidl, Aldi, Denner, or Migros. Interestingly, a non-negligible portion (12.8%) reported buying wine at station-service outlets, highlighting the accessibility of wine in alternative retail locations. Online shops were used by 4.3% of respondents, and 6.4% preferred purchasing directly from a producer or vineyard. Only 2.1% indicated purchasing from a specialized wine shop, and no respondents reported buying wine at a wine fair or exhibition.

Purchase Place	Count	Percentage
Supermarket (e.g., Coop, Lidl, Aldi, Denner, Migros)	35	74.5%
Station-service	6	12.8%
Directly from producer/vineyard	3	6.4%
Online shop	2	4.3%
Specialized wine shop	1	2.1%
Wine fair or exhibition	0	0.0%

When grouped by thematic categories, both age groups (18-25 and 26+) identified recommendation (e.g., from friends, family, or influencers) as the most common criterion when selecting wine, accounting for 70.2% and 72.7% of responses respectively. The appearance of the packaging was the second most cited factor, with a notably higher share among younger respondents

(19.1% vs. 10.4%). Habitual purchasing (i.e., choosing the same bottle repeatedly) appeared in both groups at similar levels (8.5% for 18-25 and 7.8% for 26+). Other criteria such as origin/region and food pairing were only mentioned by older respondents (2.6% and 1.3%, respectively), and were completely absent among 18-25-year-olds.

Theme	18–25 (%)	26+ (%)
Recommendation	70.2%	72.7%
Packaging	19.1%	10.4%
Habit	8.5%	7.8%
Origin / Region	0.0%	2.6%
Food pairing	0.0%	1.3%

As for the purchase price, respondents were asked whether they looked at the price before buying a bottle of wine. Across the full sample, 70.2% reported that they always consider the price, while 29.8% stated they sometimes do. Among the 18-25-year-old group (n = 47), 76.6% said they always check the price, compared to 23.4% who reported doing so occasionally. Respondents were asked to rank five wine selection criteria from 1 (most important) to 5 (least important). The table below presents the average ranking score for each criterion: a lower score indicates higher importance (e.g., a mean of 2.00 means that, on average, the criterion was ranked between first and second place). Across all respondents, price received the lowest average score (2.43), making it the most important overall. This was followed by wine type (2.47) and origin or region (2.57). Label design (2.80) and awards or medals (3.05) were ranked less important by comparison.



When comparing age groups, both the 18-25 and 26+ cohorts ranked price as their top priority (2.41 and 2.44, respectively). For 18–25-year-olds, the second most important factor was wine type (2.21), while for the 26+ group, it was origin or region (2.54). The youngest group gave slightly more weight to label design (2.76 vs. 2.84), while awards were ranked lowest by both groups.

4.3.2.15. *Perception*

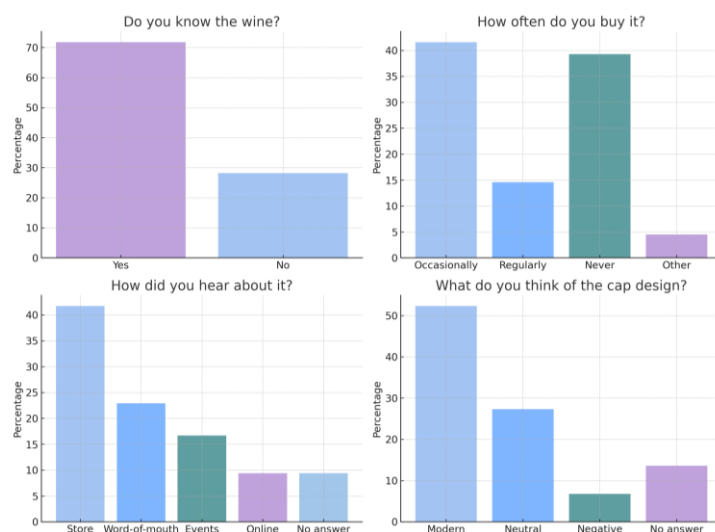
During the survey, respondents were asked to describe the image they associate with wine. Responses were grouped into thematic categories. The most frequently selected image was a combined perception of tradition and conviviality (29.2%), followed by convivial and accessible (16.2%) and traditional (14.9%). Only 9.1% of respondents described wine as elitist, and 6.5% associated it with modernity or trendiness. A small percentage (5.2%) viewed wine as a drink for another generation, while 19.5% did not answer the question.

Several survey questions explored how consumers perceive guidance when selecting wine, as well as their susceptibility to marketing or social influence. When asked about a beginner-oriented concept a curated selection of three wines titled *“First Steps in Wine”*. 65.5% of all respondents expressed no interest. However, within the 18–25-year-old group, 46.2% responded positively, with half of them indicating that such a solution would help simplify their decision due to too many options on the market. Regarding the impact of marketing, 40.3% of the overall sample stated that advertising or brand storytelling could influence their purchase decisions. This proportion rose to 55.3% among 18–25-year-olds, suggesting greater receptiveness to commercial messaging within this demographic. A third question addressed the potential influence of public figures. While 79.8% of all respondents claimed they would not be influenced by a celebrity or influencer promoting wine, 34.0% of the 18–25 segment indicated they might be inclined to try a wine endorsed by someone they follow on social media.

4.3.2.16. *Maison Gillard & La Porte de Novembre ICE*

Several questions in the survey focused specifically on the product *La Porte de Novembre ICE*, developed by the winery Maison Gillard. Overall, 71.8% of respondents reported knowing the wine, and this awareness was even higher among the 18-25-year-olds (83%). When asked about purchase behaviour, 41.6% of participants indicated buying the product occasionally, 14.6% said they purchase it regularly, and 39.3% stated they had never bought it. The most common source of product discovery was in-store exposure or recommendations (41.7%), followed by word-of-mouth (22.9%) and events or tastings (16.7%).

Online media, including social networks and digital ads, accounted for only 9.4% of discovery channels, a relatively low figure, particularly among younger demographics. One question addressed the product’s non-traditional cap design, a distinctive element of its branding. Over half of the respondents (52.3%) described it as modern or innovative, while 27.3% considered it neutral, and only a small share (6.8%) found it negative or inappropriate.



4.3.3. Interpretation and analysis

The quantitative survey revealed several key trends that help clarify wine consumption behaviours across different age groups, with a particular focus on respondents aged 18 to 25. These findings underscore the importance of targeting younger generations (18 to 40) in marketing strategies aimed at revitalizing interest in wine. Within the 18-25 age segment, a significant proportion of participants reported not drinking wine. The most frequently cited reason was tasting aversion, while other factors such as alcohol content, lifestyle choices, or social pressure played only a marginal role. This suggests that for many young consumers, wine remains an acquired taste rather than a default alcoholic beverage. Among those who do consume wine, supermarkets were the dominant purchasing channel across all age groups, with 74.5 percent of 18 to 25-year-olds and 74.0 percent of respondents aged 26 and older purchasing wine through this route. However, generational differences emerged in secondary channels. Young adults were more likely to purchase wine from station-service outlets (12.8 percent) compared to their older counterparts (2.6 percent), while specialized wine shops and online

platforms were slightly more favoured by older participants. Price was a central concern for all respondents, particularly among the 18 to 25 group: 76.6 percent reported that they always consider price before purchasing a bottle. This reflects a broader consumer trend, echoed by a 2024 national study in France, which found that 54 percent of wine buyers prioritize price over origin. The high price sensitivity observed in the younger demographic suggests that affordable pricing strategies are critical when targeting a young adult. Another insight emerged around digital behaviour: several young respondents mentioned using the mobile application Vivino, which allows users to scan wine labels and access peer reviews. Vivino, with over 109,000 Instagram followers and the slogan “Let’s demystify wine,” points to a broader phenomenon. Many young consumers perceive wine as elitist and opaque. The popularity of tools like Vivino highlights the need for clear, accessible, and digitally supported decision-making aids when addressing this demographic. Together, these findings illustrate both the challenges and the opportunities facing wine producers and retailers.

A few hypotheses have emerged from these findings, the first one would be that price is a dominant purchase criterion for young adults, 76.6 percent of 18 to 25-year-olds stated that they always check the price before buying a bottle of wine, slightly higher than the general population in the sample.

Secondly, young adults aged 18–25 are significantly more likely to be persuaded by wine advertising on social-media platforms than consumers over 25.

And finally, brand recognition for Maison Gillard’s La Porte de Novembre ICE was found to be low among young consumers. Only a small proportion of 18 to 25-year-olds indicated that they knew this product, suggesting limited reach within this target audience

The data confirms that while young adults represent a promising market, they also exhibit unique behaviours that require tailored strategies. Price consciousness, digital reliance, and a general hesitancy toward traditional wine culture shape their attitudes. Effective engagement will require adapting messaging, pricing, and product accessibility to better meet their expectations.

5. Discussion

This section aims to analyse and interpret the findings from the literature review, the semi-structured interviews, the quantitative survey, and the experiment to answer the central research question: *How can neuromarketing techniques help Swiss wine brands engage 18–25-year-old consumers more effectively?* The objective is to identify areas of convergence and divergence between

the various data sources, and to derive actionable insights that can inform marketing strategies adapted to this specific segment.

The discussion is structured around the hypotheses presented earlier and will evaluate the extent to which each of them is confirmed or challenged by the empirical and theoretical results. The goal is not only to validate research assumptions, but also to extract meaningful lessons that may contribute to revitalising wine consumption among younger adults through emotionally resonant, culturally relevant, and cognitively effective approaches.

5.1. H-1 Packaging as a purchase trigger

Hypothesis: *Packaging design significantly influences the wine purchase decisions of 18-25-year-olds, especially through unconscious visual and emotional cues.*

One of the most striking results of this research came from the experiment, which tested System 1 responses to visual wine packaging. Despite receiving low preference ratings, the two most visually memorable bottles, designs 4 and 8, shared bold colours and atypical layouts. This conflict between preference and memorability suggests that impactful packaging can activate unconscious attention mechanisms, even when consumers do not consciously favour the design. In neuromarketing terms, this confirms the role of System 1 in shaping first impressions and intuitive choices, particularly for low-involvement products like wine.

These bottles were consistently recalled, even when not consciously preferred. This suggests that strong colour contrast can trigger sensory distinctiveness and long-term memory encoding. Visual impact and brand recall do not depend solely on liking, but also on perceptual dominance. According to Orth (2009), packaging with bold and unusual elements increases visual encoding and attention fixation. For younger consumers, highly responsive to visual cues, colour acts as both an attention trigger and a memory anchor. Survey data reinforce these insights. A majority of 18-25-year-olds reported being influenced by packaging aesthetics, describing standout bottles as “cool,” “original,” or “creative.” These responses confirm that design serves as a shortcut for evaluation when traditional cues such as origin or grape variety are less accessible or less relevant. Expert interviews further

validate this trend. Mrs. Jouanigot described packaging as an emotional and cognitive trigger that acts before any rational assessment takes place. For Mr. Forstel, packaging is a form of “cueing”. It catches the eye, sets a tone, and signals who the product is meant for, even before we read the label. According to Mr. Picard, the “Porte de Novembre ICE” bottle was specifically designed to stand out in retail settings, using contrast and minimalism to appeal to younger buyers. This is consistent with broader literature. Kapoor and Kumar (2019) found that over 70 percent of young consumers make purchase decisions at the point of sale, often influenced by packaging. Their research confirms that factors such as shape, material, and colour drive impulse buying. Similarly, Khan et al. (2016) identified design and typography as significant predictors of purchase intention among young adults. Beyond influencing immediate purchase behaviour, packaging also plays a strategic role in brand awareness. In crowded retail spaces, a distinctive colour palette or label design can create visual recognition and support long-term brand recall. The experimental results demonstrated this effect: designs 4 and 8, despite their low ratings, were the most frequently remembered. Such memorability can lay the groundwork for future purchase decisions. As noted in recent literature, packaging often serves as the brand’s primary point of contact in store environments, especially when advertising is limited. Packaging also holds symbolic value. According to Fellay (2023), visual design enables young consumers to project lifestyle preferences and social identity. For this generation, packaging is not only informative but expressive. Prasanna and Priyanka (2024) confirm that Generation Z expects brands to use design as a channel for emotion, cultural relevance, and authenticity.

The hypothesis is confirmed. Packaging has a direct and unconscious impact on wine purchase decisions among 18-25-year-olds. It attracts attention, supports recognition, and shapes emotional perception prior to deliberate thought. For Swiss wine producers, strategic investment in packaging design is not optional. It is a critical bridge between the product and the consumer’s mind.

5.2. H-2 Emotion as a primary driver of wine choice

Hypothesis: *Emotional responses play a critical role in the wine purchase decisions of 18-25-year-olds, often outweighing rational considerations such as origin, technical information, or price.*

“Emotion comes first. Always,” says Mrs. Jouanigot, which encapsulates the consensus among the neuromarketing experts interviewed in this study. For young adults aged 18 to 25, wine purchasing is not primarily a rational act. According to the experts, the decision to pick up a bottle is guided by instinct, not analysis. This hypothesis is strongly supported by the data. In the consumer survey, respondents rarely mentioned origin, grape variety, or awards as influential factors. Instead, many referred to feelings, atmosphere, or mood. Mrs. Jouanigot emphasized that packaging must first trigger a feeling before it can communicate information. Mr. Forstel underlined that young consumers often decide based on a sensation rather than a set of facts. Mrs. Mages added that the wine industry must reconnect emotionally with a generation that often finds wine culture too formal or distant. Taken together, these findings support the hypothesis that emotion plays a primary role in wine selection among 18 to 25-year-olds. Strategies that target emotional impact, through visual identity, storytelling, or sensory elements are more likely to resonate than those relying solely on rational persuasion. These findings align with foundational principles of neuromarketing. According to Kahneman (2011), System 1 governs fast, intuitive, emotionally charged responses, particularly in low-involvement purchase contexts like wine. Zaltman (2003) notes that 95 percent of our thinking occurs in the unconscious, and emotion is a key driver of memory and decision-making. Wine, when purchased by younger consumers, rarely involves deliberate comparison or technical knowledge. Instead, visual stimuli, mood, and symbolic association dominate the process. The “somatic marker hypothesis” proposed by Damasio (1996) further supports this interpretation: emotionally encoded experiences guide behaviour even when individuals believe they are acting rationally. Recent studies have also demonstrated the centrality of emotion in Generation Z’s daily choices. Azfar et al. (2024) link emotional well-being to decision-making frameworks in education. Ekasari et al. (2024) highlight the impact of emotional intelligence on Generation Z’s professional performance, while Rahma et al. (2023) show how low emotional regulation correlates with online behavioural extremes. These results confirm that Gen Z is deeply shaped by emotional mechanisms, even outside of marketing.

The hypothesis is confirmed. Emotional processing is not peripheral, but central to wine choice among 18–25-year-olds. Attempts to reach this audience without emotional resonance are likely to fail, regardless of product quality or heritage. For Swiss wine producers, the implication is clear. Communication strategies must focus less on transmission of facts, and more on emotional engagement through packaging, storytelling, and experiential design.

5.3. H-3 Influence of digital marketing

Hypothesis: *Consumers aged 18-25 are significantly more receptive to social media campaigns than older age groups.*

According to the survey, 43% of 18-25-year-olds stated that an online advertisement could convince them to try a wine, compared to 26% of respondents aged 26 and over. This clear gap supports the idea that younger adults are more responsive to digital advertising. However, only 11% of young respondents said that the presence of a celebrity ambassador would influence their purchase decision. This suggests a strong preference for peer recommendations or decision-support tools like “Vivino”, which was mentioned spontaneously in the open-ended responses. Many participants expressed a desire to form their own opinions, rather than follow public figures, highlighting their need for autonomy when discovering new products. From an expert perspective, Mrs. Mages (Swiss Wine Valais) explained that Instagram and Google Ads are being used to specifically reach this audience, especially around events like the “*Caves Ouvertes*”. Mrs. Barral also emphasized the importance of engaging, immersive, and creative experiences to spark interest among young consumers. Despite the efforts of producers like Maison Gillard to modernize their branding, the study reveals a significant gap in brand recognition among young consumers. In the survey, only a small fraction of respondents aged 18 to 25 indicated familiarity with the product “*La Porte de Novembre ICE*,” despite its wide availability in Coop stores. This limited awareness suggests that distribution alone is not sufficient to create brand presence among younger audiences. Mr. Picard emphasized that “*Porte de Novembre*” has been successful in targeting a younger demographic through dedicated Instagram pages and seasonal marketing campaigns. However, the fact that this product line is marketed almost independently from Maison Gillard may contribute to brand fragmentation and reduced overall visibility. These findings support the hypothesis that Swiss wine brands need to invest more in identity-building efforts that go beyond retail exposure. Emotional storytelling, influencer partnerships, and culturally relevant content may offer stronger routes to brand salience in this age group. These observations are aligned with

recent academic literature. Generation Z favours short, visual, and interactive content (Prasanna & Priyanka, 2024) and places high value on authenticity and transparency (Singh, 2023). They tend to reject traditional, overly polished campaigns in favour of interactive, relatable formats such as micro-influencers and user-generated content. In the wine sector in particular, Generation Z prefers edgy, modern visuals over classic branding (Zollo et al., 2018).

The hypothesis is confirmed. Consumers aged 18-25 are indeed more receptive to social media campaigns than older segments. However, their engagement strongly depends on how the content is created: it must encourage personal discovery, feel authentic, and be adapted to the digital habits of this generation.

5.4. H-4 Price sensitivity versus other criteria

Hypothesis: *Price remains the primary purchasing criterion for 18-25-year-olds, even when compared to attributes such as origin, certifications, or packaging.*

The survey confirms that 60% of respondents aged 18-25 always consider price before purchasing wine, compared to 54% of older consumers. When asked to rank the importance of various attributes, price consistently appeared in the top two for a majority of young respondents, well ahead of traditional indicators like geographic origin or medals. This aligns with broader literature indicating that Generation Z is highly value-conscious (Kalyva et al., 2024). In practice, discounts and promotions appear to be particularly effective levers. In a 2023 study on Generation Z buying behaviour, discounts received average score of 4.116 out of 5 in terms of purchase influence, and a majority of participants stated that they “often wait for offers before buying” (Secretaria et al., 2023). This demonstrates that promotional pricing is not only expected but often drives purchasing decisions. Expert interviews reinforced this trend. Mr. Picard observed that even a 1 or 2 CHF difference can strongly affect

purchase intent among younger clients. Mrs. Jouanigot emphasized the need to connect pricing to perceived value, stating that if the offer is not justified through story, experience or design, young adults lose interest quickly. Mr. Forstel, however also pointed out that contextual cues in store design, such as music and lighting, can influence perceived value and mitigate price resistance. However, not all discounts are received equally. While price reductions remain attractive to young consumers, there is growing awareness of deceptive pricing tactics. Some promotions simulate discounts by displaying artificially inflated original prices, creating the illusion of a deal when no actual savings exist. As Mrs. Jouanigot pointed out during her interview, such tactics fall under the category of "dark patterns" Although the survey conducted for this study did not directly test participants' reactions to fake discounts, several respondents spontaneously expressed mistrust toward unclear or misleading promotional strategies. When price perception is distorted, consumer trust is eroded, particularly among members of Generation Z, who show heightened sensitivity to authenticity and transparency. As Nevala (2020) explains, practices such as hidden fees, false urgency messages, or misleading markdowns are increasingly recognized and rejected by this demographic, contributing to long-term disengagement. In parallel, Mrs. Mages highlighted a broader structural challenge: even though some young consumers are introduced to wine at an early age, many perceive it as outdated or less festive than beer, cocktails, or alcohol-free alternatives. She emphasized that price alone is insufficient to capture attention, brands must offer experiences and narratives that feel relevant and accessible to this generation.

This hypothesis is confirmed: young adults aged 18 to 25 demonstrate high price sensitivity regarding wine purchases. However, their engagement is shaped not only by affordability but also by emotional relevance, health perceptions, and evolving cultural associations. To attract and retain this audience, wine producers must prioritize transparent pricing while building long-term value through authenticity, meaning, and experience.

5.5. H-5 Modernising the image of wine to reach younger consumers

Hypothesis: *To better attract consumers aged 18 to 25, Swiss wine brands must update their cultural and visual identity, moving away from traditional codes and toward more accessible, emotionally resonant expressions.*

Both survey and interview data confirm that wine suffers from a perception gap among young consumers. Several participants described wine as elitist, non-festive, or for older people, and indicated a preference for more modern, informal alternatives such as beer, cocktails, or alcohol-free drinks. As Mrs. Mages noted in her interview, this perception partly explains why many young adults stop drinking wine after initial exposure in family settings. While the product itself remains appreciated by some, the category's cultural codes often feel outdated and disconnected from Generation Z lifestyles. In neuromarketing terms, this reflects the persistence of negative mental schemas activated by wine's traditional cues. These schemas, including associations with seriousness, rituals, and complexity, can inhibit curiosity and emotional connection. To create new mental availability, brands must construct fresh associative networks through accessible formats, visual storytelling, and emotionally relevant experiences. Repositioning wine as expressive, fun, or even casual could help break down the cognitive barriers that currently prevent engagement. Survey data support this need for reimagination. When presented with the concept of a "First Steps in Wine" discovery pack containing three beginner-friendly bottles, 46.2 percent of 18 to 25-year-olds expressed interest. Among them, half said such a format would reduce their confusion and help them make a confident choice. This suggests that educational, simplified approaches delivered with a modern tone and design can lower the entry barrier and rebuild positive emotional associations. Academic research also reinforces this direction. According to Viot and Passebois-Ducros (2010), novice consumers, especially younger ones, are more influenced by brand cues than by technical information. Brand rejuvenation strategies are essential to sustain market relevance, especially in saturated or ageing sectors like wine. Lehu (2006) argues that revitalising a brand's emotional and visual language is necessary to remain culturally connected. Jeffery et al. (2024) further note that consistency in colour, logo, and visual identity across product lines enhances brand recognition and memory encoding, especially for consumers with low category involvement.

The hypothesis is confirmed. Modernising the image of wine is not a superficial rebranding effort. It is a strategic and cognitive necessity if Swiss producers wish to create emotional engagement, visual salience, and cultural alignment with a new generation of consumers.

6. Recommendations

6.1. Strengthen digital visibility through tailored and immersive content

One of the key takeaways from this research is that Generation Z engages with brands primarily through mobile-first digital platforms, especially when content is visual, short-form, and emotionally relevant. To align with these expectations, Maison Gillard should intensify its digital marketing efforts using paid advertising and search optimization. Google Ads campaigns could be geolocated and scheduled around key moments such as the “Caves Ouvertes” to drive traffic to tasting events or specific wine offers. In parallel, Meta platforms such as Instagram should be leveraged to create immersive Reels and Stories that show authentic experiences such as young people tasting wine, sharing reactions, or discovering the brand for the first time. This type of emotional storytelling, when combined with strong visual identity, activates System 1 and encourages immediate attention and engagement. Moreover, Maison Gillard should improve the SEO performance of its website by including simple educational content such as FAQs, short blog entries like “Three words to describe your first red wine,” and mobile-friendly navigation to increase organic discovery and user relevance.

6.2. Lower the barrier to entry through accessible formats and packaging

Findings show that many young consumers feel intimidated or confused by wine’s complexity. This cognitive overload can be reduced through intuitive design and simplified offerings. A strategic opportunity lies in the creation of a “First Steps in Wine” discovery box composed of three mini-bottles, accompanied by brief and engaging descriptions written in accessible language. Such a product not

only reduces decision fatigue but also introduces wine as a fun, low-risk experience. Additionally, for wines targeted at this demographic, Maison Gillard should consider standardizing the use of screw caps. These closures are perceived as practical and unpretentious, qualities appreciated by younger consumers. Reinforcing this shift, the packaging of these bottles should be visually bold and modern, favouring vibrant colours and minimalist label design. The packaging experiment in this research has shown a clear link between visual salience and memorability. Finally, Maison Gillard could implement pop up events in other region in Switzerland, especially vibrant place where young people meet, proposing a wine tasting activity would allow the 18-25 to have a first entry with a Gillard's wine and would be associated to a place that they like and feels comfortable with. Instead of expecting the customer to come to the retail store, the winery should go to them.

6.3. Reposition wine as an emotionally resonant and culturally relevant product

One of the clearest findings in this study is that 18 to 25-year-olds often perceive wine as elitist, outdated, or disconnected from their lifestyle. To overcome this barrier, Maison Gillard must invest in reconstructing positive emotional associations and cultural relevance. This includes rethinking its brand storytelling, shifting away from technical descriptions toward narrative-driven, emotionally expressive communication. Describing a wine as “the one you open when something unexpected turns out beautiful” or “your sunset bottle” taps into imagination, mood, and lifestyle alignment. In its physical spaces, particularly the wine cellar in Sion, Maison Gillard could explore visual immersion by incorporating digital screens, dynamic lighting, and sensor-triggered animations that highlight product design and mood pairings. Finally, launching seasonal or mood-based limited editions such as “ICE Summer,” “Mood Rosé,” or “Terrace win” would reinforce the brand's emotional resonance and stimulate collectability. All those names describe a sensation and a feeling they could enjoy if they drink these bottles. These initiatives would help Maison Gillard shift away from rigid wine codes and create a more flexible, sensory, and emotional brand experience tailored to the next generation.

6.4. Enhance the in-store experience

While digital strategies are essential to attract attention and generate first contact, the in-store and on-site experience remains a crucial moment for triggering emotional connection and long-term loyalty. Maison Gillard already offers an olfactory activity at the back of its winery, but this resource is not currently accessible to all visitors. Making this experience available to every guest, regardless of whether they are part of a tour or not, would allow the brand to democratise wine education in a playful and emotionally engaging way. This initiative would benefit from the strong link between olfactory stimulation and emotional memory, which is widely recognised in neuromarketing as a key factor in experience retention and brand attachment. To go further, Maison Gillard could develop a hands-on educational workshop designed to contrast flawed and quality wine profiles. For instance, participants could be invited to smell a corked bottle and learn how to identify what makes a wine defective, followed by a comparative tasting of a well-balanced, aromatic wine. This experiential sequence would foster both curiosity and competence, offering young consumers a rare feeling in the wine world: empowerment. The aim is not to simplify wine by stripping it of depth, but to make its complexity enjoyable and accessible through guided discovery. Such an approach would also help break down persistent stereotypes portraying wine as elitist or overly intellectual. By making the tasting room an active learning space where senses are activated, mistakes are demystified, and emotions are encouraged, Maison Gillard could profoundly reshape how wine is experienced by new generations.

The recommendations presented in this section are directly informed by the empirical findings and theoretical insights developed throughout this thesis. They aim to translate the principles of neuromarketing into concrete strategies tailored to the behaviours, expectations, and emotional logic of 18 to 25-year-old consumers. By combining digital immersion, simplified product formats, sensory and educational experiences, and culturally relevant storytelling, Maison Gillard can reposition its brand in a way that feels accessible, engaging, and emotionally meaningful to a younger audience. These proposals are not isolated actions but form a cohesive strategy anchored in the mechanisms of attention, memory, and affective processing. Together, they offer a pathway to rejuvenate the brand image of Maison Gillard and to ensure its relevance in a market shaped by rapid generational and cultural shifts

Conclusion

This bachelor thesis set out to explore how neuromarketing strategies could contribute to rejuvenating the image of wine and increasing its consumption among young adults in Switzerland, focusing on the 18 to 25 demographics. Combining literature insights, expert interviews, a consumer survey, and an experimental test, the research revealed a strong alignment between unconscious cognitive processes and the emotional, sensory, and visual factors influencing this segment's purchase behaviour. The study confirmed that price sensitivity, visual salience, emotional resonance, and digital-native habits significantly shape young consumers' relationship with wine. Emotional triggers, such as packaging aesthetics or relatable storytelling, proved more impactful than traditional product attributes like region or grape variety. While traditional communication remains present, it no longer resonates effectively with younger audiences, who favour fast, intuitive, and visually engaging formats.

The thesis also emphasized the need for the wine industry to demystify its image, moving away from elitism toward inclusion, accessibility, and education. Maison Gillard, with its innovative product line like "Porte de Novembre," is well-positioned to lead this shift. By implementing emotionally intelligent, sensory-focused, and digitally adapted strategies, the brand can strengthen its connection with young consumers without compromising its authenticity.

Ultimately, this research underscores that neuromarketing is not about manipulation. It is about better understanding. Understanding the silent language of perception, memory, and emotion. And in doing so, giving wine a new voice, one that speaks not just to taste, but to identity, connection, and shared experiences.

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Author's declaration

I, Lisa Bredou, hereby declare that this Bachelor thesis entitled “Neuromarketing and Wine: Understanding How Sensory and Emotional Strategies Can Attract 18–25-Year-Old Consumers to Swiss Wine Brands” is the result of my own independent work and has not been submitted for any other degree or diploma.

All sources of information used in the thesis have been acknowledged. I confirm that I have read and understood the HES–SO regulations on academic integrity and plagiarism.

Place: La Tour-de-Peilz

Date: 26 May 2025

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lisa Bredou". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'L' and 'B'.