

Fixed costs to consider when buying a bottle of wine

In the first of a mini-series, Richard Bouglet of L'Art du Vin outlines why you should pay a little extra for a bottle of wine.

You do not get a huge amount of wine for your money on a bottle costing around £7 or £8. Unfortunately, in a bottle of wine you have fixed costs and most of it goes to HMRC.

You have £2.68 of duty and on top of that you have VAT which is applied to the £2.68 and then you have shipping, the cost of a bottle, and glass has become super expensive, especially because of the situation in Ukraine.

Then you have cardboard boxes for shipping and the price of pallets on which the wine sits during transit have gone through the roof and we have to mention Brexit which has had a big impact in several aspects.

There is more paper work now as we are not part of the European Union so we have got a customs input which has a fee as we have to employ people to do that job.

Furthermore, you have less availability of transport to come to the UK and supply and demand has increased the price of that so, if you are buying a bottle of wine at a low price in terms of the amount of pure wine in it, you would be lucky if you got 25p or 30p of wine.

The costs are fixed, it does not matter if you are buying at an entry level or an expensive Bordeaux, the duty is the same

and that is why a lot of people in the industry believe that is unfair.

The entry level with wine has risen to around £7.50 and £8.50, but I would say that as soon as you move to £12 then you have suddenly a lot more wine for your money.

That is why I would advocate you drink less but drink better.

I would also say that if you want some nice seafood or meat or cheese products of good quality I would recommend going to a good fishmonger, a good butcher or a specialised cheese shop, and it is the same way with wine.

It does make a difference. To be able to supply a supermarket as a wine producer you need to have a serious production capability, however, just like any product, if you are producing en masse the quality is not always going to be the best.

Whereas independent wine merchants, like ourselves, just like with a farm shop, are perhaps more ethical, will perhaps pay more attention with lower production, and they are likely to take account of environmental issues. We have, for example, a lot of organic wine.

FOOTNOTE: L'Art du Vin is based at Dalgety Bay and imports and distributes wine from artisan producers in leading organic estates in France, Spain, Italy, Austria and the New World.

The company were also the first Scottish wine merchant to be a certified member of the Soil Association and their portfolio focuses on wines made with passion, integrity and uniqueness of origin while remaining true to environmental and ethical issues.

L'Art du Vin supplies to hospitality outlets including The Scholar Hotel at The University of Edinburgh.

PICTURE: Richard Bouglet in the warehouse preparing another

shipment for a client. Picture ***Nigel Duncan***