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Interactions among Relevant Non-*Saccharomyces*, *Saccharomyces*, and Lactic Acid Bacteria Species of the Wine Microbial Consortium: Towards Advances in Antagonistic Phenomena and Biocontrol Potential

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Abstract: The topic of microbial interactions is of notable relevance in oenology, being connected with their impact on microbial biodiversity and wine quality. The interactions among different couples of microorganisms, in particular yeasts and lactic acid bacteria representative of the must/wine microbial consortium, have been tested in this study. This interaction's screening has been implemented by means of plate assays, using culture medium, grape juice, and wine agar as substrates. Different antagonistic phenomena have been detected, belonging to the following interaction categories: yeast-yeast, yeast-bacteria, bacteria-yeast, and bacteria-bacteria. In general, the inhibitory activity has been observed in all three media agar used as substrates, resulting in more frequent on culture medium, followed by grape juice and, finally, wine. Specifically, the work is one of the first reports demonstrating the reciprocal interactions between non-*Saccharomyces* yeasts (NSY) and malolactic bacteria. The findings shed new light on the co-inoculation of the yeast starter culture with malolactic bacteria, as well as the biocontrol potential of Lactic Acid Bacteria (LAB) strains. Highlighted microbial interactions are relevant for the management of alcoholic fermentation, malolactic fermentation, and the development of distinctive aroma profiles, control of spoilage yeasts, and the selection of tailored mixed starter cultures. In addition, the plate assay method could be a fast, cheap, and suitable method to exclude negative interactions among *Saccharomyces* spp., NSY, and malolactic bacteria during trials from regional spontaneous fermentations with the aim to select tailored mixed starter cultures.

Keywords: grape must; wine; yeast; *Saccharomyces cerevisiae*; non-*Saccharomyces*; malolactic bacteria; lactic acid bacteria; inhibitory activity

1. Introduction

As reviewed by Liu et al. [1] the Wine Microbial Consortium (WMC) is mainly composed of different microorganisms belonging to *Saccharomyces* spp., Non-*Saccharomyces* Yeasts (NSY), Lactic Acid Bacteria (LAB) Species, Acetic Acid Bacteria (AAB) species, *Bacillus* spp., and filamentous fungi, all microbes with diverse origins, occurrences, and paths of diffusion from the field to the winery [2]. In particular, *Saccharomyces* spp., NSY, and LAB are considered pro-technological microbes in oenology and play a pivotal role in the production of high-quality wines [3]. To a different extent, microbial diversity within these

three classes contributes to shaping sensory characteristics and the safety of wine [4,5]. In fact, *Saccharomyces* spp., NSY, and LAB are present in spontaneous wine microbial consortia and used as starter cultures in oenology [6,7]. *Saccharomyces* spp. play the key role in Alcoholic Fermentation (AF), determining wine production and shaping wine quality crucially [8,9]. The positive effect of non-*Saccharomyces* yeasts can be dual. On the one side, NSY can be relevant for specific pro-technological applications [10–14]. On the other, they produce a variety of volatile compounds and extracellular enzymes with an important impact on the sensorial profile of wine [15,16]. These yeasts prevail at the beginning of the vinification process and are quickly replaced by *S. cerevisiae*, which completes AF, in reason of the different tolerance to peculiar wine stressors, such as ethanol and SO₂. Concerning the role of LAB in the microbial wine-associated ecosystem, specific malolactic bacteria concerns modulate both microbial stability and sensorial quality of wine [17,18]. They consume residual nutrients and synthesize inhibitory compounds, contrasting the growth of undesired microbes [19]. LAB can produce volatile secondary metabolites with a positive impact on wine's chemical composition and aroma [4,20].

Irrelevant, positive, and negative interactions can influence the growth and/or the metabolic activity of the species composing the WMC, affecting the evolution of microbial resources during fermentation and wine quality [1,21]. The WMC interactions include direct (cell-cell contact, quorum sensing, predation, parasitism, symbiosis, and inhibition) and indirect (neutralism, mutualism, commensalism, amensalism, and competition) interactions [22]. Several studies delve into the principal interactions among the main categories belonging to the wine microbial consortium: yeast-yeast (*Saccharomyces* spp.-*Saccharomyces* spp. [22,23]; *Saccharomyces* spp.-NSY [24,25]; NSY-NSY [26,27]), yeast-bacteria (NSY-LAB [28–30]; *Saccharomyces* spp.-LAB [31]), bacteria-yeast (LAB-NSY [32,33]; LAB-*Saccharomyces* spp. [34]), bacteria-bacteria (LAB-LAB [35]).

The heterogeneity, oenological significance, and the temporary succession of the different microbial categories contribute to must/wine microbiota, making this system an interesting model to study microbial interactions. In the last years, different methods and substrates have been used to test the relationships among microorganisms of enological interest. Generally, their evaluation is performed on plates [36–38], through co-/sequential inoculation in culture medium [39,40], synthetic [41], and commercial [36,42,43] grape juice/must or wine. In this context, the present work aims to verify, using an integrated plate assays methodological approach, the occurrence and the extent of interactions among all the possible combinations of non-*Saccharomyces*, *Saccharomyces*, and lactic acid bacteria isolated from spontaneous fermentations, used as oenological starter cultures, or from public collections. Interactions among yeasts and bacteria affect the wine quality, but only limited information on these phenomena is reported in the scientific literature [44]. Here, plate assays have been selected as a low-cost and fast method to evaluate the interactions for a large number of strains, with the novelty of introducing the use of plates made by including must and wine in order to achieve, despite the limitations of plate screening, a progressive approach with respect to oenological conditions.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Microorganisms

Forty-five microbial strains belonging to 15 different species of enological interest have been used in this work (Table 1).

In particular, bacterial species included three strains of *Oenococcus oeni*, 5 *Lactiplantibacillus plantarum* strains, one *Pediococcus* spp., and one strain for each of the following species: *Levilactobacillus brevis*, *Pediococcus parvulus*, *Lentilactobacillus hilgardii*. The yeast species included *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* (7 strains), *Torulaspota delbrueckii* (3 strains), *Hanseniaspora uvarum* (2 strains), *Metschnikowia pulcherrima* (10 strains), *Pichia fermentans* (3 strains), *Brettanomyces bruxellensis* (5 strains), *Hanseniaspora guilliermondii* (1 strain), *Issatchenkia terricola* (1 strain), and *Starmarella bacillaris* (1 strain). The microorganisms submitted to this analysis derived from public collections, isolated from wine commercial

starter cultures, or they have been isolated from spontaneous oenological fermentations (e.g., [42,45–51]) (Table 1). All the microbial strains have been stored at $-80\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$ in MRS or YPD medium and added with 30% of glycerol for bacteria and yeasts, respectively.

Table 1. List of microorganisms of enological interest used in this work.

Species	Strain Code	Matrix/Source
<i>Saccharomyces cerevisiae</i>	superlievito alcoligens	CSC
<i>S. cerevisiae</i>	elegance	CSC
<i>S. cerevisiae ex bayanus</i>	EC1118	CSC
<i>S. cerevisiae</i>	E4	OSF
<i>S. cerevisiae</i>	I6	OSF
<i>S. cerevisiae</i>	SUPRARED HG	CSC
<i>S. cerevisiae</i>	T2	CSC
<i>Hanseniaspora uvarum</i>	1444	CECT
<i>H. uvarum</i>	B05B29	OSF
<i>Hanseniaspora guilliermondii</i>	M105A31	OSF
<i>Torulaspora delbrueckii</i>	11199	CECT
<i>T. delbrueckii</i>	B05B12	OSF
<i>T. delbrueckii</i>	291	CSC
<i>Pichia fermentans</i>	M105A3	OSF
<i>P. fermentans</i>	B05A36	OSF
<i>P. fermentans</i>	B05A29	OSF
<i>Issatchenkia terricola</i>	B05B8	OSF
<i>Starmerella bacillaris</i>	B05B6	OSF
<i>Metschnikowia pulcherrima</i>	B0512B3	OSF
<i>M. pulcherrima</i>	B0512B24	OSF
<i>M. pulcherrima</i>	B0512B25	OSF
<i>M. pulcherrima</i>	B0512B26	OSF
<i>M. pulcherrima</i>	B0512B15	OSF
<i>M. pulcherrima</i>	B05B2P	OSF
<i>M. pulcherrima</i>	B05A36	OSF
<i>M. pulcherrima</i>	M105A51	OSF
<i>M. pulcherrima</i>	B0522	OSF
<i>M. pulcherrima</i>	346	CSC
<i>Brettanomyces bruxellensis</i>	2	OSF
<i>B. bruxellensis</i>	4	OSF
<i>B. bruxellensis</i>	5	OSF
<i>B. bruxellensis</i>	6	OSF
<i>B. bruxellensis</i>	7	OSF
<i>Lactiplantibacillus plantarum</i>	Lp90	OSF
<i>L. plantarum</i>	44	OSF
<i>L. plantarum</i>	V22	CSC
<i>L. plantarum</i>	38 CDS	OSF
<i>L. plantarum</i>	T1	OSF
<i>Levilactobacillus brevis</i>	9809	IOEB
<i>Lentilactobacillus hilgardii</i>	4786	CECT
<i>Pediococcus parvulus</i>	126	OSF
<i>Pediococcus spp.</i>	32	OSF
<i>Oenococcus oeni</i>	OT3	OSF
<i>O. oeni</i>	6	OSF
<i>O. oeni</i>	OT4	OSF

OSF, oenological spontaneous fermentation, UNIFG collection; CSC, commercial starter culture; CECT, Colección Española de Cultivos Tipo; IOEB, Bacteria collection of the “Faculté d’Oenologie de Bordeaux”.

2.2. Culture Medium and Growth Conditions

Yeast cultures were grown in YPD broth: 10 g/L of yeast extract (Oxoid, Basingstoke, UK), 20 g/L of bacteriological peptone (Oxoid), and 20 g/L of dextrose (Oxoid). The growth of non-*Saccharomyces* yeasts was also evaluated in WL nutrient broth (Wallerstein Laboratory, Oxoid) [52]. Malolactic bacteria were grown in MRS broth (Oxoid), or MRS supplemented with 10 g/L of L-malic acid (Sigma Aldrich, St Louis, MO, USA) and adjusted to pH 5.5, with 1 M NaOH (Sigma Aldrich), for *O. oeni* strains. The growth of all microorganisms was carried out at 30 °C for 48 h, apart from *O. oeni* strains that were incubated in a jar (anaerobic conditions) for a week.

Considering the media for the plate screening, for yeast-yeast interactions YPD medium has been used for both layers; for bacteria-bacteria interactions, MRS medium has been employed for both layers; while, for bacteria-yeast and yeast-bacteria interactions, MRS and YPD media have been used for the bottom and/or top layer, respectively. The concentration of microbial suspensions was assessed by spectrophotometric (turbidimetric) analysis.

2.3. Interaction Plate Screening: Double-Layer Agar Diffusion Assay

The interactions between couples of microorganisms have been evaluated using (i) YPD and MRS culture medium, (ii) commercial red grape juice (VitaFit; Emig GmbH, Rellingen, Germany), and (iii) commercial red and white wine (alcohol concentration 10.5% (w/v); pH 3.5) as substrate.

The first methodological approach to test microbial interactions has been a double-layer agar diffusion assay, proposed by Comitini et al. [53]. A layer of culture medium agar (10 mL) was poured into Petri dishes. After solidification, 5 µL of six different strains overnight cultures were seeded to form rings of inoculum.

Plates have been incubated at room temperature (25–30 °C) for 24 h or, in the case of *O. oeni* strains, in the jar for a week. After that time, a top layer of culture medium soft agar (10 mL; 1% of agar), containing 6×10^5 CFU/mL of another strain, was poured onto the bottom layer and, finally, the Petri dishes incubated for about 72 h at room temperature.

2.4. Interaction Plate Screening: Agar Diffusion Assay

To simulate the real situation, the evolution of must/wine microbial consortium and the interactions between microorganisms have been tested in grape juice and wine. This attempt has been implemented through agar diffusion assay. This method has been suggested by Mehlmakulu et al. [38] and, unlike the above-described approach, was performed on a single layer. Grape juice has been added with 1% of yeast extract only to test the interactions involving bacteria (to “simulate” the conditions occurring at the end of AF) and adjusted to pH 4.5 with 1 M NaOH; this medium has been heated up to reach 55 °C and kept at this temperature. 1:100 v/v of each strain overnight culture have been inoculated into 7.5 mL of the modified grape juice. Hence, 2.5 mL of 4% agar (kept at 55 °C) was mixed with the inoculated medium and poured into sterile Petri dishes. Finally, 5–10 µL of different strains overnight cultures were spotted on the surface of the solidified agar plates (each strain must have the possibility to grow in correspondence with its own spot). The plates were incubated at room temperature until a well-developed lawn of the strain inoculated into grape juice was observed (a week in the case of *O. oeni* strains). Grape juice was selected as a commercial matrix capable of mimicking the physicochemical conditions of grape must.

As mentioned above, agar diffusion assay has also been performed using wine as substrate, added with 1% yeast extract for all the interactions to test. In this case, the different bacterial strains were pre-stressed in wine and incubated at 30 °C for a week in order to adapt them to the medium promoting their growth: 8 mL of wine (without the addition of yeast extract and pH change) were added to 4 mL of the overnight culture. Furthermore, interactions between all microbial couples were assessed in the red wine while those detected with the first and this method (i.e., in red wine) have also been carried

out in white wine in order to evaluate the maintenance of the phenotype as the oenological context varies.

2.5. Interaction Plate Screening: Results Interpretation

It is important to point out that, for both the methodological approaches used in this work, strains seeded through the spots are the ones that eventually interact with the inoculated strain. The presence of interaction has been verified by observing the growth around the spots, which could determine two situations. The lack of growth was displayed by a clear area surrounding the spot, the so-called halo of inhibition, with a diameter proportional to the extent of inhibition itself. On the contrary, a major growth around the spot identifies a positive interaction between the two strains under examination, indicating that the development of the spotted one stimulates the development of the inoculated strain. Otherwise, none of the previous situations occurred if the microbial couple tested does not interact.

3. Results and Discussion

Four categories of microbial interactions, functional to the discussion, can be identified among those tested in this work: yeast-yeast, yeast-bacteria, bacteria-yeast, and bacteria-bacteria. As a whole, negative and neutral interactions have been detected, while no examples of positive interactions have been reported. This is in contrast to the literature in the field, which identifies different behaviors attributable to mutualism/synergism and commensalism reported in matrices of oenological interest [1,54] (e.g., between *S. cerevisiae* and *L. plantarum* in grape juices [55], *Kloeckera apiculata*/*S. cerevisiae* in grape juice integrated with yeast extract [56]). The findings highlight that plate screening did not seem adequate to detect positive interactions between microorganisms in the wine sector.

Inhibitions representative of all the possible typologies of antagonisms have been observed, including all tested microbial categories (i.e., *Saccharomyces*/non-*Saccharomyces* yeasts and lactic acid bacteria). According to the extent of their antagonistic behaviors, the different microorganisms used in this study have been classified as strains of mild (\pm), middle (+), or strong (++) inhibitory activity showing halos of inhibition, surrounding the respective spots, with a diameter lower than 3 mm, ranging from 3–6 mm or more than 6 mm, respectively. Evidence has been detected in all three media agar used as substrates, resulting in a more frequent on culture medium, followed by grape juice and, finally, wine. In particular, referring to the exerted (Figure 1a) and suffered (Figure 1b) inhibitions, non-*Saccharomyces* yeasts and LAB showed activity on culture medium and grape juice while *S. cerevisiae* strains on culture medium and—in only a few cases—wine. These results confirmed, in the oenological field, that in vitro antagonisms do not necessarily correlate with the same behavior in in situ studies [57]. Highlighted trends indicate a selective maintenance of the antagonistic character shifting from tests on a culture medium to evaluation on the edible matrix. Intriguingly, in the case of the yeasts, this selectivity seemed to correspond to the phase of dominance during winemaking: grape juice for non-*Saccharomyces* and wine for *S. cerevisiae* [58,59].

Therefore, selected strains belonging to all the microbial categories tested in this plate screening [non-*Saccharomyces*, *S. cerevisiae*, and Lactic Acid Bacteria (LAB)] have interacted on culture medium agar (examples in Figure S1).

Evidence highlights only a certain connection with the clear succession of microbial dominance (i.e., non-*Saccharomyces* in grape must and in early Alcoholic fermentation (AF), *Saccharomyces* in the middle/late AF, LAB during malolactic fermentation) [30], underlining how the dominance phenomenon is only one of the complex WMC interactions.

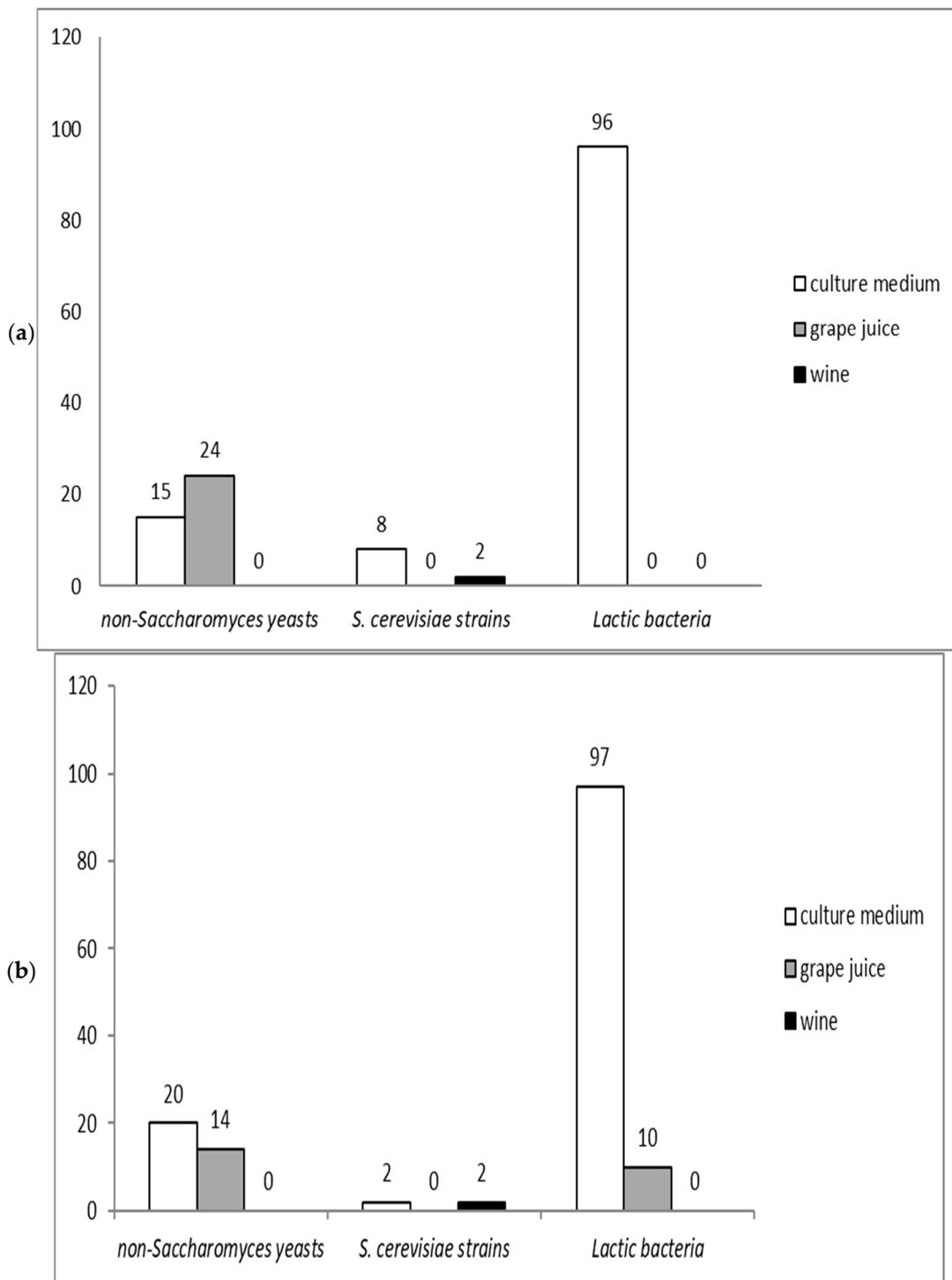


Figure 1. Frequency of inhibitory activity concerning the inhibiting (a) and inhibited (b) species, according to the different media tested.

3.1. Non-Saccharomyces as Inhibiting Species

Delving into the results found for each of the couple of tested microorganisms, Table 2 shows the inhibitory activity of tested non-Saccharomyces strains against all the studied yeast and bacterial strains.

Table 2. Inhibitory activity of non-*Saccharomyces* yeasts according to the diameter of halo of inhibition: “±” = lower than 3 mm, “+” = ranging from 3–6 mm and “++” = more than 6 mm.

Inhibiting Species	Inhibited Species	Inhibitory Activity
<i>M. pulcherrima</i> 346	<i>S. cerevisiae</i> I6	± ^C
	<i>L. plantarum</i> V22	± ^C
	<i>L. brevis</i> IOEB	± ^C
	<i>L. plantarum</i> 38 CDS	± ^C
	<i>Pediococcus</i> spp.	± ^C
	<i>O. oeni</i> OT3	± ^C
<i>T. delbrueckii</i> 291	<i>L. plantarum</i> Lp90	++ ^C
	<i>L. plantarum</i> 44	++ ^C
	<i>L. brevis</i> IOEB	++ ^C
	<i>P. parvulus</i> 126	++ ^C
	<i>L. hilgardii</i> CECT 4786	++ ^C
	<i>L. plantarum</i> 38 CDS	++ ^C
	<i>Pediococcus</i> spp.	± ^C
<i>P. fermentans</i> M105A30	<i>Pediococcus</i> spp.	± ^C
<i>P. fermentans</i> B05A36	<i>Pediococcus</i> spp.	± ^C
<i>H. guilliermondii</i> M105A31	<i>P. fermentans</i> M105A30	± ^J
<i>H. uvarum</i> B05B29	<i>P. fermentans</i> M105A30	± ^J
<i>P. fermentans</i> B05A29	<i>T. delbrueckii</i> 291	± ^J
	<i>T. delbrueckii</i> CECT 11199	± ^J
	<i>B. bruxellensis</i> 2	± ^J
	<i>B. bruxellensis</i> 6	± ^J
<i>M. pulcherrima</i> B0512B3	<i>P. fermentans</i> M105A30	± ^J
<i>M. pulcherrima</i> B0512B24	<i>P. fermentans</i> M105A30	± ^J
<i>M. pulcherrima</i> B0512B25	<i>P. fermentans</i> M105A30	± ^J
<i>M. pulcherrima</i> B0512B26	<i>P. fermentans</i> M105A30	± ^J
<i>M. pulcherrima</i> B0512B15	<i>P. fermentans</i> M105A30	± ^J
<i>M. pulcherrima</i> B05B2P	<i>P. fermentans</i> M105A30	± ^J
<i>M. pulcherrima</i> B05A36	<i>P. fermentans</i> M105A30	± ^J
<i>M. pulcherrima</i> B0522	<i>P. fermentans</i> M105A30	± ^J
<i>B. bruxellensis</i> 2	<i>Pediococcus</i> spp.	++ ^J
	<i>O. oeni</i> 6	++ ^J
<i>B. bruxellensis</i> 4	<i>Pediococcus</i> spp.	± ^J
	<i>O. oeni</i> 6	+ ^J
<i>B. bruxellensis</i> 5	<i>Pediococcus</i> spp.	± ^J
	<i>O. oeni</i> 6	+ ^J
<i>B. bruxellensis</i> 6	<i>Pediococcus</i> spp.	± ^J
	<i>O. oeni</i> 6	+ ^J
<i>B. bruxellensis</i> 7	<i>Pediococcus</i> spp.	± ^J
	<i>O. oeni</i> 6	+ ^J

The superscripts indicate the medium onto which the results have been observed: “^C” = culture medium and “^J” = grape juice.

In literature, several studies deepened the antimicrobial potential of *M. pulcherrima* (e.g., [27,60]). Interestingly, *M. pulcherrima* 346, an isolate from commercial starter culture [10], inhibited, on culture medium, bacterial strains representative of spontaneous malolactic consortia (*L. plantarum*, *L. brevis*, *Pediococcus* spp., and *O. oeni*) and the autochthonous *S. cerevisiae* strain I6 [42]. This is consistent with what has been found in previous studies that demonstrated the antimicrobial activity of *M. pulcherrima* strains against *S. cerevisiae*, *O. oeni*, and other lactobacilli of wine interest [37,61–63]. Furthermore, these findings could contribute to explaining the modulatory effects on the spontaneous malolactic consortium observed when *M. pulcherrima*-based commercial starter culture was used in winemaking [30]. On the contrary, the other *M. pulcherrima* strains exert their antagonistic influence only toward *P. fermentans* M105A30, in agreement with the evidence observed by Oro et al. [27]. Surprisingly, we found no antimicrobial action on spoilage yeasts *Brettanomyces/Dekkera* [62]. Taken together, these results proved the strain-dependent character of *M. pulcherrima* antimicrobial activity. This is probably connected to the intraspecific diversity in terms of the molecular basis responsible for the antagonistic phenotype [64]. The inhibitory activity of *M. pulcherrima* is addressable to the production of low molecular weight and heat-sensitive metabolites, principally pulcherriminic acid [63]. The acid forms an insoluble red pigment pulcherrimin in the presence of iron (III) ions, with subsequent precipitation. This iron sequestration which depletes the medium of iron, making it unavailable to the other microorganisms' mechanism appeared to be strain-dependent [64]. Additionally, the inhibition of *S. cerevisiae* by *M. pulcherrima* could also come from the competition for nutrients: in the sequential inoculation, the consumption of the nutrients by the non-*Saccharomyces* yeast at the beginning of AF could prevent the following growth of *S. cerevisiae* [62].

In this study, *T. delbrueckii* 291, a commercial strain, showed inhibitory activity toward some bacterial strains on culture medium agar. This might contribute to explaining a negative influence found after inoculation of commercial *T. delbrueckii* on spontaneous malolactic consortium [30] strains, which is perfectly in accordance with the evidence reported by Nardi et al. [65] that successfully tested the combination of *T. delbrueckii* and *O. oeni* strains in red Barbera wine. Together with results reported for *M. pulcherrima* 346, these findings added a piece to the intricate puzzle of the possible interaction among non-*Saccharomyces* and malolactic bacteria in oenology [13,28,65–69].

Concerning the other non-*Saccharomyces* yeasts, some inhibitions on culture medium and grape juice testify to the occurrence of other phenomena of interest. In particular, *P. fermentans* M105A30 was found largely inhibited. *P. fermentans* B05A29 displayed a certain negative activity against *T. delbrueckii* and *B. bruxellensis* (some *Pichia* strains have been found to produce a killer toxin called zymocins [70,71]). Finally, all the strains of *B. bruxellensis* tested in this study inhibited *Pediococcus* spp. and *O. oeni* 6 on grape juice agar.

3.2. *Saccharomyces* as Inhibiting Species

Table 3 reported the inhibitory spectrum of tested *Saccharomyces* strains with respect to all the studied yeast and bacterial strains.

In this study, the inhibitory activity of *S. cerevisiae* strains was detected on both culture medium and wine agar. With regard to the first substrate, *S. cerevisiae* superlievito alcoligens inhibited all the bacterial strains, with the exception of *O. oeni* strains and *L. plantarum* T1. These findings confirm the potential of selected *S. cerevisiae* strains against spoilage LAB in wine [72]. In particular, it was proven the existence of a *S. cerevisiae* peptidic fraction, with a molecular weight lower than 10 kDa, that inhibits the growth of *L. hilgardii* [63]. This antagonism could find application also in the reduction of biogenic amines produced by specific *L. hilgardii* strains in wine [72–74]. The trends against *L. plantarum* strains, but not counter to *O. oeni* strains, could contribute to explaining the impact of inoculation of the *S. cerevisiae* selected strain on the spontaneous malolactic consortium [30]. This is an aspect of particular interest if we consider the rising attention delved into *L. plantarum* as

a new species of interest in malolactic control [75]. In general, the evidence confirms the continuous interest in the study of yeast-bacteria compatibility in winemaking [28,69,76].

Table 3. Inhibitory activity of *S. cerevisiae* strains according to the diameter of halo of inhibition: “±” = lower than 3 mm, “+” = ranging from 3–6 mm and “++” = more than 6 mm.

Inhibiting Species	Inhibited Species	Inhibitory Activity
<i>S. cerevisiae</i> T2	<i>S. cerevisiae</i> superlievito alcoligens	± ^W
	<i>S. cerevisiae</i> I6	± ^{C,W}
<i>S. cerevisiae</i> superlievito alcoligens	<i>L. plantarum</i> Lp90	++ ^C
	<i>L. plantarum</i> 44	++ ^C
	<i>L. plantarum</i> V22	++ ^C
	<i>L. brevis</i> IOEB	++ ^C
	<i>P. parvulus</i> 126	++ ^C
	<i>L. hilgardii</i> CECT 4786	++ ^C
	<i>L. plantarum</i> 38 CDS	++ ^C

The superscripts indicate the medium onto which the results have been observed: “^C” = culture medium and “^W” = wine.

In this study, it has been detected inhibitory activity of *S. cerevisiae* T2 toward two other strains of *S. cerevisiae*: superlievito alcoligens (on wine agar) and on the autochthonous strain I6 (on culture medium and wine agar). This second inhibition represents the only case in which the same inhibition occurred on more than one substrate by means of interactions plate assay in the present study. In the last years, intra-specific inhibitions between different strains of *S. cerevisiae* have been reported, also with contrasting results in terms of prevalence among wild and commercial *S. cerevisiae* strains [77–79].

3.3. LAB as Inhibiting Species

Interestingly, in this study, the LAB inhibitory activity was detected only on culture medium agar (Table 4).

Table 4. Inhibitory activity of lactic bacteria species according to the diameter of halo of inhibition: “±” = lower than 3 mm, “+” = ranging from 3–6 mm and “++” = more than 6 mm.

Inhibiting Species	Inhibited Species	Inhibitory Activity
<i>L. plantarum</i> Lp90	<i>L. plantarum</i> 44	± ^C
	<i>L. plantarum</i> V22	± ^C
	<i>L. brevis</i> IOEB	± ^C
	<i>P. parvulus</i> 126	± ^C
	<i>L. hilgardii</i> CECT 4786	± ^C
	<i>L. plantarum</i> 38 CDS	+ ^C
	<i>Pediococcus</i> spp.	± ^C
<i>L. plantarum</i> 44	<i>L. plantarum</i> 44	± ^C
	<i>L. plantarum</i> V22	± ^C
	<i>L. brevis</i> IOEB	± ^C
	<i>P. parvulus</i> 126	± ^C
	<i>L. hilgardii</i> CECT 4786	± ^C
	<i>L. plantarum</i> 38 CDS	+ ^C
	<i>Pediococcus</i> spp.	± ^C

Table 4. Cont.

Inhibiting Species	Inhibited Species	Inhibitory Activity
<i>L. plantarum</i> V22	<i>L. plantarum</i> Lp90	+ ^C
	<i>L. plantarum</i> 44	± ^C
	<i>L. plantarum</i> V22	± ^C
	<i>L. brevis</i> IOEB	± ^C
	<i>P. parvulus</i> 126	± ^C
	<i>L. hilgardii</i> CECT 4786	± ^C
	<i>L. plantarum</i> 38 CDS	+ ^C
	<i>Pediococcus</i> spp.	± ^C
<i>L. brevis</i> IOEB	<i>L. plantarum</i> Lp90	+ ^C
	<i>L. plantarum</i> 44	± ^C
	<i>L. plantarum</i> V22	± ^C
	<i>L. brevis</i> IOEB	± ^C
	<i>P. parvulus</i> 126	± ^C
	<i>L. hilgardii</i> CECT 4786	± ^C
	<i>L. plantarum</i> 38 CDS	+ ^C
	<i>Pediococcus</i> spp.	± ^C
<i>P. parvulus</i> 126	<i>L. plantarum</i> Lp90	+ ^C
	<i>L. plantarum</i> 44	± ^C
	<i>L. plantarum</i> V22	± ^C
	<i>L. brevis</i> IOEB	± ^C
	<i>P. parvulus</i> 126	± ^C
	<i>L. hilgardii</i> CECT 4786	± ^C
	<i>L. plantarum</i> 38 CDS	+ ^C
	<i>Pediococcus</i> spp.	± ^C
<i>L. hilgardii</i> CECT 4786	<i>L. plantarum</i> 44	± ^C
	<i>L. plantarum</i> V22	± ^C
	<i>L. brevis</i> IOEB	± ^C
	<i>P. parvulus</i> 126	± ^C
	<i>L. hilgardii</i> CECT 4786	± ^C
	<i>L. plantarum</i> 38 CDS	+ ^C
	<i>Pediococcus</i> spp.	± ^C
	<i>L. plantarum</i> 38 CDS	<i>L. plantarum</i> 44
<i>L. plantarum</i> V22		± ^C
<i>L. brevis</i> IOEB		± ^C
<i>P. parvulus</i> 126		± ^C
<i>L. hilgardii</i> CECT 4786		± ^C
<i>L. plantarum</i> 38 CDS		+ ^C
<i>Pediococcus</i> spp.		± ^C
<i>L. plantarum</i> T1		<i>L. plantarum</i> Lp90
	<i>L. plantarum</i> 44	++ ^C
	<i>L. brevis</i> IOEB	++ ^C

Table 4. Cont.

Inhibiting Species	Inhibited Species	Inhibitory Activity	
	<i>P. parvulus</i> 126	++ ^C	
	<i>L. plantarum</i> 38 CDS	++ ^C	
	<i>Pediococcus</i> spp.	+ ^C	
<i>Pediococcus</i> spp.	<i>O. oeni</i> OT3	+ ^C	
	<i>L. plantarum</i> Lp90	++ ^C	
	<i>L. plantarum</i> 44	+ ^C	
	<i>L. plantarum</i> V22	++ ^C	
	<i>L. brevis</i> IOEB	± ^C	
	<i>P. parvulus</i> 126	+ ^C	
	<i>L. hilgardii</i> CECT 4786	± ^C	
	<i>L. plantarum</i> 38 CDS	++ ^C	
	<i>M. pulcherrima</i> B0512B3	± ^C	
	<i>M. pulcherrima</i> B0512B25	± ^C	
	<i>P. fermentans</i> M105A30	++ ^C	
	<i>P. fermentans</i> B05A36	++ ^C	
	<i>T. delbrueckii</i> 291	++ ^C	
	<i>O. oeni</i> OT3	<i>O. oeni</i> OT3	+ ^C
		<i>L. plantarum</i> Lp90	++ ^C
<i>L. plantarum</i> 44		+ ^C	
<i>L. plantarum</i> V22		++ ^C	
<i>L. brevis</i> IOEB		± ^C	
<i>P. parvulus</i> 126		± ^C	
<i>L. hilgardii</i> CECT 4786		± ^C	
<i>L. plantarum</i> 38 CDS		++ ^C	
<i>M. pulcherrima</i> B0512B3		± ^C	
<i>M. pulcherrima</i> B0512B25		± ^C	
<i>M. pulcherrima</i> B0512B26		± ^C	
<i>M. pulcherrima</i> B0522		± ^C	
<i>P. fermentans</i> M105A30		+ ^C	
<i>P. fermentans</i> B05A36		++ ^C	
<i>T. delbrueckii</i> 291		+ ^C	
<i>O. oeni</i> 6	<i>O. oeni</i> OT3	± ^C	
	<i>O. oeni</i> OT3	± ^C	
<i>O. oeni</i> OT4	<i>M. pulcherrima</i> B0512B3	± ^C	
	<i>P. fermentans</i> M105A30	++ ^C	
	<i>P. fermentans</i> B05A36	± ^C	
	<i>T. delbrueckii</i> 291	++ ^C	
	<i>B. bruxellensis</i> 2	+ ^C	
	<i>B. bruxellensis</i> 4	± ^C	
	<i>B. bruxellensis</i> 6	± ^C	
	<i>B. bruxellensis</i> 7	± ^C	

The superscript indicates the medium onto which the results have been observed: "C" = culture medium.

Excluding a few strains, auto-inhibition was observed among different bacterial species/strains, that are probably addressable to nutrient depletion and acidification [80–82]. In this study, *Pediococcus* spp. inhibited *O. oeni* OT3. Discordant results concern the couple *L. hilgardii*—*O. oeni*, since Rodriguez et al. [83] observed that the growth of *O. oeni* could be inhibited by means of H₂O₂ produced by *L. hilgardii* while, according to Aredez Fernandez et al. [84], the inhibition of *O. oeni* in co-culture with *L. hilgardii* seems to be due to competition for arginine, a stimulating agent for the growth of *O. oeni*, and to the consumption of peptides by *L. hilgardii*.

Interesting results of this study are referred to the different inhibitions between some LAB and non-*Saccharomyces* yeasts. Specifically, *Pediococcus* spp., *O. oeni* OT3, and *O. oeni* OT4 inhibited some strains of *M. pulcherrima*, *P. fermentans* B05A36, *P. fermentans* M105A30, and *T. delbrueckii* 291. Furthermore, *O. oeni* OT4 has shown inhibitory activity also toward four strains of *B. bruxellensis*. These last inhibitions are attractive due to the possible application in the biocontrol of this bacterium to inhibit one of the main spoilage agents in wine [32,33].

4. Conclusions

An improved understanding of the interactions among must/wine-associated microorganisms could provide a useful tool to avoid fermentations that are stuck or sluggish, optimize wine quality/safety, and minimize the production of those compounds that depreciate wine quality. From this point of view, the study (i) characterized the in vitro potential of microbial resources that might be exploited for biocontrol activities on grape/wine and (ii) provided original information that can contribute to explaining a range of microbial interactions in the oenological trials. However, this reservoir of microbial antagonisms was drastically reduced when tested on the real matrices (must and wine). As said, it was possible to observe a considerable number of inhibitions exerted by non-*Saccharomyces* strains (on grape juice) and a few inhibitions by *S. cerevisiae* (on wine). This is consistent with the broader challenge in dealing with the exploitation of microbial controlling traits directly in situ in the food industry [85,86]. It is important to underline that the interactions studied in this paper are related to the growth/no growth of microorganisms, with research activities that are propaedeutic to but not considering the metabolic interaction, which is one of the current trends in wine microbiological studies (see [87–90]). Highlighted microbial interactions are very important for the sustainable control of spoilage yeasts and the management of alcoholic fermentation, malolactic fermentation, and the development of a distinctive aroma profile [71]. In addition, the plate assay method could be a fast, cheap, and suitable method to exclude negative interactions among *Saccharomyces* spp., NSY, and malolactic bacteria during trials from regional spontaneous fermentations with the aim to select tailored mixed starter cultures [42,91].

Supplementary Materials: The following supporting information can be downloaded at: <https://www.mdpi.com/article/10.3390/app122412760/s1>, Figure S1: inhibitions tests on agarised grape juice.

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