



Review

The Lower the Better? Discussion on Non-Alcoholic Wine and Its Marketing

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Abstract: In the German beverage market, a shift in consumption has become apparent in recent decades: away from alcoholic beverages and towards non-alcoholic alternatives. This indicates a tradeoff between two important and nutritionally relevant substances: alcohol and sugar. This review, therefore, addresses the question of the significance of these developments to the German wine industry, where non-alcoholic wines and sparkling wines are becoming increasingly important. The production of these products is accompanied by a reduction in alcohol content with a simultaneous increase in sugar. Furthermore, these products could also become the focus of health policy efforts when it comes to accusations of possible “alibi marketing”. Here, parallels with the handling of tobacco products become clear, while the tradeoff between alcohol and sugar recedes into the background.

Keywords: non-alcoholic; beverages; sugar; alcohol; marketing; alibi marketing; tradeoff



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1. Introduction

Beverages are a central part of our daily diet. As new products enter the global beverage market every year, water; juices; soft drinks; and alcoholic beverages such as wine, beer, and spirits are no longer limited to a handful of brands and varieties. Due to their constant consumption, beverages have been the focus of nutrition research for years. The fundamental scientific findings on the health effects of certain ingredients are an important part of the global health policy debate on reducing harmful consumption patterns [1]. Particular attention is paid to two important components of beverages: sugar as a central ingredient of non-alcoholic drinks such as soft drinks and ethanol as a product of alcoholic fermentation—the most important ingredient of wine, beer, and spirits.

Of central importance in the current health debate is the assessment of sugar and ethanol as cancer-promoting [2]. With regard to sugar, this specifically concerns the connection between sugar consumption and obesity. For ethanol, recent publications cited by the World Health Organization suggest that even small amounts are associated with cancer-promoting effects [3], even though no clear conclusion can be drawn so far regarding the classification of moderate and harmful consumption [4,5]. In this context, the WHO is calling for far-reaching measures to reduce sugar and alcohol consumption, similar to those in the area of tobacco [6].

Looking at the development of the German beverage market, it becomes clear that alcohol consumption has already declined significantly in recent decades. At the same time, non-alcoholic beverages are becoming increasingly important. For instance, beer consumption fell from 141.1 L per capita in 1970 to 94.6 L in 2020 [7]. In comparison, the consumption of mineral water rose from 12.5 L to 131.9 L in the same period [8]. Juices, on the other hand, are steadily losing market significance, and the consumption of non-alcoholic soft drinks is stagnating after years of growth [9].

In recent decades, a shift in consumption has become apparent within the German beverage market: away from alcoholic beverages and towards non-alcoholic alternatives.

Considering the most important health-relevant substances, the rise of the soft drink category indicates an increasing intake of sugar via non-alcoholic beverages.

Other than beer, the German wine sector has remained largely unaffected by the developments in demand for alcohol beverages. Wine and sparkling wine consumption has remained at a constant level of around 24 L per capita (including sparkling wine) in recent decades. Between 2019 and 2022, however, a slight decline of around one liter per capita became apparent [10].

In view of the overall shift in consumption, the German wine industry has recently been discussing alcohol-free alternatives. In Germany, this means a maximum possible alcohol content of 0.5 percent by volume for a non-alcoholic wine. To reach such alcohol contents, processes are used that remove the alcohol from the beverage, such as vacuum distillation [11]. This could have implications not only in terms of nutritional effects, since the removal of alcohol in wine is associated with a simultaneous increase in sugar to balance out the acidity and to imitate the “round” mouthfeel of alcohol. In addition, the development of the non-alcoholic wine category could also be associated with the introduction of new regulatory measures. Noteworthy here is the discussion surrounding possible “alibi marketing” [12], which is understood to be the attempt by companies to promote their brands without, for instance, advertising an alcoholic or sugary product that is also produced. Beer manufacturers, for example, often use the same brand images and slogans for their non-alcoholic beverages as for their alcoholic products [13].

In the context of alcohol policy efforts to reduce nutritionally relevant sugar and alcohol consumption, this review examines the possible implications of changes in consumption patterns for the German wine industry regarding the renewed focus on alcohol-free wines and sparkling wines. Here, special attention is paid not only to an overview of the health assessment and regulatory measures with regard to sugar and alcohol but also to the influence of the classification of possible alibi marketing, where it seems to be that both ingredients are treated differently. Parallels to the handling of tobacco can also be observed.

For this purpose, the review is structured as follows: Section 2 deals with the classification of alcohol and sugar in EU health policy. The development of the German wine market in the field of non-alcoholic alternatives is presented in Section 3. In Section 4, the importance of marketing with regard to non-alcoholic wines is elaborated in the context of possible alibi marketing.

2. Alcohol, Sugary Beverages, and Health

2.1. Alcohol in the Context of the EU Health Policy Debate

The connections between alcohol, sugar, and cancer are receiving significant attention, especially in global health science and policy. According to Runggay et al. [14], alcohol intake was responsible for roughly 741,300 new cancer cases globally in 2020 (4.1% of all cases), with males being more affected. Alcohol-related malignancies were prevalent in high-risk drinking areas, which reinforces the calls for effective strategies to raise awareness and restrict alcohol use in order to address this global health concern.

Alcohol consumption has a substantial global health impact, particularly among people aged 15 to 49. A recent study provides more accurate estimates of the burden of alcohol-related sickness, emphasizing the need to address its broader impact beyond health. To minimize population-level consumption and alleviate alcohol-related impacts on individuals and society, effective public health policies such as taxation, price regulation, marketing limits, and availability restrictions have been proposed [15].

Hydes et al. [16] provided an overview of the global burden of alcohol-related liver disease, particularly among working-age persons. To combat alcohol-related harm, effective public health measures are prioritized, with pricing controls and access limitations having proven effective in reducing alcohol use and mortality rates. The study emphasizes the importance of comprehensive methods to address alcohol-related liver disease and its major public health impact.

To promote safer alcohol use, high-income countries have implemented low-risk drinking guidelines. According to research, there are gender differences in the health impacts of alcohol, with women suffering more harm at lower levels due to differences in alcohol metabolism. Women are advised to drink less alcohol in countries such as Canada. To address alcohol-related risks and enhance health outcomes, comprehensive treatments and guidelines that take gender dynamics into account are proposed [17].

The WHO European Alcohol Action Plan serves as a roadmap for the development of the most effective control policies [18,19]. Future strategies and critical actions are outlined, with the primary goals of lowering teenage alcohol misuse and reducing risky drinking in the general population. Aside from assisting individuals with abuse criteria through health services, significant prevention efforts include public policies such as marketing, availability regulations, economics, and drink-driving measures.

From the point of view of the wine industry, for several decades there has been discussion around possible positive health effects of moderate wine consumption in the sense of the Mediterranean diet [20]. The debate about the limits of moderate and harmful consumption was the subject of a vote in the EU Parliament to strengthen Europe in the fight against cancer in February 2022. In the final resolution, only harmful alcohol consumption is listed as a risk factor for a variety of cancers [4].

2.2. Sugary Beverages in the Context of the EU Health Policy Debate

Extensive research points to an unbreakable relationship between diets containing excessive sugar, fat, and salt and noncommunicable diseases [21]. Sugary drinks with high fructose content cause hepatic steatosis and accelerate the evolution of non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD), increasing the risk of cancer [22].

To represent the complexity of dietary intake, Zamora-Ros et al. [23] performed a dietary pattern analysis. A total 450,064 adults from the European Prospective Investigation into Cancer and Nutrition cohort were involved in the study. Utilizing validated, nation-specific nutrition questionnaires, food consumption was evaluated. A total of 712 first differentiated thyroid cancers (TCs) were identified after an average followup period of 14 years. In the fully adjusted model, a diet high in sweetened beverages was linked to a higher risk of differentiated thyroid carcinoma, but a diet high in alcohol intake was negatively associated with differentiated TC risk.

Escobar Gil and Laverde Gil [24] conducted a review study on the effects of artificially sweetened beverages, including diet soda (DS), on health, particularly those not related to incident diabetes mellitus, obesity, or metabolic syndrome. The study investigated how artificially sweetened beverages (ASBs) affect several aspects of health, revealing a strong correlation between ASB intake and depression, especially among females. Pre-natal maternal ASB use has been linked to negative consequences for a child's cognitive development. While there is little information on the cardiovascular effects, some studies indicate a connection between DS consumption during childhood and adult cardiac remodeling, hypertension, and hyperlipidemia. Consumption of DS is linked to higher levels of retinopathy and glycosylated hemoglobin in diabetics. Furthermore, it has urogenital implications, such as a higher chance of developing end-stage renal disease and worsening lower urinary tract symptoms. In postmenopausal women, increased soda consumption, including ASBs, is linked to an increased risk of hip fractures. Telomere length and tooth degradation are also inconsistently affected by DS ingestion. A study conducted by Wilson et al. [25] showed that consumer knowledge of artificial sweeteners is low.

Meanwhile, the public health rationale for sugar-sweetened drink (SSB) warning labels is based on their contribution to diet-related diseases, low consumer understanding of associated health hazards, and the need for informed consumer decision making. Acute illness, toxicity, and long-term health risks are the main areas of concern for current warnings on consumer items, and they must adhere to strict language, formatting, and placement guidelines. Factual correctness, controversy, evidence of harm, and potential restrictions on commercial communication are all issues that must be addressed in deter-

mining whether SSB warnings are constitutionally permissible. The topic of acceptable formatting requirements, particularly for advertisements, needs more discussion [26].

3. Alcohol, Sugar, and the German Wine Market

In Germany, the cultivation, production, and consumption of wine have a long tradition. In 2021, the German wine culture was granted the status of an intangible cultural heritage [27]. In 13 official winegrowing regions, approximately 100,000 hectares of vines are cultivated [10,28]. More than 16,000 winegrowing businesses and approximately 36,000 co-operative winegrowers are responsible for a production of around 9 million hectoliters of wine each year, which made Germany the 9th largest wine producer worldwide in 2022. With over 13 Million hectoliters, Germany has an outstanding position as the world's second largest wine importer, which makes the country one of the most important consumer markets [29].

As mentioned above, the German wine industry has, so far, remained largely unaffected by the general shift in consumption towards non-alcoholic beverages. Nevertheless, the German wine industry has been attempting to establish alcohol-free alternatives for a long time. One focus lies in non-alcoholic wines, which have been produced since the beginning of the 20th century but have not yet achieved considerable importance, although a steady increase in demand and production has been apparent for several years [30]. Non-alcoholic sparkling wines had already reached a share of five per cent of the total German sparkling wine market in 2020 [31]. Wines are less important, with a market share of around one percent, but strong growth rates are also attested to in this category [32].

Non-alcoholic wines differ from grape juices and sparkling wines in that the alcohol is removed from already fermented wine using a dealcoholization process with the aim of producing a beverage whose sensory properties are as close as possible to those of its alcoholic counterpart.

There are two basic ways to remove the alcohol content of wine: membrane-based processes and vacuum distillation. The former include techniques such as reverse osmosis, nanofiltration, pervaporation, and osmotic distillation. A comprehensive overview of the individual procedures is provided by Zamora [11]. As Schmitt and Christmann [33] showed, membrane processes can be particularly suitable for partial dealcoholization. Such techniques can be used, for example, to reduce the alcohol content of wines from regions where grapes tend to become particularly ripe [11]. However, full dealcoholization is associated with high energy and resource consumption, which is why technologies such as reverse osmosis are rarely used for this purpose. In Germany, thermal processes in the form of vacuum distillation have become the most popular method to produce non-alcoholic wine, e.g., by vacuum rectification or spinning cone column [33]. Overall, the method relies on distillation of the wine under reduced atmospheric pressure, whereby almost the complete amount of ethanol evaporates at temperatures of around 30 degrees Celsius [34]. Non-alcoholic wines normally contain around 0.3 to 0.4 percent alcohol, which is below the legal limit of 0.5 percent by volume applicable in Germany. Due to the low temperatures during distillation, important aroma components are retained in the alcohol-free liquid or can be recovered via additional process phases. In terms of sensory characteristics, "raw" non-alcoholic wines are mainly characterized by a clearly more present acidity [35]. Additionally, Schmitt et al. [35] showed that while the fruit characteristics of wine are not significantly affected during dealcoholization, the perception in terms of body and fullness of the product differs significantly from that of the untreated initial wine. In order to balance the perception of acidity, sugar is added to the products. At the same time, the addition of sugar is intended to imitate the mouthfeel of ethanol in alcoholic wines [11]. According to legislation of the European Union (Art. 3 (5) Regulation EU 2019/934 read in conjunction with Annex I Regulation (EU) 1308/2013), only the addition of grape must, concentrated grape must, and rectified concentrated grape must is permitted, whereas the addition of sucrose or sugar substitutes is not.

While the process almost completely removes the alcohol content, a simultaneous increase in the sugar content is required. A dry-tasting wine with alcohol contains significantly less sugar than a dealcoholized wine with the same flavor profile; sugar contents of over 40 g per liter are common in the field of dealcoholized wines. A similar picture emerges in the area of non-alcoholic beers, whose sugar contents are also higher than those of beers with alcohol [36]. Although the sugar contents of these drinks are far below those of soft drinks, for example, a tradeoff seems to occur with regard to the fundamental effects of the two most important health-impairing ingredients: alcohol and sugar.

A definitive statement on the health effects of this tradeoff requires a more extensive analysis. Nevertheless, the development of the alcohol-free category with regard to the alcohol and sugar ingredients—classified as “unhealthy commodities” [37]—is not purely favorable with regard to diets.

In a recent publication, the WHO addressed the health effects of beverages in the “no & low” category, i.e., beverages with an alcohol content of between 0 and 3.7 percent by volume [38]. According to WHO, the impact of no- and low-alcohol beverages on worldwide ethanol consumption and public health remains unknown. Concerns include their ability to minimize alcohol use and related harm, to deceive vulnerable people, and to gently encourage alcohol consumption. However, so far, there has been little research on the production of no-alcohol beverages, their consumption, and their health effects. A worldwide action plan for 2022–2030 intends to accelerate progress in addressing alcohol use and its consequences by using available evidence and policy know-how. Although no- and low-alcohol beverages can affect consumer choice and replace higher-ethanol drinks for heavy users, they do not serve as a gateway to regular beer drinking [38].

It seems surprising that WHO, in its recent publication on no- and low-alcohol beverages, does reference a possible tradeoff between alcohol and sugar. Instead, it refers to possible “alibi marketing”, with which the alcohol industry could promote the sale of its products by using well-known brands. This issue is discussed in more detail below.

4. Marketing in a Competitive Landscape

4.1. Non-Alcoholic Wines and the Need for Differentiation

As mentioned previously, the market for non-alcoholic wines in Germany has developed dynamically in recent years. The compound annual growth rate is indicated at 9 percent for the period from 2021 to 2025 [39]. Still, market shares are at a very low level of around one percent for still wine and five per cent for sparkling wine in Germany. Particularly noteworthy in the development is the large number of new products entering the market. In a tasting of non-alcoholic wines and sparkling wines carried out by an important German wine trade journal, a total of 247 products were tested in March 2022. Eleven years earlier, only 20 products had been submitted. This rapid development is also made possible by new offers of the service for dealcoholization of wines, which is now possible with small quantities of around 300 L [40], enabling the market entry of small and medium-sized wineries, which play an important role in the small-scale structured German wine market, with over 16,000 producers. Especially given the large number of smaller wineries, the marketing of new products is associated with a high relevance of competitive strategies expressed through the generic strategies of cost leadership and differentiation [41,42]. For small businesses, the differentiation strategy is a fundamental dimension, as competitive advantages cannot be achieved in the form of cost leadership due to their size. Since direct sales play a particularly important role for smaller wineries in Germany, a differentiation strategy to build loyal customers is an important approach to marketing. The same applies to indirect sales, as the absence of customer contact increases the relevance of differentiation, e.g., through branding.

Overall, emotions play a critical role in shaping consumer decision-making processes, affecting preferences, and determining purchasing intentions according to extensive scholarly studies [43,44]. As Shaw et al. [45] showed, various consumption values play an important role in the consumption of non-alcoholic wines, both for wine drinkers and non-

wine drinkers. Non-alcoholic wine brands can develop strong emotional connections with consumers by methodically crafting sensory experiences that elicit positive emotions such as pleasure, relaxation, and indulgence. These emotional connotations have the potential to greatly increase the perceived appeal of non-alcoholic wines as a viable alternative to their alcoholic counterparts, particularly among those looking to reduce their alcohol intake or adopt healthier lifestyles. Additionally, the implementation of an emotional experiential strategy in the marketing of non-alcoholic products has the potential to encourage people to switch from alcoholic to non-alcoholic wine [46]. Still, the need for differentiation can be seen as an obstacle to the marketing of such products. Usually, marketing is associated with high levels of investment, which cannot be borne by wineries of smaller sizes, making a dual brand strategy difficult to imagine for smaller businesses.

This seems of particular relevance, since adding emotional elements to non-alcoholic product marketing offers a promising path to support the acceptance of non-alcoholic wine as an alternative to alcoholic wine. Brands may establish long-lasting connections with consumers and change their preferences towards non-alcoholic wines by leveraging the persuasive power of emotions. Furthermore, in contexts where alcohol excise taxes apply, the economic benefits of no- and low-alcohol wines provide an extra incentive for consumers to embrace these alternatives.

4.2. Alibi Marketing in the Context of No and Low Alternatives

The previous section showed that non-alcoholic wines and sparkling wines require marketing strategies for their commercialization. In recent years, however, the accusation of “alibi marketing” has been made with regard to “no and low” alternatives. This discussion will most likely continue to gain traction, with the recently released “Snapshot Series on Alcohol Control Policies and Practice” by the WHO, which focuses on the marketing of zero- and low-alcohol beverages [38]. “Alibi marketing” can be defined as a strategy employed by brands to associate certain attributes with their products without directly promoting them. Originally, the term was associated primarily with the marketing of tobacco. Previous studies have identified examples of alibi marketing being utilized to avoid cigarette sponsorship rules in Formula 1 racing. Following the passage of the European Directive on cigarette advertising in 2005, Philip Morris International, for example, used “barcode” designs as substitutes for Marlboro emblems [12]. The tobacco industry subsequently faced accusations of attempting to mask the addictive properties of nicotine and deflect attention away from well-established health hazards [12,47].

One key target of tobacco advertising was the youth population, and the imagery used in advertisements was designed to attract them [48]. The young adult market was referred to publicly, regularly examining young people’s lifestyles, motives, and aspirations. It was determined that young people smoked for emotional reasons and that branding might meet their requirements by instilling aspiration, coolness, and a sense of “street cred” in the products [49]. Such techniques violated regulatory standards that prevented cigarette advertisements from implying links between smoking and social achievement or exploiting the vulnerabilities of emotionally fragile individuals, particularly young people. To increase smoking initiation and continuation, advertising agencies addressed different areas of marketing, such as pricing, distribution, and other forms of commercial communication, such as point-of-sale materials and direct mail [50]. Advertising and sponsorship became inextricably linked, with both playing critical roles in establishing brand images that were appealing to young smokers [51].

Besides tobacco, the term alibi marketing has been used in connection with other sectors. Concerning the sugar sector, it is used to downplay the link between excessive sugar consumption and a variety of health problems [52]. Although the sugar industry is frequently associated with claims of using alibi marketing strategies, it shares deceptive marketing practices with the alcohol and tobacco industries. Companies have resorted to marketing their sugar-laden products as “natural” or “organic” to divert attention away from their high sugar contents as consumer demand for better food options and a greater

emphasis on health consciousness continue to rise. This marketing strategy generates a false image of healthier options, sometimes leading customers to make rash decisions [53].

In the alcohol business, attempts to promote responsible consumption while downplaying the negative effects of alcohol on health are observable [54]. Alibi marketing received major promotional attention during the final seven games of the EURO 2016 championship. The Carlsberg brand name and trademark were completely replaced on digital advertising billboards surrounding the football pitch during UEFA Euro 2016 broadcasts by two alibis: the word “Probably” and the phrase “. . .the Best in the World” [13].

However, consumption of non-alcoholic beverages is an area where comprehensive data on manufacturing, consumption patterns, and potential health effects remain insufficient [55]. As the labeling and marketing of non-alcoholic beverages are currently unregulated, opportunities for alibi marketing are conceivable. According to the WHO [38], alibi marketing of the products in question ceased after the relevant regulations were extended in 1997.

Particularly significant in terms of potential incentives to consume alcohol is that as “no and low” beers become more widely available, they appear to replace higher-strength alcoholic beverages rather than serve as a gateway to increased beer consumption [55]. Still, the actual degree to which “no and low” beverages can effectively replace higher-strength alternatives remains unknown.

Despite similar health concerns, sugar and alcohol face differing regulatory and public perceptions in the context of alibi marketing. Alcohol, a regulated substance with well-documented harmful effects, is subject to tight marketing rules and restrictions in many nations. Sugar, on the other hand, despite its link to health problems like obesity and diabetes, does not receive the same level of scrutiny or oversight. Conceivably, companies offer the image of healthier options by emphasizing elements such as natural ingredients or health claims while still delivering products with high sugar contents.

5. Discussion

A tradeoff between alcohol and sugar is perceptible when it comes to the production of non-alcoholic alternatives, including in the wine sector. Both ingredients are of nutritionally high importance. Although it cannot be clearly shown what the specific health effects of this shift are, it is apparent that the tradeoff is nonetheless associated with significant impacts, especially for the marketing of non-alcoholic beverages such as non-alcoholic wine. While sugar occupies a central position in recent WHO publications when it comes to the health consequences of excessive consumption, the ingredient is not given any attention in the discussion on non-alcoholic alternatives.

It is highly relevant for the wine industry that non-alcoholic alternatives have become a new focus of the health policy debate. This is particularly important because products such as non-alcoholic wines and sparkling wines can also represent a way of countering possible regulatory intervention. Instead, the discussion seems to show clear parallels to the developments in the tobacco industry. This can be seen with regard to health policy recommendations in Germany, for example, in the most recent publications of the Cancer Research Center (DKFZ). Based on the “*Tobacco Atlas*”, a counterpart on alcohol has now appeared for the first time, the “*Alcohol Atlas*” [56].

When evaluating the comparability of the alcohol and tobacco industries, however, it is imperative to acknowledge their distinct contexts. Because of the well-established and serious health risks associated with smoking, the tobacco industry has experienced considerable condemnation. While abusive alcohol intake has clear and evidence-based health consequences, there remains a gray area in the debate when it comes to defining moderate and harmful consumption. So far, there is no clear opinion on this issue on the part of science or politics [5].

This aspect also seems relevant when it comes to the comparability of alibi marketing in the fields of tobacco and alcohol. Alibi marketing sparks a heated debate with conflicting opinions. Critics claim that alibi marketing deceives consumers by emphasizing the

availability of natural sweeteners in sugary items or downplaying the hazards associated with alcohol intake. It is argued that such approaches inhibit informed decision making and limit access to accurate information. On the other hand, consumer autonomy and free choice can be emphasized. As adults have the ability to make independent decisions, they should be allowed to choose items based on their particular interests and objectives. Looking at the business side, companies have a responsibility to provide transparent and precise information to enable informed decision making, putting the onus on individuals to educate themselves.

This nuanced knowledge emphasizes the importance of conducting a comprehensive analysis when comparing the relative influence and impact of wine brands to those of cigarette and sugar brands. Although certain wine brands are well known, they may not have the same level of influence and ubiquity as their counterparts in the tobacco and sugar industries. As a result, it is critical to approach debates about alibi marketing in the sugar and alcohol industries with a balanced perspective on consumer autonomy, informed decision making, and the unique peculiarities of these industries. As shown above, to market their products, the wine industry must adhere strongly to the use of a differentiation strategy in the form of emotionalization, which gives brands a special role. However, due to the structure of the German wine industry, which, for the most part, consists of small and medium-sized wineries, a dual brand strategy is difficult to imagine for those businesses, which is why they must first and foremost use their existing differentiation. This fact becomes particularly relevant when it comes to the possible accusation of alibi marketing.

The look at the tradeoff of increased sugar content in non-alcoholic wine alternatives and the parallels to the tobacco industry regarding the accusation of alibi marketing make it clear that non-alcoholic alternatives in the wine industry might not have an easy time in the future. New low-sugar or sugar-free product innovations could be just as relevant as a possible placement of products in the form of new, target-group-oriented concepts and brands that escape the accusation of alibi marketing.

6. Summary

The consumption of alcohol and its regulation have been the subject of widespread public health debate for many years. The classification of alcohol as a risk factor for a large number of cancers has once again significantly boosted the discussion surrounding the introduction of regulatory measures. Together with social changes in attitudes towards alcohol consumption, it can be assumed that consumption will continue to decrease in the coming years, including that of wine. As shown in this paper, the introduction of non-alcoholic alternatives is associated with a tradeoff between alcohol and sugar. This connection is relevant from a nutritional point of view. At the same time, alcohol-free alternatives are becoming the focus of health policy efforts. The debate about possible alibi marketing is particularly worthy of mention. Here, the German wine industry could face an area of tension, as the small-scale structure of the industry makes it difficult for smaller businesses to imagine a new brand strategy that stands out from existing alcoholic products.

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