



EHL Blog

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Swiss Wine Directory: The answer of a young entrepreneur to a shifting industry

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The world wine production and consumption have shifted from "traditional" countries to "new" countries. Indeed, in the early 2000s Europe accounted for 73% of the global wine production compared to 60% today.

If last year France and Italy were still the top wine producing countries, closely followed by Spain, the latest numbers from the International Organisation for Wine and Vine show a declining European production and consumption, to favor the rise of other countries like the USA, Argentina, South Africa, and of course China.

Completing this worldwide trend, the industry is also experiencing a major increase of wine exports. In the early 2000s only 25% of wines was exported against 40% today. Wine has therefore become an international commodity representing a market worth more than 25 billion euros.

In the heart of Europe, Switzerland is one of the top wine consuming countries in the world, but its best kept secret may well be its 14,900 hectares of vineyards and an annual production of 200 million bottles. The country can count on a wide repertoire of world-class wines that regularly win top awards at international competitions thanks to their high quality and traditional feel. Yet, only one percent of Switzerland's wine production goes for export. Truly, still majorly composed of passionate and fiercely independent winemakers, the Swiss wine industry experiences difficulty in positioning itself in a globalized market.

"The world of Swiss wine has suffered (and still suffers) a lack of awareness", says Hervé Badan, a young entrepreneur. Such an observation triggered action from this enthusiastic graduate of the *Ecole hôtelière de Lausanne*. In a few years, he has been able to create valuable structures in support of the Swiss wine industry's communications, within and outside the country.

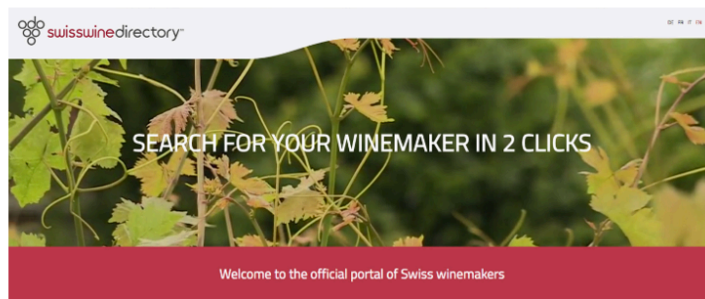
"My training at EHL has been a major asset in my business adventure. It taught me the rigor and tenacity needed to run the entrepreneurial marathon. It also developed my skills, although I think that deep down, there is an entrepreneur at heart. Finally, I can trace back to EHL values the positive attitude and customer focus that I apply every day with my partners, suppliers and customers."



When describing his entrepreneurial journey, Hervé Badan remarks that, "as with any marketing strategy, it was necessary to analyze the system cost structure and competition, to determine the industry's place in the market". More generally, before launching his projects, he took the time to gain experience and make sure that his ideas would meet a market need. He also insists that growing market awareness and engagement of Swiss winegrowers has been central to the success of his communication endeavors.

His most recent effort to better connect Swiss wine producers to a challenging and mutating market is the Swiss Wine Directory. With a spark in his eyes, Hervé Badan describes it as a sort of "Swiss wine AirBnB".

Swiss Wine Directory is exactly what it stands for: a directory of Switzerland's winemakers, a portal to "help wine producers increase their online visibility by presenting their wineries in a professional way, with multilingual content and by communicating detailed information on a large scale". But not only... With just a few clicks visitors can now geolocalize wine producers, plan their next winery visits thanks to an interactive map and clever search features, in four languages. "Our first goal is to make the public aware of this platform and of Switzerland's wine producers, all of them. Medium-term, we're looking to open the first online wine shop that is accessible to all of these producers," notes Hervé Badan.



This new medium may just be the tool the industry was waiting for in order to better position Swiss wines internationally.

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