

## 9 tips for finding buyers on the European wine market

Wine markets in Europe vary from country to country and there are various ways in which you can find potential buyers. Therefore, finding the right market, let alone the right buyer, can be complicated. Study the differences in each country and per buyer and make sure you understand how you can approach your buyers. The following tips could help you find and approach your potential buyers.

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## 1. Find out which wine market in Europe has the best opportunities for your wine

Market research can help you find out which wine market in Europe offers the most promising opportunities for your wines. Wine buyers align their portfolio to taste preferences and trends in their market, which differ per country. Therefore market research is essential to understanding your target market.

### Tips:

Read our studies on [trade statistics](#), [trends](#) and [requirements](#) on the European wine market for an overview of the European wine market.

Our studies on [country-specific wine markets](#) are a good starting point for your own market research.

## 2. Visit international wine fairs to get in contact with your buyers

International wine trade fairs are valuable platforms for you to develop your contact base, meet buyers and build brand recognition. At these trade fairs you can exhibit your wine at your stand and play host for important representatives from importers, distributors and retailers from across the world. This can give you a big boost in finding interested buyers for your wine.

The most important international wine fairs in Europe include

1. [Prowein](#) (Düsseldorf, Germany)  
Prowein is the largest industry meeting for professionals from viticulture, production, trade and gastronomy. This annual wine trade fair is growing rapidly and is an attractive business platform in the wine industry.
2. [Vinexpo](#) (Bordeaux, France)  
A bi-annual wine trade fair that plays a significant role in the popularisation of the wine industry and culture in Asia and Africa. However, participation is more costly than at Prowein.
3. [World Bulk Wine Exhibition](#) (Amsterdam, the Netherlands)  
This trade fair serves as a meeting place for both buyers and sellers of bulk wine. If you are producing bulk

wine, this trade fair may be the best possible opportunity to promote and market your bulk wine.

Besides these international wine trade fairs, you could consider participating in local and niche trade fairs in your target market. Examples are:

1. [Biofach](#) (Nuremberg, Germany)

Biofach is the most important international exhibition for organic food and fair-trade products, held every February. It is an important niche trade fair for companies that sell natural wines.

2. [London Wine Fair](#) (London, United Kingdom)

The London Wine Fair is an annual wine fair, predominantly focused on the wine trade in the United Kingdom.

### Tips:

When you want to participate as a visitor at a trade fair, make sure you have identified your potential buyers beforehand and thoroughly studied their websites. Visit their exhibition stand, introduce your company and establish initial contact. Make sure that you can explain to them in no more than two minutes why they should purchase your wines (sales pitch).

Keep in mind that it is costly to participate as an exhibitor at a trade fair. Find other wine producers/brand owners in your country and team up for a country pavilion. This way you can share the costs of an exhibition stand and make a greater impression at the trade fair.

## 3. Sector associations are valuable sources of information

Wine sector associations are national organisations which represent businesses from their own country to various ends. These associations are a good source of information about your target markets and potential buyers, as many include a list of their members which can be potential buyers. Members of these associations can range from small wine producers to multinational wine traders.

The [Comité Européen des Entreprises Vins \(CEEV\)](#) is the representative body of the European wine industry and trade. Its members consists of 23 national associations, a group of leading European wine companies and two non-European Union observer associations (from Switzerland and Ukraine). Focus on associations in the countries that might offer the best opportunities for your wine.

For more information about what target markets offer most opportunities for you wine, please read our studies on [country-specific wine markets](#).

Below are examples of wine sector associations in Europe. The links will open a list of members of the specific sector association.

1. [The Wine and Spirit Trade Association \(WSTA\)](#) – United Kingdom
2. [Royal association of Dutch wine traders \(KVNW\)](#) – the Netherlands (additionally, [this wine database](#) lists wine importers and the wines they import)
3. [Vinum and Spiritus Association Belgium](#) – Belgium
4. [Federation of German wineries and wine retailers e.V](#) – Germany
5. [Association of Swiss wine trade](#) – Switzerland

### Tips:

Use the membership lists of wine sector associations to find potential buyers in your target market.

Use sector associations for finding market information on your target market. They can be a good source for your market research.

## 4. Wine magazines can be used to promote your wine to a wide public

International wine magazines are a good opportunity to promote your wine and/or winery. Through an article you can communicate your Unique Selling Points to a wide public within the wine industry, ranging from wine experts to wine importers and wine specialty shops.

Examples of such wine magazines are [Meininger's](#), [Harpers](#) and [The Drinks Business](#). You can contact these magazines via their websites.

Promotion via such articles works best if you can promote unique characteristics of the region or country you are producing your wine in. It is a good way to brand your production origin and generate interest and recognition for your wine region. Subsequently, you can use the recognition in your other marketing tools.

## 5. Join matchmaking programmes and trade missions

Embassies and chambers of commerce can provide interesting business opportunities as they are usually involved in trade missions and matchmaking programmes. These platforms have strong relations with businesses in your target market and can help you to get in contact with them.

### Tip:

Contact your embassy or the chamber of commerce in your target country to explore what matchmaking opportunities they can offer you. An example of cooperation with an embassy could be to host a wine tasting/dinner to introduce your wine to European buyers.

## 6. Use social media to build your brand locally and/or regionally

Social media are increasingly being used as a medium to discuss wine among wine consumers. Additionally, social media are becoming increasingly popular for marketing and promotional purposes. Therefore, social media can be a good channel to promote your wine locally and regionally, build your brand and generate support for your wine. Having a stronger brand helps you to find interested European buyers for your wine.

Besides social media, wine apps, such as [Vivino](#) and [wine searcher](#), are becoming more popular among wine consumers to find a specific wine and/or to find additional information. Presenting your wines in these apps helps you to gain feedback from consumers and increases your brand's visibility.

### Tips:

Social media platforms such as [YouTube](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Instagram](#) offer ways to establish a personal and corporate image online. Use these platforms to build a stronger brand through promotion and marketing. With a stronger brand you will be a more interesting business partner for wine buyers in Europe.

Create an account on Vivino and/or wine searcher to gain direct feedback from wine consumers and increase your brand's visibility.

## **7. Do not contact your potential buyers with a generic email**

Almost all wine buyers prefer personal meetings to emails. Unfortunately, this is not always possible. Sending generic emails introducing your company to a potential trading partner will not work for European wine buyers. Since they have no reference of your capacities, such an email is often perceived as unreliable or spam email.

If you do choose to contact your potential buyers via email, personalise your email. Explain why your wine will add value to their particular portfolio. If you are not sure who the right contact person is within the company, express these doubts and ask if your email can be forwarded to the right contact person. This might trigger the recipient to do so, rather than disregard your email.

## **8. Hire a scout who knows your target wine market and can help you find buyers**

If you have identified opportunities for your wine in a target market you are unfamiliar with, you could consider hiring a scout to find buyers for you. A scout can be a wine expert or a consultant that knows your target market well, who can help you find buyers and open doors to your target market. They must believe in your wine to be able to endorse it to potential buyers.

### **Tip:**

If you want to gain access to a new and unfamiliar market, hire a scout that knows your target market and can help you find buyers.

## **9. Understand your potential buyers before you contact them**

Wine buyers are contacted by potential suppliers every day, making it difficult to convince them to buy your wine. They expect you to understand their needs and wishes before you contact them. If you do not meet their expectations, you will not be an interesting business partner.

For more information about the expectations of wine buyers, please read our [10 tips for doing business in the European wine market](#).

Please review our [market information disclaimer](#).