



Exploring consumer and wine expert views towards VERJUICE: a grape-based product made from viticultural waste

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• Introduction

- The wine sector has looked for sustainable alternatives to convert viticultural waste materials into ingredients/products with high-added value. One great example is to use thinned unripe grapes (traditionally left to rot) to make verjuice.
- As verjuice is not yet regulated, it varies widely in terms of grape picking time, varietal, production methods and target end-uses. In fact, this leads to the diversity in sensory profiles found in verjuice currently available in the market.

Aim: Initial exploration of New Zealand consumer preferences and consumer and global wine expert attitudes towards verjuice products.

• Materials & Methods

- 13 verjuice samples from different countries were presented to consumers (n=21, 17F & 4M)



Discussion Groups

- Identify key sensory attributes
- Explore uses & preferred packaging
- Understand desired label info

- 10 semi-structured interviews were conducted with wine & grape growers from different countries

Online Interviews

- Understand business motivations
- Explore key decisions concerning verjuice production

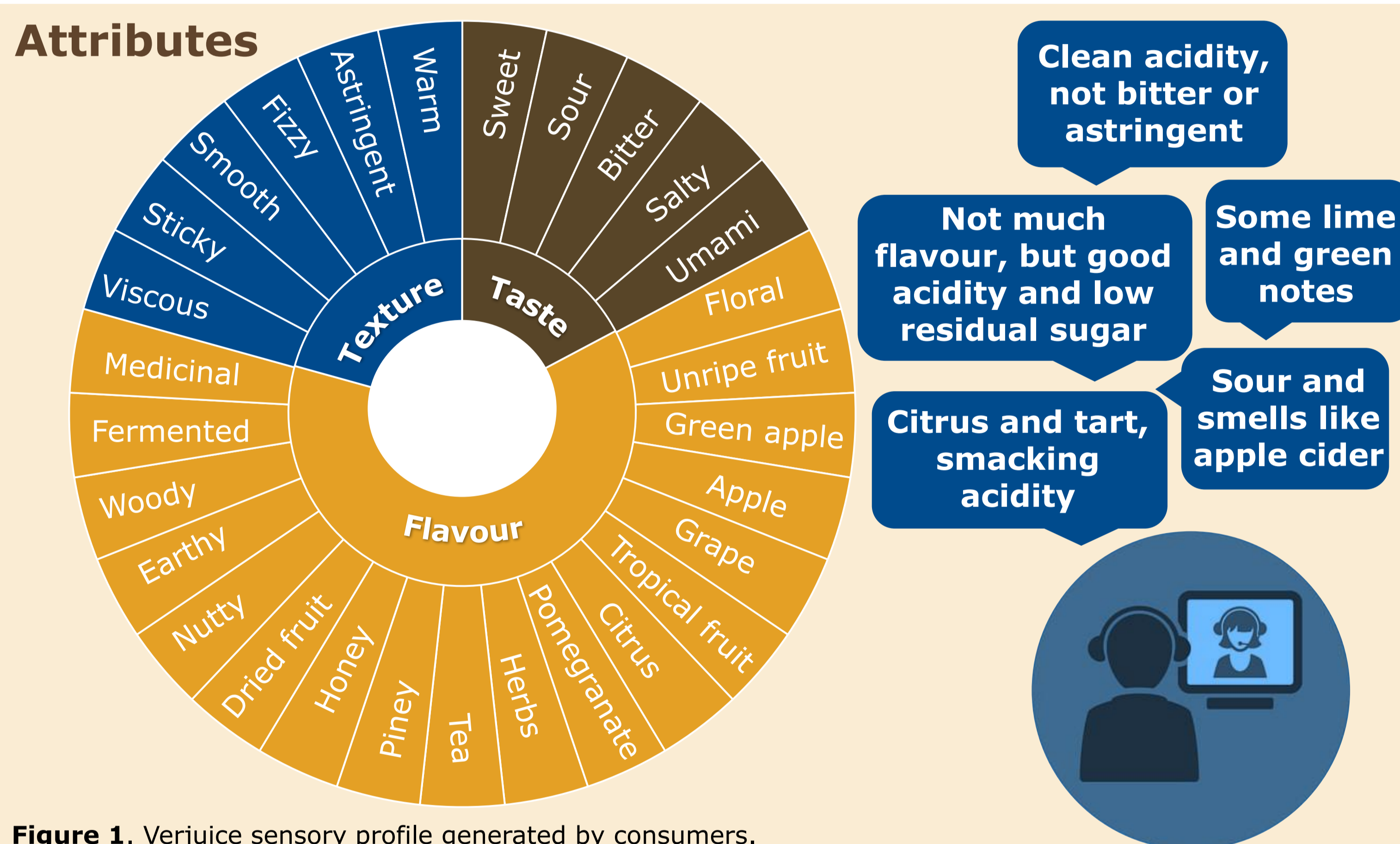
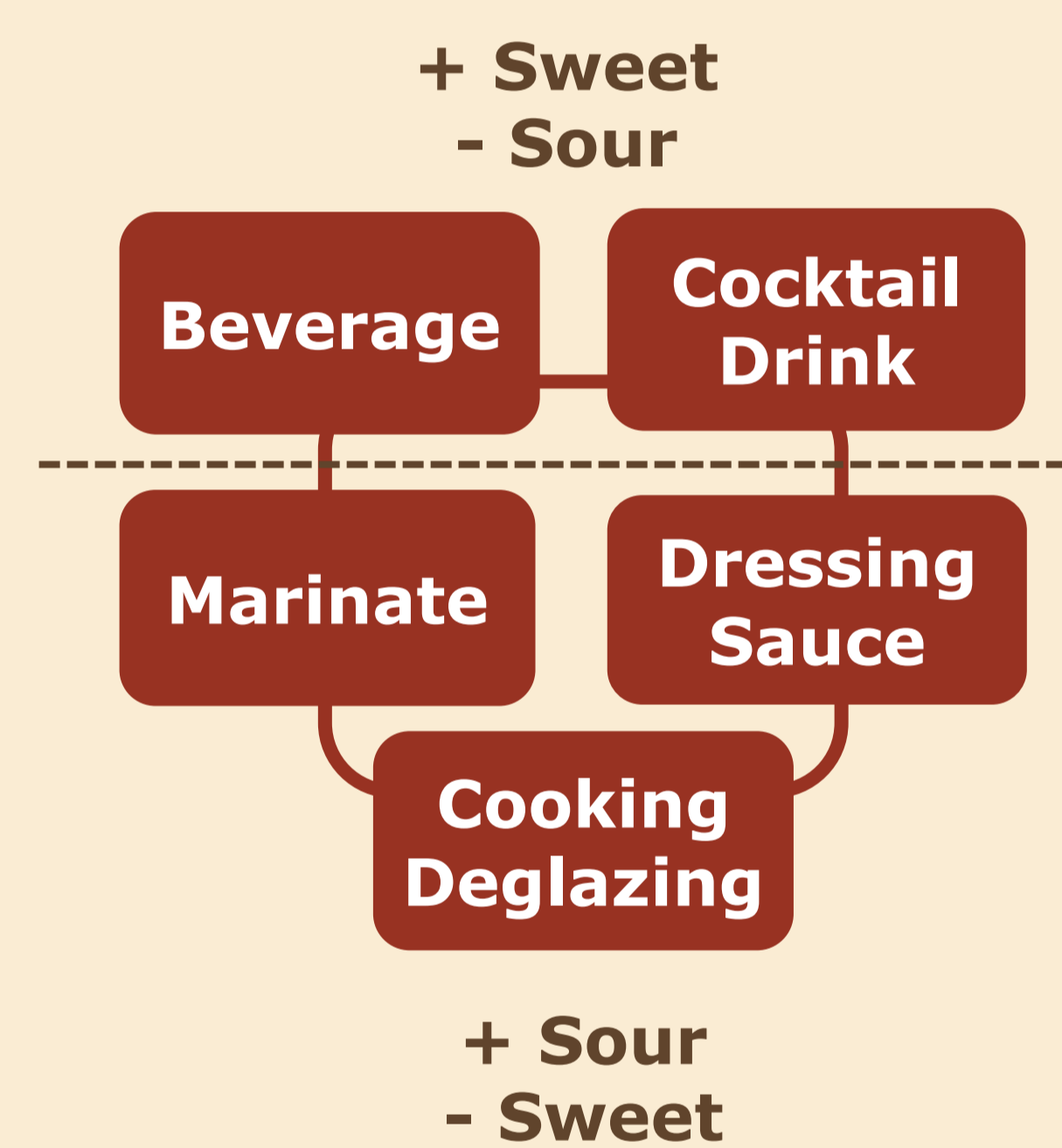


Figure 1. Verjuice sensory profile generated by consumers.

Key Uses



- Initially, for cooking. Moving forward, as a drink ingredient
- Replacement of vinegar or lemon juice for dressings
- As a kitchen condiment, it goes well in food-wine pairings
- One verjuice is for cooking, the other to drink
- In cocktails, the bars are asking for it

Packaging

SHAPE	CLOSURE	VOLUME
		750mL 500mL 375mL 250mL
DRINKING		
		750mL 500mL 375mL
COOKING		

- 750mL-wine bottle is part of our bottling line, no extra cost
- As winegrowers, our decisions are behind our wines
- 750mL is more price competitive, 375mL cost more
- Bigger bottles for restaurants, half size for consumers
- Screw cap can reseal easily

Label information

Company logo	Alcohol free
Origin	Brief product story
Attractive image	Environmental aspect
Grape variety	Sensory description
Year	Suggested uses
Batch number	QR code → Recipe
Use by date	Health benefit
Storage condition	Warning if any
Certification if any	Nutritional table
Volume size	Ingredients

- Explanation of verjuice might not be enough
- Keep it simple, it is working in this way
- After opening, it needs to be refrigerated
- Grape juice does not state alcohol free, why verjuice?

• Conclusions

- Opportunities for the wine industry aligning verjuice to different use case scenarios and sensory signatures were identified.
- A disconnect between consumer and producer views was recognized in terms of sensory profile, versatility of uses, desired packaging and label information.
- The use of thinned grapes represents a substantial commercial opportunity for wineries by converting waste material into verjuice, adding value to its sustainability credentials, especially for environmentally aware consumers.

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