

Give them what they want — WINE



Nine out of 10 golfers drink wines, but one club in three doesn't serve wines. This is the surprising conclusion of a national survey just conducted for GOLFDOM.

These statistics are startling when one considers the increasing consumption of wines. Many club managers obviously have not done a thorough job on their homework when it comes to modern management of food and beverage facilities. Over the past decade, it has been found that increased wine consumption at country clubs is directly related to increased use of food and beverage facilities in general—and increased revenue. However, the survey indicates that many managers are neglecting this potential source of additional profits. Although several factors come into play when pricing wines, a club could start at twice cost on less expensive wines or set a \$3 profit on a bottle of more expensive

wine. And these are likely to be additional beverage profits, since wines consumed with meals generally do not cut into liquor sales. In addition to the financial side, the following survey results point out that many club managers are ignoring a primary facet of good management—and that is to serve to the tastes of your members.

A questionnaire was sent out early this spring to find out from golfers what their attitudes were about wine. Wine drinking has been increasing spectacularly over the past decade, particularly among people under 25, who have discovered the pleasure of wine drinking and are developing more discriminating tastes for wines than those of the preceding generation. Individuals who reached maturity in the forties and fifties, like their forebears, favor a narrow range of drinks, but younger people deviate from this past norm and are curious about a wide variety of beverages. Nowhere is this more apparent than in mat-

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Golfers' interest in wines is higher than that of the general population, but ironically one club in three doesn't serve wines

By **WILLIAM MASSEE**

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GIVE THEM WHAT THEY WANT

continued

ters of wine, consumption of which has just passed one gallon per person in this country.

Greatest growth has been in table wines. The GOLFDOM survey strongly indicated this. Of the 493 responses to a question on wine categories, 179 showed a preference for table wines, 131 for sparkling wines or champagnes, while additional choices were evenly divided between vermouth and other aperitif wines. Dessert wines, once most popular of all, were lowest on the list. Samples of golfer preference in wines in general seem to follow the trend of the younger, more venture-some drinkers, since the table wine category offers a wide selection. The striking indication is that club managers seem to be lagging far behind the trend toward wine drinking. Even in the Northeast, the most popular wine drinking region, one-third of all respondents' clubs do not serve wine. And in the progressive Pacific region, which includes the great wine producing state of California and the vacation state of Hawaii, only 57 per cent of the country clubs serve wines—a figure that becomes more sur-

prising when compared to almost 62 per cent in the Midwest, generally considered a bastion of conservatism.

To get some idea of wine preferences, a random list of 20 brand names was composed. The list included producers of both popular and premium wines in New York and California, and eight European houses, including two champagnes. Golfers were asked which of the wines they have tried during the past year.

Of the 10 leading brands, five were from California, two from New York and one each from Italy and Portugal. The 10th was a catch-all category, called "French table wines," and this was set apart on the listing, with another general category simply labeled "Other." In the Northeast, where imported wines seem to be strongly preferred in most surveys, only three European brands replaced their California peers, which followed closely after. In the Pacific states listing, one of the New York wines was replaced by an aperitif which has a French name, but which is made in this country.

This would seemingly indicate that club owners would do well to stock a selection of California and New York state wines, at

least, and the preceding question confirms this notion, for 78 out of 100 people indicated they drank wine while dining out, as well as at home. In the Southwest and Pacific states, where fewer country clubs serve wines than in other regions, more people—over 82 per cent—claim to drink wines under these circumstances than in other parts of the country. Inasmuch as half the brands in these regions were other than Californian, a somewhat wider selection is indicated for club shelves.

A further clue to the present broadness of American wine drinking habits is indicated by the choices among the list of brands. Any particular market may have a favorite brand or two that is in the lead by 10 per cent or 20 per cent, but after that, very little separates the next dozen brands. It is almost as if people liked the idea of drinking wine, and choice was secondary, particularly where choice was limited. This would indicate that a relatively few number of choices over a wide range would appeal to most of the clientele. Other surveys bear this out.

New York, Los Angeles and San Francisco are the top wine markets in the country, followed by Detroit and Chicago for table wines, with places such as Boston, Philadelphia and Washington, D.C., not far behind, trailed by the bedroom areas of Connecticut, northern New Jersey and Los Angeles county. It is not at all surprising that wine sales follow the city and suburban markets, where country clubs are located. What is surprising is that country clubs pay little attention to such results, which have been conducted for years by Time Magazine and others.

The general assumption on the part of hoteliers and restaurateurs, for instance, is that imported wines and spirits are desired by the public. Certainly, they are more desirable from the selling point of view because the prices charged can be higher. The

Wine preferences of golfers

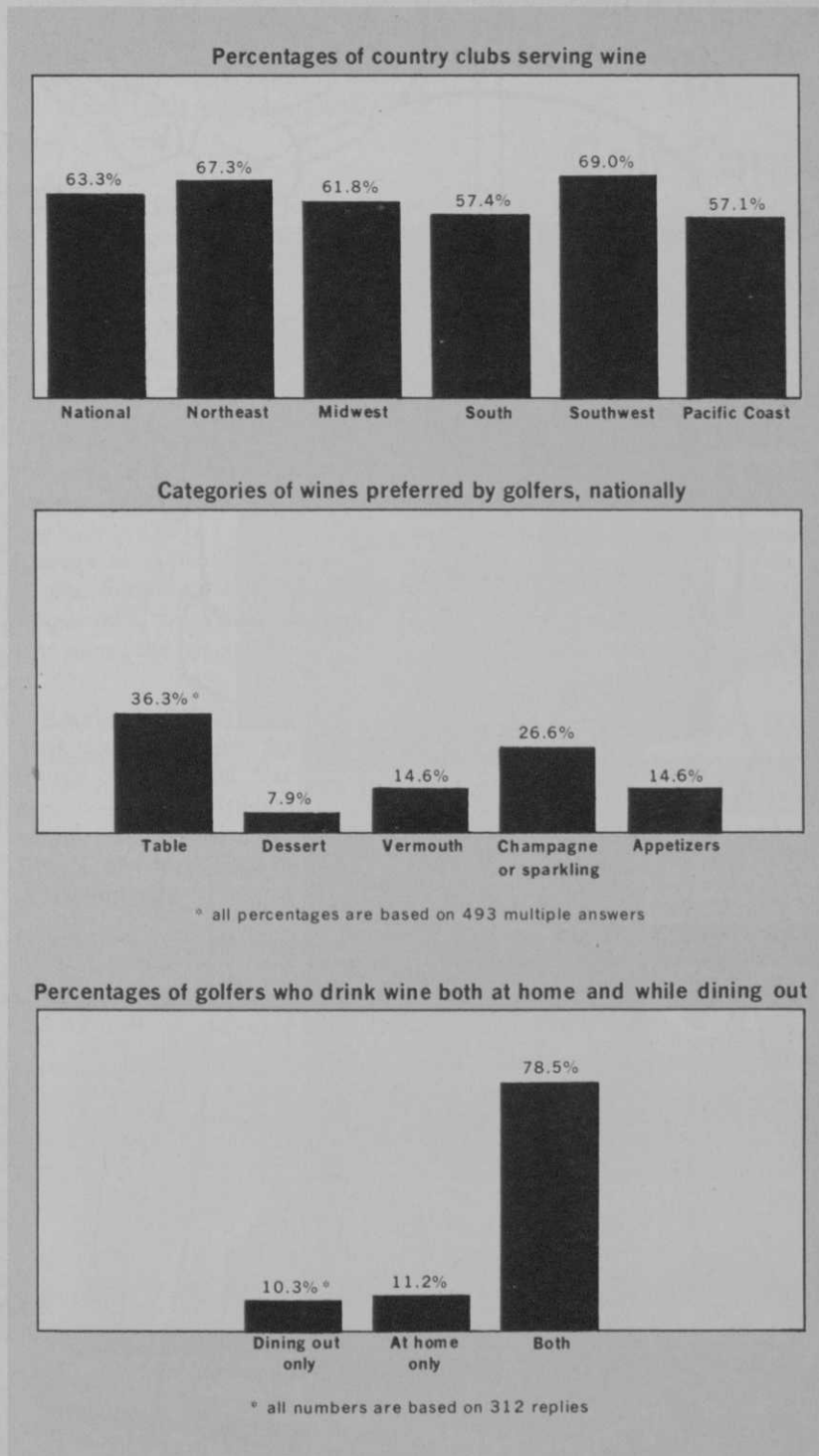
	Imported	Domestic	Both
Northeast	30.5%	37.8%	31.7%
Midwest	28.0%	48.0%	24.0%
South	29.1%	49.1%	21.8%
Southwest	24.0%	48.0%	28.0%
Pacific Coast	19.5%	68.3%	12.2%
National	27.0%	49.1%	23.9%

results of the GOLFDOM poll show a different trend.

The question was asked whether imported or domestic wines were preferred. Domestic is a loaded word, implying negative characteristics, and was used deliberately, instead of American, which has neutral or positive overtones. Even so, 49 per cent of the respondents claimed to prefer domestic wines, 24 per cent replying that they liked both domestic and imported wines. Preferences for domestic wines were highest in the Pacific states (68 per cent), balanced by a 30 per cent lower rating in the Northeast, while other regions were close to the national averages.

This decisive result warrants some comment because it indicates that not only has the public come of age (drinking wine has become almost a part of daily life for a large segment of the population), but so has the American wine industry (by providing palatable wines at reasonable prices). The most popular brand of wine in the Northeast and South was Taylor, the most popular brands on the Pacific coast were Paul Masson and Christian Brothers, all quality producers. Brands of popular-priced wines appeared high in every region, Gallo in the Northeast and Midwest and Italian Swiss Colony leading in the South and Pacific area. Only one wine readily identified as Kosher was on the list, Mogen David, and this scored generally high everywhere, leading in the Midwest and Southwest; this indicates that there is still a big market for sweet wines in all areas of this country.

But the change is noticeable. Even in traditionally conservative areas, very few people say they drink wines only rarely. Nearly 17 per cent of respondents in the Midwest and Southwest said they drank wines rarely, the figure dropping to 14 per cent in the South, 6.5 per cent in the Northeast and 4 per cent on the Pacific



coast. Wines have far greater acceptance everywhere, at least socially, than do spirits.

GOLFDOM sought the wine drinking survey to determine whether or not there was interest in wines on the part of golfers and to see if there was any parallel with this group and the population in general. Results show that interest in wines among golfers is stronger than among the population in

general. And ironically, the survey shows that, presently, there is less opportunity for wine drinking at golf clubs than in the public places the golfer frequents. □

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