How Atmosphere in a Restaurant Can Influence Positively Wine Consumption?

Marie Vangelisti

University of Stavanger – Institut Paul Bocuse – University of Haaga-Helia

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INSTITUT PAUL BOCUSE, HOSPITALITY AND CULINARY ARTS MANAGEMENT
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES, NORWEGIAN SCHOOL OF HOTEL MANAGEMENT
HAAGA-HELIA, UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCE

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<td>237110</td>
<td>Marie Vangelisti</td>
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Abstract

In today's restaurant industry, the global atmosphere of a place (ambiance, decoration, food, music…) has more influence on consumption behavior than the food itself. That is why the aims of this paper is to know how to manage the restaurant atmosphere in order to increase wine sales. Based on a literature review, an atmospheric model has been defined, by referring to this model, the restaurant managers will be able to improve their restaurants atmosphere in order to increase their sales. Moreover, based on this, interviews with professionals from the restaurant industry have been carried out, news variables appeared, and this led us to create a new atmospheric model based on the interviews. This research allows us to create a final atmospheric model based on literature and experiences, which represents a concrete tool for restaurant managers. Besides, these findings help people to understand that not only a gastronomic atmosphere pushes people to consume expensive wines but wine cellar atmosphere can do it as well.

Keywords: Atmosphere, restaurant, management, wine sales
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Foreword

I would like to present my these as the result of months of work, but also as the ending point of my master degree.

Before any development on my experimental master thesis, I would like to begin this paper with a thanks to all the people and all the institutions that gave me the opportunity and their help to work on a subject that very interest me and that will probably help me for the future.

First of all, I would like to thank the Paul Bocuse Institute which provide me a good formation, but which also gave me the opportunity to complete my formation at the Haaga-Helia University in Helsinki and at the Stavanger University. Moreover, I would like to thank M. Cattret and Mrs. Ferry for their support and their help all along the formation and during the writing of the these.

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Restaurant Atmosphere Influence on Wine Consumption

Introduction

In today’s gastronomy, we see that more and more restaurants are emerging, from the fast food to the gastronomic restaurant. All of them provide different menus, different prices, different services. Those different types of restaurant thanks to their interior design, their employees, their core products, provide also different atmospheres (Hansen, Jensen, & Gustafsson, 2005). The food quality and the service which are part of the atmosphere can be more or less high, as the price that they offer. Moreover, customers can decide to go to those restaurants for different occasions, either for an everyday lunch in a brasserie or a fast food, or for a special occasion as wedding anniversary in a gastronomic restaurant. But, there is no rules explaining that one restaurant corresponds to a specific occasion. In addition, the consumer’s purchasing power can vary according to the age, the social class, the reason why people are going to a restaurant, but also according to the specific place where consumers are. Finally, even if the occasion of going to the restaurant can influence people consumption, restaurant atmosphere might be the key influence factor on customer’s choices and purchasing behaviors.

In French gastronomy, a lunch or a diner, is often accompanied by wine especially in a restaurant, a study shown that in 2012, around 80% of people who are going to the restaurant consume wine (Vin, 2013). Those results prove that wine is part of a meal experience. Besides, wine diversity thanks to their origins, their grape, their appellation or even their years is larger than restaurant diversity. Thus, most of the time, wine selection in restaurant seems to be a big challenge, especially in knowing that restaurants provide in average 30 different wine references for traditional restaurant and 75 references for gastronomic restaurant (Merienne, 2010). However, this wine selection can be influenced by different factors: the place where the wine is
consumed, the occasion, tastes preferences or even the presence of a sommelier. Finally, during a meal experience, we are all aware about the average price of a menu in a specific restaurant, however, wine selection during a meal can increase significantly the total amount of a diner.

In some situation, it has been shown that places or more specifically their atmosphere influences the purchase decision more than the product itself (Milliman, 1986). Furthermore, studies have shown that the atmosphere, the social interactions or even the interior design through a specific coziness of a place influence the time spent in a place, the purchasing behaviors and the experience's appreciation (Baker, Levy, & Grewal, 1992; Bitner, 1992; Milliman, 1986).

In restaurants, different categories offer different qualities of product, form very high quality in three stars Michelin restaurant to a basic quality in traditional restaurant or brasseries. Generally, prices correspond to the quality, high quality and rare product are more expensive than basic product. Moreover, the atmosphere is proportional to the restaurant's quality, the service and the interior design are more elaborated in gastronomic restaurants than in brasseries. But, what is the influence of all those elements on wine purchasing behaviors? For sure, customers will spend more money in food in a high category of restaurant, but does this high quality atmosphere will push customers to consume high quality or more expensive wine and cheaper wine in a traditional restaurant?

The aim of this study is to know how the atmosphere in a restaurant can influence positively wine consumption. Results will help restaurant managers and owners in their atmosphere management, but also in the elaboration of the wine list according to the restaurant where they are working in. In a more scientific aspect, this study will help to better understand
consumption behavior, but also, that will add one dimension to the consumption behavior studies, when people are confronted to choices. Moreover, it can also help to better understand wine consumption and which factor influence the most customers when they have to make choices.

All along this paper we will study this atmospheric influence: in a first part different theories will be analyzed in order to underline what are the different elements of atmosphere, how wine is consumed in restaurants, and how atmosphere can influence wine consumption. From those theories, a model will be established, to illustrate how restaurant's atmosphere should be elaborated to increase wine sales. In another part, data collection will be done through in-depth interviews with restaurant managers, waiters or sommeliers, those data will be analyzed and compared with the initial model, to finally complete it in order to improve it and offer a useful tool for restaurant managers and owners.
Literature Review

What is Atmosphere?

*Atmosphere in Business setting*

In general, atmosphere is the environment where we live, it represents what is around us. It represents the character of a specific place and influences people in their behavior by creating feelings. However, from a business perspective according to Philip Kotler, “the atmosphere describes the conscious designing of space to create certain effects in buyers, more specifically, atmospherics is the effort to design buying environment to produce specific emotional effect in the buyer that enhance his purchase probability” (Kotler, 1973 - 1974).

The atmosphere is composed of different dimensions, in his study Kotler explains that atmosphere has an impact on four senses: visual, aural, olfactory and tactile. He does not consider taste as part of the atmosphere (Kotler, 1973 - 1974), however, in a restaurant setting we can notice that the dish that customer can taste is part of the atmosphere and the specific ambient that it provides.

Others authors talk about servicescape, defined as “a complex mix of environmental features which influences internal responses and behaviors” (Bitner, 1992). However, servicescape can be considered as the physical environment where services are delivered, atmosphere can be seen as the result of interaction between people and this physical environment (Heide & GrØnhaug, 2006), thus, we can admit that servicescape is also part of the atmosphere. Moreover, Bitner explains that the servicescape is composed of three different dimensions, the first one is the ambient which is represented by the music, the temperature, the lighting, the noise, the scent.
This dimension confirms Kotler’s theory, because it appeals to all the senses. The second dimension is the spatial layout which refers to the physical aspect of the equipment, machinery and furnishing but also, to their organization in the space (Bitner, 1992). The last dimension represents signs, symbols and artifacts, it is the image of an organization, and that transmits organization values in term of service and concept. Moreover, it helps firms to differentiate themselves from competitors (Bitner, 1992).

All those definitions and dimensions of the atmosphere and servicescape are common to business in general, however, in a hospitality setting they can change even if they are similar to the ones explained beforehand.

**Atmosphere in Hospitality setting**

In an hospitality setting or from a restaurant perception the atmosphere can have another definition than in other businesses. According to Heide and Gronhaug, dimensions of atmosphere in hospitality management are very similar to the Bitner’s ones, and they are the following: ambient factors, social factor and design factor. Ambient factors are background conditions in the environment, social factors represent human interaction in the environment, in a restaurant it is represented by consumers and employees, and the design factors includes physical elements and their organization (Heide & GrØnhaug, 2006).

In their study, Hansen, Jensen and Gustafsson explain the concept of the meal experience. A part of the meal experience is composed by the core product (food and beverage consumption), the restaurant interior (design, furniture, colors...), the personal social meeting (customers, employees and interaction) and the company (group of clients) (Hansen et al., 2005).
Besides, the last dimension of the meal experience is the restaurant atmosphere which includes the other categories, the senses and the environment. The senses are experiences perceived by the customers through their eyes, ears, skin, mouth and nose (Hansen et al., 2005). And the environment represents the restaurant trough tangible and intangible aspects (Hansen et al., 2005). As we can see, every elements of a restaurant, tangible or not are part of the atmosphere.

In today’s economy, consumers are looking for experiences, in order to have a break with the routine and more and more business are trying to provide them (Gilmore, 1998), as for example the Ultra Violet restaurant in Shanghai. According to Hansen, Jensen and Gustafsson, atmosphere is a key factor to provide a successful experience. Thus, a coherent management of the different elements which compose the atmosphere, will provide pleasure and arousal for customer, influence positively their behaviors and their perceptions, and that will help them to appreciate their experience in a restaurant. Furthermore, that will also impact the wine consumption, how we will see in the last part, as consuming wine is linked to a sensation of pleasure: if the atmosphere provides pleasure to customers that might push them to consume wine. However, different atmospheres influence in different ways customers, this concept will be treated in the following part.
Influence of Atmosphere on Customer Behaviors

According to what have been said beforehand, the ambient, the design, the core product and social interactions are part of the atmosphere, and all those factors will influence customers, on their quality perception and on their meal experience. It will also influence the communication and the economy of a company. However, the influence on customer depends of how the atmosphere is managed.

Firstly, Bitner explains that people react to a place with two different behaviors. The approach behavior which includes all positive behaviors that might be influenced by a specific place, such as desire to stay, and the avoidance behavior which is the opposite, so a desire not to stay (Bitner, 1992). The design and the physical aspect will be the first element that customers will see, through decorations, arrangement, furniture… And those elements, in a first time will help them to decide to come in or not, in a second time, push them to stay or not to stay, and finally, it will influence the time spent in a place.

Secondly, thanks to their experiences, a few studies show that some customer’s perceptions and behaviors are influenced by the ambient. In their study, Mattila and Wirtz manipulated scent and music, with three different tempos and three different level of scents in a store environment. “Their results show that when ambient scent and music are congruent with each other in terms of their arousing qualities, consumers rate the environment significantly more positive ” (Mattila & Wirtz, 2001). Thus, this explains that a total coherent ambient influences positively customers, and might encourage shoppers to engage in impulse buying (Mattila & Wirtz, 2001). Furthermore, the ambient consistency in a restaurant includes every single part of the restaurant, from the design of the menu, to the plating of the dish, and the service quality.
In his study, Milliman only worked on music tempo in a restaurant and its influence on customer’s behaviors. His results show that in a slow music ambient, customers spend more time in a restaurant than in a fast music ambient. Moreover, the music tempo does not have an impact on food consumption, however, in a slow music ambient consumers spend more money in beverage, than in fast music ambient (Milliman, 1986). Thanks to those two studies, we can notice that the ambient can influence customer’s perception but also customer’s purchasing.

Thirdly, the social factor has an important influence on customers, especially in a restaurant setting, where the service is one of the most important part to provide a successful meal experience. In their experience Baker and Levy worked on the effect of social interaction (high and low environment) and ambient (high and low ambient) on customer’s pleasure, arousal and willingness to buy. Their results show that high social environment and high ambient provide greater pleasure and arousal to customer, than low social environment and low ambient (Baker et al., 1992). Furthermore, pleasure and arousal provided by the social interaction and the ambient influence positively customer’s willingness to buy. Through those results, we can notice that customers react more positively when employees are friendly and take care of them in a high ambient.

Social interactions influence customer’s behaviors, but as we have seen previously, the social level of a place also influences behaviors. The desire to belong to a specific social class will push people to act in a certain way which corresponds to the social group to which they wish to belong (Ladwein, 1999). This corresponds to the Maslow’s theory about human motivations, which explain that one of the dimensions of human motivation is the fact that human desires to belong to a certain group or social class (Maslow, 1943). For example, gastronomic restaurant represents
a high social environment, and customers might behave in a way that make them feel belonging to this high social class.

All along this part, we have seen that atmosphere influences customer’s behaviors in their consumption and in their perception. Thus, based on theories seen beforehand, we can admit that in a comfortable restaurant, with coherent, slow and high ambient, with friendly and involved employees, customers will probably get pleasure, stay longer, and spend more money. Moreover, thanks to a good atmosphere, consumers have a better quality perception, thus, they will probably look for qualitative products which will match with the atmosphere. In a wine consumption study, it has been proven that the price is assumed as a quality indicator (Chiodo & Fantini, 2006), consequently, the atmosphere might push customers to buy more expensive wine. Finally, the atmosphere has an influence on consumers, but it also has it on managers and restaurant owners, thus, the goal for them is to manage the atmosphere well in order to push consumers to spend money and increase their willingness to pay.

In the following part, wine consumption in France will be quickly analyzed, in addition to that, factors that influence wine choices in a shop or in a restaurant will be determined.
Restaurant Atmosphere Influence on Wine Consumption

Wine Consumption Behaviors and Atmospheric Influences

Wine consumption in France

It is well known that wine has an important place in the French culture, French wines are recognized all around the world, it is part of everyday life’s French people. Even if, during the past, wine was reserved for nobility, today, thanks to its democratization through all the different categories of wine that we can find everywhere, everybody can drink wine. It can be drunk during a lunch or a dinner for a simple meal, or a special occasion, to celebrate something special. Furthermore, it can also be drunk during an aperitif or a party. However, the wine remains inseparable from the meal, the image of tradition and French gastronomy are very often associated with wine consumption (Amine & Lacoeuilhe, 2007). Moreover, we can notice that wine has a social aspect, because it gathers people around the idea of sharing, but it also provides them pleasure and a festive dimension.

Wine is the most consumed alcoholic drink in France however, wine French’s consumption decreases, a study of FranceAgriMer shows that annual consumption per person decreases from 104 L in 1975 to 46,6 L in 2010, moreover, this study also shows that the percentage of regular consumer decreases from 51% in 1980 to 17% in 2010 (Janvier, 2012). This is explained by the fact that people prefer drink less but qualitative wines instead of drink a lot of bad wines. Besides, it is also explained by the fact that youngers drink less than their ancestors, they drink wine essentially for special occasion or they prefer to drink beer which is less expensive (Amine & Lacoeuilhe, 2007). Furthermore, wine consumption can vary according to the occasion, the taste, the time of the day, the place where the wine is consumed or the money that consumers want to spend.
Choosing a wine, in a restaurant, in a supermarket or in a wine cellar is often a challenge, because lot of factors might influence this choice, as the taste, the price or the color of the wine. A study made on wine consumption decision explains that mains factors that influence wine selection in a restaurant are the grape variety, the availability by the glass, and if the wine will match with the food (Jaeger, Danaher, & Brodie, 2010). However, others different studies explain that different elements can influence wine selection and consumption.

Firstly, the situation and the occasion might influence wine choices, in their study Amine and Lacoeuilhe worked on wine consumption and how the consumption situation can influence wine selection in a French context (Amine & Lacoeuilhe, 2007). In their article, they identified two categories of consumers, youngers which drink more occasionally and rarely alone, and older people, which drink more daily in less formal situation. Besides, after identifying those two types of consumers, they identified two types of consumption: the formal consumption which can be represented by business dinner or Christmas dinner, and the less formal consumption, which can be represented by a solitary consumption or an everyday family dinner. Then, in their experience, they interrogated people in supermarket and in wine cellar on their situations of consumption. And results show that people come in a wine cellar to buy more qualitative wine for a formal consumption, thus, they come in supermarket for a less formal consumption (Amine & Lacoeuilhe, 2007). We can conclude that according to the situation of consumption, wine choices vary.
Moreover, Jaeger, Danaher and Brodie also talk about the situation of consumption, and the importance attached to wine selection by consumers in a restaurant. Results of this study show that environment has an important influence on wine selection. However, other results show that around 75% of the participants express that they can attach different importance to wine choices according to the occasion (Jaeger et al., 2010). For example, they will attach more importance to wine selection during a business dinner than during a dinner alone.

Secondly, the atmosphere through different ambient that it provides, is able to influence wine selection. In their study, North, Hargreaves and Mc Kendrick worked on music from different countries and their influences on wine selection in a store. They choose French and German music, and their results showed that French music pushes consumer to buy French wine, and more German wine are sold when German music is playing (North, Hargreaves, & McKendrick, 1999). Thus, we can notice that only the origin of the music played might influence wine selection.

Besides, Areni and Kim also made a study on the music influence on wine selection in a store, however in their case, they changed the type of the music. Classical music and top forty music was played alternatively in a store. Results shown that classical music led customers to buy more expensive wine than top forty music (Areni & Kim, 1993). This is explained by the fact that classical music creates a sophisticated atmosphere, which make consumers think that only expensive wines need to be considerated (Areni & Kim, 1993). Those two studies show that a specific ambient influences consumption in a specific way, furthermore, it is important for manager and restaurant owner to notice that a sophisticated atmosphere influences more positively consumption than normal or banal atmosphere.
Thirdly, in knowing that the service is one of the most important part of a meal experience, it was almost sure that elements of it might influence wine choices. And, Maske and Cordua share the same opinion with Dewald about the role of a sommelier during the service in a restaurant. Their two studies explain that the presence of a sommelier in a restaurant influences more positively wine ordering (Ben Dewald, 2008; Manske & Cordua, 2005). Their results explain that when a sommelier is part of the service, in a first time more customers drink wine, and in a second time, the average wine check is higher than when a sommelier is not part of a service (Ben Dewald, 2008; Manske & Cordua, 2005).

Finally, in the first part it has been proved that atmosphere influences consumer’s behaviors and that is possible for restaurant owners to manage their atmosphere to make their customers behave in a certain way. In addition to that, in being focused on a specific part of the meal experience as the wine selection, we can notice that atmosphere from the service to the ambient can be also managed in a way that it might influence wine consumption. And, as wine provides interesting profit margins, that underlines an important point for manger or restaurant owner.
Atmospheric Model and Conclusion

*Atmospheric Model*

All along this literature review, the concept of atmosphere and its influence have been explained in general but also in restaurant setting. Furthermore, in the last part, wine consumption and elements that influence wine selection have also been analyzed. Thus, the goal of this study is to find a link between atmosphere and wine consumption in a specific restaurant setting. We have seen that atmosphere can influence consumers in their behaviors and perception, now the idea is to focus more on the wine consumption, which allow managers to make interesting benefit margins. According to all the studies analyzed previously, it is now possible to create a restaurant atmosphere model which will allow restaurants to sale more easily their most expensive wines, and to increase their wine sales. Thanks to this model, in a first time, restaurant managers will know how to manage the atmosphere in order to push clients to consume more. In a second time, restaurant managers or sommeliers will be able to improve their wine list accordingly to the atmosphere that their restaurant provides. Finally, that will help restaurant managers and sommeliers to better manage their stocks. For example, if they need to sell a specific wine, they can modulate the model, to create an atmosphere which will fit with the wine that they want to sell.
The restaurant atmospheric model will take into account different variables of a meal experience based on theories analyzed beforehand: the ambient (Bitner, 1992; Heide & Grønhaug, 2006), the social interactions (Hansen et al., 2005; Heide & Grønhaug, 2006), the design (Bitner, 1992; Hansen et al., 2005; Heide & Grønhaug, 2006) and the core product (Hansen et al., 2005).

First of all, the core product which is what clients will consume (drinks and food), needs to be well established. In knowing that, most of the time people are looking for a wine which will match with the food that they ordered (Jaeger et al., 2010): dishes need to be elaborated and sophisticated with high quality food. Moreover, restaurants should provide a full menu instead of simple dishes written on a carte, that will represent a kind of qualitative and elaborated restaurant. In addition to that, as customers will get an entire menu with at least starters, main dishes and desserts, they will stay longer in the restaurant, thus they will probably consume more wine. Finally, if the food is elaborated and qualitative, and the menu looks sophisticated, to match the wine and the food, consumers will probably order a qualitative wine, which most of the time represents an expensive wine.

Second of all, the restaurant interior needs to be attractive in order to make people come in, but it also needs to be comfortable and pleasant; that will push consumers to stay longer in a place (Bitner, 1992), but also make them enjoy their experience, for example, tables should not be too small, the height of the table must be adjusted to that of the chairs, and small armchairs are more comfortable that simple chairs. However, the restaurant interior must be comfortable but it must also provide a nice view, colors should not be too flashy, furniture should stay simple, as the decoration, and the space has to be chastened. Furthermore, the restaurant interior needs to
be well arranged (Bitner, 1992), nothing should come disturbing customers in their experience, the space must not be overstored, waiters must have the space to walk all around the restaurant. Moreover, customers should not have the impression to eat with people from the table next to them, they need enough space to feel good and in a restaurant, not in a cafeteria. Finally, kitchen noises and odors must not come in the restaurant. The restaurant interior will help with other variables to create a specific ambient, moreover, that will push people to stay longer and consequently to increase their chance to spend money.

In addition to that, the ambient remains an important variable of the atmosphere, which can be determinant in wine consumption. Thus, in a first time, a high ambient will create arousal and pleasure to customers (Baker et al., 1992), this high ambient can be created by the decoration, the number of waiter or even uniforms that they wear. A clean, quiet and not too busy place can represent a high ambient. In a second time, the music will have an important role. In order to push consumers to stay longer in a restaurant and to select most expensive wines, the music needs to be slow and classical (Areni & Kim, 1993; Milliman, 1986). Besides, if the restaurant manager needs to sale wines from a specific country, he can adjust the music accordingly and change the origin of the classical music. For example, if French wines need to be sold, a French classical background music will lead clients to consume French wines (North et al., 1999). Then, classical music will create a sophisticated environment, this environment will match with the sophisticated food, and that will create a very coherent ambient which will increase customer’s willingness to pay (Mattila & Wirtz, 2001).
Finally, social interactions, which in this model will be represented by the service, have an important role in customer’s behaviors influences. A high service environment needs to be established, a qualitative and friendly service will create pleasure and arousal to customers (Baker et al., 1992), a lot of employees are necessary to create this high service environment. Employees have to always be present for customers and answer to all their expectations; they also have to be polite, to present well and to be well dressed. Moreover, a restaurant needs to have the presence of a sommelier which will contribute to the high service environment, push customers to order wine, but also which will make clients ordering more expensive wine (Ben Dewald, 2008; Manske & Cordua, 2005). A sommelier is part of the high service environment, and can drive customers choices in order to make them order the most expensive one, or at least a wine at an interesting price.
Conclusion

This model based on different theories analyzed beforehand proposes an atmosphere that will push clients to order and consume more expensive wine and each component of the atmosphere influences wine consumption: the menu, the quality of the food, the decoration, employees behaviors and even the background music. This model, with an elaborated cuisine, a comfortable and chastened interior design and a quiet and high ambient looks like a classic gastronomic restaurant atmosphere. However, brasserie or other type of restaurants can use this model and adapt it to their kind of restaurant.

To conclude, this model can be an interesting tool for managers and restaurant owners to increase wines sales. It can be considered as a guide (cf. Figure 1), with different criteria that need to be respected by each part of the restaurant. However, this model can be improved, thanks to different testimonies from restaurant owners and customers, which leave the experiences in real life.

![Figure 1: Atmospheric model guide – Important criteria to make increase wine sales](image-url)
Method

Design

The purpose of this study is to know how atmosphere in a restaurant can have a positive influence on wine consumption, more precisely how different parts of the atmosphere should be managed in order to increase wine sales. Consequently, the conduct of the study will be based on the main aspects of the atmosphere: the core product, the interior design, the ambiance and the social interaction, to compare the to the model proposed in the literature review.

The research question needs detailed and concrete answers based on experiences lived by people, or real facts in order to have results that can be implemented in the real life. Thus, for this exploratory purpose, a qualitative research method was conducted through in-depth interviews. “Qualitative research allows us to understand the mechanisms of public opinion, to understand why people think this or that, why they allow themselves to do this or that practice, how they understand their environment” (Wahnich, 2006). Moreover, in-depth interview has been chosen because, in addition to providing answers to the research questions, this method also “provides respondent’s feelings, perceptions, experiences, and thoughts about the question” (Ivey, 2012). Thus, this provided a complete and detached description of the research topic.
Measure

In a first time, an interview guide was prepared, with the questions that had to be asked during the interview (the full interview guide is available in Appendix A). The interviews were driven in order to know what respondents think about atmosphere in a restaurant, how atmosphere can influence wine consumption, and how each part of the model should be managed to sell most expensive wine. Furthermore, the guide was mainly composed of open-end questions, in order to collect as much data as possible.

The first part of the interview consists of questions dealing with the subject of the atmosphere in general, and the influence it may or may not have on the wine consumption. Others part of the interview are based on the model developed in the literature review: for the core product part, questions deal with the influence of a specific type of food or a specific aperitif on wine consumption. For the ambiance part, questions deal with the influence of the ambient and the background music on wine conception. For the interior design part, questions ask for a specific decoration or design that is able to influence positively wine consumption. And for the social interaction part, questions deal with the influence of the service and the presence of a sommelier on wine consumption. Finally, the last question asks if a specific restaurant category can influence wine consumption.

Then, interviews have been set up, the reason of the interview was explained beforehand to the respondents and the aim of the interview was to let respondents express themselves without interruption to get precise results. For the measurement, all the interviews have been recorded and notes have been taken for the most relevant answers. The collected recordings were analyzed, translated and organized according to the atmospheric model guide.
Sample

The geographic scope of the work is the French country, where wine consumption has an important place in people's everyday life. In addition to that, most French people drink wine when they go to restaurant, consequently during the interview respondents are talking about a subject that is familiar to them and that is an asset to have a constructive interview.

All the interviews were conducted with waiters, sommeliers or restaurant managers: ten people of the restaurant industry have been interviewed. This sample consisted of five fine dining restaurants head-waiters, two restaurant managers (one fine dining restaurant and one brasserie), one sommelier and two restaurant owners. The main idea was to question people who have knowledge and experiences in the restaurant industry, because, first they know every parts of a restaurant, which elements are part of the atmosphere and which of them are important. Second, thanks to their experiences, they are able to say in which atmosphere people consume expensive wine, but also how the atmosphere should be managed to increase wine sales. Finally, the idea to choose people from restauration industry emerged because most of the time, simple customers do not realize that atmosphere has such influence on their wine consumption.
Results

All along the interviews, information was collected and sorted in order to compare it with the atmospheric model guide. Most important words or adjectives used by respondents during interviews were organized in templates in order to see which words are most frequent, and answers that reflect similar ideas were grouped (all templates are available in Appendix B). In general, the majority of the answers correlated with the literature review. However some elements seem to be more important to the respondent than to the literature, and inversely, some points are underlined in the literature but were not be mentioned by the respondents. Besides, the respondent’s job positions did not influence answers as we noticed a certain homogeneity in the results even if job positions were different. In this result part, every answer will be explained part by part, and compared with the model. Then, to conclude the result part, a new atmospheric model guide will be proposed.

Atmosphere

First of all, for the questions concerning the atmosphere in general, all the respondents expressed all elements that has been cited in the literature review. The majority of the respondents expressed five senses to define a restaurant atmosphere in keeping with the Kotler’s theory. However, some respondents did not express directly five senses but the words and adjectives used in their answers referred to the five senses: “light, music, food, service, decoration...”
Secondly, one of the principal elements of the atmosphere presented during interviews was the social factor: the service, customers, welcoming, friendliness. And for some respondents it represents the atmospheric key factor: “people in a restaurant, whether they are clients or employees create the atmosphere in a restaurant.” Those elements match with the theories of Hansen, Heide and Gronhaug. Besides, after the social factor, an element that has frequently been expressed is the food, of course the main reason of going to a restaurant is the food: sharing moment around the food.

Third of all, respondents also talked about the place itself as part of the atmosphere in a restaurant, through its decoration, its space or its interior design.

Finally, all participants agreed with the fact that restaurant atmosphere influence wine consumption. However, concerning the element that influence the most wine consumption, answers were extremely diverse. Even if service was cited more than once, respondents expressed the place or the food quality, and some of the others said that glasses quality influences the most wine consumption. Thanks to those elements, we can admit that every part of the atmosphere influences wine consumption, even if service might be the most influencing factor.

**Core Product**

First of all, concerning the core product, every respondent assumed that food has a reel influence on wine ordering except one. However results are relevant enough to assume that food has an impact one wine consumption. Moreover, concerning the elaborate aperitif before a dinner, answers are mixed: half of the people think that offering for example an elaborate
cocktail for the aperitif will introduce a good mood for the entire dinner, and this would push people to consume more, and probably spend more money in wine during the dinner. On the contrary, the other half explained that offering an elaborate cocktail for the aperitif is not a good point for wine sales, because cocktails are very expensive, thus, that might discourage clients from ordering expensive bottle of wine for the rest of the meal. Besides, most of the time cocktails are not ordered before a dinner, it is more considered as a dessert or a digestive. Consequently, elaborate aperitif is not an important element to make increase wine sales, we can add that in a simple bar, offering a cocktail can reduce a lot wine consumption.

Second of all, concerning a specific type of food that might increase wine sales, respondents had a same opinion: “luxurious food, noble and rare product” will push consumers to order more expensive wines.

“The gourmet cuisine, everything that is foie-gras, truffles, game, duck, luxury seafood, luxury fish such as Bluefin tuna, whole wolf, seabream…”

In addition to that, the major part of the participants talked about the harmony between wine and food, which was quickly explained in Jaeger’s paper (Jaeger et al., 2010): when people go to the restaurant, they really want to have a wine which will match with their food. Consequently, based on interviews results and on theory, if gastronomic and luxurious food is sold by a restaurant there is a greater chance that clients order expensive wines.

Furthermore, results showed that there is another solution to sell expensive wines: some respondents explained that if a restaurant provides tapas, wine sales might increase.
“I also think the category of wine bars that offer food like tapas type micro corked can have a potential impact on the consumption of wine from customers.”

In this case, the experience around the wine will be more considered as a wine tasting and consumers will want to taste qualitative wine, that they do not drink every day, increasing wine sales will.

Finally, to compare results with the model, we can notice that providing a unique and full menu will not influence a lot wine sale. Besides, based on interviews, “high quality food” and “elaborate dishes” still represent important points and should be kept in the model. However, we can add two different variables within the model: the harmony between wine and food, and the tapas offer.

**Ambiance**

First of all, for the question dealing with the ambiance and the wine consumption, every respondent explained that the ambiance influences wine sales according to how it is managed. A quiet and welcoming ambience, which provides good sensation will of course influence positively wine consumption. Some of the participants think that a festive ambience can also push people to consume more. However, an important point that was underlined, is the coherence of the ambience as explain Mattila and Wirtz in their theory (Mattila & Wirtz, 2001): “It allows to appreciate a wine and also to ruin the consumption of a great wine if it is not coherent”. Of course, there is no points to have a gastronomic restaurant and play rock music, that can disturb and frustrate customers. According to the respondents, the ambience has to fit with the decoration, the interior design, the food but also with what clients were expected before
coming to a specific place. This last point represents a variable that is difficult to measure but which can also influence consumption as Amine and Lacoeuilhe explain in their theory: wine consumption can vary according to the situation (Amine & Lacoeuilhe, 2007).

Second of all, concerning the background music, interviews confirm what has been said in the literature review by Areni and Kim (Areni & Kim, 1993), slow music like jazz or lounge music influences more positively consumption than rock or electronic music: “I think a place where music is too strong and where exchanges between customers are complicated, would be a negative point as to the higher consumption of wine from customers. A more relaxed ambiance, where music is present but at controlled volume is beneficial to influence the consumer to stay longer and therefore generate more consumption.”

Finally, to compare results with the model, “slow and classical music” and “coherent ambient” are relevant points. However, “high ambient” was not be mentioned during the interview, consequently it does not represent an important point in the influence of wine consumption. Furthermore, we can add the “good sensation” variable, which will represent the main goal for influencing positively wine consumption.

**Interior Design**

For the interior design part, questions have been asked in order to know how to manage it to influence positively consumption. First of all, for the design part, respondents explained that a comfortable and well-arranged space might optimize sales, as explained in Bitner’s theory (Bitner, 1992): “a comfortable place will push consumers to stay longer or to more appreciate a drink, and consequently, they will consume more”.
Second of all, concerning the decoration part, opinions are divided, half of the interviewees thought that a simple decoration and an uncluttered style will help for increasing wine sales, as for example new gastronomic restaurant style. The other half said that a decoration around the wine might have a positive influence on wine consumption (for example to use wooden barrel as a table or to expose wine bottle on the wall): “if the cellar or the bottles are showy, this can influence the consumer to be curious and therefore want to discover new wines.”

Finally, interview results confirmed all the different variable of the model for the interior design part: comfortable, well-arranged and uncluttered decoration. However, we can add one more variable for the model which is a decoration inspired by the wine's theme.

Social Interaction

First of all, during the interviews the social interaction part represented to most important factor for the respondents, they all agreed that social interaction and specially the service influence considerably wine choices. Waiters or sommelier are a reference for consumers when they have to choose the wine during a dinner, consequently, results showed that the quality of the service is a key point. Second of all, according to respondents, employees have to well understand customer’s expectations in order to advise them well and guide them in their decision.

“I think he should be able to bring these tips and suggestions while leaving the client master of his choice. He must be a "reassuring" figure for the customer, he must succeed in analyzing his client to be able to advise him a wine that corresponds to him and especially with
the meal he has chosen, but he must also be able to leave a step of maneuver to these customers”.

Moreover, to be able to do that employees need to know the wine list, wine specificities and stories. Of course, based on interviews results we can see that the presence of a sommelier is the main element that might influence wine choices. However, not all restaurant can afford a sommelier, in this case the restaurant managers should train their employees in order to make them able to understand and advice clients positively to optimize wine sales.

Finally, during interviews, people did not talk about a high or low environment, we can therefore assume that a specific social environment do not represent an important point in wine consumption. However, the presence of a sommelier and employee’s behaviors are important elements for the model, thus, for employee’s behaviors we can add within the model three different variables: understanding customer’s expectations, being able to give advices and knowing wine specificities.

Conclusion

To conclude this result part, in a first time we can say that all respondents agreed and all their answers were coherent. Furthermore, their opinions were close to the literature, but thanks to their experience and expertise they brought other variables that are more precise and concrete, and therefore easily applicable.

In a second time, most people might think that a gastronomic restaurant atmosphere is the only way to push people to consume expensive wine. This theory has been proven: restaurant with uncluttered decoration, elaborate dishes, noble and rare products sell more expensive wine
than simple brasserie. However, this study allows us to see that another category of restaurants might also have the possibility to sell expensive wines: tapas restaurant with wine cellar style. This kind of restaurant will provide an offer all around the wine, which will obviously push customers to buy expensive wines.

Finally, results from the interviews, allow us to make another version of the atmospheric model guide (cf. Figure 2). However, news experiences or studies should be realized for each part in order to prove the results further and go deeper into the research.

![Atmospheric model guide – Result version](image_url)
Discussion

In this discussion part, results from each variable of the atmosphere will be discussed: links with the literature review and the atmospheric model and news elements added in the model. In the first time, thanks to theories in the literature review, an atmospheric model guide has been created with four main variables: the ambiance, the interior design, the core product and the social interaction. Moreover, in-depth interviews have been done based on the model and results allows us to complete it in adding new elements in the different variables. Before interviews, we though that only a gastronomic restaurant atmosphere influence positively wine consumption: uncluttered decoration, high service, very qualitative food... However, results showed that a new kind of atmosphere might influence positively wine consumption.

Firstly, concerning the ambient part, literature explains that a high ambient (Baker et al., 1992), slow and classical music (Areni & Kim, 1993), and a coherent ambient (Mattila & Wirtz, 2001) influence positively consumption. During interviews, respondents did not mention that a high ambient can influence consumption. However, they confirmed the slow music and coherent ambient variables but they added that not only classical musical can have a positive influence on wine consumption but also jazz and lounge music. Finally, an element that was not mentioned in the literature but that participants mentioned is providing good sensation within a restaurant in order to create a good ambience, which will push clients to consume more. Those results will allow news studies to establish experiences on which kind of slow music influences most positively consumption, or to know which kind of coherent ambient is best to increase wines
sales, or other kind of sales. Furthermore, knowing those special ambient points allow restaurant managers to improve the ambience or to adapt it in order to put it into line with the offer and provide a coherent offer thus increasing sales.

Secondly, for the core product part, literature explains that a full menu, a high quality food and elaborate dishes might push consumers in ordering more expensive wine. During interviews, respondents did not mention that a full menu might have an influence on wine consumption. However, they assumed that high quality products and elaborate dishes is a key point to sell expensive wine. Finally, respondents added a new types food offer that might influence positively wine consumptions: dishes as tapas or small bites which will create a wine tasting atmosphere. Those results add new variables from a theoretical point of view and can help in finding new theories on the core product in a restaurant, in knowing which type of food or dishes make the most increase sales or wine sales. Furthermore, those findings can help restaurant managers to improve their offers or change it: trying to make more gourmet food or provide a tapas menu. However it is important not to provide a too gastronomic menu if the interior design or the ambience do not feet with this type of food, the overall atmosphere will lack coherence and this will not have a positive influence on wine sales.

Thirdly, concerning the interior design, studies explain that a comfortable and well arranged (Bitner, 1992) place with an uncluttered decoration might influence positively wine consumption. Results from interviews confirmed the importance of a comfortable and well-arranged place. Moreover, concerning the decoration, respondents also confirmed that a simple or uncluttered decoration is favourable to consumption. However, interviews showed that in addition to the gastronomic restaurant style, the « wine cellar » style, with a decoration inspired
by wine (wooden barrel, bottle on the wall...) can influence positively wine sales. Those results provide new variables to the literature and insights to take into account for further studies. Those new studies could for example analyse which decoration influence the most positively sales, or in which one clients feel better. In addition to that, restaurant managers can use those results to improve their interior design and maybe to adapt their decoration, make it more simple and uncluttered or make the wine more visible in order to push consumption.

Finally, for the social interaction part, literature explains that a high environment (Baker et al., 1992), correct employees and the presence of a sommelier (Ben Dewald, 2008) are key points for wine consumption. During interviews, the high environment has not been mentioned. However, respondents confirmed the importance of employee’s behaviour and the presence of sommelier. Besides, important elements of employee’s behaviours, whether they are sommeliers or waiters, have been added: the ability to understand customer’s expectations, giving advice to customer and increase employees wine knowledge. Those findings complete theories for the atmosphere in general but also about the service in restaurants or in the hospitality industry. However, new theories can be created in order to know which part of the service is the most important, or who between a sommelier and a trained employee which one makes increases sales the most. Finally, those results can help restaurant managers to train their employees, provide a concrete tool to make a good job and a plan to follow during the service.
To conclude this discussion part, we can say that this study provides new insights concerning atmosphere but also elements that influence consumers according to how they are managed. Obviously, some of those elements should be tested during experiences or in the real life in order to make them more valid. However, all elements provided during this study based on literature and in-depth interviews represent a reliable tool, which can be used in real life and studied for further experiment.
Conclusion

As a conclusion, we can notice that this study provides lot of information concerning the management of a restaurant atmosphere, through studies and results interviews. Furthermore, we can assume that, even if the study has some limitations, results of the experiences provide theoretical and managerial implications through a final atmospheric model guide (cf. Figure 3), based on theories and interviews results, but they also answer to the research question.

In a first time, we can admit that this study faces a few limitations. Indeed, in spite of the time that interviews organizations took, study was only made with a small sample of people; consequently, no generalizations can be done with the results found. Besides, new variables added on the model should be tested, because as explained beforehand, the study is made with a sample and results might not be a general truth.

Figure 3: Atmospheric model guide – Final version
Concerning the theoretical and managerial implications, we can notice that firstly, this study completes others studies that has been done previously, in providing new variables in every part of the atmosphere. Consequently, that gives news research tracks, it is possible to makes news experiences or studies on which environment influences most positively wine consumption (gastronomic restaurant or wine cellar atmosphere), or even make studies on the new variables in order to prove their validity. Finally, this study helps people to better understand wine consumption or even consumer’s behaviours.

This study can help restaurant managers to optimize wine sales: the atmospheric model can be used every day because it can help restaurant managers in creating atmosphere that will push clients to consume, or just help them to improve a specific part of their restaurants. Furthermore, waiters and sommeliers can also use it to improve their service skills.

Finally, it is sure that there is not only gastronomic restaurant style or wine cellar style, but this model can be used by every kind of restaurant. Thus, it allows restaurants that not have a decoration that meets those criteria to focus on the core product or on the social interaction, or restaurants that not sell elaborate cuisine to focus on the interior design. As a consequence, restaurant managers may just need to choose a specific part that needs to be improved, without forgetting that every part has to be coherent.

Then, it is also important to know that the model represents the concrete answer of the research questions and that users, thanks to experiences that they live in their restaurant, can complete it at any time. Bus this may also be used by scientists after making new studies and experiences.
References


Appendix

Appendix A

Interview Guide

Atmosphere in general:
1) What are elements that constitute restaurant atmosphere?
2) Do you think that atmosphere have an influence on wine consumption?
3) Which element of the atmosphere influence the most wine consumption?

Core Product:
4) Does the type of food influence wine consumption? And How?
5) Which type of food will push consumer to order more expensive wine?
6) Do you think that an elaborate aperitif (cocktail) can influence wine ordering in a positive way?

Ambiance:
7) Does ambient influence wine consumption and how?
8) Which type of music can influence more positively wine consumption?

Interior Design:
9) How the design of a restaurant can influence positively wine consumption?
10) Which kind of decoration will influence positively wine consumption?

Social Interaction:
11) Does the service influence wine consumption and how?
12) How sommelier or waiters should behave to sale more expensive wine?
13) Do you think that people consume more expensive wine in gastronomic restaurant that in brasserie?
### Appendix B

#### Appendix B-1: Interviews answers – Atmosphere

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ATTEMPHORE</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Influence?</th>
<th>Influence the most</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Head-waiter</td>
<td>Five senses</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>View (decoration) Touch (glasses quality)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head-waiter</td>
<td>Five senses, social interactions</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Taste</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head-waiter</td>
<td>Space, People, Smell, Light, Music</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head-waiter</td>
<td>Music, Place, Food</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Food, Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head-waiter</td>
<td>Place, People, Light, Music, Decoration</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Glasses quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurant Manager</td>
<td>Space, Service, Food</td>
<td>Non</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurant Manager</td>
<td>Service, Food, Place</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sommelier</td>
<td>Music, Food, Service, Five senses</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Be welcoming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurant owner</td>
<td>Ambience, Interior design, Employees</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurant owner</td>
<td>Service, Decoration, Place, Food, People</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Service</td>
</tr>
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</table>

#### Appendix B-2: Interviews answers – Core Product

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CORE PRODUCT</th>
<th>Influence?</th>
<th>How?</th>
<th>Cocktail?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Head-waiter</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Rare product</td>
<td>No, too expensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head-waiter</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Wine &amp; Food Harmony, Qualitative</td>
<td>No, digestive, aperitif, dessert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head-waiter</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Wine &amp; Food Harmony, Gourmet, Luxurious</td>
<td>Yes, good mood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head-waiter</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Luxurious</td>
<td>No, too expensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head-waiter</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Wine &amp; Food Harmony, Noble</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurant Manager</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Wine &amp; Food Harmony, Expensive products</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurant Manager</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Luxurious, Rare, Tapas</td>
<td>Yes, good beginning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sommelier</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Seasonal, Qualitative products</td>
<td>No, aperitif, digestive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurant owner</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Tapas, Gourmet</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurant owner</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Tapas or Gourmet</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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</tbody>
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Appendix B-3: Interviews answers – Ambience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AMBIANCE</th>
<th>Influence?</th>
<th>How?</th>
<th>Music?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Head-waiter</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Coherent, Good sensations</td>
<td>Slow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head-waiter</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Coherent with offer</td>
<td>Slow, Lounge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head-waiter</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Quite, slow</td>
<td>Slow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head-waiter</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Coherent</td>
<td>Jazz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head-waiter</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Coherent with offer</td>
<td>Jazz, Lounge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurant Manager</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Feet with expectation</td>
<td>Depend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurant Manager</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Be welcoming, Feet with expectation</td>
<td>Jazz, Lounge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sommelier</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Coherent, Good sensation</td>
<td>Lounge, Slow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurant owner</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Good sensations</td>
<td>Lounge, Slow</td>
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<td>Restaurant owner</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Be welcoming</td>
<td>Lounge</td>
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Appendix B-4: Interviews answers – Interior Design

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<th>INTERIOR DESIGN</th>
<th>Design?</th>
<th>Decoration?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Head-waiter</td>
<td>Comfortable</td>
<td>Wine discovery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head-waiter</td>
<td>Good Sensation</td>
<td>Modern, Uncluttered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head-waiter</td>
<td>Structured</td>
<td>Simple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head-waiter</td>
<td>Well Arranged</td>
<td>Uncluttered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head-waiter</td>
<td>Well Arranged</td>
<td>Expose bottles</td>
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<tr>
<td>Restaurant Manager</td>
<td>Comfortable</td>
<td>Around Wine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurant Manager</td>
<td>Comfortable</td>
<td>Modern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sommelier</td>
<td>Good Sensation</td>
<td>Uncluttered, Simple, Around wine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurant owner</td>
<td>Well Arranged</td>
<td>Wine cellar, Expose bottles</td>
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<tr>
<td>Restaurant owner</td>
<td>Warm design</td>
<td>Woods barrels, Around wine</td>
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### Appendix B-5: Interviews answers – Social Interaction

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<thead>
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<th>Influence?</th>
<th>How?</th>
<th>Behaviour?</th>
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<tr>
<td>Head-waiter</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Sommelier</td>
<td>Advices, Understanding Client, Knowledge</td>
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<tr>
<td>Head-waiter</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Sommelier</td>
<td>Advice, Inform</td>
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<tr>
<td>Head-waiter</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>Advice, Understanding Client</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>Advice, Knowledge</td>
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<tr>
<td>Head-waiter</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>Understanding Client</td>
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<td>Restaurant Manager</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>Advice, guide</td>
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<tr>
<td>Restaurant Manager</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Help Customers</td>
<td>Advice, Knowledge</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sommelier</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Be present</td>
<td>Knowledge</td>
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<tr>
<td>Restaurant owner</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Suggest</td>
<td>Advice, Understanding Client</td>
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<tr>
<td>Restaurant owner</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>Advices</td>
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