

America - the new wine frontier

8 Apr 2009 by Jancis Robinson

For the first time ever last year, Americans drank more wine in total than Italians – managing a national wine consumption of 27.3 million hl as opposed to 26 million hl in Italy. This was one of several key trends to emerge when the Paris-based international wine body OIV presented initial statistics for 2008 this week.

Another less upbeat one was that the world's total consumption of wine fell for the first time in the current era – though by less than one per cent. This was chiefly because the Italians, French and Germans drank so much less wine last year, although North Americans and Australians did their best to compensate by increasing their consumption. The world's total wine production was very slightly greater in 2008 than in 2007, but then 2008, 2007, 2003 and 2001 were modest vintages in terms of size, essentially for climatological reasons.

All in all, the Americas provided many of the bright spots for upward trends in wine. Brazil, for example, increased its total plantings of the vine most notably and now has 100,000 ha of vineyard, although is still very much in third place in South America after Argentina and Chile (225,000 and 198,000 ha respectively).

China, meanwhile, is estimated to have more vineyard area than any country in South America: 500,000 ha of vines in 2008, although this was a more modest increase on the 2005 total of 485,000 ha.

For the first time, Europe produced less than half of all wine made in 2008, and its exports fell from an average of more than 75% of all wine exports in the 2001-05 period to 70% in 2008. US wine exports continued to grow.

You can download the OIV's full March report [here](#).