If you read my article earlier this year about heroic microbiologists, you will know that I am increasingly fascinated by microbes and their role in wine: in viticulture, especially in the interaction between vine and soil, and in winemaking. For example, the new, 4th edition of the *Oxford Companion to Wine* included for the first time entries on soil biota and microbial terroir.

Today I read on Becca Yeamans-Irwin's excellent website *The Academic Wino* a summary and review of a fascinating study published last year in *Food Chemistry* by C Muñoz-González, C Cueva, M Ángeles Pozo-Bayón and M Victoria Moreno-Arribas: 'Ability of human oral microbiota to produce wine odorant aglycones from odourless grape glycosidic aroma precursors'.

As Yeamans-Irwin points out, this is a very small-scale study. However, the results suggest that the microbial population in your mouth – which is probably unique to you – could affect the...
aromas you detect in a wine because these microbes are able to transform odourless aroma precursors in a wine into volatile aromatic molecules.

This potentially means that we would all have a slightly different experience when tasting a wine. Then we might be taking into consideration not just bottle variation but also oral-microbe variation.

The image shows *Actinomyces naeslundii*, a bacterium that, according to the study, produces compounds that are associated with floral aromas.